

Sexuality Education in the WHO European Region

THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

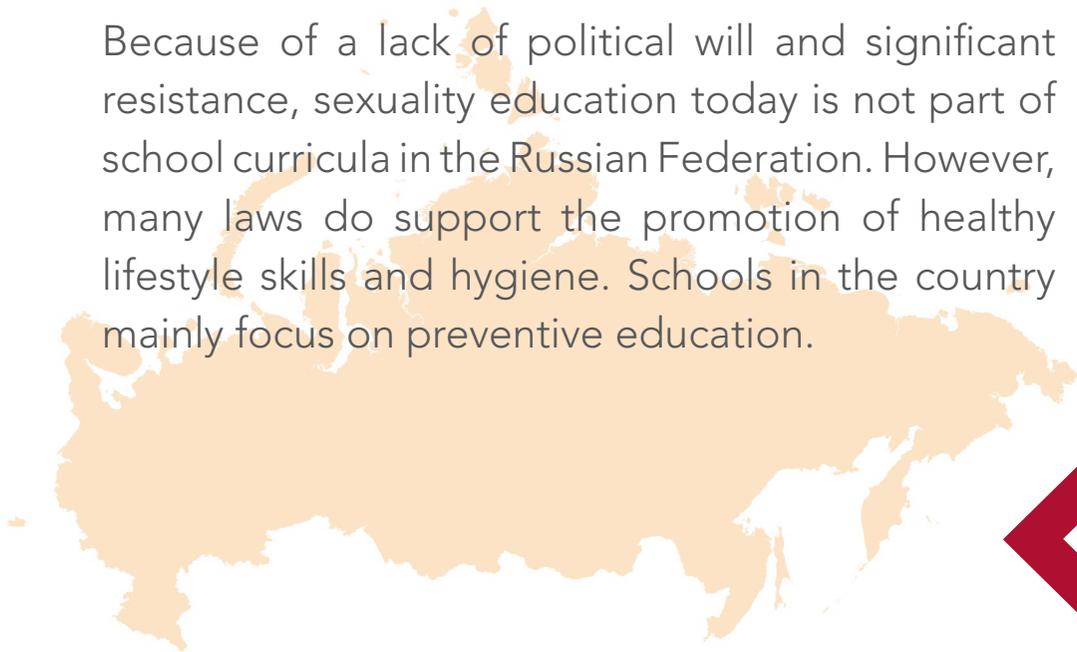


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Status of sexuality education

Because of a lack of political will and significant resistance, sexuality education today is not part of school curricula in the Russian Federation. However, many laws do support the promotion of healthy lifestyle skills and hygiene. Schools in the country mainly focus on preventive education.





Laws and policies

No policies or laws specifically regulate the inclusion of sexuality education in the formal educational system. Rather, the school system covers issues related to preventive education, which is mandatory for all educational institutions in all regions of the Russian Federation. Provisions for access and the right of children and young people to preventive and healthy lifestyle skills education are provided in several laws including the Law on Education (2012)¹ and the Law on Fundamental Healthcare Principles in the Russian Federation (2011).²

Implementation of sexuality education

Some elements of sexuality education, e.g. physiological aspects of the human body, pregnancy and birth, HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, family and love, are integrated into other subjects such as biology, basics of life safety, and physical education for learners³ aged 12 years and older. In some schools, some aspects such as HIV prevention, family relationships, family values and responsible parenting are presented during extracurricular hours or training. They are not systematically delivered, but rather are initiated by teachers or medical specialists.

Educational institutions including schools develop the curriculum, but the teachers who deliver the subject are responsible for its planning and implementation. Invited healthcare workers may cover some topics. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are rarely involved in sexuality education in schools, though in the past they played a significant role in the promotion of HIV education.

