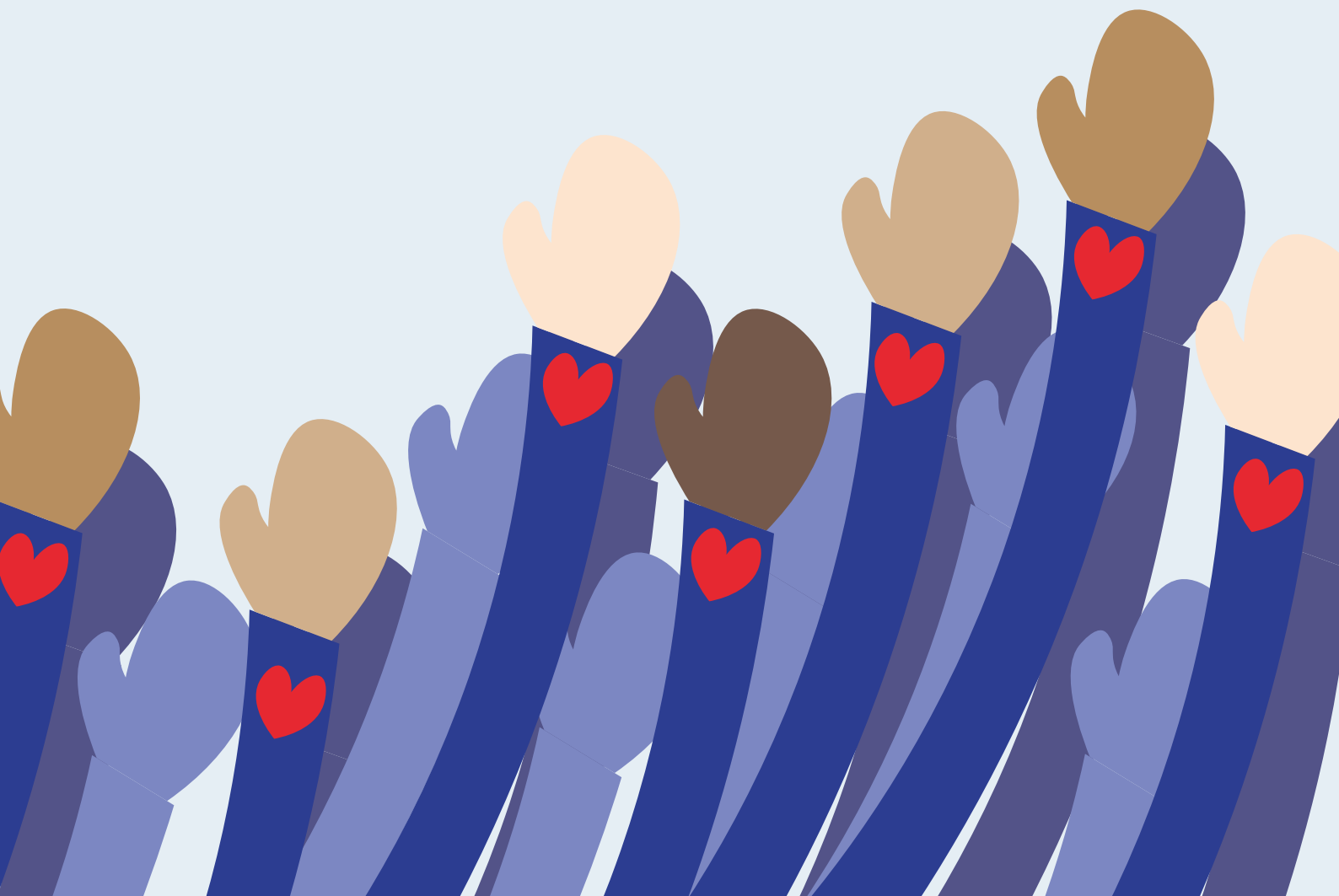


# Safe, seen and included

## Report on school-based sexuality education



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# Why we must empower all learners through inclusive comprehensive sexuality education

This report highlights the critical need for inclusive comprehensive sexuality education that embraces diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions to create a safe and inclusive learning environment for all learners. While progress has been made globally in promoting and implementing high-quality comprehensive sexuality education, there are still shortcomings in evidence-based curriculum and delivery, and discrimination based on sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions remains prevalent and harmful.

Through insightful analysis, case studies and exemplary practices from various countries, this report offers valuable recommendations to policy-makers, educators, and civil society groups. It emphasizes the significance of pre-service and in-service teacher training, as well as effective monitoring, to ensure the well-being of learners in all their diversity. By embracing these recommendations, we can unlock the gender-transformative power of education, fostering holistic development and providing a supportive space for all learners.



unesco

*"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed"*

# Safe, seen and included

Report on school-based sexuality education

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# Abbreviations and acronyms

<b>ARROW</b>	Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women
<b>BZgA</b>	<i>Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung</i> [Federal Centre for Health Education]
<b>CSE</b>	Comprehensive sexuality education
<b>ECLAC</b>	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>EPFSRR</b>	European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual & Reproductive Rights
<b>DBE</b>	Department of Basic Education
<b>EI</b>	Education International
<b>ESA</b>	East and Southern Africa
<b>GALE</b>	Global Alliance for LGBT Education
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GEM</b>	Global Education Monitoring
<b>HIV</b>	Human immunodeficiency virus
<b>IGLYO</b>	International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Intersex Youth and Student Organisation
<b>ILGA</b>	International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association
<b>IPPF</b>	International Planned Parenthood Federation
<b>ITGSE</b>	International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education
<b>LGBTIQ+</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer plus
<b>MOVILH</b>	<i>Movimiento de Integración y Liberación Homosexual</i> [Movement for Homosexual Integration and Liberation]
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>OFESI</b>	<i>Observatorio Federal de la Educación Sexual Integral</i> [Federal Observatory for CSE]
<b>RFSU</b>	<i>Riksförbundet för sexuell upplysning</i> [Swedish Association for Sexuality Education]

<b>RIE LGBTI</b>	<i>Red Iberoamericana de Educación LGBTI</i> [Iberoamerican LGBTI Education Network]
<b>SERAT</b>	Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual and gender-based violence
<b>SOGIE</b>	Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression
<b>SRHR</b>	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
<b>STI</b>	Sexually transmitted infection
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>UNAIDS</b>	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNGA</b>	United Nations General Assembly
<b>UNGEI</b>	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UPR</b>	Universal Periodic Review
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>YCSRR</b>	Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights



# Terminology and definitions

This section presents operational definitions of key terms used in the report.

## Comprehensive sexuality education – CSE

UNESCO, along with its UN partners, understands CSE as a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality (UNESCO et al., 2018). It aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to:

- ▶ realize their health, well-being and dignity
- ▶ develop respectful social and sexual relationships
- ▶ consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others
- ▶ understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.

Different countries use a range of different terms for education that covers some or all of the above topics (for example, Life Skills Education; Relationships and Sex Education; Health Education; etc.). Sexuality education may or may not be **comprehensive**, in the sense of covering the full range of topics that are important for all learners to know, including those that may be challenging in some social and cultural contexts. ‘Comprehensive’ also refers to the breadth and depth of topics and to content that is consistently delivered to learners over time, throughout their education, rather than a one-off lesson or intervention (UNESCO et al., 2018).

## Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression – SOGIE

**Sexual orientation** refers to each person’s capacity for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to (and intimate and sexual relations with) individuals of any sex (UNAIDS, 2015; UNESCO, 2016). Depending on the sex of the individual and those to whom they feel attracted, people may be heterosexual, homosexual (gay or lesbian), or bisexual. Other orientations such as pansexual, asexual, etc. also exist.

**Gender identity** refers to a person’s deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the gender socially ascribed

to their sex assigned at birth. It includes both the personal sense of the body – which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means – as well as other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms (UNAIDS, 2015).

Persons who identify with the gender socially attributed to persons of their sex are **cisgender**, while those who identify with the gender socially attributed to the opposite sex are **transgender**. Other concepts, such as gender-fluid, non-binary, gender non-conforming, and queer, are used by persons who do not necessarily identify with any gender in particular. The term **trans** is used to comprise the definitions of transgender, transsexual and transvestite, meaning persons who socially perform the gender socially associated to the sex different from the one assigned to them at birth, persons who transform their body to match the physical features of the sex different from the one assigned to them at birth and persons who occasionally dress as is socially expected from people of the sex different from the one assigned to them at birth. Trans is used in the report to comprise all non-cisgender identities.

For the purposes of this report, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression are included among the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality.

## Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer - LGBTIQ+

The acronym LGBTIQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer (see “Sex” for a definition of intersex). Other populations could be included in the acronym. However, LGBTIQ+ is one of the most common acronyms and it is used in this study to designate all populations who are potentially subject to discrimination based on real or perceived SOGIE, not necessarily only the ones represented by their initials. Note that variations of this acronym appear in the report where specific literature or other external documentation is being quoted.

## Gender

UN Women and UNESCO defines gender as “the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between

women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities” (UN Women and UNESCO, 2016).

### Sex

The term sex refers to biologically determined differences that are used to label individuals as males or females. The bases for this classification are reproductive organs and functions (UNAIDS, 2015). People who are born with sex characteristics (including sexual anatomy, reproductive organs, hormonal patterns and/or chromosomal patterns) that do not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies are intersex persons (OHCHR, 2019).

### Gender-based violence – GBV

For the purposes of this research, gender-based violence is defined as violence exerted by an individual against another in an unequal relationship of power, that is based merely on the sex and/or gender of the person who suffers the violence (violence against women and girls) or as a punishment for failing to perform the social behaviours expected from their sex, either in terms of sexual orientation or of gender identity. Gender-based violence and violence based on SOGIE may be used as equivalent in this research.

### Stigma and discrimination

Stigma associated with SOGIE is a social construct that attaches a negative connotation to non-conventional sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions. Discrimination based on SOGIE is the mistreatment of individuals who are LGBTIQ+ or are perceived to be, leading to a violation of their rights, typically including their right to equality.

Discrimination based on sexual orientation is known as **homophobia**, **lesbophobia** or **biphobia**. Discrimination based on gender identity is known as **transphobia**.

### Gender transformative education

Gender-transformative education “means challenging existing and biased/discriminatory policies, practices and programmes and affecting change for the betterment of life for all” (UNESCO, 2022). This may be an entry point for some countries to begin the discussion around SOGIE.

### Inclusive education

While the term ‘inclusive education’ is often interpreted in relation to children with disabilities or speakers of minority languages,<sup>1</sup> this report uses the term specifically in relation to inclusion of SOGIE aspects and meeting the needs of LGBTIQ+ learners as part of a wider definition of inclusive education. Indicators of inclusive education in this sense include learners’ reported feelings of safety at school, experiences of bullying based on actual or perceived SOGIE status, school drop-out, and the extent to which learners’ needs are addressed by education policies and learning materials (Richard & MAG Jeunes LGBT, 2018).

**Inclusive sexuality education** can be defined as “education that encompasses all forms of human sexuality, including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersexual, queer, non-binary, questioning, pansexual, polysexual, asexual, and many others” (Gegenfurtner & Gebhardt, 2017).

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, <https://www.unicef.org/education/inclusive-education>

# Executive summary

## INTRODUCTION

All children, adolescents and young people have the right to “inclusive and equitable quality education” (Sustainable Development Goal 4) that values and nurtures them. The curriculum should act as both a mirror and a window (Style, 1996), enabling learners to see themselves reflected and also granting them insights into experiences beyond their own. This is as true for comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) as for any other subject on the school timetable.

While there has been considerable progress globally on the development, endorsement and implementation of CSE in recent years, significant gaps remain (UNESCO et al., 2021). Among these is inclusion of evidence-based content relating to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), and delivery of CSE in ways that are inclusive of and relevant to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) learners.<sup>2</sup>

The primary and secondary research reflected in this report are grounded in and benefit greatly from a number of earlier pieces of work by United Nations (UN) agencies and others. Foremost among these is the UN *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education* (ITGSE); first published in 2009, it underwent a major revision and update in 2018 (UNESCO et al., 2018). Complementing the revised ITGSE has been the production of technical and programmatic guidance for non-formal, out-of-school CSE (UNFPA, 2020), specifically to reach those hitherto excluded or left behind. There has also been significant work on school bullying and violence, including that based on SOGIE (UNESCO, 2016, 2019a & 2020a), that underpins the work on SOGIE-inclusive CSE.

The new research set out in this report has been commissioned by UNESCO as part of its recognition of ongoing evidence gaps in relation to CSE (UNESCO et al., 2022) and its efforts to address the lack of provision that meets the specific CSE needs of particular groups of learners. LGBTIQ+ learners have been identified as one such group facing significant challenges in accessing CSE that is relevant to and inclusive of them. Alongside the question of whether and how the CSE needs and rights of LGBTIQ+ learners are being fulfilled is a desire

to understand the extent to which accurate, SOGIE-related CSE content is being provided for the benefit of all learners. The report seeks to fill some of the evidence gaps in these areas.

The report’s target audiences include policy-makers and ministries, civil society organizations, teachers, learners, UNESCO and its sister agencies, and others who seek to promote, or to understand more about, school-based sexuality education that is inclusive of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. The specific objectives of the research are the following:

- ▶ To identify and document countries where LGBTIQ+ inclusive sexuality education is being developed or delivered through formal school programmes
- ▶ To highlight different ways in which CSE programmes are including factual, respectful and non-stigmatizing information on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, as well as those which address the needs and rights of LGBTIQ+ learners
- ▶ To analyse the factors that contribute to or hinder success.

This report’s findings, conclusions and recommendations aim to contribute to ensuring that learners in all their diversity can feel safe, seen and included throughout their educational journeys.

### Methodology and conceptual framework

Throughout the process of this research, the consultants have been guided by a small advisory group in UNESCO’s Section for Health and Education. The research team’s data collection methods have consisted of literature review, 31 key informant interviews and review of national laws, policies, curricula and teaching materials, followed by inputs from key experts from all regions at a technical consultation to discuss the preliminary findings, in September 2022 in Cape Town, South Africa. Of particular interest was the process followed by certain countries to design, approve and implement the relevant policies, legal instruments and/or curricula, including key actors, drivers for success, barriers and outcomes at each stage. To the extent possible, country-level information was triangulated

<sup>2</sup> Please see pages 4-6 for operational definitions of these and other terms used in this report.

by interviewing representatives of civil society and UN bodies as well as government, also taking into account the information available through the literature and document reviews, including curricula, policies and teaching materials.

The conceptual framework was developed based on the evidence review, the precedent of gender analysis (e.g. distinguishing between 'gender-blind', 'gender-sensitive' and 'gender-transformative' approaches) and reference to the concepts and key ideas set out in the ITGSE. The framework sets out three main categories of SOGIE inclusiveness:

- ▶ **SOGIE-protective.** CSE policies, curricula and programmes fall under this category when they include discussions around equality, equal respect of the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people, and preventing/addressing discrimination and violence based on SOGIE.
- ▶ **SOGIE-sensitive.** In this category, SOGIE is made visible as an integral part of content related to sexuality and gender. CSE policies, curricula and programmes include discussions around gender norms, how sexual orientation and gender identity are treated in those norms and how norms should be challenged when harmful.
- ▶ **SOGIE-transformative.** This category means that non-conventional SOGIE is normalized. To receive this designation, policies, curricula and programmes should include and promote discussions around SOGIE in other areas of CSE, such as relationships, skills for health and well-being, development of the human body and sexual and reproductive health.

As a short-hand, these three categories of SOGIE-protective, SOGIE-sensitive and SOGIE-transformative correspond in turn to measures that enable LGBTIQ+ learners to feel **safe**, both physically and emotionally; to feel **seen**, with the realities of their lives reflected in the curriculum and school environment; and to feel **included** as a full and equal part of the school community.

## Findings

Five main themes emerged from the literature review and consultations:

- 1 *SOGIE-based discrimination in schools, system-wide and in relation to CSE provision in particular:* It is clear that in schools and other educational

settings around the world, pervasive stigma, discrimination, bullying and violence on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression continue to exist. Both the persistence and the damaging effects of these phenomena are widely documented. The "toxic impact" includes detriments to learners' educational participation, performance and completion, their physical and mental health, and their long-term employment and economic prospects, in addition to undermining broader societal cohesion (UNESCO Bangkok, 2015b). It should be noted that while there are many shared challenges and rights violations affecting LGBTIQ+ learners, there are also aspects that may differ, for example for those who are trans, intersex or non-binary. SOGIE based discrimination often intersects with discrimination based on other determinants, such as race, class, religion, among others, that affect LGBTIQ+ learners as well as other learners. When it comes to sexuality education specifically, there is a clear lack of inclusive and differentiated provision. In a global survey of over 21,000 young people identifying as LGBTI+ aged between 12 and 26 years, in 108 countries, a majority of respondents (59%) felt that their needs as LGBTI+ persons were "never" addressed by education or school policies, increasing to 61% in relation to having their needs as a LGBTI+ person addressed in the curriculum or learning materials (Richard & MAG Jeunes LGBT, 2018).

- 2 *Evidence of the benefits of inclusive CSE, for all learners, in all their diversity:* SOGIE-inclusive CSE is not merely about 'avoiding a negative'; it is important to highlight the positive evidence about the benefits of inclusion. Equally importantly, these benefits accrue not only to LGBTIQ+ learners themselves, but to all learners and the wider school community. Stonewall's 2017 survey of over 3,700 LGBT pupils aged 11-19 across Britain found that in schools where pupils were taught about SOGIE issues, LGBTIQ+ pupils were less likely to experience homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, and more likely to report feeling safe, welcome and happy at school. In a systematic review of three decades of research on school-based sexuality education programmes, Goldfarb & Lieberman (2020) identify benefits including appreciation of sexual diversity, prevention of intimate partner violence, development of healthy relationships, reduction in homophobic bullying, improved social/emotional learning, and increased media literacy. The review also emphasizes that early grades are

the best time to introduce the topics of sexual orientation, gender equality and social justice, and that sex education is most effective when begun early, before sexual activity starts.

- 3 *Global progress in inclusion:* Despite the many ongoing gaps and shortcomings, there is growing evidence of progress on SOGIE inclusion in CSE. However, such progress is neither linear nor permanent. Even where inclusive policies and curricula have been developed, endorsed and approved, they may be unevenly implemented and are subject to reversal; gains made cannot be taken for granted. Rather, they must be defended if they are to survive changes of government, shifts in prevailing ideology or simply attrition due to lack of continued active support and resourcing. A common feature of countries where there has been progress in SOGIE-inclusive CSE is collaboration and partnership (sometimes after sustained advocacy) between civil society organizations representing LGBTIQ+ people and Ministries of Education. There are varying approaches to SOGIE inclusion taken at country level. At a minimum, learners in all their diversity should be protected, both in an overall school environment that is safe, and through a CSE curriculum that recognises the rights of all children and young people. More advanced CSE curricula (and whole school/education approaches) systematically build in SOGIE visibility and ultimately normalize the existence of a diversity of sexual orientations, gender identities and ways to express them. Examples of SOGIE-protective, SOGIE-sensitive and SOGIE-transformative approaches are provided from a range of countries and regions. Even where a SOGIE-transformative curriculum has been developed and implemented, the education sector cannot 'rest on its laurels'. Ongoing adaptation in the light of changing circumstances, new evidence and evolving consensus on good practice is required.
- 4 *Opposition and backlash:* For decades, far-right and religious extremist movements have been campaigning against sexuality education, despite the international recognition of inclusive education as a fundamental right. Their strategies have evolved over time, and may be grouped into three areas: mass mobilization, law-making and occupation of decision-making spaces (Datta, 2018). Opposition to sexuality education has been part of a broader anti-gender campaign, involving also sexual and reproductive rights and rights related to SOGIE

(EPFSRR, 2021). Some educational systems have been banned from discussing SOGIE-related issues with learners by the criminalization of such discussion (UNGA, 2019). While CSE-opposing groups are more active and visible in some countries than in others, evidence suggests that an international common agenda and coordination exist, promoting similar objectives and using similar patterns of advocacy in multiple countries. However, when CSE programmes or SOGIE-inclusive education programmes are introduced with community engagement and involvement, it has been seen that the programme captures 'hearts and minds'.

