

Sexuality Education in the WHO European Region

THE NETHERLANDS

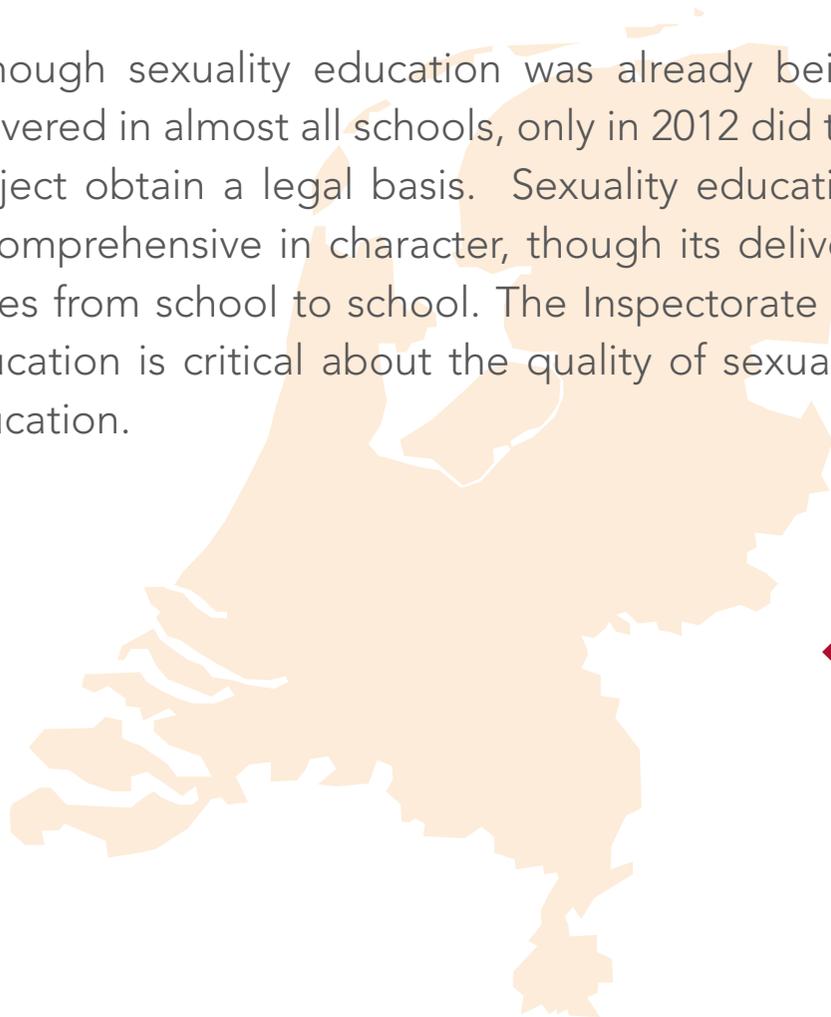


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Status of sexuality education

Although sexuality education was already being delivered in almost all schools, only in 2012 did the subject obtain a legal basis. Sexuality education is comprehensive in character, though its delivery varies from school to school. The Inspectorate for Education is critical about the quality of sexuality education.





Laws and policies

In 2009, a policy letter of the Ministry of Health mentioned sexuality education as an important part of education. In 2012, changes to the education law were made, including the setting of new goals (core objectives 38 and 43) on sexuality education for primary and secondary schools. Sexuality education is partially embedded in the national objectives of education, but there is no national sexuality-education curriculum – there are only frameworks and guidelines: one deals with ‘relationships and sexuality,’ another explains the main objectives regarding ‘sexuality and sexual diversity’. Both were developed by the Foundation for Curriculum Development; the guidelines are integrated into syllabi in a largely comprehensive manner.

Implementation of sexuality education

School boards, together with teachers and other partners, are responsible for the methods, teaching materials and programme development. Sexuality education is, for the most part, integrated into other subjects like biology, citizenship education or sociology. The number of teaching hours varies depending on the schools and the teachers. According to the Inspectorate for Education (2016)¹, the quality of delivery of sexuality education also differs widely as it mainly depends on individual teachers.