Sexuality education outside the formal school setting

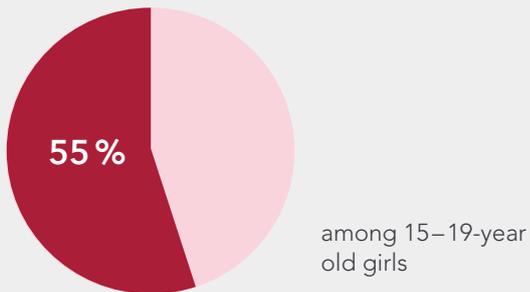
Some NGOs have developed programmes for young people including underserved groups. These programmes mostly aim at preventing HIV and developing life skills. For example, the Health and Development Foundation supported the implementation of a training programme called 'Everything That Concerns You', which reached more than 400 000 learners in secondary schools, vocational schools, youth centres and centres of additional education across the Russian Federation. Designed for adolescents aged 13–18 years, the programme aims to improve health outcomes among adolescents, prevent risky behaviour, HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, and motivate young people to lead healthy lives. The Russian Association for Population and Development (RAPD; IPPF member association) also implements a number of projects on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and hosts a webpage for young people with information on SRH and online consultation.



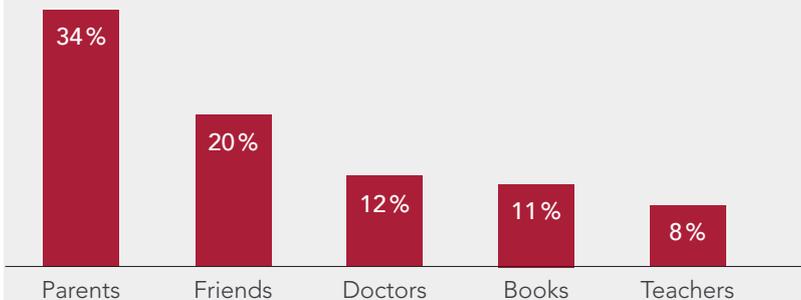
Challenges

There is significant resistance to sexuality education in the Russian Federation from parents, church, traditionalists and some federal and local parliament members. The main argument used against sexuality education is the presumed 'negative influence of information related to sexuality on an adolescent's behaviour'.

Unplanned pregnancies⁴



Important sources of information on issues related to sexuality (incl. pregnancy, menstruation, sexually transmitted diseases)⁴



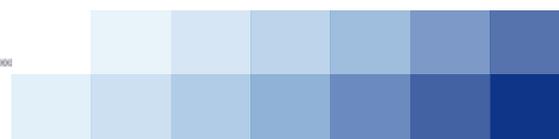


Country facts

The Russian Federation

Total population ⁵	143 202 000
Population aged 15–19 years (% of 15–19-year-olds in total population) ⁵	7 392 000 (5.2 %)
Government expenditure on education (% of GDP) ⁶	4.2
Youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24 years) ⁷	15
Gender Inequality Index rating ⁸	0.271
Births per 1 000 women aged 15–19 years ⁹	23
% of 15-year-olds who have had sexual intercourse ¹⁰	boys: 26 % girls: 11 %
Average age of mother at birth of first child ¹¹	24.6

For references go to last page



References / Definitions

- 1 Law on Education (2012) of 29 December 2012 (N 273-F3) (http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_140174/, accessed 25 March 2017).
- 2 Law on Fundamental Healthcare Principles in the Russian Federation (2011) of 21 November 2011 (N 323-ФЗ) (<https://www.rosminzdrav.ru/documents/7025-federalnyy-zakon-ot-21-noyabrya-2011-g-323-fz-ob-osnovah-ohrany-zdorovya-grazhdan-v-rossiyskoy-federatsii>, accessed 25 March 2017).
- 3 **Learner:** a child or young person who is enrolled or attends classes in school, including primary (basic/elementary), secondary (middle) and high school.
- 4 Russia reproductive health survey 2011. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Federal State Statistics Service (Russia)/Ministry of Health (Russian Federation); 2011.
- 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 (<http://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 Mother's mean age at first birth. Index Mundi [data from CIA world factbook, various years] (<http://www.indexmundi.com/factbook/fields/mother's-mean-age-at-first-birth>, accessed 25 March 2017).