- 5 *Quality of implementation:* While some components of CSE that are delivered via mainstream subjects, e.g. Biology, may be included in examination syllabi, generally CSE is not an examinable subject. Accordingly, it is often side-lined or excluded from school inspections and teaching assessments, pushing it down the list of priorities for education officials, school managers and teachers themselves. Both teacher preparation and the monitoring of delivery are fundamental to future progress and sustainability of SOGIE-inclusive CSE. The lack of adequate training for teachers on SOGIE concepts and how to implement inclusive CSE emerged repeatedly both in key informant interviews and in the literature review. Nonetheless, good practice in teacher preparation also exists. It is important to remember the challenges faced by teachers and other school staff who may undergo harassment, exploitation and violence themselves based on their own actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. SOGIE-inclusive policies and curricula also benefit staff. It is often the case that monitoring of the implementation of CSE, including SOGIE-related issues, is weak and CSE is seldom subject to inspection by the authorities. The role of external actors in implementation is also a crucial factor to consider. While positive partnerships with LGBTIQ+ organizations have helped to raise the quality and effectiveness of CSE curriculum development and delivery in a number of countries, other actors may bring a very different agenda.

Findings are illustrated throughout with country case studies, featuring Argentina, Austria, Cambodia, Chile, Mongolia, Namibia, the Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden and Uruguay.

## Conclusions

Overall, we find a mixed picture of both progress and pushback on school-based SOGIE-inclusive CSE in all regions. Schools do not operate in isolation; their ability – within and beyond CSE – to address issues of sexual orientation and gender identity or to acknowledge SOGIE-related equality is shaped by prevailing national laws and societal norms. What this looks like will be different in each country and region. There are, however, common factors that can help to support and sustain progress towards inclusion, whatever the starting point or context. We have identified implications for policy and programming in three main areas: drivers and opportunities for SOGIE-inclusive CSE; strategies for overcoming barriers; and sustaining inclusion and relevance over time.

### ► Drivers and opportunities for SOGIE-inclusive CSE

- International and regional commitments and accountability processes
- Production and promotion of technical guidance (e.g. ITGSE, WHO European Standards) and the availability of related support
- The sustained work of LGBTIQ+ communities, organizations and networks – often in challenging and even hostile and risky circumstances – to press for accountability, and their technical expertise in contributing to the development and delivery of SOGIE-inclusive curricula
- A favourable legal environment that addresses discrimination on SOGIE grounds
- High-level political leadership and ‘champions’ in key positions
- Awareness-raising to create favourable public opinion
- The establishment of broad coalitions that bring together government, academia, teacher training institutions, media/opinion leaders, LGBTIQ+ organizations and other relevant civil society partners, including those representing young people
- Collection of up-to-date, accurate data about SOGIE-related attitudes and learners’ experiences to create a solid evidence base for inclusive policies, curricula and programmes.

### ► Strategies for overcoming barriers

- Partnerships between government and civil society organizations representing LGBTIQ+ people (particularly young people)
- A sustained and incremental advocacy process to communicate with, reassure and build the understanding of key stakeholders
- Partnership with and use of media (both ‘official’ media and social media) and key influencers, to inform and shape public opinion and contribute to better understanding and acceptance of the value of CSE, gender equality and LGBTIQ+ inclusiveness
- The use of evidence, and relevant technical standards and guidance, to justify/defend inclusive policies and curricula
- Promotion of favourable legislation that protects the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons, and use of national laws/policies to give legal backing to SOGIE-inclusive CSE in schools
- The use of appropriate national accountability and follow-up mechanisms for regional and international commitments that support inclusive CSE
- Development and promotion of SOGIE-inclusive CSE resource materials for all levels of education, to support teachers to put policies into practice in the classroom
- Training for teachers, school management and other staff, both pre-service and in-service, that provides the opportunity to reflect on values and attitudes
- Mutual learning between countries on challenges faced and lessons learnt (while acknowledging the specificity of each context and the need to adapt accordingly).

### ► Sustaining inclusion and relevance over time

- Ongoing research, data collection, monitoring and evaluation to maintain an evidence-led approach that is responsive to new information.
- Mechanisms to deal with underperformance or non-compliance with inclusion measures
- Development and deployment of appropriate communication and advocacy strategies to ‘bring the public with you’ as approaches evolve
- Investing in capacity strengthening of teachers
- Partnership with, but not over-reliance on, civil society.

## Recommendations

Together, policy-makers, ministries, civil society, schools, teachers, learners, UNESCO, other UN bodies and researchers all have a vital role to play in advancing SOGIE-inclusive CSE. The well-being of learners in all their diversity depends on it.

### ► Policy-makers and ministries:

- Use the conceptual framework presented in this report as a guide for assessing provision, both within sexuality education and more broadly, asking yourselves how you are ensuring that LGBTIQ+ learners are **safe**, both physically and emotionally; that they are **seen**, with the realities of their lives reflected in the curriculum and school environment; and that they are **included** as a full and equal part of the school community.
- Build a broad-based coalition that includes all relevant stakeholders, opening the space to civil society organizations and LGBTIQ+ youth groups.
- Guarantee that CSOs and community groups have access to the resources needed for meaningful participation in decision-making spaces.
- Invest in teachers' professional development to improve their skills, confidence and effectiveness in SOGIE-inclusive CSE, accompanied by investment in good data collection to monitor implementation, delivery and impact.

### ► Civil society:

- Where the environment is suitable, act as a bridge between government processes and LGBTIQ+ populations; seek out opportunities to partner with education providers (in and out of school) to design and deliver inclusive CSE curricula, and to monitor and evaluate impact on learners.
- Apply pressure through advocacy and hold governments to account for their commitments to CSE, inclusive and equitable quality education, and young people's SRHR.
- Participate in the adaptation of the SOGIE inclusive CSE programmes to the evolving environment.
- For organizations that are not youth-led, ensure that the voices, priorities and lived experiences of young LGBTIQ+ learners are at the forefront of SOGIE inclusion.

Promote partnerships between institutions and community groups, especially youth-led organization, to monitor the implementation of SOGIE inclusive CSE and the evolution of the context.

### ► Schools and teachers:

- For school management and staff – including not only teachers but also support staff, school nurses, etc. – the process of building inclusion involves improving your own awareness and understanding, and reflecting on your personal beliefs and values around gender, diversity, equality and other SOGIE-related themes.
- School leadership and governing bodies set the tone for inclusion, through their own behaviour and use of language as well as through institutional policies, provision of and support for relevant training, and codes of conduct for staff and learners, as well as through prevention of and reaction to backlash.
- Schools need to allocate specific resources to the delivery of SOGIE inclusive CSE and include LGBTIQ+ learners in the process.
- Transparent and accessible systems for redress, in cases of bullying, violence or discrimination on SOGIE grounds, are important.
- Good links with LGBTIQ+ organizations, support networks and sources of reliable information, along with clear referral pathways to external adolescent- and youth-friendly services, will further bolster your school's inclusion efforts.

### ► Learners:

- Learners in all their diversity can use the conceptual framework to identify priorities for action, by asking the following: What information and support do I need to feel **safe**, both physically and emotionally? What information and support do I need to feel **seen**, with the realities of my life reflected in the curriculum and school environment? What information and support do I need to feel **included** as a full and equal part of the school community?
- Peer support for others is also vital. Therefore an additional question for learners could be: How can I contribute to helping my fellow learners feel safe, seen and included?

► **UNESCO, other UN bodies and donors:**

- Further consultation and analysis are needed to enrich and extend this report. UNESCO and sister agencies can leverage their unique abilities to convene relevant expertise and to support platforms for mutual learning, open and frank discussions around conflicting arguments and lesson-sharing and experience exchange, securing the funds necessary for the process.
- Engage with young LGBTIQ+ learners, through organizations such as IGLYO and youth representatives of national LGBTIQ+ networks. Involving them in identifying how to incorporate SOGIE components throughout all 8 key concepts of the ITGSE would pay valuable dividends. Their perspectives on how teachers, schools and education systems can overcome barriers to inclusive CSE are also essential.
- Consultation with ministries and sector experts will help to flesh out what specific actions and investments are needed to put recommendations into practice. Support for the design and implementation of monitoring mechanisms and information systems, and dissemination of the data and analyses that are gathered and produced, will greatly strengthen countries' ability to track and improve the provision of school-based SOGIE-inclusive CSE.



# 1. Introduction

*“I needed to know if he would be physically and emotionally safe; feel welcomed, respected, and fully embraced; and be able to focus on learning.” – Parent of transgender learner (Slesaransky-Poe et al., 2013)*

All children, adolescents, and young people have the right to “inclusive and equitable quality education” (Sustainable Development Goal 4) that values and nurtures them. The curriculum should act as both a mirror and a window (Style, 1996), enabling learners to see themselves reflected and also granting them insights into experiences beyond their own. This is as true for comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) as for any other subject on the school timetable.

While there has been considerable progress globally on the development, endorsement and implementation of CSE in recent years, significant gaps remain (UNESCO et al., 2021). Among these is inclusion of evidence-based content relating to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), and delivery of CSE in ways that are inclusive of and relevant to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) learners.<sup>3</sup>

Sexuality education’s treatment of SOGIE-related diversity – when it has treated the topic at all – has often used a negative lens, focusing on ‘problems’ such as human rights violations, discrimination, STIs, HIV and others. CSE programmes are evolving towards discussions around sexuality and pleasure in a much more positive way, making sure that learners can recognize and acknowledge that sexuality is varied and pleasurable, and creating an environment that facilitates reflection on issues of respect, consent, pleasure, safety and health in ways that are relevant to all learners’ lives.

This report presents an assessment of current SOGIE inclusiveness in CSE, based on extensive literature review and consultation. Its findings, conclusions and recommendations aim to contribute to ensuring that learners in all their diversity can feel safe, seen, and included throughout their educational journeys.

## 1.1 Background and context

Sexuality education occupies a crucial position “at the crossroads of education and health” (Richard & MAG Jeunes LGBT, 2018). As underlined by the recent *Global Status Report* (UNESCO et al., 2021), CSE is central to children’s and young people’s well-being, equipping them with the knowledge and skills they need to make healthy and responsible choices in their lives.

While the great majority of countries have policies or laws relating to sexuality education, particularly at secondary education level, policy and legal frameworks do not always equate to comprehensive content or strong implementation. Analysis of national CSE curricula suggests that they often lack the breadth of topics needed to make sexuality education effective and relevant. Many teachers lack confidence to deliver sexuality education, leading to learners receiving information too late or not at all. Despite opposition to CSE across a range of settings, often reflecting misinformation about the content, purpose or impact of such education, the involvement of communities, including parents, school officials, religious leaders, media and young people themselves, has created a favourable environment for CSE in many countries (UNESCO et al., 2021).

For sexuality education to be considered genuinely comprehensive, it must use a “human-rights based and inclusive approach that challenges stigma and discrimination and addresses the specific SRHR [sexual and reproductive health and rights] needs of excluded children, adolescents and youth (including sexual minorities, those who are living with HIV or with disabilities, etc.)”; conversely, it would **not** qualify as comprehensive if “inaccurate, discriminatory, and/or harmful messages are delivered, for example about people with different sexual orientations” (Parry, 2016).

Nevertheless, successive evidence reviews (e.g. UNESCO, 2015; UNESCO et al., 2022) have identified major gaps in the inclusion of accurate SOGIE-related content in CSE curricula, and failure to meet the needs of LGBTIQ+ learners in most countries. Curricula rarely acknowledge the specific SRH needs and rights of young people living with HIV, young people with disabilities or young gay, lesbian and transgender people, especially as they reach puberty (UNESCO, 2015). It is clear from the recent SIECUS report and call to action (SIECUS et al., 2021) that inclusive sexuality education is rare. Indeed, in a global

<sup>3</sup> Please see pages 4-6 for operational definitions of these and other terms used in this report.

survey of young people on CSE, those participants who identified as queer, trans and sexually diverse unanimously rated their in-school sexual education experiences as a 1 out of 5, the lowest available rating, equating to “abysmal” (YCSRR & IYAFP Canada, 2021).

This is despite findings that, far from school children suffering from participation in inclusive sexuality education, “on the contrary, on the basis of the reviewed evidence, there are good reasons to expect that the educational benefits will be overwhelmingly positive, particularly for at-risk learners belonging to a sexual minority” (Gegenfurtner & Gebhardt, 2017). SOGIE-inclusive CSE supports self-esteem and enables all children to understand their right to their own sexual orientation and gender identity as they define it (Alliance pour une Éducation Sexuelle, 2017).

The Global Alliance for LGBT Education (GALE) monitors how the right to education is implemented by states (Dankmeijer, 2017), focusing on the key components of access to schools, the right to a good curriculum and the right to a good teacher. Under “access to schools” GALE includes the right to a safe school environment that supports self-expression and identity development. The “right to a good curriculum” includes rights to relevant and positive information and support, through both the formal curriculum and informal learning (peer learning and support), while the “right to a good teacher” includes rights focusing on how teachers should be competent and supportive, both individually and as a team.

The *2019 Cali Commitment to Equity and Inclusion in Education* defines inclusion as “a transformative process that ensures full participation and access to quality learning opportunities for all children, young people and adults, respecting and valuing diversity, and eliminating all forms of discrimination in and through education” and “a commitment to making preschools, schools, and other education settings, places in which everyone is valued and belongs, and diversity is seen as enriching.” There is also recognition that inclusive education must tackle intersecting drivers of exclusion beyond gender and sexuality, including disability, migrant and refugee status, violence and displacement, ethnicity and health status (UNESCO, 2019b).

The *Yogyakarta Principles (2007) on the application of international human rights law to sexual orientation and gender*, adopted in 2006, include as Principle 16: “Everyone has the right to education, without discrimination on the basis of, and taking into account,

their sexual orientation and gender identity.” Ten years later, the YP+10 addendum (Yogyakarta Principles, 2017) set out additional principles and state obligations:

“STATES SHALL: Ensure inclusion of comprehensive, affirmative and accurate material on sexual, biological, physical and psychological diversity, and the human rights of people of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics, in curricula, taking into consideration the evolving capacity of the child.”

In recent years, there has been some evidence of increased political support for inclusive and rights-based CSE, though there is considerable variation between and within regions (see section 3.3 on Global progress in SOGIE inclusion). As highlighted by ECLAC (2019), a common problem affecting CSE is the lack of systematic evaluation to gauge the gap between the theory and the classroom reality or to evaluate compliance with syllabus goals. This is consistent with global evidence that shows a major gap between CSE policy and implementation (UNESCO et al., 2021). In fact, according to Rutgers (2018), CSE is often not monitored or evaluated at all owing to a lack of appropriate methods, expertise or assigned budget to do so. This makes it extremely difficult to assess the extent to which CSE is regulated or implemented in countries, let alone issues of coverage, quality, inclusion and impact.

An important part of the context for inclusive CSE is the collective action and activism of young people. For example, the Joint Youth Statement on the 2021 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS states, “As young people, we want to make clear that we do not believe the language in the 2021 Political Declaration goes far enough; there must be commitments made... to fully repeal any laws that criminalize LGBTQI+ people” (Youth Working Group for the High-Level Meeting, 2021). Also in 2021, the Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (YCSRR), in conjunction with Generation Equality action coalitions in Mexico City and Paris, set up the #YouthForCSE digital advocacy campaign and panels to centre young people’s voices in the discourse around CSE, talking about what CSE means to them, why they think it is necessary and their demands to decision-makers.

A crucial part of this wider youth movement has been the increased mobilization of young LGBTIQ+ people themselves, whose specific needs and issues were often not taken into consideration by LGBTIQ+ organizations in the past. There are now national, regional and global youth LGBTIQ+ organizations and networks who advocate for their rights, including in relation to education and health.<sup>4</sup> There are also specific LGBTIQ+ youth-focused initiatives, such as Stonewall's campaign #HearQueerYouth, that centre young people's voices in advocating for inclusive education.<sup>5</sup>

## 1.2 Building on previous initiatives

*"The ITGSE was a turning point for us."*  
– Key informant, South Africa

The primary and secondary research reflected in this report are grounded in and benefit greatly from a number of earlier pieces of work by United Nations (UN) agencies and others. Foremost among these is the UN *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education* (ITGSE); first published in 2009, it underwent a major revision and update in 2018, to take account of more recent evidence and lessons learned from the implementation of CSE in a range of settings (UNESCO et al., 2018). The ITGSE provides detailed guidance, including topics, key ideas and differentiated learning objectives for ages 5 to 18+, a number of which make reference to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (see section 2.2 for details).

To support countries in implementing the updated ITGSE and applying the guidance at national level, the Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool (SERAT) has also been revised (UNESCO, 2020b). SERAT includes some components relating to SOGIE inclusiveness and protection. For example, under Curriculum Development, it includes consultation with experts on human sexuality, while under Programme Objectives, it includes "respecting human rights, gender equality and diversity." To assess the overall environment, the tool asks about both "prohibitive laws" that criminalize same sex relations, and "protective laws" covering sexual orientation, gender identity and key populations.

Complementing the revised ITGSE has been the production of technical and programmatic guidance for non-formal, out-of-school CSE (UNFPA, 2020), specifically to reach those hitherto excluded or left behind. Because many among these groups are not in school, and those who do attend school may not receive CSE, out-of-school programmes can help fill the gaps and effectively address their needs. Notably, the UN guidance on delivering out-of-school CSE to specific groups of young people includes three sections relating to SOGIE, focusing respectively on young lesbian, gay and bisexual people, and other young men who have sex with men; young transgender people; and young intersex people. While the emphasis of our report is on the formal education sector, a number of the case studies of good practice that are featured throughout the document demonstrate that links between in-school and out-of-school provision, and between government and relevant civil society organizations, are an important route to achieving CSE quality and uptake.

There has also been significant work on school bullying and violence, including that based on SOGIE (UNESCO, 2016, 2019a & 2020a), that underpins the work on SOGIE-inclusive CSE. UNESCO's efforts in this area began in 2011, when it convened the first-ever UN international consultation to address homophobic bullying in educational institutions (UNESCO, 2012). In addition to providing technical guidance to Member States, UNESCO has also supported political commitment to combating homophobia and transphobia in schools. In 2016, UNESCO organized an international ministerial meeting to catalyze responses by Member States to homophobic and transphobic violence. A group of countries present at the meeting also affirmed a "Call for Action by Ministers" expressing their political commitment to ensuring inclusive and equitable education for all learners in an environment free from discrimination and violence, including discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.<sup>6</sup>

Work on SOGIE-related bullying and violence has taken place at regional as well as global level. For example, Minimum Standards to Combat Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying (IGLYO, 2014) were launched at the European Parliament. UNESCO Santiago (2015) commissioned a comprehensive report on homophobic and transphobic violence in school settings in

4 See, for example, <https://www.youthleadap.org/> in Asia Pacific and <https://www.iglyo.com/> in Europe.

5 See <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/campaign-lgbtq-inclusive-education-hearqueeryouth>

6 See <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246247>

Latin America; its findings on the prevalence of such violence were reinforced by country-level research on discrimination against LGBTIQ+ persons in educational settings, e.g. in Mexico (Comisión Ejecutivo de Atención a Víctimas, 2018). A report on CSE in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNESCO Santiago, 2017) found that while the topic of discrimination and its harmful effects is usually present in most CSE curricula in the region, the issue of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity is “almost always ignored.” In the Southern Africa sub-region, research has been undertaken – and in some cases, resources developed – to document and address homophobic bullying in schools, e.g. in South Africa (Reygan, 2016; Brown & Buthelezi, 2020; DBE, undated) and Namibia (Brown, 2017).

### 1.3 Purpose and objectives

The new research set out in this report has been commissioned by UNESCO as part of its recognition of ongoing evidence gaps in relation to CSE (UNESCO et al., 2022) and its efforts to address the lack of provision that meets the specific CSE needs of particular groups of learners.<sup>7</sup> LGBTIQ+ learners have been identified as one such group facing significant challenges in accessing CSE that is relevant to and inclusive of them. Alongside the question of whether and how the CSE needs and rights of LGBTIQ+ learners are being fulfilled is a desire to understand the extent to which accurate, SOGIE-related CSE content is being provided for the benefit of all learners. The report seeks to fill some of the evidence gaps in these areas.

The report’s target audiences include policy-makers and ministries, civil society organizations, teachers, learners, UNESCO and its sister agencies, and others who seek to promote, or to understand more about, school-based sexuality education that is inclusive of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.

The specific objectives of the research are the following:

- ▶ To identify and document countries where LGBTIQ+ inclusive sexuality education is being developed or delivered through formal school programmes
- ▶ To highlight different ways in which CSE programmes are including factual, respectful and non-stigmatizing information on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, as well as those which address the needs and rights of LGBTIQ+ learners

- ▶ To analyse the factors that contribute to or hinder success.

It is important to stress that the report is **not** an attempt to rank countries or create a global ‘league table’; rather, it seeks to highlight a range of examples from diverse countries and regions to illustrate both progress and remaining challenges in the development and implementation of SOGIE-inclusive CSE policies and curricula.

## 2. Methodology and conceptual framework

### 2.1 Methodology

Throughout the process of this research, the consultants were guided by a small advisory group in UNESCO’s Section for Health and Education. The research team’s data collection methods consisted of literature review, key informant interviews and review of national laws, policies, curricula and teaching materials, followed by a technical consultation with key experts from all regions to discuss the preliminary findings.

