

Sexuality Education in the WHO European Region

SWITZERLAND

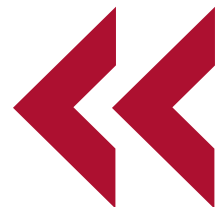
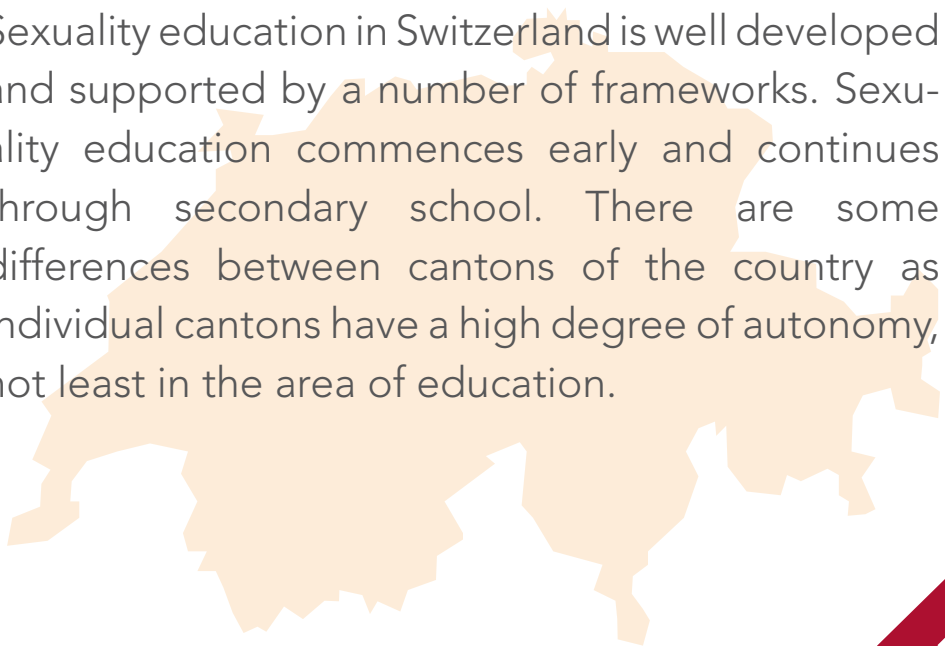


SWITZERLAND



Status of sexuality education

Sexuality education in Switzerland is well developed and supported by a number of frameworks. Sexuality education commences early and continues through secondary school. There are some differences between cantons of the country as individual cantons have a high degree of autonomy, not least in the area of education.





Laws and policies

The frameworks for sexuality education and educational objectives are included in the 'Plan d'Études Romand' (2009) in the French-speaking cantons, the 'Lehrplan 21' (2014) in the German-speaking cantons, and the 'Linee Guida per l'Educazione Sessuale nella Scuola' (2008) in the Italian-speaking cantons. The cantons in Switzerland have a high degree of autonomy, also in the area of education. They are fully responsible for implementing sexuality education.

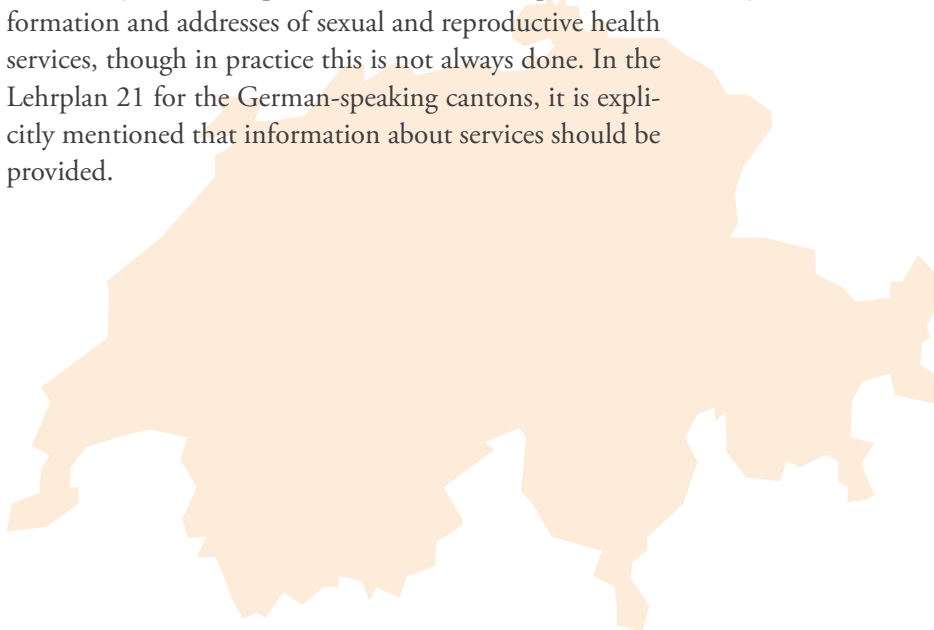
The Ministries of Education of the individual cantons are responsible for curriculum development. They are supported by various advisory groups, including teachers and education specialists, healthcare professionals (in the French-speaking and Italian-speaking cantons), church authorities (in the Italian-speaking cantons), and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The WHO/BZgA *Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe* (2010)¹ were used as a guideline to verify the comprehensiveness of the curricula.