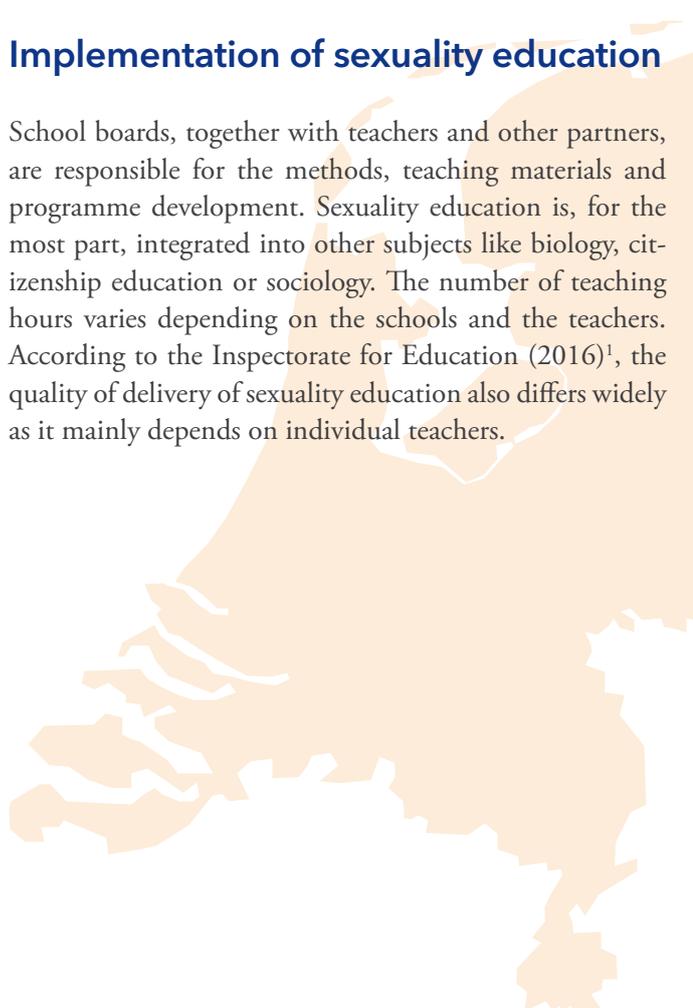
Training of teachers on sexuality education

A few teachers are trained for sexuality education, mostly via short courses or workshops on specific topics. Further, many online resources, e.g. ‘lesgevenindiefde.nl’ or ‘seksuelevorming.nl’, provide useful information and support for teachers.

National non-governmental organisations (NGOs) like ‘Rutgers’ (IPPF member association), ‘SoaAids Nederland’, ‘Movisie’ and other stakeholders, including teachers, young people, private institutions and publishers, develop educational materials, lesson packages and teaching guidelines. It is estimated that 40 % of the secondary schools use the lesson package ‘Lang Leve de Liefde’ (Long Live Love, 6/7 lessons), and that 30 % of primary schools use the package ‘Kriebels in je buik’ (Butterflies in Your Stomach, consisting of 12 lessons for level 7 and 8 of primary school, i.e. 10 – 12-year-olds). The WHO/BZgA *Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe* (2010)² were also used by Rutgers and SoaAids Nederland for the development of their lesson packages.

Sexuality education outside the formal school setting

Sexuality education is sporadically provided through mass media, e.g. TV programmes or webpages with information on sexuality. There are special sexuality-education programmes for underserved or at-risk groups, including young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, young people with physical or learning disabilities, young people in correctional institutions and young migrants. For example, Learning Line (‘Leerlijn’) – a special education programme for learners with disabilities.



