

# Sexuality Education in the WHO European Region

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## CYPRUS



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## Status of sexuality education

In 2010, a new educational reform was introduced in Cyprus by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This led to the development of a health-education curriculum, which includes sexuality education. The programme has a comprehensive character, but is not yet sufficiently implemented. It is to be taught in primary and secondary schools to learners aged 7–15 years and optionally in high schools.





### Laws and policies

Cyprus has signed and ratified a number of international and European conventions, treaties and other agreements, which promote and secure the right of children to education, including sexuality education. In 2010, a new educational reform was introduced by the Ministry of Education and Culture, including the health education programme. This led to the development of a health education curriculum, which includes sexuality education in a thematic area framed as ‘Family Planning – Sexual and Reproductive Health’. This area was developed in accordance with the *Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe* (2010).<sup>1</sup>

### Implementation of sexuality education

Sexuality education in the schools is still being developed. It is taught as a cross-curricular subject and is compulsory in both primary and middle schools and optional in high schools. This applies only to public schools. It is not mandatory for private schools to follow the curriculum of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

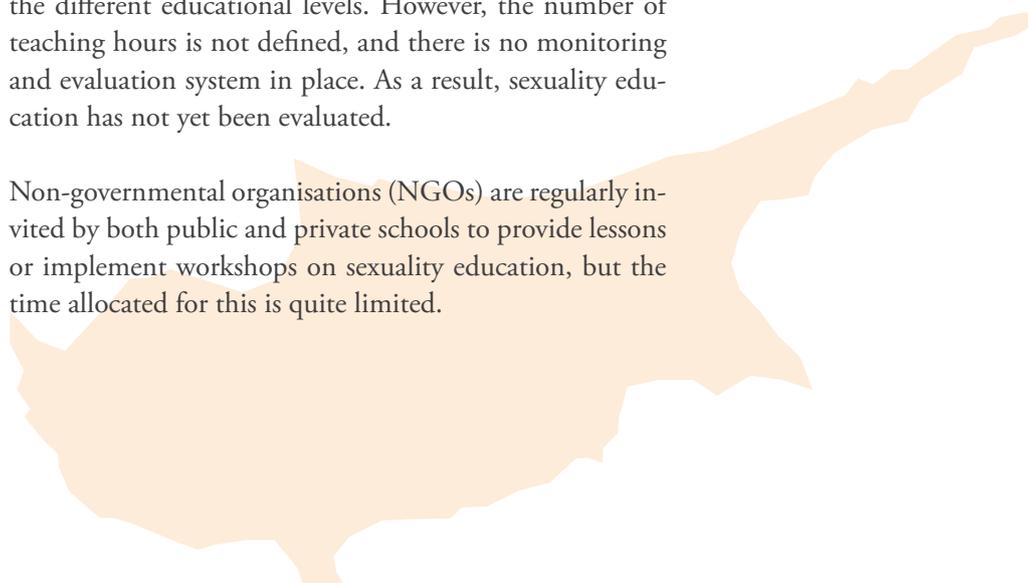
The thematic area ‘Family Planning – Sexual and Reproductive Health’ in the health education programme provides a detailed overview of what should be taught at the different educational levels. However, the number of teaching hours is not defined, and there is no monitoring and evaluation system in place. As a result, sexuality education has not yet been evaluated.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are regularly invited by both public and private schools to provide lessons or implement workshops on sexuality education, but the time allocated for this is quite limited.

### Training of teachers on sexuality education

Special training for teachers who provide sexuality education is not mandatory. The Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus, under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture, occasionally offers optional training to teachers at all levels of education on sexuality education, sexual violence, gender-based violence and other issues, usually in collaboration with NGOs. However, there are no data available on the number of teachers who have been trained to provide sexuality education nor on the content or length of such training for those who underwent it.

Teaching guidelines are provided as part of the curriculum. The Cyprus Family Planning Association (CFPA, IPPF member association), in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus, has developed two teaching manuals for teachers on sexuality education, one for primary and one for secondary education. Educational materials developed by CFPA reflect the comprehensive approach and include interactive teaching methods.





## Sexuality education outside the formal school setting

Youth centres and clubs organise workshops on various issues such as gender, contraception, partner violence and relationships and invite NGOs to conduct them. Apart from CFPA, the leading NGO in sexual and reproductive health and rights in Cyprus, other NGOs are active in this field. The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies has implemented awareness-raising interventions with young people, using a variety of non-formal, experiential and interactive methods. The Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family deals with domestic violence. Sexuality education through mass media, internet and social media is rare. There are also no specific educational programmes targeting especially underserved or at-risk young people.

## Challenges

There is opposition to sexuality education in Cyprus from parents, some teachers and conservative and religious groups. There is also a lack of data on the sexual and reproductive health of young people.

# Country facts

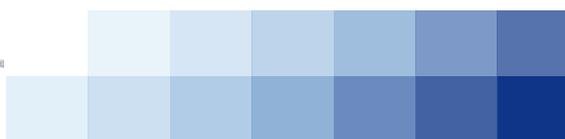


Cyprus

Total population <sup>2</sup>	840 000
Population aged 15–19 years (% of 15–19-year-olds in total population) <sup>2</sup>	56 000 (6.6 %)
Government expenditure on education (% of GDP) <sup>3</sup>	6.6
Youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24 years) <sup>4</sup>	32.3
Gender Inequality Index rating <sup>5</sup>	0.979
Births per 1 000 women aged 15–19 years <sup>6</sup>	5
% of 15-year-olds who have had sexual intercourse <sup>7</sup>	N/A
Average age of mother at birth of first child <sup>8</sup>	29.0

N/A: not available

For references go to last page



## References / Definitions

- 1 Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe. Cologne: WHO Regional Office for Europe/BZgA; 2010.
  - 2 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).
  - 3 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.
- 4 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.
- 5 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).
- 6 Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1 000 women ages 15–19). Washington (DC): World Bank; 2016 (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT>, accessed 25 March 2017).
  - 7 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).
  - 8 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/f7e9007fb-3ca9-445f-96eb-fd75d6792965>, 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.