The journey towards comprehensive sexuality education

Global status report

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UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to **"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."** The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.

How are countries advancing towards comprehensive sexuality education for all?

Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is central to children and young people's well-being, equipping them with the knowledge and skills they need to make healthy and responsible choices in their lives.

This report draws on multiple data sources to provide analysis of countries' progress towards delivering good quality school-based CSE to all learners. 85 per cent of 155 countries surveyed have policies or laws relating to sexuality education, with considerably more countries reporting policies to mandate delivery at secondary education level than at primary level. However, the existence of policy and legal frameworks do not always equate to comprehensive content or strong implementation.

Most countries report that they have some curricula in place but more detailed analysis suggests that it often lacks the breadth of topics needed to make sexuality education effective and relevant. Moreover, while efforts to scale-up teacher training are evident in a range of settings, research with teachers shows that many feel they lack confidence to deliver sexuality education. Surveys show that students frequently feel that they received information too late and would have preferred sexuality education to have started earlier in their schooling.

In a recent survey of young people (aged 15-24) from Asia and the Pacific,

fewer than 1 in 3

believed that their school taught them sexuality education well.

There is evidence of opposition to CSE across a range of settings, often reflecting misinformation about the content, purpose or impact of such education. However, in many countries involvement of communities, including parents, school officials, religious leaders, media and young people themselves, has created a favourable environment for CSE.

Recommendations to countries in this report include:

- Clear mandates and budgets to ensure implementation of policies and programmes that support the availability of good quality comprehensive sexuality education for all learners.
- Invest in quality curriculum reform and teacher training.
- Strengthen monitoring of the implementation of CSE.

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"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed"

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sexuality education

Global status report

Contents

Tables

Figures

Case studies

Acknowledgements

List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ASFE	Annual Survey of Formal Education
ASRH	Adolescent sexual and reproductive health
BZgA	German Federal Centre for Health Education
CRPD	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	civil society organization
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CSE	Comprehensive sexuality education
ECA	Europe and Central Asia
DBE	Department of Basic Education (South Africa)
DREAMS	Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
ESHA	Estonian Sexual Health Association
GBV	Gender-based violence
FBO	faith-based organization
FLE	Family Life Education
FP	Family Planning
GFATM	Global Fund to end AIDS, TB and Malaria
HFLE	Health and Family Life Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HWB	Health and well-being
IATT	Inter-Agency Task Force
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICT	Information and communication technology

LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LGBTI	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex
LMIC	Low-to-middle-income country
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
META	Movimiento Estamos Tod@s en Acción (We're All in Action), Young Latin American Activists for Inclusive Development)
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NHS	National Health Service (UK)
NCPI	National Commitments and Policy Instrument
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (UK)
PEPFAR	The President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief
RSHP	Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
SERAT	Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool
SRE	Sex and Relationships Education
SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
SSA	sub-Saharan Africa
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
TCG	Technical Cooperation Group
UBRAF	Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UNAIDS)
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme

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