With the support of the advisory group, an initial round of global and regional contacts helped to identify countries across different geographical regions in which SOGIE-related issues were known to be included in school-based CSE, and/or countries that have succeeded in developing and implementing CSE policies or programmes inclusive of LGBTIQ+ learners and respectful of their rights.

Concurrently, the literature review included a wide range of peer-reviewed literature from academic journals, along with ‘grey’ literature produced by civil society organizations, UN bodies and others. A “snowball approach” was used, whereby bibliographies in the articles retrieved in the initial search were scanned for additional sources, while key experts were also asked to submit or suggest further relevant documentation. Materials available in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese were reviewed in the original, while relevant documents in other languages were translated by UNESCO.<sup>8</sup>

Semi-structured interviews were conducted, in either English or Spanish as appropriate, with 31 global, regional and national key informants between March and May 2022 (see Annex 1 for the interview

<sup>7</sup> For example, previous work has focused on adolescents and young people living with HIV (UNESCO, 2021) and learners with disabilities (UNESCO Harare, 2021).

<sup>8</sup> Note that these were unofficial translations, purely to enable access to the material.

guide and Annex 2 for the list of those consulted). At national level, individual interviews were held with key stakeholders to collect qualitative information to provide a context to the policies or curricula identified and build understanding of the drivers of inclusive and successful CSE programmes. Informants included staff of multilateral and intergovernmental bodies, government officials, academics and representatives of national, regional and international civil society, including LGBTIQ+ networks and organizations.

Of particular interest was the process followed by certain countries to design, approve and implement the relevant policies, legal instruments and/or curricula, including key actors, drivers for success, barriers and outcomes at each stage. To the extent possible, country-level information was triangulated by interviewing representatives of civil society and UN bodies as well as government, also taking into account the information available through the literature and document reviews, including curricula, policies and teaching materials. Where possible, laws or other legal instruments providing legal foundation for the policies (or relevant to the wider enabling environment) were also identified and examined.

While the primary focus was on official policies and provision, the team recognized the central importance of the voices and perspectives of learners and teachers themselves. Efforts were therefore made to include and reflect these, e.g. by drawing from both the peer-reviewed and grey literature. This is an area of investigation that can and should be expanded and prioritized (see recommendations for UNESCO and areas for future research, sections 5.5 and 5.6).

Analysis was carried out independently and then jointly by the consultants, drawing out a series of themes and cross-checking that these corresponded with the findings. Draft country case studies were sent to the relevant key informants for review. Report drafts were revised based on the feedback of the UNESCO advisory group and selected additional colleagues.

A technical consultation was held in Cape Town, South Africa, from 27 to 29 September 2022, with participation of over 30 experts from academia, ministries of education, civil society organizations and community groups and international agencies (see Annexes 3 and 4 for the agenda and list of participants). The aims of the consultation were to promote dialogue around the issue of SOGIE-inclusive CSE, to discuss the preliminary findings of the research and to feed into the final version and explore entry points and how

LGBTIQ inclusive sexuality education can be supported by policy commitments and strengthened curricula. This document incorporates feedback and additional information provided during the consultation.

It is important to note the limitations to this research:

- ▶ In a number of cases, despite the research team's best efforts, it was not possible to access all relevant national policy or curriculum documentation during the research period.
- ▶ Even where the materials (or a sample or summary of them) were available, it was not possible to gauge the degree, extent or effectiveness of their implementation beyond what emerged from the key informant interviews.
- ▶ Information reported to us is presented in good faith, but it should be noted that this information has not been independently verified (e.g. through evaluation reports) except where indicated.

While not a limitation as such, it should also be noted that countries that produce more in-depth information and documentation on their CSE provision are more likely to reveal gaps and shortcomings, which is a positive part of the learning process. On the principle that 'absence of evidence is not evidence of absence,' it should not be assumed that similar (or other) problems or challenges do not exist elsewhere.

## 2.2 Conceptual framework for SOGIE inclusiveness

The conceptual framework presented below was developed based on the evidence review, the precedent of gender analysis (e.g. distinguishing between 'gender-blind', 'gender-sensitive' and 'gender-transformative' approaches) and reference to the concepts and key ideas set out in the ITGSE. The latter uses evidence on behaviour and practical experience change, as well as expert recommendations and national and regional sexuality education frameworks, to provide a comprehensive set of key concepts, topics and illustrative learning objectives to guide development of locally adapted curricula for learners aged 5 to 18+.

The ITGSE establishes **8 key concepts**, each of which includes topics, learning objectives and key ideas, that quality CSE policies and programmes are expected to cover. Some of these (highlighted in green below) either make direct reference to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, or provide the opportunity to explore concepts such as 'difference' or 'laws' which could include SOGIE-related topics:

## 1. Relationships

- 1.1 Families
- 1.2 Friendship, Love and Romantic Relationships
- 1.3 Tolerance, Inclusion and Respect

**Key ideas: “Stigma and discrimination are harmful” and “Stigma and discrimination on the grounds of differences are disrespectful, harmful to well-being, and a violation of human rights.”**

- 1.4 Long-term Commitments and Parenting

**Key idea: “There are many factors that influence if, why, and when people decide to have children.”**

## 2. Values, Rights, Culture and Sexuality

- 2.1 Values and Sexuality
- 2.2 Human Rights and Sexuality

**Key idea: “There are local and/or national laws and international agreements that address human rights that impact sexual and reproductive health.”**

- 2.3 Culture, Society and Sexuality

## 3. Understanding Gender

- 3.1 The Social Construction of Gender and Gender Norms

**Key ideas: “It is important to challenge one’s own and others’ gender biases” and “Homophobia and transphobia are harmful to people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity”**

- 3.2 Gender Equality, Stereotypes and Bias

**Key idea: “Gender stereotypes and bias impact how men, women, and people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity are treated and the choices they can make.”**

- 3.3 Gender-based Violence

## 4. Violence and Staying Safe

- 4.1 Violence
- 4.2 Consent, Privacy and Bodily Integrity
- 4.3 Safe Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

## 5. Skills for Health and Well-being

- 5.1 Norms and Peer Influence on Sexual Behaviour
- 5.2 Decision-making
- 5.3 Communication, Refusal and Negotiation Skills
- 5.4 Media Literacy and Sexuality
- 5.5 Finding Help and Support

## 6. The Human Body and Development

- 6.1 Sexual and Reproductive Anatomy and Physiology
- 6.2 Reproduction
- 6.3 Puberty
- 6.4 Body Image

## 7. Sexuality and Sexual Behaviour

- 7.1 Sex, Sexuality and the Sexual Life Cycle
- 7.2 Sexual Behaviour and Sexual Response

## 8. Sexual and Reproductive Health

- 8.1 Pregnancy and Pregnancy Prevention

**Key idea: “Young people who are sexually active and could benefit from contraception should be able to access it without significant barriers, regardless of ability, marital status, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation.”**

- 8.2 HIV and AIDS Stigma, Care, Treatment and Support
- 8.3 Understanding, Recognizing and Reducing the Risk of STIs, including HIV.

However, even where not explicitly stated, there are sound reasons to support the inclusion of SOGIE-related issues in the rest of the key concepts recommended for delivery of fully comprehensive sexuality education:

- ▶ The definition of “sexuality” in the framework of CSE, according to the ITGSE, includes sexual orientation and gender identity, along with sex, gender, sexual intimacy, pleasure and reproduction.<sup>9</sup>
- ▶ The ITGSE also states that “it is important that CSE includes ongoing discussions about social

and cultural factors relating to broader aspects of relationships and vulnerability, such as gender and power inequalities, socio-economic factors, race, HIV status, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity.”

- ▶ The ITGSE recognizes that sexual orientation and gender identity are among the factors that affect learners’ sexual and reproductive health, their access to education and life opportunities and their general well-being.

The conceptual framework developed for the purposes of this report therefore sets out three main categories of SOGIE inclusiveness:



**SOGIE-protective.** CSE policies, curricula and programmes fall under this category when they include discussions around equality, equal respect of the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people, and preventing/addressing discrimination and violence based on SOGIE. In order to qualify for this category, the CSE instruments should include the following topics, which would fit within the key concepts “Values, Rights, Culture and Sexuality” and “Violence and Staying Safe”:

- Social and institutional discrimination based on SOGIE, and international and national legislation protecting LGBTIQ+ populations from discrimination
- Inclusion and respect towards LGBTIQ+ persons in the private arena
- SOGIE-based discrimination and violence as harmful to well-being and a violation of rights.



**SOGIE-sensitive.** In this category, SOGIE is made visible as an integral part of content related to sexuality and gender. CSE policies, curricula and programmes include discussions around gender norms, how sexual orientation and gender identity are treated in those norms and how norms should be challenged when harmful.

- SOGIE in the context of social construction of gender, gender norms, stereotypes and bias
- LGBTIQ+ persons in the discussions on sex, sexuality, sexual behaviour and sexual response
- SOGIE in sexual and reproductive health.



**SOGIE-transformative.** This category means that non-conventional SOGIE is normalized. To receive this designation, policies, curricula and programmes should include and promote discussions around SOGIE in other areas of CSE, such as relationships, skills for health and well-being, development of the human body and sexual and reproductive health.

- SOGIE in the context of families, friendship, love and romantic relationships
- SOGIE in the context of sexuality in cultural and social life
- SOGIE as part of the efforts to build skills for health and well-being
- SOGIE in the context of the human body and development.

As a short-hand, these three categories of SOGIE-protective, SOGIE-sensitive and SOGIE-transformative correspond in turn to measures that enable LGBTIQ+ learners to feel **safe**, both physically and emotionally; to feel **seen**, with the realities of their lives reflected in the curriculum and school environment; and to feel **included** as a full and equal part of the school community.

<sup>9</sup> See Box 1, Conceptual framework for sexuality in the context of CSE, in UNESCO (2018), p 17.

### 3. Findings

This section brings together findings from both the literature review and consultations, drawing out five main themes:

- 1 SOGIE-based discrimination in schools – system-wide, and in relation to CSE provision in particular
- 2 Evidence of the benefits of inclusive CSE – for all learners, in all their diversity
- 3 Global progress in inclusion – with examples linked to the three categories set out in the conceptual framework
- 4 Opposition and backlash – reflecting the fact that progress is neither linear nor permanent
- 5 Quality of implementation – recognizing both teacher preparation and the monitoring of delivery as fundamental to future progress and sustainability of SOGIE-inclusive CSE.

Throughout, there is an effort to highlight the perspectives of learners and teachers wherever possible. Individual country case studies are also provided to illustrate the progress to date as well as the challenges that remain.

#### 3.1 SOGIE-based discrimination in schools

*“We were openly told that same-sex relationships are too inappropriate to be discussed in class. A pupil asking about same-sex adoption was asked to leave the class so as not to offend the sensitivities of other learners. [Another pupil] openly referred to gay sex as unnatural, and when I tried to argue with her I was humiliated in front of my class. I was 14.” – Bethany, 17, learner at a faith-based girls secondary school, United Kingdom (Stonewall, 2017)*

It is clear that in schools and other educational settings around the world, pervasive stigma, discrimination, bullying and violence on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression continue to exist.<sup>10</sup> Both the persistence and the damaging effects of these phenomena are widely documented. According to a systematic literature review by Gegenfurtner & Gebhardt (2017), the available evidence points to a distressingly wide range of types and impacts of abuse affecting LGBTIQ+ learners:

“... sexual minority learners are more likely than heterosexual learners to suffer from cyberbullying, emotional abuse, physical abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, and weapon assault. These negative school experiences put LGBT learners at high risk of being socially isolated; of being absent from school in order to avoid bullying, abuse, and assault; of using substances to compensate for their sufferings; of being infected with sexually transmitted diseases; of suffering from depressive symptoms; and of thinking about or even attempting suicide.”

The “toxic impact” includes detriments to learners’ educational participation, performance and completion, their physical and mental health, and their long-term employment and economic prospects, in addition to undermining broader societal cohesion (UNESCO Bangkok, 2015b).<sup>11</sup> Two thirds of young people affected by SOGIE-related bullying and violence have difficulties paying attention in class, and are more likely to change schools or drop out of school altogether (UNESCO Santiago, 2015).

It should be noted that while there are many shared challenges and rights violations affecting LGBTIQ+ learners, there are also aspects that may differ, for example for those who are trans, intersex or non-binary. Puche (2021) finds that for trans learners in Spain, even when there are attempts at inclusive education – such as classroom discussions on homophobic abuse – the lived experiences of trans people may remain unnamed and thus invisible. This is echoed in Australia, where “sex education class did not mention trans or intersex” (trans learner, quoted in Jones et al., 2016). This is despite the fact that trans and gender-diverse learners face additional obstacles including gendered uniforms, official school documents or records that do not reflect their gender identity, and single-sex facilities such as toilets and changing rooms (UNESCO, 2016). These situations often escalate to extreme exclusion of trans learners and lead to school drop-out or expulsion from the system. Casa Trans (Trans Home), an initiative operating in several Latin American countries, is an example of a civil society partnership with Ministries of Education to provide the space and resources for trans learners to complete their education. Intersex learners

10 See, for example, UNESCO Bangkok (2015b) on the Asia-Pacific region, and UNESCO Bangkok (2018b) specifically focusing on China, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

11 See also UNESCO Bangkok (2015a) Bias & Bullying: Voices from Asia-Pacific classrooms [video], in which young people speak directly about their experiences. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbWu\\_UXNadA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbWu_UXNadA)



may identify with a range of sexual orientations and gender identities; in some contexts, they “may not want to be considered part of what is known as the LGBTQ+ community, because it may put them in danger” (UNFPA, 2020). Where there is no clear overall legal framework for the protection of personal information, or where educational policies on confidentiality are absent, weak or unenforced, some of the challenges for LGBTQ+ learners become even more acute.

Discrimination comes in different forms and may intersect with other aspects of learners’ identities and realities. Research in the Netherlands showed that LGBT learners may more often experience discrimination on grounds different from SOGIE, such as age, gender or ethnic origin (Andriessen *et al*, 2020). As one of the key informants described it: “in their experience of exclusion, LGBT learners have more in common with their peers than what makes them different.”

When it comes to sexuality education specifically, there is a clear lack of inclusive and differentiated provision. A qualitative study of queer youth aged 16-19 in South Africa found that what they want and need from sexuality education is a curriculum that recognizes sexual diversity, is without assumptions about their sexual experience or lack of it and does not focus solely on “disease, deviance

and danger” (Francis, 2019). The current reality of CSE globally is far from meeting these needs:

“Most curricula rarely acknowledge the specific SRH [sexual and reproductive health] needs and rights of young people living with HIV, young people with disabilities or young gay, lesbian and transgender people, especially as they reach puberty.... Without adequate training and sensitization to the issues, teachers may potentially reinforce harmful messages to young people – sometimes backed by harmful and punitive national laws. This perpetuates stigma and discrimination in the community and may be particularly damaging to vulnerable young people who may be living with HIV or coming to terms with their own sexuality” (UNESCO, 2015).

As the quote above indicates, harmful and punitive national laws can create a particularly challenging context for inclusive CSE – see the Namibia case study below.



### CASE STUDY: NAMIBIA

#### *SOGIE-protective CSE in a repressive environment*

Namibia adopted the UNESCO Salamanca Statement on Inclusive Education, which calls for schooling to cater for all children regardless of their differences, in 1994. However, Namibia’s legal and socio-cultural climate is hostile to LGBTQ+ groups and presents numerous challenges for how young people with same-sex identities are framed and treated in schools. A study with self-identified homosexual learners in secondary schools in Windhoek found that participants were subjected to homophobic violence by school management, teachers and fellow learners ranging from name-calling to physical attacks and denial of access to school (Brown, 2017). According to the study, although the Policy on Inclusive Education paves the way for all children to participate fully in the education system, “it is evident that all learners are not equally valued, protected and supported.”

Despite a wider legal and cultural environment that is repressive / constraining for LGBTQ+ persons, a more SOGIE-protective approach can be seen in the country’s CSE programme. Namibia has included CSE within the life-skills curriculum since 2006. The curriculum was rolled out in 2019 and is yet to be assessed. The life-skills syllabus for grades 8 to 10 calls for protection of LGBTQ+ learners and affirmation of sexual diversity (Ministry of Education, 2006). It includes discussions around topics such as “sex and sexuality,” “attitudes towards sexuality,” “gender roles” and “personal sexuality and preferences”. Under the latter topic, discussions are proposed on “different sexual patterns, such as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual and celibacy,” acknowledging the existence of diversity in sexual orientation. Such discussions are then linked to respect for human rights, meaning that the programme can be categorized as SOGIE-protective. Given the constraints in implementation created by COVID-related restrictions, it is still too early to assess the impact of this new curriculum on the inclusiveness of education in the country.

However, the legal environment in which this programme exists is challenging. The Criminal Procedure Act of 1977 states that sexual intercourse between men is punishable as a crime of sodomy. Even though there have been attempts to abolish this offence, it still stands as punishable (Law Reform and Development Commission, 2020). Civil society organizations have long struggled to repeal such legal provisions in a context of what is called “political homophobia” that leads to homophobic and transphobic bullying and violence. The Ombudsman has also asked the Government to abolish the offence of sodomy (ILGA, 2020). It is argued that the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sex in Namibia’s Constitution includes the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

As noted by Gowen & Wings-Yanez (2014), not only are sexuality education materials around the world not tailored to fit the needs of LGBTIQ+ learners, but many such materials have been critiqued for actively “disfranchising” these populations. This is borne out by a global survey of over 21,000 young people identifying as LGBTIQ+ aged between 12 and 26 years, in 108 countries: a majority of respondents (59%) felt that their needs as LGBTIQ+ persons were “never” addressed by education or school policies, increasing to 61% in relation to having their needs as a LGBTIQ+ person addressed in the curriculum or learning materials (Richard & MAG Jeunes LGBT, 2018). In a 2019 online survey of over 1,400 young people aged 15–24 from 27 countries in Asia and the Pacific reflecting on their experience of sexuality education, just over one quarter (28%) believed that their school taught them about sexuality very well or somewhat well. Young people who identified as LGBTIQ+ were less satisfied with their sexuality education than their peers (UNFPA, UNESCO & IPPF, 2020).

The lack of appropriate provision is not just an issue for mainstream schools. In Switzerland, for example, Torrent (2019) considers the impact of heteronormative CSE in relation to special education and those with learning difficulties:

“This definition of the sexual relationship leaves little room for non-heterosexual, non-reproductive or non-penetrative sexualities. Certainly, sexual health specialists address sexual diversity: homosexuality, rainbow families. They try to adopt an inclusive language, which reflects a desire for openness. But a more precise analysis... shows that the LGBTIQ+ theme remains a minority one, relegated to a marginal place.”

In Mongolia, UNFPA is working with the Ministry of Education and Science to improve the delivery of CSE to children with special educational needs. UNFPA initially provided support to assess the school curriculum on health education in two special schools in Ulaanbaatar for children with visual and hearing impairments, focusing on CSE and gender-based violence prevention as per international guidance. While these learners follow the same curriculum as other schools, which includes SOGIE components (see case study, page 39), the results showed that most

children with disabilities were unable to benefit from health education, as classes were not designed for those with special needs. Based on the assessment findings, UNFPA advocated for the Ministry of Education and Science to develop methodological guidance on teaching health education/CSE for teachers and social workers to meet learners’ needs appropriately and ensure sustainability. To improve access to CSE, UNFPA supported the establishment of interactive health education classrooms in the two special schools. These examples from Switzerland and Mongolia underline the importance of an intersectional approach (Crenshaw, 2017) to inclusive sexuality education.

### 3.2 Evidence of the benefits of inclusive CSE

*“Substantial evidence supports sex education beginning in elementary school, that is scaffolded and of longer duration, as well as LGBTIQ-inclusive education across the school curriculum and a social justice approach to healthy sexuality.” – Goldfarb & Lieberman (2020)*

SOGIE-inclusive CSE is not merely about ‘avoiding a negative’; it is important to highlight the positive evidence about the benefits of inclusion. Equally importantly, these benefits accrue not only to LGBTIQ+ learners themselves, but to all learners and the wider school community. A joint statement in 2019 by the OHCHR’s Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and the Special Rapporteur on the right to education emphasized that the inclusion of LGBT people in education settings was of paramount importance to “leaving no one behind.”<sup>12</sup>

According to the Global Alliance for LGBT Education (GALE), “changing the education system to be less heteronormative and more inclusive... will lead to better schools for everyone, not only for LGBTIQ+ learners. Research has also convincingly shown that schools cannot become substantially more safe for LGBTIQ+ learners when they are not becoming more safe and inclusive in general” (Dankmeijer, 2017). It is important to replace heteronormative terminology and images to allow all learners to feel seen and represented in the discussions. Available evidence suggests that a curriculum that is inclusive of sexual diversity and LGBTIQ+ issues improves school climate and safety for

12 See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25094&LangID=E>

all (Baams, Dubas & van Aken, 2017). Canada's 'Every Teacher' project on LGBTQ-inclusive education finds that "[t]eachers understand that safety requires inclusion.... the two are mutually dependent" (Taylor et al., 2015).

