

Sexuality Education in the WHO European Region

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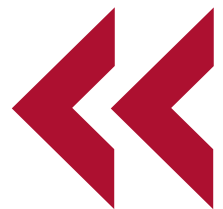


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Status of sexuality education

Sexuality education in Austria is comprehensive and is supported by a strong legal base. It is part of a mandatory educational programme that starts with primary-school children aged 10 until the end of secondary school. There is little opposition to sexuality education, although some challenges do exist, for example, a lack of teacher training and the absence of monitoring and evaluation. Steps are being taken to overcome these obstacles.





Laws and policies

The legal basis of sexuality education lies in the ‘Grundsatzerlass Sexualpädagogik’ [Fundamental Decree on Sexuality Education]¹ adapted in 2015 from the 1970 original statutes. The overall goal of this decree is the development of adequate competence in the field of sexuality and the development of positive self-awareness, based on the *Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe* (2010)² and the IPPF Framework for Comprehensive Sexuality Education.³

Implementation of sexuality education

Sexuality education is integrated into various school subjects. It is mandatory for all learners and is spread throughout primary and secondary school, starting around age 10 and continuing until the end of secondary school. The sexuality-education programme is comprehensive and employs a participatory teaching approach. Topics such as biological aspects, pregnancy, contraception, love, marriage, gender roles, HIV, sexual and domestic violence are treated extensively in the curriculum.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the curriculum. Input to the curriculum was provided by representatives of other ministries as well as by teachers/educational experts and health professionals, all of whom participated in a working group.

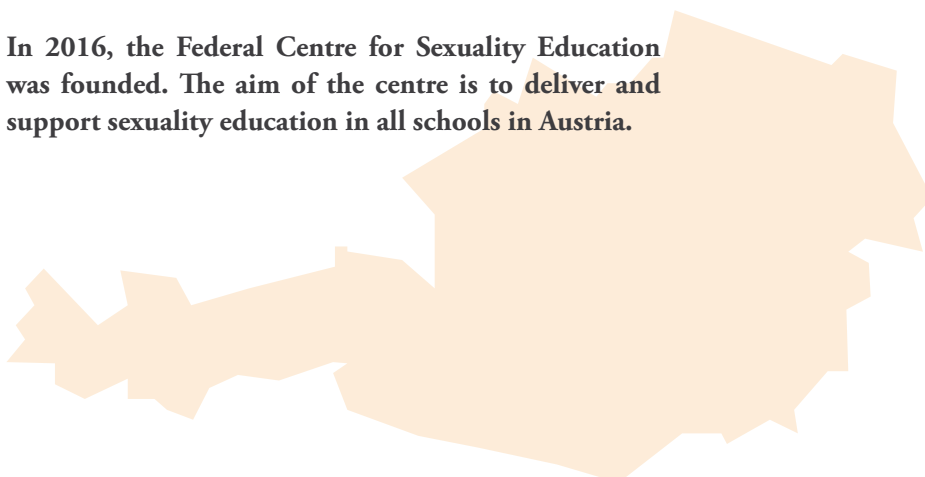
In 2016, the Federal Centre for Sexuality Education was founded. The aim of the centre is to deliver and support sexuality education in all schools in Austria.

Training of teachers on sexuality education

Only a few teachers have been trained, in 2-3 day training courses. There are no official teaching materials, but non-governmental organisations (NGOs), such as the ‘Österreichische Gesellschaft für Familienplanung’ (ÖGF, Austrian Association for Family Planning, IPPF member association) have developed teaching materials, including a demonstration kit of contraceptive methods. The new Federal Centre for Sexuality Education in Salzburg is now also working on developing teaching materials.

Sexuality education outside the formal school setting

Some NGOs provide sexual and reproductive health information for young people via youth centres, mass media and social media. A variety of programmes funded by the government have been designed to reach underserved and at-risk young people.