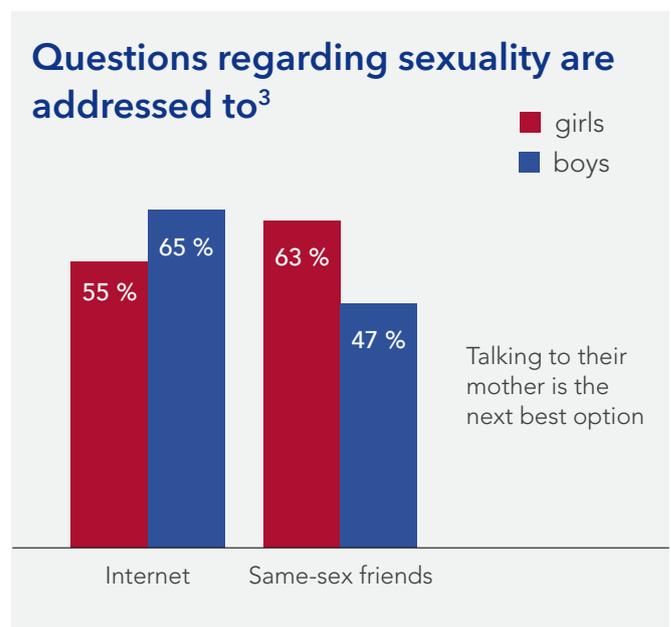
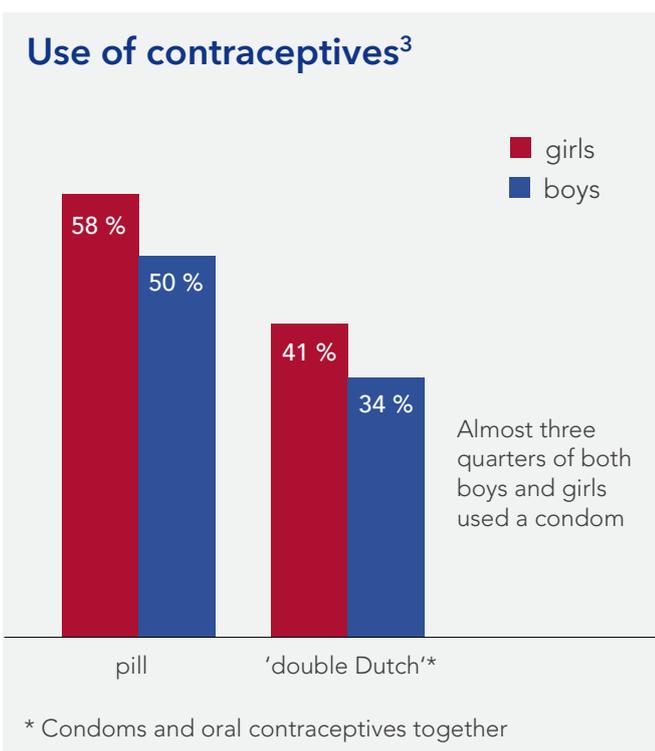
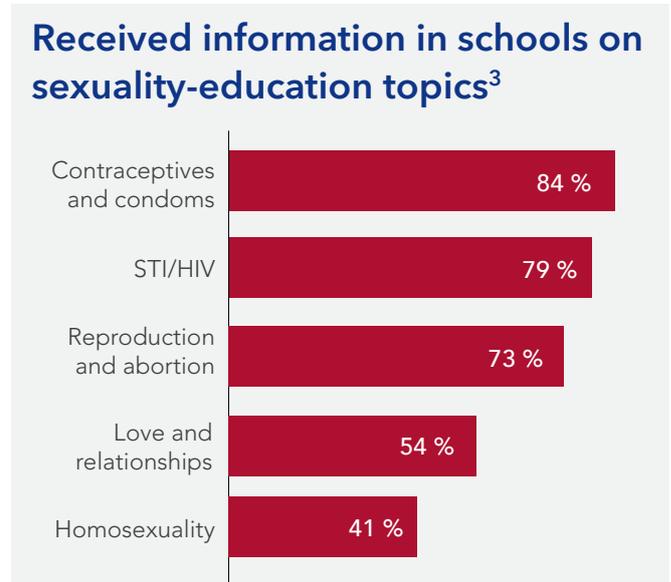
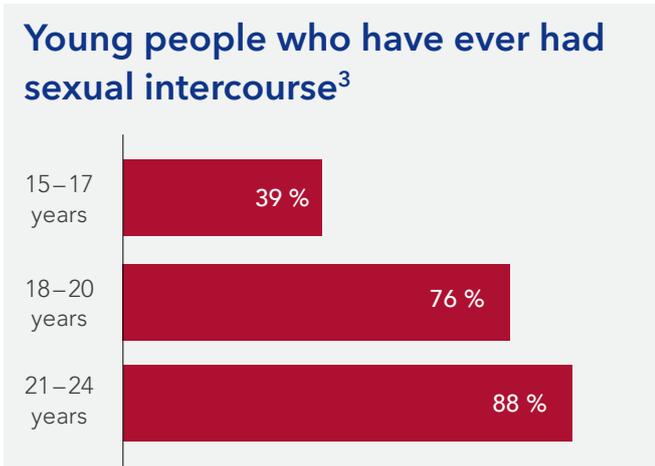


Challenges

There is a little opposition to sexuality education in the country, mostly from conservative religious groups. Field experts think that sexuality education still has to be improved, because there remains a lack of criteria to assess the quality of sexuality education as well as an explicit curriculum for sexuality education, structural embedding of sexuality education in schools, implementation capacity and evaluation of results and quality of sexuality education.

Good-practice example

The website 'sense.info' provides reliable information on sexuality on the internet for young people, 12–25 years old. It is quite popular, with almost 2 million visitors per year. It also includes a telephone hotline and chat contact.



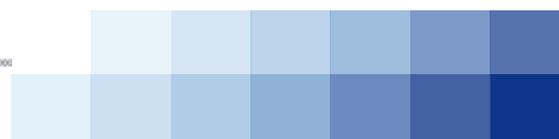
Country facts



The Netherlands

Total population ⁴	16 829 000
Population aged 15–19 years (% of 15–19-year-olds in total population) ⁴	996 000 (5.9 %)
Government expenditure on education (% of GDP) ⁵	5.6
Youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24 years) ⁶	8.8
Gender Inequality Index rating ⁷	0.044
Births per 1 000 women aged 15–19 years ⁸	4
% of 15-year-olds who have had sexual intercourse ⁹	boys: 15 % girls: 16 %
Average age of mother at birth of first child ¹⁰	29.4

For references go to last page



References / Definitions

- 1 <https://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/actueel/nieuws/2016/09/05/omgaan-met-seksualiteit-en-seksuele-diversiteit> (accessed 25 March 2017).
- 2 Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe. Cologne: WHO Regional Office for Europe/BZgA; 2010.
- Learner:** a child or young person who is enrolled or attends classes in school, including primary (basic/elementary), secondary (middle) and high school.
- 3 Most important conclusions: Sex under the age of 25. Utrecht: Rutgers WPF/STI AIDS Netherlands; 2012 (http://www.rutgers.nl/sites/rutgersnl/files/PDF-Onderzoek/Fact-sheet_Seksonderje25ste_ENG.pdf, accessed 25 March 2017).
- 4 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).
- 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).
- 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.
- 6 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.
- 7 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).
- 8 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).
- 9 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).
- 10 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).