The Sex Education Forum (2017) in the UK emphasizes that one of the core principles of good quality sexuality education is that it fosters gender equality and LGBT+ equality, and challenges all forms of discrimination, not only in specific lessons but in everyday school life. Inclusive schools are ones that "embrace diversity and respect the human rights and dignity of all learners" so that "the potential of all people is fulfilled unencumbered by prejudice and discrimination" (UNESCO GEM Report, 2021).

Stonewall's 2017 survey of over 3,700 LGBT pupils aged 11-19 across Britain found that in schools where pupils were taught about SOGIE issues, LGBTIQ+ pupils were less likely to experience homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, and more likely to report feeling safe, welcome and happy at school. In the best cases, SOGIE inclusion went beyond CSE to influence the wider curriculum:

*"In English Literature lessons my teacher included work by Audre Lorde and Oscar Wilde and discussed the ways that they presented their homosexuality in their poems or novels. We watched films such as 'Pride' and 'Milk' to learn about LGBT history. I think that a lot of my confidence and acceptance around my sexual orientation is because of the way my teachers celebrated LGBT history and the achievements of LGBT people." – Sadie, 18, United Kingdom (Stonewall, 2017)*

As Glazzard & Stones (2021) emphasize, "avoiding the teaching of LGBTQ+ content... is not only selling LGBTQ+ pupils in primary schools short; it is also selling all pupils short." These findings on the benefits of inclusive CSE for all learners are consistent with the strong evidence on CSE effectiveness overall (Haberland, 2015) showing that programmes addressing gender or power are five times as likely to be effective as those that do not. Effective CSE programmes give explicit attention to gender or power in intimate relationships and foster critical thinking about how gender norms

or power manifest and operate in society. Moreover, in a systematic review of three decades of research on school-based sexuality education programmes, Goldfarb & Lieberman (2020) identify benefits including appreciation of sexual diversity, prevention of intimate partner violence, development of healthy relationships, reduction in homophobic bullying, improved social/emotional learning, and increased media literacy. The review also emphasizes that early grades are the best time to introduce the topics of sexual orientation, gender equality and social justice, and that sex education is most effective when begun early, before sexual activity starts. Positive representation of sexual diversity benefits both LGBTIQ+ and other learners, promoting acceptance and respect, but it is scarce. Of the 47 countries in the European Council, IGYLO (2022) found that only 12 included such representations in their textbooks.

Evidence also shows the importance of linking in-school and community provision of sexuality education. A systematic review by Fonner et al. (2014) finds that school-based sex education interventions producing the most significant changes in behaviour included community-based components that extended beyond the school environment, by involving external resources and activities, such as youth-friendly services, and involving parents, teachers, and community members in intervention development (as an example, see IPPF's YSAFE program on page 44).

Overall, as emphasized by the UNESCO GEM Report (2021), "Inclusion is not just a result; it is first and foremost a process and an experience.... The right to be in good physical and mental health, happy, safe and connected with others is as important as the right to learn."

### 3.3 Global progress in SOGIE inclusion

*"CSE programmes must include and celebrate all young people, inclusive of diverse ethnicities, body types, genders, sexualities and disabilities" – Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights<sup>13</sup>*

13 See [https://youthcoalition.org/youth\\_for\\_cse/](https://youthcoalition.org/youth_for_cse/)

Despite the many ongoing gaps and shortcomings identified in previous sections, there is growing evidence of progress on SOGIE inclusion in CSE. However, such progress is neither linear nor permanent. Even where inclusive policies and curricula have been developed, endorsed and approved, they may be unevenly implemented and are subject to reversal; gains made cannot be taken for granted. Rather, they must be defended if they are to survive changes of government, shifts in prevailing ideology or simply attrition due to lack of continued active support and resourcing.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Montevideo Consensus (ECLAC, 2013) commits to the following in Article 11:

“Ensure the effective implementation from early childhood of comprehensive sexuality education programmes, recognizing the emotional dimension of human relationships, with respect for the evolving capacity of boys and girls and the informed decisions of adolescents and young people regarding their sexuality, from a participatory, intercultural, gender sensitive, and human rights perspective.”

Nevertheless, as noted by Barrientos & Lovera (2020), the region ranges from countries that explicitly include protection of the rights of LGBTIQ+ people in their curricula (e.g. Uruguay), to those whose educational curricula make no mention at all of LGBTIQ+ learners (e.g. Guatemala and Honduras); a third group of countries have inclusive curricula, but it remains up to individual institutions whether or not to apply them (e.g. Brazil), and in some cases the curricula do not apply nationwide (e.g. in Colombia, the inclusive measure is applicable only in Bogotá). Chile offers an interesting example of progress in SOGIE inclusion even without a national CSE curriculum (see case study, page 29).

It is often the case that progress under the same laws and policies varies between different regions or provinces, especially in cases of decentralized administrations, as has been noted in the cases of the Netherlands and Argentina (see case studies on pages 34 and 38). Likewise, federal systems in the United States and Canada, with decentralized authority for education, have given rise to a wide range of approaches, from

very progressive to non-existent to hostile (see also section 3.5 on Opposition and backlash). In the United States, most learners are not receiving SOGIE inclusive education, even though a range of SOGIE inclusive CSE curricula can be found across the country, especially in the six states that require SOGIE inclusion in CSE. Only 3.2% of LGBT learners report having received SOGIE inclusive education (Rayne, 2022). A review of the ‘Every Teacher’ project in Canada (Taylor et al., 2015) found a patchwork of provision:

“There has been great progress in recent years in many schools across the country, from big metropolitan cities to small remote towns, but a great many more have not even begun to address the exclusion of LGBTQ learners and staff from safe and meaningful participation in everyday life at school. Lack of action on this issue is leaving far too many young people trapped in hostile school climates that run the gamut... from demoralizing to deadly.”

In Asia and the Pacific region, while the majority of countries have laws or policies related to sexual and reproductive health and/or sexuality education for young people, commitment to CSE varies significantly (UNFPA, UNESCO & IPPF, 2020). Ministry of Education responses indicate that in Bangladesh, for example, “cultural and social constraints” affect CSE content and delivery (UNFPA, UNESCO & IPPF, 2020). In a review of eleven countries in South, South East and Central Asia, SOGIE-related aspects were identified as significant gaps in the scope and coverage of laws, policies and strategies (ARROW, 2018). The Adolescent Education Programme in India, for example, does not include sexual orientations, gender identities or sexual diversity, reinforcing a heteronormative approach (ARROW, 2018). In Aotearoa/New Zealand, sexuality education is one of seven key learning areas in Health and Physical Education, with both sexual diversity (lesbian, gay and bisexual identities and perspectives) and gender diversity (transgender and non-binary gender) explicitly included in the curriculum guidelines since 2015. However, based on a survey of 73 participants aged 16-19 years, sexuality education continues to focus primarily on conventional content areas such as heterosexual sex and biological function, and is not inclusive of sexual and gender diversity. Inclusion in

the wider school environment is also reported to be limited, although measures such as allowing same-sex partners at school dances or having a 'rainbow allies' group feature as useful early steps towards openness and learning in the school community (Ellis & Bentham, 2021).

In the European region, the WHO and BzGA Standards (2010) helped to drive progress, and sexuality education in formal school settings is now required or supported by laws, policies and/or strategies in almost all countries. However, there is variation in the degree of comprehensiveness of provision, for example in the coverage and treatment of sexual diversity, and sexuality education is rarely a 'stand-alone' subject (Ketting & Ivanova, 2018; Ketting, Brockschmidt & Ivanova, 2021). Even where SOGIE-inclusive CSE is relatively well developed, there are differences in approach – see the case studies on the Netherlands, Austria and Sweden (pages 30-33). According to IGLYO's latest report (2022) on LGBTIQ+ inclusive education generally (i.e. not focused on CSE only) in schools in Europe, ten countries have failed to implement any inclusive measure (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Latvia, Monaco, Poland, Russia, San Marino, Turkey and Ukraine) and five have implemented legislation that goes against the right to education of LGBTIQ+ learners (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Hungary, Latvia and Russia). Trans, non-binary, and intersex learners are facing particular backlash (IGLYO, 2022).

For East and Southern Africa (ESA), the ESA Commitment to young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights created momentum for CSE. An NGO representative noted that "[t]he major benefit is peer pressure... positive competition for success. A number of countries were working on CSE frameworks based on seeing other countries do it" (Watson et al., 2021). In terms of SOGIE inclusion, however, a government representative admitted that some countries' ministers were not ready to accept "all the issues, e.g. LGBTQ" (Watson et al., 2021).

Some participants in the technical consultation also highlighted the importance of partnerships between different LGBTIQ+ groups, including inter-generational alliances, to identify common targets for the inclusion of SOGIE in CSE. Additionally, alliances with other movements whose aims might have common features can be beneficial. For example, the LGBTIQ+ movement in Namibia supported the pro-choice movement and the support was offered back when needed for the

inclusion of SOGIE in CSE (see Namibia case study on page 24).

A common feature of countries where there has been progress in SOGIE-inclusive CSE is collaboration and partnership (sometimes after sustained advocacy) between civil society organizations representing LGBTIQ+ people and Ministries of Education. Examples include Blue Diamond Society and Chetana in Nepal (UNESCO Bangkok, 2015b, p 59), Proud to be Us in Laos, Rainbow Community Kampuchea (RoCK) in Cambodia, MOVILH in Chile and Colectivo Ovejas Negras in Uruguay, among others. While the role of such organizations in out-of-school CSE and related services is well known, it is important to recognize their increasing importance in school-based provision. This has evolved from work at local level (e.g., representatives being invited to give presentations or lead discussions on diversity issues in individual schools) to more meaningful and systemic national involvement in the design of curricula and methodologies.

To achieve inclusive CSE, the digital space is also increasingly significant for reaching young people – particularly those who are marginalized – as either an alternative or a complement to formal sector provision (Jolly et al., 2020; UNESCO Bangkok, 2021):

*"If we hadn't explored the Internet, we would have no idea about many things regarding SRH as proper sexuality education wasn't provided to us in school."* – Young woman, Nepal (UNFPA, UNESCO & IPPF, 2020)

A survey conducted on adolescents' and young people's use of digital spaces to learn about sex, relationships and their bodies (UNESCO, 2020c) showed that 71% of 15-24 year olds had sought sexuality education online in the previous 12 months – for example, through online applications, podcasts, YouTube videos, interactive games, chatrooms and other media platforms. Digital spaces can enable anonymity and direct access to information and support, making them useful particularly where SOGIE diversity is stigmatized or criminalized. However, such spaces can also be an environment that facilitates bullying and coercion, including on SOGIE grounds. There are also important questions around quality control and accuracy of the information provided, as well as concerns about how the security of personal information is safeguarded.

Therefore, to further the inclusion agenda through digital provision, vetting of sites is important so that teachers and schools can recommend accurate and trusted sources. Positive experiences of the use of digital spaces can be found, such as the AMAZE project (<https://amaze.org/>), producing hundreds of videos on topics related to CSE, including SOGIE inclusion, that have been used in many different countries and languages in a very diverse range of settings.

### SOME EXAMPLES OF SOGIE-INCLUSIVE CURRICULA

During the course of the development of this report, curricula from four countries (Argentina, Austria, South Africa and Sweden) were collected and analysed, along with components of different curricula implemented in the United States that were provided by the organization UN|HUSHED. This section synthesizes features of interest to SOGIE inclusion in CSE from each of them. Further information about the context in which each of the curricula were developed in the first four countries can be found in the section 3.4 below.

#### ARGENTINA

The curricular guidelines for CSE were approved at the national level in 2009 and can be adapted at the provincial level. The guidelines recommend a cross-cutting approach in kindergarten and primary school (social sciences, ethics and citizenship, natural sciences and language and literature), and both a cross-cutting approach and a specific space in the curriculum from there to the end of secondary school. Regarding SOGIE, the guidelines include the following contents:

##### Kindergarten:

- Different forms of families
- Respect for the feelings, emotions and needs of others
- Diversity in human bodies

##### Primary education:

- Social sciences: Diversity of human beings, different forms of families and respect for different lifestyles.
- Ethics and citizenship: Recognition of one's own prejudices and discriminatory practices. Recognition of social discrimination. Gender-related cultural and social expectations.
- Natural sciences: Awareness of one's body. Parenthood. Sexual and reproductive health.

- Inter-relation between biological, social, psychological, affective and ethical aspects of sexuality.
- Language and literature: Gender roles and discrimination in media, publicity, stories and television programmes, and discrimination based on sexual orientation. Discriminatory language. Feelings and discrimination.

##### Secondary education:

- Social sciences: Diversity in the configuration of families through history, with an emphasis on the period after the second half of the twentieth century. Discrimination and exclusion based on sexual identity.
- Ethics and citizenship: Recognition of and reflection around predominant sexual and affective conducts. Laws, treaties and rights regarding sexuality, including sexual diversity and the responsibility of the State.
- Natural sciences: Understanding of human sexuality from a scientific perspective. Sexual and reproductive health. Sexuality versus reproduction and focus on erotic genital sensations.
- Language and literature: Expression of needs and request for help before violations of rights. Different models of families. Recognition of discrimination as an expression of mistreatment.
- Social sciences: Critical analysis of masculinity and femininity throughout history.
- Ethics and citizenship: Forms of discrimination. Masculinities and homophobia. Critical analysis of femininity. Critical analysis of gender-based prejudices. Discrimination as mistreatment.
- Philosophy: Identification of prejudices and their components in relation to sexuality.

#### AUSTRIA

The Sex Education Act (see Austria case study on page 36) sets out general standards for CSE that are inclusive of SOGIE. There is no specific CSE curriculum for each educational level. Nevertheless, the following competences are required in physical education (primary school), biology and environmental studies, religion, psychology, psychology and philosophy.

Learners should be able to:

- Name essential factors of a sexually healthy lifestyle<sup>14</sup>
- Become aware of their own attitudes towards sexuality and partnership and their personal values
- Respectfully engage with other attitudes and develop a respectful attitude towards different forms of sexuality and identities.

## SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa includes CSE in grades 4-12 through scripted lesson plans (see case study on page XXX), that serve as guidance to Life Skills teachers. The educators' guides explicitly advise teachers to "Respect diversity. In these SLPs and the CAPS Life Skills, it is not assumed that all learners (or educators) will be heterosexual or identify with their assigned gender identity. The needs of all learners must be respected throughout all lessons" and provide tips to manage diversity in the classroom. The following concepts are included in the scripted Life Skills lesson for each grade.

- Grade 7. Strategies to enhance others' self-image through positive actions: respect for others and respect for diversity. Explaining the difference between the terms sex, gender and sexual orientation.
- Grade 8. Difference between the terms sex, gender and sexual orientation. Discrimination based on sexual orientation and the Constitution. Sexual identity (biological sex and gender identity).
- Grade 10. Identify media messages around race, sex, sexual orientation, gender and abilities. Everyone has the right to their own sexual orientation. What makes our gender identity?
- Grade 11. Learners are asked to read texts about role models that include gay men.
- Grade 12. Discrimination based on sexual orientation. Accepting and respecting sexual diversity. Learners are asked to work on case studies relating to safety, one of which involves homophobic abuse against a gay couple.

## SWEDEN

It was not possible to access the full content of Sweden's CSE curriculum; this section reflects the content of

a presentation at the 2022 CSE and SOGIE Technical Consultation (Rocklinger, 2022).

*Biology, years 4-6 (10-12 years old)*

Human puberty, sexuality and reproduction, questions about identity, gender equality, relationships, love and responsibility.

*Biology, years 7-9 (13-15 years old)*

Human sexuality and reproduction, identity, gender equality, relationships, love and responsibility, prevention of STIs and unwanted pregnancy at individual and global levels as well as from a historical perspective.

*Civics, years 4-6 (10-12 years old)*

The family and different forms of cohabitation. Sexuality, gender roles and gender equality.

*Religion, years 7-9 (13-15 years old)*

Life questions (purpose of life, relationships, family etc.) in various religions and societies.

## UNITED STATES

There is no national curriculum and education is decentralized to state-level administrations. Schools have great autonomy in designing curricula. While most of the curricula are only available for purchase, some can be accessed online. The FLASH Comprehensive Sexuality Education curriculum for Grades 4-6 (King County, 2022) and the Get Real curriculum for Grades 6-8 (Planned Parenthood, 2022 – see [www.getrealeducation.org/learn-more](http://www.getrealeducation.org/learn-more)) have been selected as examples and are described below.

*FLASH, Grades 4-6*

- **Family.** Everyone has a sexual orientation and a gender identity. Kids' families are made up of people who are of all sexual orientations and gender identities. People's identities might include their gender, their race, their nationality, their sexual orientation, their ability or disability, their family identity (sister, uncle, etc.), their religious identity if they have one, or others. It's important for family members to help each other feel proud of their identities. Define sexual orientation and gender identity.
- **Gender roles.** Gender stereotypes are usually about how men or boys should act, and how women or girls should act, even though these are not the only gender identities.

<sup>14</sup> According to key informants, the term "lifestyle" refers to sexual orientations and gender identities in this context.

*Get Real, Grades 6-8*

- Access accurate information about gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.
- Communicate respectfully with and about people of all gender identities, gender expressions and sexual orientations.
- Differentiate between gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.

### 3.4 Examples of 'protective', 'sensitive' and 'transformative' programmes

Applying the conceptual framework proposed in section 2.2 of this report helps to differentiate between the varying approaches to SOGIE inclusion taken at country level. At a minimum, learners in all their diversity should be protected, both in an overall school environment that is safe, and through a CSE curriculum that recognises the rights of all children and young people. More advanced CSE curricula (and whole school/education approaches) systematically build in SOGIE visibility and ultimately normalize the existence of a diversity of sexual orientations, gender identities and ways to express them. Examples and case studies illustrating SOGIE-protective, SOGIE-sensitive and SOGIE-transformative approaches are described below.

#### **SOGIE-protective**

The safety of learners is paramount in this category, with LGBTIQ+ teachers and other staff also benefiting from such provisions. Australia, for example, has a national whole school programme that addresses school bullying, violence and discrimination based on SOGIE or intersex characteristics and aims to make schools safe and inclusive places for LGBTIQ+ learners, which has been developed further at state level (Victoria State Government, 2017). The National Safe Schools Framework emphasizes that “[i]n a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimized, diversity is valued, and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or wellbeing” (Safe Schools Coalition Australia, cited in UNESCO Bangkok [2015b]).

Chile provides an interesting example of a country that has managed to implement SOGIE-protective measures in education even without a formal CSE programme in place (see case study below).



#### **CASE STUDY: CHILE**

##### *LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the absence of a national CSE programme*

Although Chile does not have what could be described as a comprehensive sexuality education programme, the country has made significant efforts to include LGBTIQ+ learners in the education system. The social mobilization of 2006 forced a change in the Education Law, which included objectives on sexuality and gender in the subjects of Life-Skills (called Orientación para la Vida in Spanish), Natural Sciences and Biology, among others. In 2017, the Ministry of Education, together with civil society, developed Guidance for the Inclusion of LGBTI Learners. No monitoring of the objectives on sexuality and gender is performed, beyond the verification of the existence of a plan in each school. International organizations have joined the call for greater comprehensiveness in Chile's sex education (Amnistía Internacional, 2019).

The Ministry of Health in 2010 mandated the provision of sex education in schools, through law number 20.418 on “information, guidance and benefits in the field of fertility regulation,” aimed primarily at preventing teenage pregnancies and STIs. This law leaves decisions about the content of sex education to schools, “according to their values.” Until 2014, it was mandatory for schools to implement one of seven content models proposed by universities for sexuality education, should they require funding (Ministerio de Educación, 2012). Subsequently, the content was left to the schools' own criteria. In 2018, an evaluation of Law 20.418 was carried out (Cámara de Diputados, 2018). The Law also covers other areas such as education for affective and sexual life and recognizes the protection of gender identity. One of the conclusions of the evaluation was that sexuality education should be strengthened “from the earliest stages of life” and its quality should be monitored.

