

UNAIDS 2024

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

2022-2023 Organizational report

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HIV in UNESCO's mandate

UNESCO uses its comparative advantage with the education sector to support Member States to advance young people's health and well-being. Efforts are guided by the revised [UNESCO's Strategy on Education for Health and Well-being](#), which was launched in 2022. The Strategy emphasizes building stronger, more resilient school health systems that promote learners' physical and mental health and well-being, as well as HIV and reproductive health, while focussing on CSE and on ending violence and discrimination. It addresses the mutually reinforcing intersections of SDGs 3 (Health), 4 (Education) and 5 (Gender equality).

Key UNESCO strategy for HIV

Efforts for global HIV prevention continue through support for delivery of in-school CSE programmes around the world, using the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education, as the principal guiding framework for curricula, policy and advocacy. UNESCO is the co-convenor of the UNAIDS division of labour area on young people, along with UNICEF and UNFPA. UNESCO also supports development of the "Education Plus" initiative, which aims to strengthen the education and empowerment of adolescent girls and young women in Africa. In 2024, UNESCO assumed the role of Chair of the Committee of Cosponsoring Organization.

Top results in 2022-2023

Landmark recommendation was adopted. A landmark achievement was the adoption of the revised Recommendation on Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development in 2023. The Recommendation conceptualizes health and well-being within the notion of "education for peace", based on evidence and internationally agreed language. Key themes include learners' health and well-being, safe learning environments, CSE and socio-emotional skills.

Political commitment was strengthened. In 2023, in Brazzaville, Ministers of Education and Health from 25 countries endorsed the WCA Commitment for educated, healthy and empowered adolescents and young people. UNESCO played an important role in supporting countries to deliver on their pledge to strengthen education and health programmes to better address HIV, early and unintended pregnancy and gender-based violence, and achieve tangible targets by 2027 and 2032.

UNESCO also collaborated to develop and launch of the Continental Strategy on Education for Health and Well-being of Young People. This African Union strategy aims to enhance the physical, mental and reproductive health of young people while contributing to the achievement of education goals. The strategy addresses health challenges, such as early pregnancies, HIV and gender-based violence, and it builds on existing international commitments such as the ESA Ministerial Commitment and the WCA Commitment.

HIV prevention efforts were strengthened. UNESCO is contributing to HIV prevention through its longstanding experience in working with ministries of education and by synergizing efforts with ongoing initiatives on girls' education and quality CSE, including the "Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future" (O3) programme. The O3 programme addresses barriers to girls' education, health and empowerment, including adolescent pregnancy, HIV and gender-based violence. It strengthens access to good-quality CSE and youth-friendly services across sub-Saharan Africa. In 2023, the Programme launched its second phase, with 20 million learners already reached by teachers who had been trained with UNESCO support.

Capacity and commitment on CSE were increased. As co-convenor of the Global Partnership Forum on CSE with UNFPA, UNESCO fosters a space for thought leadership and strategic action. In 2022, a global symposium on CSE attracted over 800 registrants, with a programme featuring 120 speakers. The online event focused on tackling the social, cultural and political environment; promoting young people's meaningful involvement and the inclusion of under-served populations; and highlighting the evidence and good practices for the delivery of CSE.

UNESCO's position as the knowledge leader on CSE was also further consolidated in 2023 with the 56th Commission on Population and Development's focus on education. UNESCO contributed with its expertise, including written reports and presentations to the committee on education and population. It also continued to support better coordinated global efforts to respond to the anti-rights movement and its disinformation campaigns against CSE, including by collaborating and sharing information with UN partners to promote a coherent response.

UNESCO also promoted the global research agenda on CSE by launching two major studies in 2022–2023. One focused on addressing evidence gaps regarding learners' social and emotional life skills and their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and values regarding gender and healthy, equitable interpersonal relationships, while documenting the sociocultural contexts of national CSE programmes in six countries. The other study will investigate adolescents' and young people's perspectives, attitudes and experiences on CSE around the world.

Through collaboration with the Global Education Monitoring Report team, UNESCO developed a Profiles Enhancing Education Review (PEER) series that is focused on CSE. In 2023, 50 profiles were successfully launched through a global webinar. They are aimed at stimulating national policy dialogues, facilitating regional peer-learning between countries and enabling the monitoring of relevant policy trends. Fifty additional profiles will be launched in 2024.

UNESCO launched a new project focussed on understanding how sexuality education can be inclusive of the needs and rights of all learners, including those who are LGBTQI+. The project aims to collate strategic information on LGBTQI+-inclusive sexuality education and advance knowledge sharing and dialogue between interested countries and stakeholders. An international consultation meeting was hosted in South Africa in 2022. In 2023 a new report, titled "Safe, seen and included", was published in English and Spanish. It highlights the rationale for sexuality education that is inclusive of LGBTQ+ learners for realizing their rights to education, health and well-being. The report features success factors and case

studies from numerous countries. UNESCO collaborated with UNDP, the World Bank, the Council of Europe and civil society partners in publicizing recommendations from the report.

Young children (e.g., aged 5–12 years) acquire foundational knowledge, skills and attitudes that shape many of their future health, education and social outcomes. To strengthen support and increase understanding of the delivery of quality CSE to those age groups, UNESCO and partners in 2022 began to lead a suite of work titled “Building strong foundations”. A new set of technical briefs has been developed, based on a thorough evidence review and a wide stakeholder consultation process (across health, social protection, education, etc.) The briefs, to be published with UNICEF, will assist governments and other stakeholders to strengthen foundational education for health and well-being in primary schools. The briefs will be launched in 2024.

In the Asia Pacific region, (Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Thailand and Viet Nam), nine videos on CSE education and lesson plans for teachers and peer educators were developed and published online, following cross-country collaboration with young people, educators and civil society. The courses were developed in both English and local languages. In addition, UNESCO continued to support and empower young people through regional advocacy (in India, Nepal and Thailand) to prevent school violence, bullying and discrimination, with a focus in LGBTQI+ learners.

In Latin America, UNESCO continued to support the delivery of the seventh edition of the 180-hour diploma-level course on CSE to state authorities, educators and other specialists in the education and health sectors across the region. Over 100 participants from 19 countries participated in the 2023 edition. Since its inception, the course has reached over 1,000 specialists in most of Spanish-speaking Latin America with a curriculum that strengthens national capacities to design, implement and monitor prevention efforts for adolescents and young people. The initiative won the 2023 World Association for Sexual Health Award for the best academic training proposal in CSE worldwide.

Progress was tracked. UNESCO commissioned a review of the SDG thematic indicator 4.7.2, which tracks the proportion of schools that provide life skills-based HIV and sexuality education within the formal curriculum or as part of extracurricular activities. The main objective was to strengthen understandings of set practices for data collection and reporting; identify challenges, shortcomings and lessons learned; and collate recommendations that can improve standards for the indicators and processes related to data collection and reporting. Completed in March 2023, the study yielded practical recommendations for improving data collection and reporting systems for SDG 4.7.2, and for enhancing the methodology. Those improvements are expected to support the development of evidence-based policies and programmes to enhance the provision of life skills-based HIV and sexuality education.

Digital community of practice was established. Recognizing that digital spaces are increasingly used by adolescents and young people as sources of sexuality education, UNESCO established a community of practice for digital content creators, the “Digital sex-ed creators hub”, in eastern Europe and central Asia. The hub convenes over 290 content creators from 60 countries who are creating innovative, factual digital content for young people. UNESCO also developed a second brief on sexuality education in the digital space, which will be launched in 2024.

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