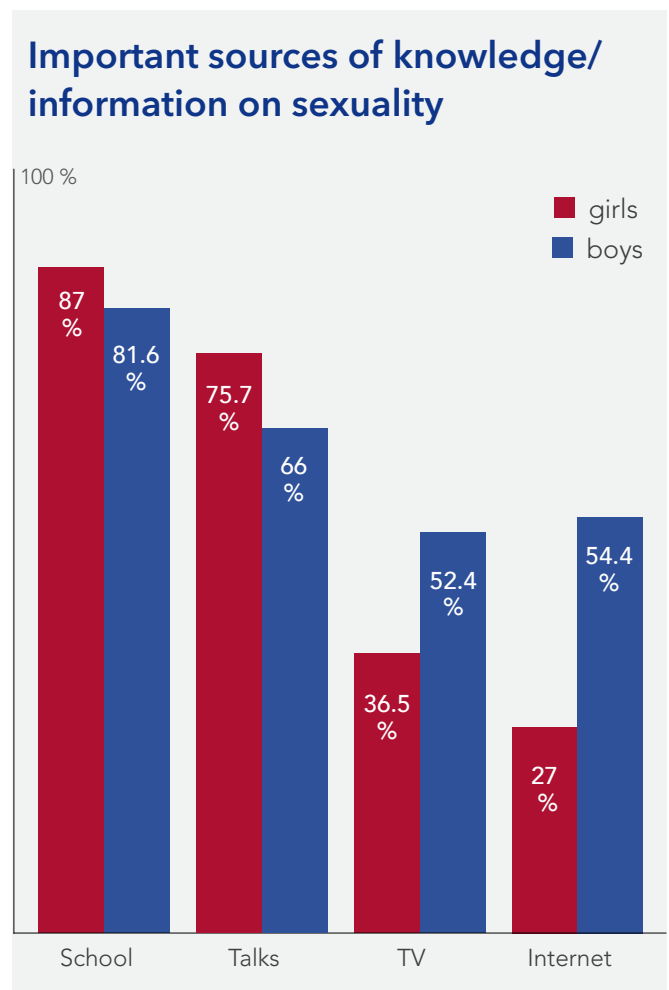
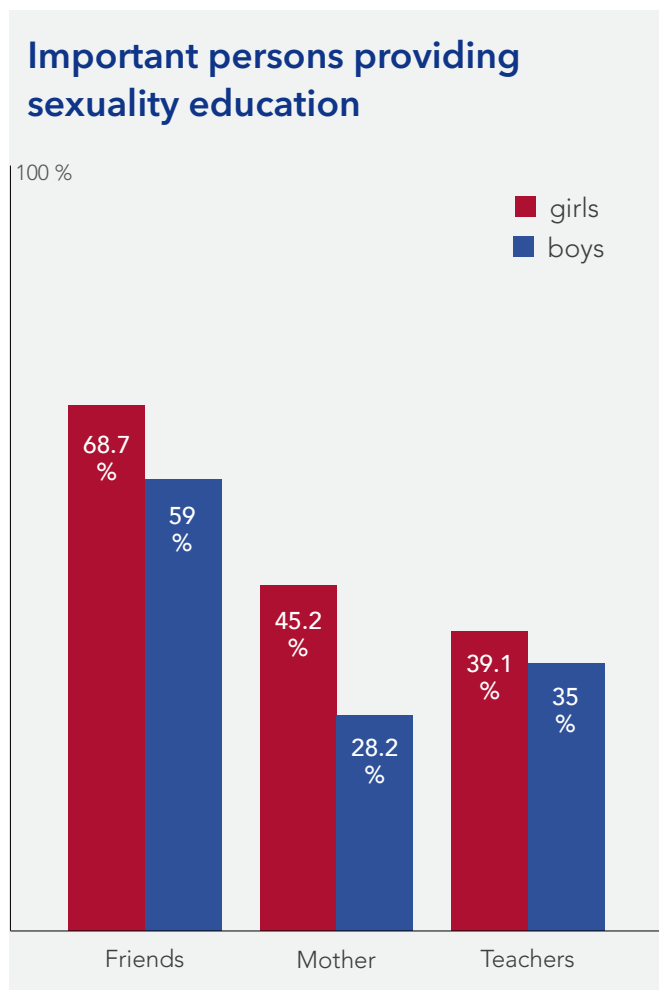


Challenges

There is some opposition to sexuality education in Austria, mainly from religious groups and some parents. The Fundamental Decree on Sexuality Education lacks explicit implementation guidelines, and there is no system in place for monitoring the implementation of sexuality education.