Mandatory curricular documents do not make explicit reference to the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ topics; while there are broad references to non-discrimination or respect for diversity, it is necessary to infer that these contain the themes of sexual and gender diversity, which are not dealt with explicitly (Rojas, Astudillo & Catalán, 2020). By contrast, there are very clear regulations for the inclusion of trans people and respect for their identity in the education sector (resolution 0812 in 2021), reinforced by the Gender Identity Law (21.120) which was approved in 2019.

The Ministry of Education has completed a cycle of three national days on sexuality education, in preparation for a comprehensive sexuality framework law that will deliver non-sexist education, addressing diversities and other gaps. A bill to amend the General Education Law is currently under discussion, and it includes sexual orientation and gender identity as categories protected from discrimination.



Teachers do not feel they have the skills to lead these discussions, especially in the context of the polarization of gender discussions with strong opposition from religious fundamentalist movements and in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although several universities offer courses related to educational inclusion for those pursuing teaching careers, it is not known how many of them deal with topics related to SOGIE. UNESCO Santiago (2021) carried out a study on teachers' attitudes towards sexual diversity, showing a greater acceptance of SOGIE diversities in schools. Rejection of physical violence against LGBTIQ+ learners is almost unanimous, although forms of verbal and symbolic violence persist.

Despite the breadth of social acceptance of sexual diversity, the CSE curriculum in the Netherlands stays mainly in the realm of SOGIE protectiveness (see case study below). According to the country's Inspector General of Education, inclusion of SOGIE issues in CSE relates to "tolerance and acceptance," with "awareness, making it discussable, promoting safety, fighting discrimination, prejudice and bullying" being "the most important goals" (Inspectie van der Onderwijs, 2016).



### CASE STUDY: THE NETHERLANDS

*CSE in a context of broad social acceptance but high degree of school autonomy*

The Netherlands is considered a world champion in respect of SOGIE-related rights, and acceptance of sexual diversity ranks among the highest in the world. Nevertheless, Dutch society and the education sector have experienced ongoing challenges in providing safe environments for LGBTIQ+ learners (Schouten & Kluit, 2017). As recently as 2019, two learners were thrown out of school because of their sexual orientation (Inspectie van der Onderwijs, 2021).

According to the basic objectives established by the Ministry of Education (2012), schools should "pay attention to" CSE when developing their curricula and learners should learn to deal respectfully with sexuality and sexual diversity within society. A manual for the development of the curriculum has been developed and is used in schools (SLO, 2015). Schools have autonomy in developing their curriculum. In practice, this translates into almost every school providing CSE to their learners, although not all with the same depth and to the same extent.

CSE is not examinable, but – in contrast to many other countries – is subject to inspection. The Inspector General of Education has produced several extensive

reports on the state of CSE, but having no criteria for implementation makes evaluation difficult and leaves room for interpretation by individual teachers or schools. Governmental institutions and civil society organizations have developed materials to help schools guide human rights-based discussions around CSE, including SOGIE; schools choosing to do so can lead discussions from a different perspective. Learners' alliances on sexual diversity exist in many schools and host peer-led discussions on SOGIE as an extra-curricular activity, though formally supported by schools. Hostile environments can put strong pressure on these learners. SOGIE inclusion can happen even in situations where there is no explicit policy through the "hidden curriculum", as it has been shown that teachers who demonstrate positive attitudes and make positive remarks about sexual diversity transmit the information to learners in a much more concrete way. In a context of high levels of school autonomy, the role of the government is to steer action among all actors in the network for CSE to be delivered properly.

CSE is delivered mainly as part of Biology, where it is mandatory, covering issues such as reproduction and safe sex, as well as love and relationships; 14% of principals and 29% of teachers reported that sexual diversity was not covered in their curriculum (Inspectie van der Onderwijs, 2016). SOGIE issues deal with respect for LGBTIQ+ populations and creating a safe environment. Some schools provide CSE through the Citizenship subject, from a more social perspective. Learners feel that CSE in schools is generally very heteronormative (Cense et al., 2020), with SOGIE components framed in opposition to what is "normal" (Cense, 2019). Results of a survey of 601 Dutch adolescents in six high schools showed that anatomy, STI prevention, and relationships were covered most often in sexuality education, with less attention to sexual diversity (Baams, Dubas & van Aken, 2017).

### SOGIE-sensitive

SOGIE sensitivity means that diversity of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression is made visible as an integral part of sexuality and sexual health. This means that LGBTIQ+ people's lives and experiences are part of discussions on sex, sexuality, sexual behaviour and sexual response. SOGIE aspects are also included as fundamental to learners' understanding of gender norms. For example, reflection on society's expectations around behaviour, appearance, dress, speech, mannerisms and activities show learners how these notions are socially constructed rather than fixed, and how they can be challenged.

South Africa may be considered an example of the SOGIE-sensitive category (see case study below).



### CASE STUDY: SOUTH AFRICA

*A firm Constitutional foundation for inclusive policies that go beyond protection*

South Africa introduced CSE, in the form of 'Life Orientation and Life Skills', into the general curriculum in 2001, as a result of the recommendations of the HIV prevention policy at the time. After an evaluation ten years later, tools for educators were developed, including specific textbooks, and the topic was integrated into other areas of the curriculum. As recommended by the evaluation, information provided in schools included details of local sexual and reproductive health services.

An additional evaluation was done in 2016/2017, looking at the impact of school materials and textbooks as well as at progress in learners' learning and prejudice in the areas of "race, age, gender, sexuality, class, religion, family status and disability" (Ministerial Committee, 2018). The evaluation found that the materials and content of CSE did not reflect the country's diversity and, in terms of SOGIE, only heterosexual and cisgender persons were represented. The ITGSE and the previous evaluation were used in 2018 to facilitate a broad consultation to strengthen the impact, coverage and quality of CSE. A task force was put in place by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to support the implementation of CSE, bringing together teachers, experts, scholars and DBE members. As a result of this work, publishers were called upon to develop new non-discriminatory textbooks. Other groups, such as parents and religious groups, were involved in a national consultation to review the roll-out of the curriculum. The process encountered strong resistance from the most conservative sectors. The introduction of SOGIE issues, at ages 12 to 15, was very contentious, though finally successful, reflecting sex and sexual diversity in a very positive way.

Scripted lessons were produced for teachers to use to lead discussions with learners, accompanied by two books: one for educators and one for learners (DBE, 2022). The Council of Educators issued a framework for comprehensive sexuality education (South African Council of Educators, undated) recognizing diversity in sexual orientations and moving towards an integrated approach in all subjects as well as in pre-service and in-service training of teachers.

An additional task force was convened in 2019, to develop guidelines for the socio-educational inclusion of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, expression and sex characteristics in schools, that are now completed and under consultation. Opposition to this process has continued to come from conservative religious groups, with links to parliamentarians, scientists, academics and parents of learners. The government has used a constitutional and human rights approach to counter pushback.

The DBE hosted the international seminar 'Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE): The key to gender responsive and socially inclusive education' in November 2021, and published a Special Issue with the Journal of Educational Studies, documenting evidence of CSE practice (Brown & Whittle [eds.], 2021). This publication was part of a strategy for advocacy and communication. The Department also produces the television series Breaking the Silence, aired nationally every week, with episodes on traditions and sexual orientation.

South Africa's Constitution forbids discrimination, including on SOGIE grounds, and is one of the very few in the world protecting same-sex marriage. Thus, the Constitution provides a very firm foundation for policies including non-discrimination based on SOGIE. The country has legislation protecting the autonomy of gender identity that also applies to the education sector. Legislation explicitly prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation since 2000 and specifically in the health, labour and housing sectors (ILGA, 2020).

The CSE curriculum clearly includes discussions around the rights of LGBTIQ+ populations, protection under national legislation and mechanisms to safeguard such rights. The curriculum goes beyond protection when promoting discussions around SOGIE and gender-based violence, diversity in sexual and romantic relationships and prevention of STIs. This model can therefore be categorized as SOGIE-sensitive.

### SOGIE-transformative

In order to achieve full inclusion, Omercajic & Martino (2020) advocate moving beyond mere "accommodation" of difference to an explicit commitment to gender justice in schools, which accords with a SOGIE-transformative approach. A tolerance-based approach may be insufficient, carrying the risk of framing non-heterosexuality as deviance (Bengtsson & Bolander, 2019). The exercise of tolerance implies othering those tolerated and is not critical of the privilege of being tolerant. This is echoed by Miller (cited in Horton, 2020), who highlights the importance of schools being affirming with a "pedagogy of recognition" where trans pupils can see that they are valued, not merely tolerated.

Austria and Sweden are examples of longstanding CSE programmes that have developed over time to offer a high level of SOGIE inclusion. Argentina also falls within the transformative category – see case studies below.



### CASE STUDY: AUSTRIA

*A comprehensive and progressive approach from early years onwards*

Austria's CSE programme dates back to 1972, when the Sex Education Act was passed and CSE was included in the formal curriculum. Currently, the education system sets out cross-curricular Teaching Principles that need to be considered when delivering content in all subjects. One of these Principles is Sexuality Education, meaning that all subjects need to include aspects related to CSE. The Education Act, revised in 2013, now makes reference to the European WHO Standards for Sexuality Education (WHO Regional Office for Europe & BZgA, 2010). The document, however, goes beyond the minimum standards as SOGIE issues are included in the curriculum from kindergarten onwards. The act mandates that sexuality education must be oriented to, among other topics, "different lifestyles" which in practice means sexual orientation and gender identity. In a 2016 study, 42.4% of teachers reported having discussed SOGIE issues with learners aged 6-9 years, 47.3% with learners aged 10-12 years and 58.1% with ages 13-15. Notably, 83.7% of learners in the latter group reported discussing SOGIE issues in school (Depauli, Plaute & Oberhüttinger, 2016).

Progress in inclusive CSE reflects a wider enabling environment of progressive legislation. For example, since 2004, Austria prohibits discrimination on SOGIE including in the education sector at all levels (Equal Treatment Act). In 2011, the Criminal Code was revised to include the sexual orientation of a victim as an aggravating factor of certain crimes. Adoption of children by same-sex couples has been possible since 2016, and same-sex marriage was approved in 2019, following a Constitutional Court decision (ILGA, 2020).

The Education Act establishes that learners should meet specific competences around "developing attitudes" that include the ability "to respectfully engage with other attitudes and develop a respectful attitude towards different forms of sexuality and identities" (BMBWF, 2018). The curriculum includes SOGIE issues in topics related to security and respect for human rights, such as gender roles, sexual and domestic violence, love, pregnancy, contraception and marriage (BZgA, 2018). However, teachers can decide when and how to include CSE in their subjects; their knowledge and attitudes influence how or even whether it is delivered. Teachers may make use of external resources to provide information related to CSE, such as local civil society organizations or LGBTIQ+ groups, if they feel unprepared to deliver good quality

education on SOGIE. So far, the quality of the education delivered by external actors is not controlled and a quality control system and criteria are under development.

Governmental institutions have produced materials adapted to different age groups to facilitate discussions around SOGIE, such as a Rainbow Family box for kindergarten learners, a theatre play called King and King for primary schools, and a collection of posters on SOGIE-related issues. Recognizing the need to protect LGBTIQ+ learners from discrimination and violence, schools implement strategies like "LGBTI allies", where teachers or fellow learner volunteers act as entry points into the system for learners with questions, concerns or complaints regarding SOGIE-related issues.

In 2015, a Federal Centre for Sexual Education was established at the Salzburg University of Teacher Education to raise awareness around CSE among learners and teachers and to become a national reference point for the education sector. The Centre undertook an assessment of CSE in the country (Depauli, Plaute & Oberhüttinger, 2016), based on a survey of 10,000 teachers, parents, relatives and learners and covering issues related to SOGIE. The topic of "gender identity and sexual orientation including coming out and homosexuality" was rated as important or very important by 64.8% of teachers and 69.5% of parents. In a follow-up analysis, it was noted that "qualifications and support for work in this field are viewed as essential, with survey respondents perceiving the need for high-quality initial training and continuing education and appropriate frameworks for implementation in school" (Depauli & Plaute, 2018). Survey participants "painted an impressive picture of how they would like to see sex education in schools in Austria. There was a very clear demand for a modern, tolerant, critical approach to sexual education... that aims at a healthy, joyful and fear-free development of children into adolescents and then into young adults" (Depauli, Plaute & Oberhüttinger, 2016). A key informant also pointed to the crucial role of the Minister of Education at the time, who was a personal champion for inclusive CSE: "We couldn't have done it without her."

Even where a SOGIE-transformative curriculum has been developed and implemented, the education sector cannot 'rest on its laurels'. Ongoing adaptation in the light of changing circumstances, new evidence and evolving consensus on good practice is required, as the example of Sweden shows.

## CASE STUDY: SWEDEN

*Pioneer in inclusion of LGBTIQ+ issues (1970s), but approach has had to evolve*

Sweden has been at the forefront of promoting inclusivity and addressing LGBTIQ+ issues since the 1970s. The country has a long history of delivering comprehensive education on sexuality, which has evolved over time to include issues related to sexual orientation across the curriculum. While gender identity is not explicitly addressed in the curriculum, it is discussed within the broader context of identity (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2014).

In the past decade, Sweden has moved away from a “tolerance pedagogy” towards a more critical approach to Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). This approach encourages the critical analysis of norms, including those related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression (SOGIE) topics. By deconstructing existing ideas, this approach aims to avoid polarization and the stigmatization of certain subjects (Bengtsson & Bolander, 2019). SOGIE-related issues are integrated into CSE discussions from preschool to secondary school, as well as various school subjects, such as biology, science studies, history, religion, civics, home and consumer studies, art, physical education and health, music, Swedish language, English, crafts, technology, and geography (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2014). A new curriculum is currently being developed for implementation from August 2022.

To ensure consistency in the delivery of CSE and address concerns about methodologies, Sweden has transitioned from relying on external actors, such as civil society organizations, to deliver classes related to SO, to ensuring that teachers themselves are capable and confident in delivering this education. This shift is in line with the methodologies used for the rest of the curriculum. Since 2021, CSE has become a compulsory component of teacher training programmes at universities. Schools have also taken steps to normalize the access to books that focus on LGBTIQ+ persons and groups, with some initiating reading programmes (Pedagog Malmö, 2021).

The Swedish Constitution mandates all public institutions, including schools, to exercise and promote equality and non-discrimination based on several grounds, including sexual orientation. The 2008 Discrimination Act explicitly bans any form of direct or indirect discrimination based on sexual orientation, including within the education sector (Swedish Government Offices, 2008). The Criminal Code prohibits hate speech, and the sexual orientation of a victim can be considered an aggravating factor under certain circumstances. Sweden has allowed same-sex couples to adopt children since 2003, and same-sex marriage has been legally recognized since 2009 (ILGA, 2020).

To protect learners from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, specific legal protections have been in place since 2006 (Swedish Code of Statutes, 2006). In 2014, Sweden approved a strategy for equal rights and opportunities irrespective of sexual orientation,

gender identity, or gender expression, assigning specified governmental agencies, including the National Agency for Education, with the role of promoting equal rights for LGBT individuals (Regeringskansliet Kulturdepartementet, 2014; Government Offices of Sweden, 2018).

The content of CSE in Sweden emphasizes the need to protect all learners from discrimination based on SOGIE, the critical analysis of information related to SOGIE, and the practical application of the results of such analysis. LGBTIQ+ learners also have access to specific mechanisms for complaint and resolution.

However, one ongoing challenge is the preparation of teachers. Surveys indicate that not all teachers are adequately trained to teach CSE (Bengtsson & Bolander, 2019).

So far, only teachers from grades 4 to 6 receive training in CSE pre-service preparation, but it has been reported that starting in 2022, teachers of all grades will begin receiving training in CSE. Furthermore, there is a need for better preparation among teachers for intersectional delivery of CSE, particularly in teaching CSE to migrant learners with diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. It is crucial to recognize that even the most progressive and SOGIE-transformative curriculum can only be effective if delivered by teachers who possess appropriate training and attitudes.

Another challenge lies in the monitoring of the delivery and impact of CSE. Currently, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate does not include CSE as a regular component of school monitoring. Therefore, efforts should be made to incorporate CSE into the existing monitoring mechanisms to ensure its effective implementation and assess its outcomes.

In Sweden, while external actors such as civil society organizations have played a role in providing knowledge on SOGIE in schools, the responsibility for delivering comprehensive sexuality education has always rested with teachers and school health professionals. The recent policy shift making SOGIE education a compulsory component of teacher training programmes at universities is a significant step towards ensuring consistent and quality delivery of CSE across the country.

By continually evolving its approach to inclusion and comprehensive sexuality education, Sweden demonstrates its commitment to promoting equality, non-discrimination, and the well-being of all learners, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression.

Argentina’s CSE curriculum covers all levels of compulsory education from pre-school to secondary school, as well as teacher training, in areas related to protection of human rights, construction of gender and sexuality, diversity of families, love and romantic relationships and SOGIE in the context of cultural and social life (see case study below). The breadth and depth of this programme enable it to be categorized as SOGIE-transformative.

**CASE STUDY: ARGENTINA***Towards the construction of a monitoring and inspection system for CSE*

The National Comprehensive Sexuality Education Programme was created in 2006, establishing CSE as a right of every student (Congreso argentino, 2006). According to a key informant, “After the law, everyone understood that schools have responsibility in the area of sexuality.” After the enactment of the CSE Law, a committee for the design of the curriculum was created. The curriculum was approved by most committee members.

According to resolution number 340/18 of the Federal Council of Education, CSE is cross-cutting in compulsory education, from pre-school to teacher training, as well as being a dedicated subject in the secondary curriculum. As Argentina is a Federal State, each province has the capacity to decide how CSE is structured in practice. The SOGIE focus is included as one of the five axes of CSE, “Respect for diversity,” meaning that it has to be present in all CSE content. Entry points for CSE are many, including not only the curriculum, but also the family and the community, daily institutional life and any unexpected event that may bring CSE into the conversation.

The National CSE Programme follows three lines of action: production of educational materials, a network of CSE focal points in each province and teacher training. CSE manuals have been produced covering inclusion of CSE in pre-school, primary and secondary education, as well as in school sports activities and in indigenous languages. There are manuals for inspection officials and for learners.<sup>15</sup>

The country has adopted a series of laws that anchor the inclusion of SOGIE issues in CSE, such as the law (number 26.618) allowing same-sex marriage in 2010, the Gender Identity Law (26.743) in 2012, and the law allowing abortion until the fourteenth week of pregnancy (27.610) in 2020. These laws guarantee rights and their provisions guide the content of CSE, which must reflect the Argentinian reality. Other administrative measures have been taken in some provinces in favour of gender equity and may have been facilitated by CSE, such as the establishment of standard non-gender-specific uniforms for all learners and shared bathrooms in primary school.

From 2020 onwards, the Federal CSE Observatory has established a CSE information monitoring system. Instruments have been created for the collection of information on the implementation of CSE in all provinces.<sup>16</sup> The Federal Council also decided that all teachers at each educational level should receive training on CSE on a regular basis. The first one-year CSE update training is currently planned for 40,000 teachers. The Ministry of Education offers special courses on CSE issues, such as sexual diversity, violence in emotional ties, pregnancies, maternities and paternities, and voluntary interruption of pregnancy. According to the National CSE Programme, adaptation of the curriculum will be necessary over time as norms change, which is what resolution number 419/22 of the Federal Council foresees. The aim is to close the implementation gap between provinces, and the teams of provincial CSE focal points need to be strengthened.

<sup>15</sup> All materials referred to are available at <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/educacion/esi/recursos>

<sup>16</sup> See section 3.7 for additional information about the Observatory and its CSE monitoring system.

**3.5 Opposition and backlash**

*“Arguments based on cultural background are not always compatible with international law, particularly if they are used to exclude or discriminate against people... or to prevent access to specific classes, such as... sex education classes... or access to information about lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons” – UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education (2021)*

Education is a fundamental right. It is enshrined as such in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26 (United Nations, 1948), and some of the most broadly accepted international treaties, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Political Rights, Article 13, (United Nations, 1966) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1990). All these instruments proclaim that education should be available equally to all, should foster the full development of the personality and should promote the respect of human rights. The UN General Assembly agreed to set and advance towards Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, and Goal number 4 requires to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” and to “leave no one behind”. The Human Rights Council, through its special

procedures, has made clear that LGBTIQ+ learners have the right to quality education, inclusion and freedom from discrimination in education settings (United Nations, 2019).