Implementation of sexuality education

Sexuality education is implemented both as a separate subject and integrated into broader subjects. All relevant sexuality-education topics are included in the curriculum, and most of them are dealt with extensively. Sexuality education starts early, in kindergarten or in primary school (between the age of 4 and 8 years) and continues through secondary school. The number of teaching hours is not defined. In the French-speaking cantons, there is the obligation to involve external specialists in the teaching of sexuality education for a minimum of 9 hours. The teacher or sexuality-education professional should also provide information and addresses of sexual and reproductive health services, though in practice this is not always done. In the Lehrplan 21 for the German-speaking cantons, it is explicitly mentioned that information about services should be provided.

Training of teachers on sexuality education

The training of teachers differs widely in the various parts of Switzerland. In the French-speaking part, almost all teachers are trained. In the German-speaking part, few are trained, and even those for less than a day. Educational materials and teaching guidelines are available from publishers of school materials and from the national NGO Sexual Health Switzerland ('Sexuelle Gesundheit Schweiz'; IPPF member association). They reflect participatory approaches to sexuality education. Also, the materials used vary between the different parts of Switzerland.





Sexuality education outside the formal school setting

Various extracurricular sexuality-education activities have been implemented. Professional sexuality-education organisations and some peer-education groups provide information on most subjects. Some religious organisations provide information on issues related to reproduction and natural contraception, and online media give information about all questions related to the sexuality of young people. There are special sexuality-education programmes that target young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people as well as people with physical or learning disabilities through various projects and specialized schools, but these do not reach everybody.

Challenges

The opposition to sexuality education comes mostly from conservative groups. Opponents argue that society, and especially children and young people, need ethical values and norms. Some (smaller) religiously motivated groups express opposition toward gender-based approaches.

It should be mentioned that Switzerland has the lowest teenage birth and abortion rates in Europe: 1.8² and 3.4³ per 1 000 15–19-year-old girls, respectively.

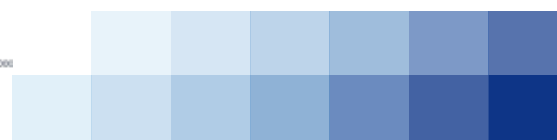
Country facts



Switzerland

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|--|---------------------------|
| Total population ⁴ | 8 238 000 |
| Population aged 15–19 years (% of 15–19-year-olds in total population) ⁴ | 439 000 (5.3 %) |
| Government expenditure on education (% of GDP) ⁵ | 5.1 |
| Youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24 years) ⁶ | 7 |
| Gender Inequality Index rating ⁷ | 0.040 |
| Births per 1 000 women aged 15–19 years ⁸ | 3 |
| % of 15-year-olds who have had sexual intercourse ⁹ | boys: 17 % girls: 13 % |
| Average age of mother at birth of first child ¹⁰ | 30.4 |

For references go to last page



References / Definitions

- 1 Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe. Cologne: WHO Regional Office for Europe/BZgA; 2010.
 - 2 Federal Office of Statistics (2015). Altersspezifische Geburtenziffern, nach Geburtsort und Staatsangehörigkeit der Mutter, (Age-specific birth rates, by place of birth and by nationality of the mother). Available at: <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/kataloge-datenbanken/tabellen.assetdetail.1641748.html>, accessed 21 November 2017).
 - 3 Federal Office of Statistics (2015). Anzahl Schwangerschaftsabbrüche bei in der Schweiz wohnhaften Jugendlichen pro 1 000 Jugendlichen (15-19 J), (Number of induced abortions among young people living in Switzerland per 1 000 young people (15 -19 years). Available at <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/gesundheit/gesundheitszustand/reproduktive/schwangerschaftsabbrueche.html>, accessed 21 November 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).
 - 6 Human development data, 2015 [online database]. New York: United Nations Development Programme; 2017 (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/data#>, accessed 25 March 2017).
 - 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).
 - 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/7e9007fb-3ca9-445f-96eb-fd75d6792965>, 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.



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/>**

Published by Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung (Federal Centre for Health Education), BZgA, Cologne/Germany **Authors:** Evert Ketting, Olena Ivanova **Edited by:** Nathalie Bélorgey, Laura Brockschmidt, Angelika Hessling, BZgA **Design and Layout:** Kühn Medienkonzept & Design GmbH **Edition:** Online version, March 2018 **Copyright** © 2018 BZgA

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