

Sexuality Education in the WHO European Region

SERBIA



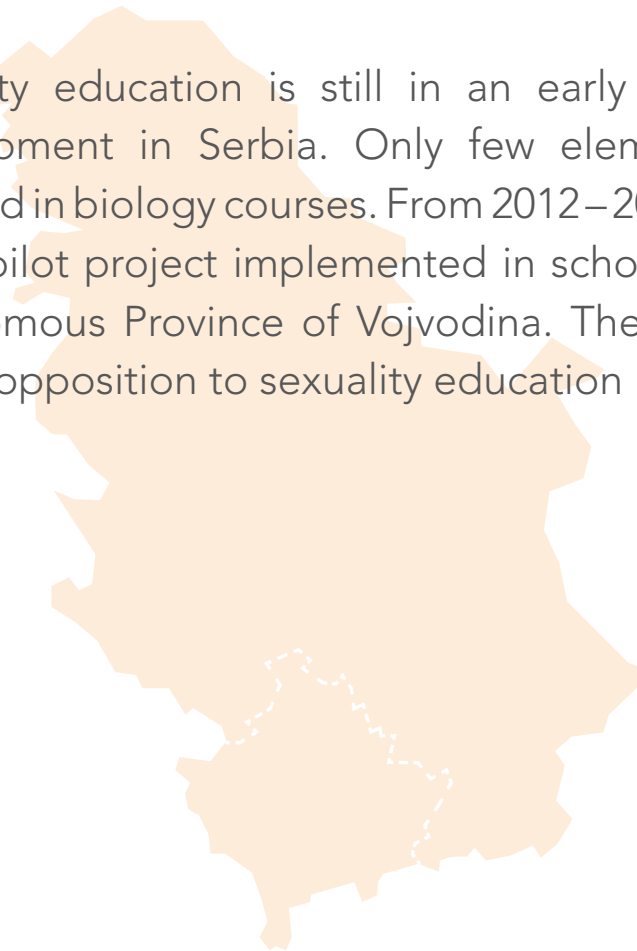
Belgrade

SERBIA



Status of sexuality education

Sexuality education is still in an early stage of development in Serbia. Only few elements are included in biology courses. From 2012–2015, there was a pilot project implemented in schools in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. There is also strong opposition to sexuality education in Serbia.





Laws and policies

There is presently no specific national law or policy concerning sexuality education in Serbia.

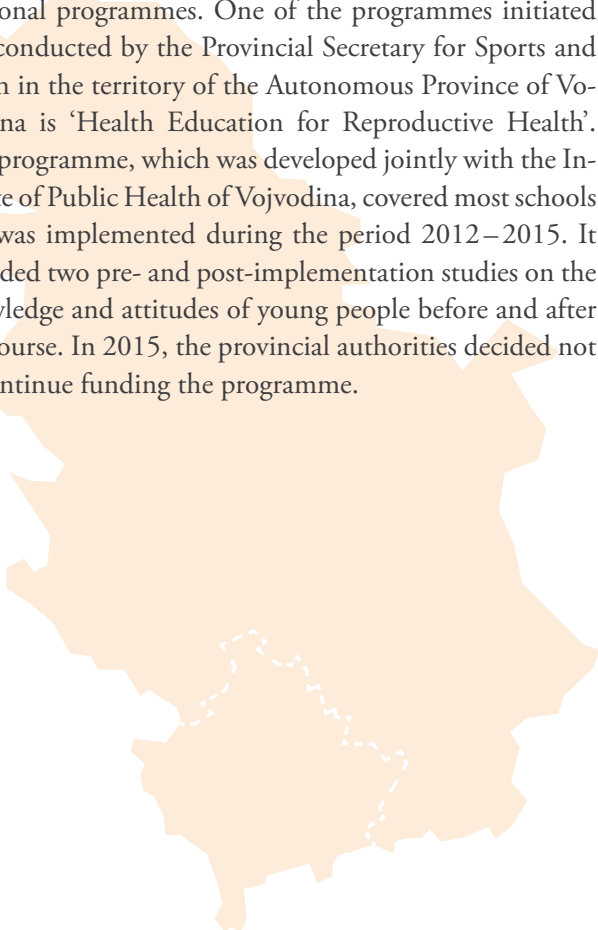
Implementation of sexuality education

A few sexuality education elements are included in biology classes, and these are strictly limited to body awareness and reproductive functions. Six teaching hours are devoted to sexuality-education topics. Biology, which is taught in both primary (or 'elementary') and secondary schools, is a mandatory subject.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the final decision whether sexuality education (as well as every other subject) is approved and taught. At the provincial/regional level, local governments can approve and implement educational programmes. One of the programmes initiated and conducted by the Provincial Secretary for Sports and Youth in the territory of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina is 'Health Education for Reproductive Health'. This programme, which was developed jointly with the Institute of Public Health of Vojvodina, covered most schools and was implemented during the period 2012–2015. It included two pre- and post-implementation studies on the knowledge and attitudes of young people before and after the course. In 2015, the provincial authorities decided not to continue funding the programme.

Training of teachers on sexuality education

Only those teachers who participated in this pilot project in Vojvodina were specially trained. There are no teaching materials or guidelines available on sexuality education, except for the ones that were developed for the pilot project.





Sexuality education outside the formal school setting

A few sexuality-education curricula have been developed by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and educational and medical professionals, but they are mostly used for informal education. Currently, 'SRH Serbia' (IPPF member association) conducts training on various topics under the new programme – 'Skills, Knowledge and Techniques for Preventing and Reducing Gender-Based Violence and Discriminatory Behaviour in the School Environment'. Educational materials and guidelines for this programme targeting teachers, learners and peer educators are under development. 'SRH Serbia' also provides non-formal peer (sexuality) education under the project 'Drop-In Centres', reaching various underserved groups of young people. Some other NGOs periodically implement programmes related to some topics of sexuality education, usually through peer education.

Challenges

There is significant opposition to sexuality education in Serbia, mainly from the Ministry of Education, teachers and other school staff as well as parents. The main arguments against sexuality education are related to the 'inappropriateness' of the topics for young people.

Data

→ Counselling centres

As of 2011, there were over 35 counselling centres for family planning located in public health centres across Serbia, focussing mostly on counselling for sexually transmitted infections, contraceptive methods and sexuality education.

→ Sexual activity and contraception

According to a 2015 survey among 15 – 24-year-olds, 79.6% were sexually active, but only 33% of them were using a modern method of contraception¹.

Country facts



Serbia

Total population ²	7 147 000
Population aged 15–19 years (% of 15–19-year-olds in total population) ²	375 000 (5.3%)
Government expenditure on education (% of GDP) ³	4.4
Youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24 years) ⁴	45.2
Gender Inequality Index rating ⁵	0.185
Births per 1 000 women aged 15–19 years ⁶	19
% of 15-year-olds who have had sexual intercourse ⁷	N/A
Average age of mother at birth of first child ⁸	27.8

N/A: not available

For references go to last page

References / Definitions

1 Tomanović S., Stanojević D. YOUNG PEOPLE IN SERBIA 2015: Situation, perceptions, beliefs and aspirations. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and SeConS Development Initiative Group: Belgrade 2015. Available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/7110686/Young+People+in+Serbia+2015.pdf/1a8d5db9-8dc7-4f3a-bcb9-2af0610d0d94>, accessed 25 March 2017.

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.-hbhc-2016-study-20132014-survey>, accessed 25 March 2017).

8 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).

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



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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