Failing to provide SOGIE-inclusive CSE affects the rights of LGBTIQ+ and other learners to education, health, to develop their personality and to live free of discrimination, among others. However, there are still strong forces trying to pull back on progress. For decades, far-right and religious extremist movements have been campaigning against sexuality education. Their strategies have evolved over time, and may be grouped into three areas: mass mobilization, law-making and occupation of decision-making spaces (Datta, 2018). For example, the ultra-conservative movement in the US has pursued a systematic long-term strategy of placing adherents to its agenda in key judicial and political offices. Opposition to sexuality education in many countries has been part of a broader anti-gender campaign, involving also sexual and reproductive rights and rights related to SOGIE (EPFSRR, 2021). Some educational systems have been banned from discussing SOGIE-related issues with learners by the criminalization of such discussion (UNGA, 2019). These movements are often either religious groups or other civil society groups closely related to them, especially those adhering to the most conservative interpretations of religions, such as Catholic or Islamic sects (UNESCO Bangkok, 2015b). There are also many contexts in which homophobia – and related forms of discrimination that attempt to ‘police’ gender and sexuality – are state-supported, becoming another instrument for domination and the suppression of individual autonomy and citizens’ rights under the guise of upholding ‘traditional values.’<sup>17</sup>

While CSE-opposing groups are more active and visible in some countries than in others, evidence suggests that an international common agenda and coordination exist, promoting similar objectives and using similar patterns of advocacy in multiple countries (Datta, 2018). In Poland, while sexuality education is mandatory, it rarely takes place due to widespread opposition (Picken, 2020). Ultra-conservative groups have opposed the implementation of sexuality education in Spain with success in some regions (EPFSRR, 2021), using the framework of the international campaign “*Con mis hijos no te metas*” [Don’t mess with my kids]. This campaign

is very influential in Latin America, especially in Central America, where it has forced governments and parliamentarians to hold back legislation on sexuality education in Panama and Guatemala, for example (Martínez Beterette, 2021). The same campaign led the opposition to the introduction of CSE in Argentina, and specifically to the inclusion of issues related to SOGIE. Schools in Ontario, Canada faced resistance to the implementation of a revised and updated Health and Physical Education curriculum. The common message of these movements or campaigns – despite rigorous evidence to the contrary on the impact of CSE – is that children learning about sexuality will be pushed into early relationships or become “sexualized”, or explicitly, that CSE is promoting homosexuality (UNESCO, 2016).

Human Rights Watch (2020) has observed “a troubling backlash” against efforts to provide CSE in many parts of the world, including in Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Kenya and Poland, with the opposition presented in the frame of “national traditions” or “cultural values” housed within a narrow interpretation of traditional (heterosexual) family units and family values. Inclusion of SOGIE components in particular is often a flashpoint for right-wing pushback, e.g. in the US,<sup>18</sup> a country whose cultural influence and financial interests have often been leveraged to push a polarized agenda on CSE and SRHR elsewhere in the world. In the UK, Glazzard & Stones (2021) characterise the approach to CSE as “running scared” – noting with concern that the UK’s current policy on Relationships and Sex Education permits schools with a religious character to teach “distinctive faith perspectives on relationships,” given that some of these perspectives may not align with the principles of the Equality Act. Primary schools will not be penalised for opting out of including SOGIE-related content as long as that they can demonstrate that “appropriate consultation” has taken place with parents, effectively providing schools that are reluctant to address this content with a “license” not to do so. In North Macedonia, evangelical Protestants are politically engaged, and they fund conservative lawmakers. Their movement is mainly anti-transgender (anti-LGB is less of a focus), and they use Facebook to mobilize groups of conservative parents.

Nearly all key informant interviews indicated that the active efforts of opposition movements to block or roll back CSE – either in general or specific aspects of

17 See, for example, <https://freedomhouse.org/article/dismantling-lgbt-rights-means-control-russia>

18 See, for example, Human Rights Watch, 17 February 2022: [Florida Advances ‘Don’t Say Gay’ Bill: Censoring Discussions Jeopardizes Children’s Rights](#)

it – constitute a significant barrier to progress, with outcomes differing from one country to another. According to Rayside (2014), “[t]he impediments to change include... the extent to which questions of sexuality tap into large unresolved debates over the role of schooling, the continuing capacity of religious conservatives to mobilize opposition to LGBT-inclusive measures, the availability of schooling options for morally traditional parents, [and] the unreadiness of most teachers to address questions of sexual diversity”. Oppositional ideologies can no longer be understood through simplistic labels such as ‘anti-gay’, ‘homophobic’ or ‘transphobic’; rather, they are actively seeking to “reassert the superiority of monogamous, binary cis-gendered, coupled marriages as best for children and for society” (Nash & Browne, 2019).

Civil society organizations and community groups play a key role in sustaining efforts to include SOGIE in education through out-of-school programmes, in the absence of State support. Many examples can be found in all regions of the world. Agents of Ishq use art-driven processes in India to generate materials that are culturally appropriate, SOGIE inclusive and have the capacity to reach a range of audiences, including people with disabilities. MOVILH in Chile led the elaboration of toolkits to integrate SOGIE in formal education that were recommended by the Ministry of Education after years of advocacy.

Even in countries where CSE is broadly accepted by the population – for example, the Netherlands, where over 90% of parents and learners think that schools should deliver evidence-based CSE (Rutgers, 2017a and 2017b) – CSE can suffer from being used as a lightning rod or proxy for discussions around other topics, such as migration and xenophobia. CSE is taught in a given social and political context and the system does not necessarily reflect this fact (Cense, 2019). A Dutch key informant noted that at times, “CSE has been used as a stick to hit others.”

Opposition to the implementation of pro-rights agendas was also found in Eastern and Southern Africa, such as in Lesotho, where such groups claimed that CSE would promote early sexual debut and would undermine traditional values. In Uganda, the government was forced to adapt the CSE curriculum in a way that no longer meets international standards (Watson et al., 2021). In Kenya, “[t]he comprehensiveness of policies and curricula has continuously fallen short because of challenges posed by highly conservative societal

norms and cultural sensitivities regarding the inclusion of topics such as contraception, abortion and sexual orientation” (Sidze et al., 2017). Such traditional values also posed a challenge to the inclusion of LGBT issues in teaching the Life Orientation subject in South Africa (Francis & Reygan, 2016).

Resistance coming from conservative teachers has also constituted a barrier to the implementation of CSE in the Asia-Pacific region (Curtin University, 2019). These attitudes, of course, often reflect those of wider society, with policy-makers and ministries not immune. However, careful and well-planned advocacy can change ‘hearts and minds,’ as in Cambodia (see case study below).



#### CASE STUDY: CAMBODIA

##### *Systematic advocacy to allay concerns and gain support*

The UN’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, which examines the human rights records of Member States, has prompted some progress in Cambodia on LGBTIQ+ rights and on the inclusion of CSE in the national curriculum. The Ministry of Health included sexual and reproductive health and rights in its most recent five-year plan, and considers SRHR one of the priority sectors for achieving government commitments. The Ministry of Education also confirmed its support for health education. This provided the opportunity to develop a national Health Education curriculum that integrates sexual and reproductive health.

The creation of this conducive environment is partly the result of five years of active advocacy by the Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC) and others with key staff in the School Health Department of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Many of the ministry staff had concerns around “sensitive language” in the CSE component. In 2020, an advocacy brief was prepared that systematically anticipated each term that might provoke backlash, explaining why its inclusion was justified as accurate, scientific and age-appropriate. Workshops were held with decision-makers in the Ministry to discuss the terminology, leading to attitude change at a high level. Senior officials who initially challenged the curriculum accepted the explanations and some now openly use previously contested terms.

A national curriculum was developed with support from UNFPA and the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU, from its initials in Swedish) and endorsed in 2018 for grades 1-12, with the Sexual and Reproductive Health component included from grade 5-12 (age 11 years and up). From 2019, the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport started to develop textbooks for three grades each year. They also welcomed the involvement of CSOs, including those who work with adolescents and the promotion of SOGIE-related rights,

in the development of the textbooks, which feature a number of SOGIE-inclusive components.

For example, in grade 7, sexual health includes consideration of gender, sexual orientation and sexual desire. Grade 9 includes a lesson on attitudes related to gender, sexuality and HIV, which states: “Health and well-being are everyone’s desire, regardless of gender, sexual orientation or gender identity.... To achieve this goal, we need to understand and respect choices based on the diversity of individuals and jointly eliminate all forms of harassment or human rights abuses.” It also includes a section on the importance of choice, diversity, equality, and respect. Examples of diverse orientations, identities and relationships are given throughout.

Grade 10 includes coverage of gender equality, sexual diversity and sexual and gender-based violence. The emphasis is on gender as an open and non-binary concept; according to a key informant, “they should know it is not just men, women, boys and girls.” It has been important to find inclusive terminology that works in the Khmer language but is also specific enough. For example, it is insufficient to encourage learners to respect the rights of “all people” as this is too vague; rather, it is more useful to say “men, women and all diverse people.” The aim is to normalize the concept that there are many different sexual orientations and identities.

The new textbooks have not yet been rolled out (partly owing to Covid delays). Mobilization of both domestic and international resources, with specific budget allocation to enable national coverage, is needed. There is also still a gap at primary level, and materials are currently being developed by RHAC in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to address that. These include storybooks on “My body and my rights” and “I am brave” (the latter about reporting violence and abuse).

Building the capacity and understanding of teachers around CSE is seen as key, giving them support and encouragement to implement the curriculum effectively and provide accurate information without stigmatizing or discriminating against any learners. Experience to date shows that SOGIE-related concepts are the most difficult for teachers, and time is needed for them to develop adequate understanding. Although achievements have been made and positives support has gradually emerged to promote CSE in Cambodia, there is still a long way to go to complete the mission, which requires further strong support from all stakeholders to ensure CSE quality.

Strategies to counter opposition may vary depending on context. Different entry points to promote SOGIE inclusion in CSE can be identified, not necessarily linked directly to sex and sexuality. Sexual and reproductive health has been often the entry point for SOGIE, but rights-based approaches that establish links to movements such as anti-racism, indigenous rights, campaigns against adolescent suicide, child protection, etc., have also been effective in bringing SOGIE to the table.

### 3.6 Teacher preparation

*“It may feel much safer to detour around this tricky topic and hope that learners will approach us individually if they have specific questions. But we owe our young people more than that, especially LGBTQ+ young people.”*  
**– Emilie Cousins, Education and Wellbeing Specialist (Brook, 2020)**

In the 10-year follow-up to the Yogyakarta Principles (2017), there was explicit recognition of the importance of teacher preparation to fulfil human rights in relation to inclusive education:

*“STATES SHALL: Ensure inclusion of comprehensive, affirmative and accurate material on sexual, biological, physical and psychological diversity, and the human rights of people of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics, in teacher training and continuing professional development programmes.”*<sup>19</sup>

However, this aim is far from being achieved, and the lack of adequate training for teachers on SOGIE concepts and how to implement inclusive CSE emerged repeatedly in the literature review, key informant interviews and the technical consultation. In Kenya, for example, Sidze et al. (2017) find that “poorly trained teachers continue to struggle with teaching sensitive topics.” Teachers are key actors in the delivery of SOGIE-inclusive CSE. However, many feel they lack the training and the information needed to do it correctly. Similar gaps have been noted in Free State Province, South Africa:

19 Emphasis added.



“Life Orientation teachers have received little or no training in the area of gender and sexuality diversity. The literature abounds on pre-service and in-service teacher education as insufficient and teachers have not been provided with adequate opportunity to engage reflexively with these issues. . . . A number of key factors led to the emergence of LGBT microaggressions [by teachers]. These included a lack of pre-service and in-service teacher education in the area, societal norms that go unchallenged, and a lack of self-reflection among teachers about the issues” (Francis & Reygan, 2016).

These experiences are widely echoed in other regions. For example, in Samoa, when asked about teaching the topic of “sexual orientation/same sex attraction”, teachers surveyed indicated either that they would not cover this topic (mainly primary school teachers), or that they would need help with factual information, teaching materials and/or teaching strategies (UNESCO Office for Pacific States, 2015). In Canada, the ‘Every Teacher’ project on LGBT-inclusive education found that “for most teachers, it is lack of training and fear of backlash that prevents them from doing their jobs, not, as is often assumed, religious belief or moral conflict” (Taylor et al., 2015). It needs to be recognized that not all teachers are suited for the delivery of CSE, and some may have the same prejudices that are prevalent in their communities. Such teachers can be assigned other tasks.



### CASE STUDY: MONGOLIA

*Focus on teacher training and qualifications for inclusive CSE*

Health education was mandatory in Mongolia from 2003-2008, and continued in some form until 2013, at which point a political decision was taken to omit it from the curriculum entirely. As a result of continuous advocacy by UNFPA and others for almost five years, health education – including comprehensive sexuality education as one of the key topics in the curriculum and teaching guides – was re-introduced in schools as a stand-alone subject starting from the 2018-2019 academic year. This also followed a new Criminal Code that came into force on 1 July 2017, outlawing discrimination and hate crimes, with sexual orientation and gender identity included as protected non-discrimination grounds.<sup>20</sup>

An intersectoral working group was established to develop the national health education curriculum and teaching guidelines, led by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Health. In addition to the two ministries, the working group included UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, Institute of Education, Institute for the Teachers’ Professional Development, Mongolian National University of Education, National Centre for Lifelong Education, Mongolian National University of Health Sciences, and relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The latter included organizations focused on women’s rights, addressing sexual violence, and the health and rights of LGBT young people. The working group organized stakeholder consultation meetings and provided guidance in developing the content of the curriculum and the teachers’ guidelines for grades 4-12 of general education schools.

In 2019, a health education textbook for grades 4 through 12 was developed and distributed to all learners. Sexual and reproductive health is included as one of the six key areas in health education class content, developed in line with the updated ITGSE, with all the key concepts including prevention of gender-based violence. From grade 8 (age 13) upwards, there is a total of 7 hours of sessions during the academic year, with the following learning objective: to acknowledge that everyone has a gender identity, to appreciate their own gender identity and to demonstrate respect for the gender identity of others. Furthermore, the learning objective includes explaining sexual orientation and distinguishing it from gender identity, refuting myths about sexual orientation and showing acceptance and respect for diversity in sexual orientation.

The Curriculum Development task force was supported by an international consultant recruited by UNFPA, who trained a core group of national experts on CSE, and provided technical assistance on how to reflect the latest ITGSE concepts in the curriculum and teaching guidelines. Subsequently, a 3-day training of 120 national-level trainers was conducted by the Institute for Teachers’ Professional Development, with teachers and methodologists from all provinces and districts. In addition, one full-day CSE training of trainers was conducted with secondary and high school health teachers.

Attention has also been given to strengthening the ‘pipeline’ of teachers who are qualified to teach CSE. An assessment by UNFPA Mongolia of the capacity of health education teachers found that only 60 per cent of them had actually been trained in that subject, with the remaining 40 per cent reluctant to discuss ‘sensitive’ topics. At the Mongolian National University of Education, only 20-25 learners were entering for the health education specialism each year. Starting from September 2022, a pilot programme of ‘double majors’, enabling learners to qualify simultaneously in (e.g.) Biology and Health Education, is being introduced to attract more trainees who will graduate with adequate knowledge and skills to teach CSE effectively.

Nonetheless, good practice in teacher preparation also exists, as the experience of Mongolia demonstrates (see case study below).

20 See <https://mongolia.un.org/en/14401-coalition-equality-and-lgbt-human-rights-launched-mongolia>

Dankmeijer (2020) proposes a classification of three types of teacher training programmes regarding SOGIE inclusion. The first one is *LGBTIQ+ Advocacy Training*, focusing on measures to tackle discrimination and enhancing visibility of SOGIE. The second one focuses on class management, under the name of *Dialogue under pressure*. This model supports teachers in exploring the differences among learners, dealing with judgements and leading discussion on SOGIE. The third one, that he calls *Heteronormativity<sup>21</sup> Training*, introduces “teachers to heteronormativity as the underlying cause of exclusion and discrimination” and helps them explore alternatives.

Civil society organizations have developed teacher training programmes and manuals that are inclusive of SOGIE. In Singapore, the Inter-University LGBT Network developed a guide for educators to enable them to support LGBTI learners, using different entry points and including resources to promote alliances with university groups, businesses and others, and to reduce backlash. The guide incorporates experiences from learners and proposes multiple entry points for discussion on SOGIE (available at <https://interunilgbt.com/>).

IPPF supported the development of a toolkit to prevent and address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the framework of the YSAFE program (<https://europe.ippf.org/our-approach/partners/ysafe>). The toolkit was created with participation of young sexuality educators and leading sexual and reproductive health and rights activists from over 30 countries. The purpose of the toolkit is to guide the delivery of sexuality education sessions that support young people at risk of marginalization and help them recognize and protect themselves from SGBV. LGBTIQ+ young people were also centrally involved in the process. The toolkit has been adopted by IPPF member associations in Albania, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

Teachers need to be able to acknowledge that their learners might be experimenting and are going through the phase of self-recognition of sexual orientation and / or gender identity and, therefore, need to see themselves represented in the pedagogic practice. Such recognition will facilitate learning, not only of CSE, but in general curriculum. To this end, UNESCO developed *Connect with Respect* (UNESCO Bangkok, 2018a), a curriculum tool based on a broad range of existing evidence, to assist teachers to detect and tackle

gender-based violence in schools, including GBV based on SOGIE.

Teacher training needs to follow clear pre-determined standards and such standards need to be reflected in guidelines for the training and the delivery of SOGIE-inclusive CSE, especially in social environments where non-conventional SOGIE is not broadly accepted (see South Africa case study on page xx). Principals and school leadership teams have an important role to play in backing their staff and supporting them when backlash occurs.

Finally, it is important to remember the challenges faced by teachers and other school staff who may undergo harassment, exploitation and violence themselves based on their own actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. SOGIE-inclusive policies and curricula hence also benefit staff. Teachers’ unions have a crucial role to play in this regard. For example, the South African Democratic Teachers’ Union ran a series of events on inclusivity in 2018, including a three-day national seminar bringing together teacher representatives living with disabilities and albinism and LGBTIQ+ members from each of the nine provinces, followed by local events in four provinces. Around 1,300 union members used these spaces to challenge deeply entrenched social norms that perpetuate discrimination and violence against vulnerable groups (EI, UNGEI & Gender at Work, 2019). The establishment of communities of practice has been instrumental in linking teachers with peers to share information and methodologies to deliver CSE, either through formal communication tools or using more informal means, such as WhatsApp or Facebook groups.

As described by McBrien (2022) teacher training can be more effective if rolled out in the context of broader school-based initiatives to raise awareness of LGBTIQ+ topics.

### 3.7 Monitoring the quality of implementation

The First Regional Implementation Report on the Montevideo Consensus (ECLAC, 2019) notes that “the existence of well-established and designed laws and syllabuses, although vital, does not necessarily guarantee effective application of CSE.” Critical factors include lack of regulation and follow-up, power struggles between different levels of government,

21 ILGA defines heteronormativity as the cultural and social practices where men and women are led to believe that heterosexuality is appropriate sexuality, implying that heterosexuality is the only way of being “normal” (McBrien, 2022).

ideological differences (including conservative pressures, particularly around rights, diversity and gender approaches), limitations of teaching material, inadequate training and financial constraints.

The lack of monitoring and accountability for the quality of CSE implementation and delivery was an issue that arose repeatedly in key informant interviews. It is often the case that monitoring of the implementation of CSE, including SOGIE-related issues, is weak and CSE is seldom subject to inspection by the authorities. Countries generally lack clear criteria for monitoring and evaluating their CSE programmes, that would allow the identification of specific areas for improvement. In South Africa, for example, information is available only on whether or not educators use the materials and scripted lessons provided, but does not cover the impact on learners. Austria produces information from evaluations and surveys, but CSE is not included in the formal inspection program. CSE is not examinable in the Netherlands but is subject to inspection. Monitoring and evaluation should include criteria to measure variations in teachers' capacities to deliver SOGIE inclusive CSE (McBrien, 2022).

While some components of CSE that are delivered via mainstream subjects, e.g. Biology, may be included in examination syllabi, generally CSE is not an examinable subject. Accordingly, it is often side-lined or excluded from school inspections and teaching assessments, pushing it down the list of priorities for education officials, school managers and teachers themselves. For this reason, according to a status report on CSE in Asia and the Pacific region, "It is ideal to teach sexuality education as a mandatory and standalone subject, as both teachers and learners can take the content more seriously. More time can also be focused on sexuality education, and it is easier to monitor and evaluate effectiveness" (UNFPA, UNESCO & IPPF, 2020). Otherwise, however progressive or inclusive the CSE curriculum may be, there will be an ongoing evidence gap in many countries about how well it is taught and how it is received by learners.

The role of external actors in implementation is also a crucial factor to consider. While positive partnerships with LGBTIQ+ organizations have helped to raise the quality and effectiveness of CSE curriculum development and delivery in a number of countries, as noted in section 3.3, other actors may bring a very different agenda.<sup>22</sup> Civil society organizations and

movements can become key allies in the process of accountability on the progress made in the advancement of SOGIE-inclusive CSE.