Good-practice example

‘SexTalks’ is a project funded in part by the Austrian Ministry for Families and Youth. An experienced team of psychologists conduct workshops with young people, where they learn how to differentiate between reliable and unreliable information on love and sexuality stemming from websites⁴.



Source: Mag.^a Strlič Martina, Einstellungen zu Sexualität bei Jugendlichen und jungen Erwachsenen [Attitudes toward sexuality among youth and young adults], Vienna: ÖGF; 2012.

Country facts



Austria

Total population ⁵	8 508 000
Population aged 15–19 years (% of 15–19-year-olds in total population) ⁵	470 000 (5.5 %)
Government expenditure on education (% of GDP) ⁶	5.6
Youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24 years) ⁷	10.2
Gender Inequality Index rating ⁸	0.078
Births per 1 000 women aged 15–19 years ⁹	7
% of 15-year-olds who have had sexual intercourse ¹⁰	boys: 24 % girls: 20 %
Average age of mother at birth of first child ¹¹	28.5

For references go to last page

References / Definitions

1 Grundsatzlerlass Sexualpädagogik [Fundamental Decree on Sexual Pedagogy]. Vienna: Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs; 2015 (https://bildung.bmbwf.gv.at/ministerium/vp/2015/2015_11.pdf?4xy5ka, accessed 25 March 2017).

2 Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe. Cologne: WHO Regional Office for Europe/BZgA; 2010.

3 IPPF framework for comprehensive sexuality education. London: International Planned Parenthood Federation; 2006 (https://www.ippf.org/sites/default/files/ippf_framework_for_comprehensive_sexuality_education.pdf, accessed 25 March 2017).

Learner: a child or young person who is enrolled or attends classes in school, including primary (basic/elementary), secondary (middle) and high school.

4 SexTalks [website]. Vienna: Youth Policy Division, Federal Ministry for Families and Youth; 2017 (<http://sextalks.at>, accessed 25 March 2017).

5 Population by age, sex and urban/rural residence, 2016 [online database]. New York: United Nations Statistics Division; 2017 (<http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=POP&f=tableCode%3A22>, accessed 25 March 2017).

6 Human development report 2016: human development for everyone. New York: United Nations Development Programme; 2016 (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/2016-report>, accessed 25 March 2017).

Government expenditure on education: current, capital and transfer spending on education, expressed as a percentage of GDP. Range in the region is approx. 2.0–8.5.

7 Human development data, 2015 [online database]. New York: United Nations Development Programme; 2017 (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/data#>, accessed 25 March 2017).

Youth unemployment rate: percentage of the labour force population aged 15–24 years that is not in paid employment or self-employed, but is available for work and has taken steps to seek paid employment or self-employment.

8 Human development report 2016: human development for everyone. New York: United Nations Development Programme; 2016 (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/2016-report>, accessed 25 March 2017).

Gender Inequality Index: a composite measure reflecting inequality in achievement between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market. It varies between zero (when women and men fare equally) and one (when men or women fare poorly compared with the other in all dimensions).

9 Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1 000 women ages 15–19). Washington (DC): World Bank; 2016 (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT>, accessed 25 March 2017).

10 Growing up unequal: gender and socioeconomic differences in young people's health and well-being. HBSC 2016 study report (2013/2014 survey). Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2016 (<http://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/growing-up-unequal.-hbsc-2016-study-20132014-survey>, accessed 25 March 2017).

11 Women in the EU gave birth to their first child at almost 29 years of age on average. Luxembourg: Eurostat; 2015 [2013 data] (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/6829228/3-13052015-CP-EN.pdf/7e9007fb-3ca9-445f-96eb-fd75d6792965>, accessed 25 March 2017).



This fact sheet is based upon a joint research project of the International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN) and the Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA), a WHO Collaborating Centre for Sexual and Reproductive Health. The data of this research were collected between October 2016 and July 2017 by means of written expert interviews with representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations in 25 countries and collection of available data from international information sources. **More information is available on <http://www.bzga-whocc.de/en/home/>**

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