MACEDONIA (FYROM)

Status of sexuality education

Three national strategies are partly related to sexuality education in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, though to date it has not become a teaching subject. A few elements of sexuality education are incorporated into various other school subjects. Despite the assistance from international organisations and advocacy efforts from local non-governmental organisations, the implementation of sexuality education in the country is a slow process that has often been met with resistance and a lack of governmental support.
Laws and policies


In 2011, a Framework for Comprehensive Sexuality Education was adopted by the Parliamentary Commission on equal opportunities, and the same Commission then recommended piloting sexuality education in schools. However, this has not led to a related action plan.

Training of teachers on sexuality education

Few teachers have been trained specifically to teach LSE. Training-of-trainers courses on LSE teaching are available, after which participating teachers are obliged to teach fellow teachers using the course content supplied to them. However, sexuality-education topics are rarely made part of this training. The governmental Bureau for the Development of Education designs the teaching materials, and teachers receive guidelines on how to conduct workshops with their colleagues.

Implementation of sexuality education

There is no separate school subject entitled sexuality education in the FYR of Macedonia. Some elements thereof are included in various other school subjects, such as Life Skills Education (LSE), biology, sociology and citizenship. The development of an LSE programme was initiated and financed by the UNICEF country office in Skopje. LSE is mandatory but is offered only during ‘living-room’ or ‘advisory classroom’ sessions/hours. LSE comprises 36 teaching hours annually for all areas of the subject, and starts in the first grade (age 6 years). Teachers decide which components to include in these lessons. The educational sub-objectives that might be considered as sexuality education are delegated for learners aged 12 or over.

The extent to which sexuality education is taught varies across the country. Since teachers themselves can select the components of LSE to be taught, most of them avoid themes that they are not comfortable with teaching, i.e. those related to SRH. According to a 2014 study, only 7% of teachers from the capital city reported having talked about sexual orientation in LSE classes; 9% had addressed oral contraception, 15% condom use and 35% HIV prevention.
Sexuality education outside the formal school setting

Some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) provide comprehensive, non-formal peer sexuality education. The Health Education and Research Association (HERA, IPPF member association) developed a curriculum for this. HERA also organises workshops on SRH issues. Furthermore, there is a ‘Sexy Hood’ radio show covering various sexuality issues, which is produced by HERA. NGOs and international organisations such as UNFPA, EGAL, HERA, HOPS and Stronger Together develop and implement programmes for underserved and at-risk groups of young people, including Roma, sex workers, drug users and migrants.

Challenges

Social taboos and conservative views hinder the implementation of sexuality education in the FYR of Macedonia. Sexuality education often lacks government support, and, in many cases, it is portrayed negatively in the media and in public campaigns conducted by the government.

Most important sources of information on issues related to sexuality

Survey data and facts from the questionnaire in the study Vasilevska L. (2014)²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet/social media</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends/peers</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Country facts

### Macedonia (FYROM)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population(^3)</td>
<td>2 066 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population aged 15–19 years (% of 15–19-year-olds in total population)(^3)</td>
<td>137 000 (6.6 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government expenditure on education (% of GDP)(^4)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24 years)(^5)</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Inequality Index rating(^6)</td>
<td>0.160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Births per 1 000 women aged 15–19 years(^7)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| % of 15-year-olds who have had sexual intercourse\(^8\)                 | boys: 36 %
girls: 3 %                                                      |
| Average age of mother at birth of first child\(^9\)                    | 26.6   |

N/A: not available  
For references go to last page
References / Definitions

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

2 Vasilevska L. Access to SRHR information in primary and secondary schools conducted among students and teachers. Skopje: HERA/Centre for Vocational Education and Training; 2014.


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.


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.


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).