It is worth examining the experience of Argentina, one of the few countries that has invested in systematic monitoring of CSE. In 2020, fifteen years after the approval of the law on CSE, Argentina set up an initiative to monitor its implementation. A Federal Observatory for CSE (OFESI in its Spanish acronym) was established to gather evidence to inform federal and provincial CSE policies, with the aim of identifying breaches in implementation and differences among provinces. OFESI is made up of representatives of all the provincial ministries of education, teachers' unions, learners' networks, the education commissions of the Congress and the Senate, universities, civil society organizations, UNFPA, UNICEF and the Federal Ministry of Education. OFESI has three working committees: Policy and Strategy, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Communications. Each committee provides strategic information to the plenary commission for discussion and decision-making. OFESI oversees CSE implementation in the following areas:

- ▶ Laws and regulations – information on laws and protocols in all provinces
- ▶ Policies – budget implementation, materials and publications, student participation
- ▶ Teacher training – CSE at universities and teacher training institutions and in-service training
- ▶ Communities – surveys among learners and families (still to be developed).

## 4. Conclusions

Overall, we find a mixed picture of both progress and pushback on school-based SOGIE-inclusive CSE in all regions. Schools do not operate in isolation; their ability – within and beyond CSE – to address issues of sexual orientation and gender identity or to acknowledge SOGIE-related equality is shaped by prevailing national laws and societal norms. As one key informant stated, "CSE is not provided in a bubble." It needs to take into account the social and political environment, adapting its content to national and local realities, such as local representations of sexuality and diversity, language, and so on. Inclusive CSE must also address the intersection of SOGIE with other factors of oppression, such as race,

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Austria's experience with TeenSTAR: <https://www.brusselstimes.com/176175/lgbt-conversion-therapy-still-exists-i-europe>

class, disability, migrant status, poverty, and others. What this looks like will be different in each country and region. There are, however, common factors that can help to support and sustain progress towards inclusion, whatever the starting point or context.

Based on analysis of the literature review and consultations, we have sought to identify the implications for policy and programming in three main areas:

- ▶ Drivers and opportunities for SOGIE-inclusive CSE
- ▶ Strategies for overcoming barriers
- ▶ Sustaining inclusion and relevance over time.

Each of these is considered in turn below.

#### 4.1 Drivers and opportunities for SOGIE-inclusive CSE

*“Governments aspiring to respect their commitment to the goal of equitable and inclusive education by 2030 must protect the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex learners, improve monitoring of school-based bullying and violence, and create a positive, supportive learning environment.” – UNESCO GEM Report (2021)*

No single factor is responsible for achieving the inclusion of SOGIE issues as part of CSE policies, curricula and programmes. Rather, there are a number of drivers, enabling factors and opportunities that reinforce one another to create ‘critical mass’ and momentum for change.

- ▶ International and regional commitments and accountability processes, such as the Universal Periodic Review on human rights, Sustainable Development Goals, Cali Commitment etc., help to set specific targets, timelines and monitoring mechanisms that galvanize action. Progressive policies are often more viable when regulated by inter-governmental bodies and communities, allowing national legislators to propose enabling legislation that adheres to the international standards. For example, the ESA Commitment is credited with creating a “united front” for the

advancement of CSE, still seen as difficult in many East and Southern African countries:

*“The ESA Commitment brought impetus to us as civil society to push governments to do more around CSE in particular. . . . [It] gave us something at the regional level that was homegrown; our governments had committed, so was easier to push. I think to a great extent, it gave us enough power as civil society to push for CSE, whether it is us going into school directly or the government itself institutionalizing it” (NGO representative, in Watson et al., 2021).*

- ▶ The production and promotion of technical guidance (e.g. ITGSE, WHO European Standards), and the availability of related support, have clearly spurred a number of countries to review and revise their school-based CSE provision to meet the new standards.
- ▶ The sustained work of LGBTIQ+ communities, organizations and networks – often in challenging and even hostile and risky circumstances – to press for accountability in the fulfilment of their rights has been instrumental; so too has been their technical expertise in contributing to the development and delivery of SOGIE-inclusive curricula.
- ▶ A favourable legal environment that addresses discrimination on SOGIE grounds generally (in some cases mentioning educational settings in particular) and/or that normalizes different sexual orientations and gender identities in all aspects of life, including protection to families, social benefits, identification documents, etc., has helped countries to justify and legitimize their action on inclusive CSE.
- ▶ High-level political leadership and ‘champions’ in key positions have helped to raise the profile of inclusive CSE, generate the necessary resources and create costed, actionable frameworks.
- ▶ Awareness-raising to create favourable public opinion has helped to overcome opposition and motivate/empower the education sector and individual teachers to become more inclusive.
- ▶ The establishment of broad coalitions that bring together government, academia, teacher training

institutions, media/opinion leaders, LGBTIQ+ organizations and other relevant civil society partners, including those representing young people, has been an important route to achieving consensus and longer-term sustainability.

- ▶ Collection of up-to-date, accurate data about SOGIE-related attitudes and learners' experiences has created a solid evidence base for inclusive policies, curricula and programmes. Where government monitoring systems are weak or non-existent, academia and civil society have an important role to play in developing models and in collecting and analyzing information.

## 4.2 Overcoming barriers

A variety of strategies can help to overcome barriers to the development and implementation of SOGIE-inclusive CSE. Again, no single approach is a 'silver bullet'. These strategies are likely to be most effective when they reinforce each other rather than being put into practice in isolation:

- ▶ Partnerships between government and civil society organizations representing LGBTIQ+ people (particularly young people), as per 4.1 above
- ▶ A sustained and incremental advocacy process (not a one-off event) to communicate with, reassure and build the understanding of key stakeholders – e.g. parents, ministry officials, school administrators and teachers, religious / cultural leaders and other opinion formers
- ▶ Partnership with and use of media (both 'official' media and social media) and key influencers, such as prominent actors, singers, sportspeople, presenters, etc., to inform and shape public opinion and contribute to better understanding and acceptance of the value of CSE, gender equality and LGBTIQ+ inclusiveness
- ▶ The use of evidence, and relevant technical standards and guidance, to justify/defend inclusive policies and curricula
- ▶ Promotion of favourable legislation that protects the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons, and use of national laws/policies to give legal backing to SOGIE-inclusive CSE in schools

- ▶ The use of appropriate national accountability and follow-up mechanisms for regional and international commitments that support inclusive CSE, e.g. commitments to equitable and inclusive education, fulfilling the sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescents and young people, etc.
- ▶ Development and promotion of SOGIE-inclusive CSE resource materials for all levels of education, to support teachers to put policies into practice in the classroom
- ▶ Training for teachers, both pre-service and in-service, that provides the opportunity to reflect on values and attitudes and to learn effective learner-centred ways to deliver inclusive content
- ▶ Mutual learning between countries on challenges they have faced and lessons learnt (while acknowledging the specificity of each national context and the need to adapt accordingly).

## 4.3 Sustaining inclusion and relevance over time

While many countries have found routes to increase SOGIE inclusion in a range of differing social, cultural and political contexts, one challenge that remains is how to sustain inclusion and relevance over time and continue to move forward even as issues shift and circumstances change. Among the measures that contribute to this are the following:

- ▶ Ongoing research, data collection, monitoring and evaluation are a prerequisite for maintaining an evidence-led approach that is responsive to new information.
- ▶ Mechanisms to deal with underperformance or non-compliance with inclusion measures (in CSE provision and in the school / education system generally) are important for accountability.
- ▶ Development and deployment of appropriate communication and advocacy strategies will help to 'bring the public with you' as approaches evolve.
- ▶ Investing in capacity strengthening of teachers, through both pre- and in-service professional development, enables teachers to address their own perceptions, values and attitudes as well as ensuring effective delivery of the relevant curriculum (UNESCO Bangkok, 2015b)

- Partnership with, but not over-reliance on, civil society is a crucial balance to strike. NGOs are important partners, and are sometimes also involved in the implementation of classroom activities, but should not be a replacement for efforts to advance teachers' practice and their implementation of inclusive curriculum for sustainability and coverage (UNESCO Bangkok, 2015b).
- Without careful planning for sustainability, programmes can stagnate, suffer attrition or disappear – see the example of Uruguay below.



#### CASE STUDY: URUGUAY

##### *Lack of ongoing coordination, training and investment threatens sustainability*

The CSE programme in Uruguay started in 2005 and covers all grades from pre-school to secondary education. The revised General Law of Education in 2008 formally included SOGIE in the general curriculum (Asamblea General de Uruguay, 2008). The law structures the curriculum around five axes, namely, health education, education in human rights, environmental education, artistic education and education in sexuality. CSE is not subject to inspection from the National Agency for Public Education (ANEP in its Spanish acronym), although the schools' headteachers, together with student representatives, evaluate its implementation.

Discussions around SOGIE have been included in the CSE programme from the start, although initially only in secondary education. After 2008, this was expanded to all compulsory education along with the reform of the general curriculum. The ANEP, together with a civil society organization, published a guide for educators on sexual diversity in CSE (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social & Ovejas Negras, 2014).

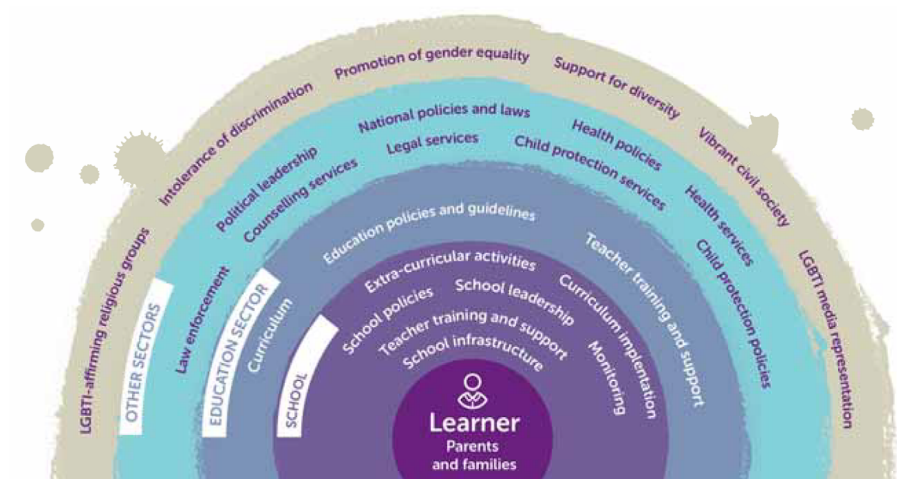
For over 10 years, an average of 250 teachers annually were trained on CSE by the National CSE Programme. A CSE focal point in each school was then given additional training. The Programme had national coordinators for primary school, secondary school and vocational education, together forming the National Commission on CSE. Only the secondary school coordination remains active. Similarly, until recently there was a CSE focal point in each of the teacher training institutes in all 19 provinces, but they are no longer active. The CSE Programme at the ANEP no longer exists, while its role is played by the National Department of Human Rights. Training of teachers is no longer being implemented and the materials have not been reprinted, as they faced strong opposition from fundamentalist groups. The lack of institutionalization of CSE through a legal instrument affects its sustainability.

The regulation of same-sex marriage (laws number 19.075 and 19.119 in 2013) and the comprehensive law for trans persons (number 19.684 in 2018), along with the proscription of all types of discrimination based on SOGIE, provide a strong legal framework for the delivery of SOGIE-inclusive CSE. Fundamentalist movements have opposed the roll-out of CSE, including through the "Con mis hijos no te metas" [Don't mess with my kids] campaign, but their influence in the country is limited. However, without ongoing investment and political support, the sustainability of CSE is under threat. While the slowing or reversal of previous progress is disappointing, according to a key informant, "We wouldn't stand where we are if nothing had been done before. The CSE programme needs to be part of the bigger picture, in order to generate changes."

## 5 Recommendations

*“There needs to be a fundamental rethink about how we teach young people about sex, love and relationships. LGBT issues need to be an important part of our curriculum in order for us to truly feel we are part of an equal society.” – Joshua, 19, United Kingdom (Stonewall, 2017)*

With the learner at the centre, the model of multi-layered support below (UNESCO Bangkok, 2015b) is a useful reminder of the overall context needed for genuine SOGIE inclusion, of which an inclusive CSE curriculum is only a part. Accordingly, this section contains recommendations for policy-makers and ministries, civil society, schools and teachers, learners, UNESCO and other UN bodies.



Source: Creating multi-layered support for learners UNESCO Bangkok, 2015b, page 44

### 5.1 Policy-makers and ministries

A key recommendation for policy-makers and ministries is to use the conceptual framework presented in this report as a guide for assessing provision. Ask yourselves: Both within our sexuality education provision and more broadly:

- ▶ How are we ensuring that LGBTIQ+ learners are **safe**, both physically and emotionally?
- ▶ How are we ensuring that the realities of the lives of LGBTIQ+ learners are **seen** and reflected in the curriculum and school environment?
- ▶ How are we ensuring that LGBTIQ+ learners are **included** as a full and equal part of the school community?

While a high-level political ally or ‘champion’ can be a key driver, this is never sufficient on its own, and brings the risk of initiatives collapsing when an individual moves on or is reassigned to another portfolio. Therefore, it is essential to build a broad-based coalition that includes all relevant stakeholders (as outlined in

section 4.1), especially civil society organizations and young LGBTIQ+ community groups. These coalitions should work together to design, help approve and implement solid and stable policies for the provision of SOGIE-inclusive CSE, including the training of teachers and other key actors.

CSOs and community groups often lack the resources to play the important role expected of them. Governments need to secure funding for the implementation of activities requiring community participation. Investment in the professional development of teachers and other key members of staff to improve their skills, confidence and effectiveness in SOGIE-inclusive CSE must be accompanied by investment in good data collection to monitor implementation, delivery and impact to inform measures for improvement. Universities and other teacher training institutions are often autonomous rather than government-run. Measures should be taken to guarantee that they are also included in data collection and monitoring.

## 5.2 Civil society

Where the environment is suitable, civil society can act as a bridge between government processes and LGBTIQ+ populations and seek out opportunities to partner with education providers (both in and out of school). This may include involvement in the design and delivery of inclusive CSE curricula, and also in monitoring and evaluation of the impact on learners, as well as facilitating the exchange of information when available.

Civil society organizations are also well placed to apply pressure through advocacy and hold governments to account for their commitments to CSE, inclusive and equitable quality education, and young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights. The nature of the organizations also allows them to evolve and adapt their programmes in a more creative and agile way; they can then pass the information and know-how on to institutional providers, building relationships of trust.

For organizations that are not youth-led, it is important to reflect carefully on what genuine and meaningful youth engagement means and how to put it into practice,<sup>23</sup> so that the voices, priorities and lived experiences of young LGBTIQ+ learners are at the forefront of SOGIE inclusion.

Impact of the work of civil society is likely to improve when action is taken in partnership with institutions or through alliances with community groups and movements, especially youth-led organizations. Involving parents through the parents associations can facilitate community ownership and support. Civil society plays a key role in monitoring the social and political environment and in helping to design measures to avoid regression of SOGIE-inclusive CSE programmes.

## 5.3 Schools and teachers

In addition to the recommendations in section 5.1 above, there are a number of guides and toolkits to support you in increasing SOGIE inclusion in your school or classroom generally, and in your sexuality education provision specifically. See, for example, IGLYO (2009 and 2015) and Victoria State Government (2017); in Spanish, RIE LGBTI (2017) and Borisonik & Bocca (2018); and in French, Gouvernement du Québec (2021). For school management and staff – including not only teachers but also support staff, school nurses, counsellors, etc.

– the process of building inclusion involves improving your own awareness and understanding, and reflecting on your personal beliefs and values around gender, diversity, equality and other SOGIE-related themes.

School leadership and governing bodies set the tone for inclusion, through your own behaviour and use of language as well as through institutional policies, provision of and support for relevant training, and codes of conduct for staff and learners. Transparent and accessible systems for redress, in cases of bullying, violence or discrimination on SOGIE grounds, are important. Good links with LGBTIQ+ organizations, support networks and sources of reliable information, along with clear referral pathways to external adolescent- and youth-friendly services, will further bolster your school's inclusion efforts. Accountability at leadership level should also include the responsibility to prevent and react to backlash against teachers or LGBTIQ+ learners, when necessary.

Allocation of resources, both financial and human, to the delivery of SOGIE inclusive CSE should be prioritized. Learners, including LGBTIQ+ learners, should be involved in the planning process to ensure adaptation to their needs. Other allies, such as parents or guardians, can be involved in the process.

The following practical tips (adapted from Brook, 2020) may also be useful:

### **All-round approach**

*Having specific lessons dedicated to sexuality and gender is important, but LGBTIQ+ inclusivity needs to be woven into all areas of CSE, e.g. referring to different types of relationships, and using a variety of pronouns when discussing topics such as healthy/unhealthy relationships and consent. Ideally this is also part of a whole-school approach that goes beyond CSE alone.*

### **Do not over-complicate it**

*Being LGBTIQ+ inclusive is not about memorizing every single definition and identity (language evolves!), but it is about celebrating difference and moving beyond a default position where heterosexual/cisgender relationships and experiences are automatically seen as the norm.*

### **Representation**

*CSE is more engaging, motivating and empowering for young people if it is relevant*

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, We Matter, Value Us: A guideline for organisations on the meaningful and ethical engagement of young people living with HIV in the HIV response (Y+ Global, 2022). Available at: <https://www.yplusglobal.org/resources/we-matter-value-us#gsc.tab=0>



to their identity and experience. Young people should be able to see themselves, as well as seeing difference, in the examples used in the classroom. It is important to use scenarios that include a wide range of sexualities, gender identities, pronouns and relationships.

### Neutral language

Using 'partner' instead of 'boyfriend' and 'girlfriend' is an easy way to include all types of relationships. Using 'they' instead of 'she' and 'he' can similarly include everyone. This may feel difficult initially, but becomes easier with practice, just as anything does. The words we use can make a huge difference to someone's comfort levels and feelings of inclusion.

### Training

Just as learners are not expected to 'just know' the content of the curriculum, teachers also should not expect themselves to 'just know' about gender/sexuality. All of us need to educate ourselves when encountering a new topic, so teachers should make use of any professional training that is available. Establishing communities of practice within schools and networking with other institutions can facilitate learning and exchange of information. Where available, informal groups using new technologies have been shown to provide valuable support.

### Signposting

Again, teachers are not expected to know everything, and it is okay not to know the answer to every question that arises. The important thing is to be able to 'signpost' by redirecting learners to reliable, age-appropriate information in your context. It is also okay to say that you will research the answer and let them know.

### Parents

Many teachers bring up concerns about talking with parents. Where relevant legislation and official curricula exist, these can be used to justify and explain the school policy and lessons. It is important to help parents understand that providing inclusive and equitable quality education is part of the job.

### Involving young people

When possible and appropriate, involve young people themselves in making lessons and the overall school more LGBTIQ+ inclusive. It is both motivating and empowering for them to be in-

involved in their own education. It also allows them space to share what they feel they need and to ask questions about areas in which they lack knowledge.

## 5.4 Learners

As with policy-makers and ministries, learners in all their diversity may find it beneficial to use the conceptual framework to identify priorities for action:

- ▶ What information and support do I need to feel **safe**, both physically and emotionally?
- ▶ What information and support do I need to feel **seen**, with the realities of my life reflected in the curriculum and school environment?
- ▶ What information and support do I need to feel **included** as a full and equal part of the school community?

Peer support for others is also vital. Therefore an additional question for learners could be: How can I contribute to helping my fellow learners feel safe, seen and included?

## 5.5 International agencies and partners

Further consultation and analysis are needed to enrich and extend this report. UNESCO and sister agencies can leverage their unique abilities to convene relevant expertise and to support platforms for mutual learning, lesson-sharing and experience exchange. Funding for such research and other ways of producing and sharing valuable information is scarce. UNESCO and other international bodies and donors should make resources available to guarantee the production and application of robust evidence.

The capacity and legitimacy to convene different actors should also be utilized to bring together key players with conflicting arguments for and against SOGIE inclusion in CSE, creating safe spaces for discussion that will ultimately help to avoid or minimize backlash.

It is essential to engage with young LGBTIQ+ learners, through organizations such as IGLYO and youth representatives of national LGBTIQ+ networks. Involving them in identifying how to incorporate SOGIE components throughout all 8 key concepts of the ITGSE would pay valuable dividends. Their perspectives on how teachers, schools and education systems can overcome barriers to inclusive CSE are also essential.

Consultation with ministries and sector experts will help to flesh out what specific actions and investments are needed to put recommendations into practice. Support for the design and implementation of monitoring mechanisms and information systems, and dissemination of the data and analyses that are gathered and produced, will greatly strengthen countries' ability to track and improve the provision of school-based SOGIE-inclusive CSE.

Entities funding projects related to the promotion and defence of SOGIE rights, should consider doing so with discretion. If publicly announced, anti-rights movements could easily claim that the project results in the imposition of the donor's political vision/agenda, which would ultimately be detrimental to the success of the project in question.

Donors wishing to advance SOGIE rights/inclusive CSE, should consider making their financial contributions flexible. Constraints on the implementation of a research or development project in relation to the promotion of SOGIE rights/inclusive CSE are multiple, as the topic remains highly sensitive and related scientific research is still in its infancy.

As one participant in the technical consultation posed it, "The role of the UN system is to keep difficult issues on the agenda."

## 5.6 Areas for further research

- ▶ There is a clear need for disaggregated data about LGBTIQ+ learners to 'unpack the acronym.' While there are undoubtedly areas of shared concern, each of these groups (and others not represented by an initial) has distinctive needs, experiences and priorities in relation to CSE that may be obscured by treating them as a single population.
- ▶ Similarly, better understanding of intersectionality between SOGIE and other aspects of exclusion would be welcome, e.g. race, class, migrant status, disability, poverty.
- ▶ Protective factors or assets that LGBTIQ+ learners have in their life that may promote well-being and resilience could also be an area of further exploration (UNESCO Bangkok, 2015b).
- ▶ According to Gegenfurtner & Gebhardt (2017), a useful direction for future research is how schools and teacher education courses can create a "positive climate that promotes a sense of agency, trust, collaboration, and workplace safety for non-heterosexual teachers and educators."
- ▶ There has been limited attention to CSE, whether inclusive or otherwise, in the higher and tertiary education sector. A notable exception is UNESCO's 'Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future (O3 Plus)' project in higher and tertiary institutions in Zambia and Zimbabwe (UNESCO Harare, 2020). Nonetheless, this remains a topic on which further investigation is warranted.
- ▶ In order to improve provision and implementation, countries would benefit from national and sub-national research on attitudes, values, priorities etc. among teachers, parents and learners in relation to SOGIE-inclusive CSE.
- ▶ It would be interesting to assess whether and to what extent the type or status of a given school (e.g. public/ private/secular/faith-based/local/ international) plays a role in its willingness or ability to develop and deliver SOGIE-inclusive CSE curricula.
- ▶ An important area for investigation is how content on gender, sexual diversity and social norms is integrated across the whole curriculum (not just in CSE), given the positive impact that a focus on gender and social norms, in particular, has been shown to have on the effectiveness of CSE (UNESCO et al., 2022).

Together, policy-makers, ministries, civil society, schools, teachers, learners, UNESCO, other UN bodies and researchers all have a vital role to play in advancing SOGIE-inclusive CSE. The well-being of learners in all their diversity depends on it.

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# Annex 1: Semi-structured interview guide

## Informed consent

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is undertaking research to identify countries that are developing and/or implementing Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) programmes that are inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE).

You have been selected as a key informant and we would like to interview you to collect data to be used in the publication of the report. Your name and title will appear only as part of a generic acknowledgements list, among 25-40 other key informants. Your name and title will not be reflected in the body of the report, nor linked to specific quotes, unless we obtain your explicit consent to do so before the publication of the report.

The session is expected to last between 45 and 60 minutes. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to stop taking part and can withdraw from the interview at any time without giving any reason. In addition, you are free to decline to answer any particular question or questions.

If you agree to participate, please state it clearly at this point. Please state also whether you consent to the interview being audio-recorded for the purposes of accuracy. Recordings will be accessed only by the authorized research team and your personal data will be protected.

## Identification of the interviewee

Full name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Institution/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_

## Consent taken by (name of interviewer)

\_\_\_\_\_

on (date) \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 Please explain your role in the design/ implementation/monitoring of CSE policies and programmes and provide the name of the policy/ programme.

## Analysis of the CSE policy/programme

- 2 Your country has been identified as having CSE policies or programmes that are inclusive of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities or expressions. Please briefly explain how these issues are included in the policy/programme.
- 3 Please elaborate on how the CSE policy/programme covers each or any of the following topics:
  - a Protection of LGBTIQ populations against violence and discrimination
  - b Analysis of SOGIE as components of sex, gender and sexuality
  - c Normalization of non-conventional SOGIE

Please refer to the sections of the documents where such topics are reflected.

- 4 How could the policy/programme be improved to meaningfully cover each of the topics above?

## Analysis of the social and political environment

- 5 What were the key drivers in the social and political contexts that allowed your country to design, approve and implement the CSE policy/programme?
- 6 What were the social and political barriers that were overcome in that process? How?
- 7 What were the social and political barriers that could not be overcome or did not allow further advancement in the scope and content of the policy/ programme?

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**Implementation of the policy/programme**

- 8 Is the content of the policy/programme reflected in the curriculum and materials? Were there specific issues whose translation into practice has been more difficult than others? What were the reasons?
- 9 Please explain how teachers are trained in the content of the curriculum and whether and how parents are involved in its implementation.
- 10 Does the programme include delivery of information and facilitation of discussions by people who identify as LGBTIQ+? Are learners allowed to decide which pronouns they want to be addressed by?
- 11 How does the programme address issues of safety, security and confidentiality in relation to LGBTIQ+ learners?
- 12 Any additional observations or comments.

[Thanks to the participant and agreement of any follow-up actions, e.g. supply of curriculum or policy documents.]

## Annex 2: List of key informants consulted

Name	Organization	Position	Country
<b>Andrea Mariño</b>	Ministry of Education	Coordinator of the Federal Observatory for CSE	Argentina
<b>Anthony Brown</b>	University of Johannesburg	Professor	South Africa
<b>Battuya Khurlee</b>	UNFPA	Programme Analyst, Adolescents & Youth	Mongolia
<b>Beatrix Haller</b>	Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research	Deputy for School Psychology, Health Promotion and Career Guidance	Austria
<b>Celeste Adamoli</b>	Ministry of Education	Director, Education for Human Rights, Gender and CSE	Argentina
<b>Diego Rossi</b>	Ministry of Education	Former Coordinator, Sexual Education Programme	Uruguay
<b>Diego Sempol</b>	Universidad de la República	Researcher	Uruguay
<b>Drashko Kostovski</b>	IPPF	Lead – Youth and CSE	Belgium
<b>Fabiola Miranda</b>	Ministry of Education	Inclusion and Participation	Chile
<b>Finn Reygan</b>	Human Sciences Research Council	Research Director, Human and Social Development Programme	South Africa
<b>Hans Olsson</b>	RFSU	Advisor Manager Sexuality Education	Sweden
<b>Ilya Zhukov</b>	UNFPA HQ	Technical Specialist, Adolescent & Youth Team	USA
<b>Jenelle Babb</b>	UNESCO Asia & the Pacific	Regional HIV and Health Education Advisor	Thailand
<b>Jo Sauvarin</b>	UNFPA Asia & the Pacific	Regional Advisor on Adolescents and Youth	Thailand
<b>Likho Bottoman</b>	Department of Basic Education	Director	South Africa
<b>Marcela Romero</b>	REDLACTRANS	Regional Coordinator	Argentina
<b>Marcelo Zelarallán</b>	Ministry of Education	Coordinator, National CSE Programme	Argentina
<b>Marianne Cense</b>	Rutgers	Senior Researcher	Netherlands
<b>Marinus Schouten</b>	School & Safety Foundation	Expert on sexual diversity in schools	Netherlands
<b>Marisa Ronconi</b>	Ministry of Education	National CSE Programme	Argentina
<b>Mary Guinn Delaney</b>	UNESCO Latin America & the Caribbean	Regional HIV and Health Education Advisor	Chile
<b>Meri Cvetkovska</b>	HERA	CSE Coordinator and Youth Programme Supervisor	North Macedonia
<b>Olaf Kapella</b>	Austrian Institute for Family Research	Research Coordinator	Austria
<b>Ramón Gómez</b>	MOVILH – RIE	Human Rights Coordinator	Chile
<b>Robert Munganda</b>	National Institute for Educational Development	Chief Education Officer: Broad Curriculum & Curriculum Management	Namibia
<b>Rubén Ávila</b>	IGLYO	Policy & Research Manager	Belgium
<b>Somolireasmey Saphon</b>	Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia	Research & Advocacy Manager	Cambodia
<b>Tej Ram Jat</b>	UNFPA	Programme Specialist	Lao PDR
<b>Teresa Fernández Long</b>	National Agency for Education	Director of Education, Unit for General Didactics	Sweden
<b>Wolfgang Wilhelm</b>	Vienna Anti-Discrimination Agency for LGBTIQ Matters	Office for Education, Youth, Integration and Transparency	Austria
<b>Yadanar</b>	UNFPA Asia & the Pacific	Consultant: CSE and Youth Participation	UK

# Annex 3: Agenda for the technical consultation

## AGENDA: CSE and SOGIE Technical Consultation Meeting

27-29 September 2022

### Meeting objectives:

- ▶ Promote evidence-based action among government representatives, policy-makers, education stakeholders, CSOs, youth networks and practitioners from the education, health and other sectors to develop, design and deliver good quality LGBTIQ-inclusive CSE programmes.
- ▶ Provide a space to share good (or emerging) practice between different countries based on the desk and qualitative research commissioned by UNESCO.
- ▶ Explore entry points and how LGBTIQ inclusive sexuality education can be supported by policy commitments and strengthened curricula.
- ▶ Build capacity for strengthening existing efforts and addressing challenges.

DAY 1: 27 September 2022 - Morning	
09:00 – 09:30	<p><b>Opening remarks and scene setting</b></p> <p>UNESCO Representative (to be confirmed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missael Hotman Napitupulu, <i>Youth Lead, Indonesia</i></li> <li>• Dr. Granville Whittle, <i>Department of Basic Education, South Africa</i></li> <li>• Overview of objectives &amp; expectations, brief agreement on ground rules (UNESCO)</li> </ul>
09:30 – 10:00	<p><b>Presentation on International evidence, guidance and recommendations on CSE, focused on SOGIE</b></p> <p><b>Presenter:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joanna Herat, Senior Programme Specialist, Section of Health and Education, UNESCO, Paris</li> </ul> <p>Q&amp;A</p>
10:00 – 10:15	<p><b>Icebreaker / Get to know one another</b></p> <p><b>Facilitator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remmy Shawa, <i>Senior Project Officer and Head of Office, UNESCO Johannesburg office</i></li> </ul>
10:15 – 10:45	<p><b>Presentation of the key findings highlighted in the research report</b></p> <p>Presented by the co-authors of the UNESCO-commissioned report, "Safe, Seen &amp; Included."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linnea Renton &amp; Diego Postigo, <i>Independent Consultants</i></li> </ul>
10:45 – 11:30	<p><b>Coffee/ Tea break</b></p>
11:30 – 12:15	<p><b>Plenary/ group discussions on findings</b></p> <p>Facilitated by Jenelle Babb, <i>Regional Advisor, Education for Health and Wellbeing, UNESCO Bangkok</i>, with support from Linnea Renton &amp; Diego Postigo</p>

<p><b>12:15 – 13:00</b></p>	<p><b>In Conversation: LGBTQI learners’ voices</b></p> <p>‘Fireside chat’ – informal panel discussion followed by questions and discussion with audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rubén Ávila Rodríguez, <i>Policy &amp; Research Manager, IGLYO, Spain</i></li> <li>• Sophea Pheung, <i>Volunteer at Asean SOGIE Caucus, Cambodia (via video link - TBC)</i></li> <li>• Jade Sullivan, <i>Director at Feminitt Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago and Canada</i></li> </ul> <p>Moderated by Petar Mladenov, UNFPA</p>
<p><b>13:00 – 14:00</b></p>	<p><b>Lunch</b></p>
<p><b>14:00 – 15:00</b></p>	<p><b>Spotlight Presentation #1 - Country examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marinus Schouten, <i>Expert on sexual diversity in schools, School and Safety Foundation, The Netherlands</i></li> <li>• Evangelina Vidal, <i>CSE Technical advisor, Education for Human Rights department, Ministry of Education, Argentina</i></li> <li>• Robert Munganda, <i>Curriculum Research and Development Specialist, National Institute for Educational Development, Namibia</i></li> </ul> <p>Moderated by Sylvain Séguy, <i>Associate Programme Specialist, UNESCO Paris</i></p>
<p><b>15:00 – 15:30</b></p>	<p><b>Rapid Reflection: Key messages from Spotlight presentations</b></p> <p>Participants reflect and highlight key messages from the Spotlight presentations</p> <p>Facilitated by Joanna Herat, <i>UNESCO</i></p>
<p><b>15:30 – 16:00</b></p>	<p><b>Coffee/ Tea break</b></p>
<p><b>16:00 – 17:15</b></p>	<p><b>Delivering SOGIE-inclusive CSE... starting with teachers</b></p> <p>Presenters: Market place format– each presenter ‘hosts’ a 15-minute discussion at a table, participants move between different tables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likho Bottoman, <i>Deputy Director: Social Mobilisation &amp; Support Services, Department of Basic Education, South Africa</i></li> <li>• Lucy Emmerson, <i>Chief Executive, Sex Education Forum, England (UK)</i></li> <li>• José Ramallo Carames, <i>Lecturer specialized in Sociology, Human Rights, Education and Sexual Diversity, Uruguay</i></li> <li>• Kalle Röcklinger, <i>Education expert, The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education, Sweden</i></li> </ul> <p>Session facilitated by Remmy Shawa, <i>UNESCO</i></p>
<p><b>17:15 – 17:30</b></p>	<p><b>Rapid Reflection: Key messages from Teacher’s discussions</b></p> <p>In plenary, participants reflect and highlight key messages from the Spotlight presentations</p> <p>Facilitated by Linnea Renton &amp; Diego Postigo.</p> <p>Nomination of rapporteur duo for Day 2.</p>
<p><b>18:30 – onwards</b></p>	<p><b>Networking / cocktail event</b></p>

DAY 2 - 28 September 2022: Morning	
9:00 – 9:15	<p><b>Summary of Day 1</b></p> <p>Rapporteur (name to be confirmed)</p>
9:15 – 9:45	<p><b>SOGIE-inclusive CSE Curricula</b></p> <p>Brief presentation on key concepts and issues to address in curricula</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linnea Renton &amp; Diego Postigo, <i>Independent Consultants</i></li> <li>• Perspective from LGBTQI community : Ramón Gómez, <i>Human Rights Officer, Movilh, Chile</i></li> </ul>
9:45 – 11:00	<p><b>Spotlight Presentations #2: SOGIE-inclusive curricula</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Antony Brown, <i>Professor, University of Johannesburg, South Africa</i></li> <li>• Via video link: Somolireasme Saphon, <i>Research and Advocacy Manager, RHAC, Cambodia</i></li> <li>• Karen Rayne, <i>Executive Director, UNHUSHED, USA</i></li> <li>• TBC Via video link: Beatrix Haller, <i>Deputy for School Psychology, Health Promotion and Career Guidance, Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research</i></li> </ul> <p>Q&amp;A for clarifications</p> <p>Moderated by Jenelle Babb, <i>UNESCO Bangkok</i> and Diego Paz, <i>Consultant UNESCO Quito</i></p>
11:00 – 11:15	<p><b>Presentation by Amaze : age-appropriate content for adolescents</b></p>
11:15 – 11:30	<p><b>Coffee/ Tea break</b></p>
11:30 – 13:00	<p><b>Group discussions: CSE &amp; curricula</b></p> <p>Break out groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4x group discussions to highlight the achievements and ongoing gaps.</li> <li>• Series of short questions e.g.: moving from 'gender &amp; diversity' to LGBTQI content; terminology in the curriculum; content for different age groups</li> </ul> <p>Plenary feedback facilitated by Joanna Herat &amp; Sylvain Séguy</p>
13:00 – 14:00	<p><b>Lunch</b></p>
14:00 – 14:30	<p><b>Artistic Performance – by Agents of Ishq, India (by video link)</b></p>
14:30 – 15:15	<p><b>Inclusive learning environments – building safe learning spaces as a basis for SOGIEinclusive CSE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jenelle Babb, <i>UNESCO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific</i></li> <li>• Via video link: Medha Acharya and Varsha Ganesan, <i>Co-Directors, Inter-Uni LGBT Network, Singapore</i></li> <li>• Fabiola Miranda, <i>Ministry of Education, Chile</i></li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Remmy Shawa, <i>UNESCO</i></p>
15:15 – 15:30	<p><b>Rapid Reflection: Key messages</b></p>
15:30 – 17:00 (Including coffee/ tea break)	<p><b>Thematic Discussions in groups</b></p> <p><b>Opposition &amp; legal / cultural acceptance:</b> how to navigate legal and cultural constraints?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Table moderators: Aina Keita, <i>National Project Officer UNESCO Namibia</i>, and Jessie Clyde, <i>Consultant, IWORDS Global</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Intersectionality: race, class, disability. How to address intersectionality.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Table moderators: Grace Isong Akpan, <i>Executive Director, The PACT, Nigeria.</i></li> </ul>



DAY 3 - 29 September 2022: Morning	
9:00 – 9:30	<b>Summary of Day 2</b> Rapporteur (name to be confirmed)
9:30 – 10:30	<b>Partnerships and multi-actor approaches for programmes &amp; advocacy (followed by a Q&amp;A session)</b>  <b>Fireside chat / panel discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anu Bista, <i>Manager, Youth and CSE, Family Planning Association, Nepal</i></li> <li>Jeffrey O'Malley, <i>Senior Advisor, LGBTI Inclusion, Africa HIV, Health and Development Team, UNDP South Africa</i></li> <li>Marcela Romero, <i>REDLACTRANS Representative, Argentina</i></li> </ul> <b>Moderated by Remmy Shawa</b>
10:30 – 11:00	<b>Coffee/ Tea break</b>
11:00 – 12:45	<b>Key recommendations</b>  Plenary & group discussion on overall key findings, recommendations and key messages. Facilitators: Linnea Renton & Diego Postigo
12:45 – 13:00	<b>Closing remarks</b>
13:00 – 14:00	<b>Lunch</b>

## Annex 4: List of participants of the technical consultation

Name	Organization	Country
<b>UNESCO</b>		
Remmy Shawa	UNESCO Johannesburg office	South Africa
Jenelle Babb	UNESCO Bangkok office	Thailand
Diego Paz	UNESCO Santiago office	Chile
Joanna Herat	UNESCO Headquarters (Paris)	France
Aina Heita-Kantewa	UNESCO Windhoek office	Namibia
Doreen Cheta	UNESCO Johannesburg office	South Africa
Sylvain Séguy	UNESCO Headquarters (Paris)	France
<b>Other UN agencies</b>		
Jeff O'Malley	UNDP South Africa office (Johannesburg office)	South Africa
<b>Civil society</b>		
Rubén Ávila	IGLYO	Spain
Ramón Gómez	MOVILH-RIE	Chile
Marcela Romero	REDLACTRANS	Argentina
Marinus Schouten	School and Safety Foundation	The Netherlands
Kalle Röcklinger	The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education	Sweden

Karen Rayne	UNHUSHED	USA
Jessie Clyde	IWORDS	USA
Lucy Emmerson	Sex Education Forum	The UK
Anu Bista	Family Planning Association of Nepal	Nepal
<b>Independent experts/ researchers</b>		
Anthony Brown	University of Johannesburg	South Africa
José Ramallo	Instituto de Profesores (Teacher Training Center) Artigas	Uruguay
Diego Postigo	Independent consultant	Panama
Linnea Renton	Independent consultant	The UK
<b>Youth representatives</b>		
Missael Hotman Napitupulu	Youth Lead	Indonesia
Jade Sullivan	Feminitt Caribbean	Canada and Jamaica
<b>Government representatives</b>		
Evangelina Vidal	Ministry of Education	Argentina
Fabiola Miranda	Ministry of Education	Chile
Likho Bottoman	Department for Basic Education	South Africa
Robert Munganda	Ministry of Education	Namibia
<b>Virtual participants</b>		
Debasmita Das	Agents of Ishq	India
Anshumaan Sathe	Agents of Ishq	India
Sopheha Pheung	Asean SOGIE Caucus	Cambodia
Somolireasmey Saphon	Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia	Cambodia
Medha Acharya	Inter-University LGBT Network, Singapore	Singapore
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## Safe, seen and included

### Report on school-based sexuality education

This report emphasizes the need for Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) that is inclusive of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions (SOGIE) to promote safety and inclusion for all learners. Despite global progress, there are still gaps in evidence-based content and delivery, and discrimination based on SOGIE remains pervasive and harmful. The report contains country case studies and good practice examples, presenting key findings and recommendations for policy-makers and practitioners. It underscores the significance of teacher training and monitoring for quality implementation to ensure learners' well-being in all their diversity.

## Stay in touch



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