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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Unified Budget Results and Accountability Framework
(UBRAF) 2016-2021

Organizational report 2021

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Key strategies and approaches to integrate HIV into 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 UNESCO Strategy on Education for Health and Well-being 2016–2021, which established two strategic priorities for UNESCO's work, outlined below. In 2022, a revised Strategy will be released, which reaffirms the continued relevance of the priorities, while expanding and reinforcing a focus on strengthening the resilience of school health systems and their ability to promote the physical and mental health and well-being of learners.

Strategic Priority 1: All children and young people benefit from good quality comprehensive sexuality education

- Preventing HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases
- Promoting awareness of HIV testing, knowing one's status, and HIV treatment
- Strengthening puberty education
- Preventing early and unintended pregnancy
- Developing attitudes, values and skills for healthy and respectful relationships

Strategic Priority 2: All young people have access to safe, inclusive, health-promoting learning environments

- Eliminating school-related violence and bullying, including based on gender, gender identity and sexual orientation
- Preventing health- and gender-related discrimination towards learners and educators
- Increasing awareness of the importance of good nutrition and quality physical education
- Preventing use of harmful substances

Top achievements on HIV in 2020-2021

- **Launching the Comprehensive Sexuality Education Global Partnership Forum.** At global level, UNESCO support has resulted in strengthened capacity to coordinate and advance efforts on CSE, through a Global Partnership Forum on CSE co-convened with UNFPA. Launched in June 2021, it brings together UN agencies, civil society, donors, youth and education networks to advance CSE through enhanced collaboration, strategic information and research, evidence-informed policy, operational, and technical guidance and coordinated advocacy.
- **Expanding strategic information for action.** To advance understanding of the state of sexuality education globally, UNESCO led the development of a milestone Co-published with WHO, UNFPA, the UNAIDS Secretariat, UNICEF, and UN Women and launched in June 2021 during the Generation Equality Forum, the report draws on data from more than 150 countries. It built on regional status reviews conducted by UNESCO, including a review of school-based CSE covering 30 countries in the Asia-Pacific region and a situational analysis on CSE and SRH services in western and central Africa, which informed the development of 24 country fact sheets.
- **Building political commitment.** Through UNESCO support, the historic 2013 Eastern and Southern Africa Ministerial Commitment to strengthen access to CSE and SRH services was renewed through 2030. Strong progress has been made towards realizing a similar commitment for western and central Africa in 2022.

- **Empowering young people.** UNESCO embarked on an innovative partnership with the Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+) and the Global Network of Young People Living with HIV (Y+ Global) to produce a youth-led update of the 2012 “Positive Learning” recommendations for meeting the needs of young people living with HIV in the education sector. Y+ Global led the work in collaboration with UNESCO and consultations were held with young people living with HIV in each world region, culminating in a global consultation in July 2021, which brought together over 60 stakeholders representing the education and health sectors, the UN, civil society and young people. The resulting recommendations were released on World AIDS Day 2021.
- **Normative guidance.** UNESCO and WHO launched the "[Global standards for health promoting schools](#)", which will help schools strengthen their responses to HIV and promote learner health and well-being.

Contribution to progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals

Contributing to SDG 3: health

UNESCO, WHO and UNICEF are partnering on the “Make every school a health promoting school” initiative, through the launch of the "[Global standards for health promoting schools](#)", implementation guidance and country case studies. UNESCO continues to support national education sectors to strengthen the capacity of pre- and in-service teachers and education staff on health education, including HIV and sexuality education. The [CSE implementation toolkit](#) and the [CSE learning platform](#) continue to serve as key resources. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the 5th edition of the online CSE course for teachers, organized by FLACSO Argentina, was completed, reaching participants from 18 countries. In western and central Africa, the number of pre-service teachers trained rose from 405 in 2020 to 110 632 by the end of 2021. In China, India, Myanmar and Pakistan, over 2,000 teachers were trained and over 600 000 teachers in India completed several modules of online school health programme training.

UNESCO also convened a new partnership, “Stepping up effective school health and nutrition”, with FAO, GPE, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, WFP and WHO. This positioned school health and well-being in the global education agenda, including through the development of a school health [advocacy brochure](#), including school health and nutrition in joint strategic dialogues and documents in the context of the COVID-19 response (including the UN Secretary-General brief on education and the "Save our futures" white paper), and the final declaration of the Global Education Meeting in 2020. UNESCO is launching a collaborative initiative to develop a global status report on school health and nutrition.

For SDG 4 (quality education)

In 2021, UNESCO supported more than 90 countries, including over 40 in Africa, to strengthen CSE and promote safe, inclusive learning environments. They reached more than 30.2 million learners in 2018–2021. In eastern Europe and central Asia, it partnered with UNFPA and BZgA on a CSE assessment in five countries (Georgia, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan,

Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). Drawing on an analysis of existing literature on research gaps and consultative process, UNESCO finalized a brief in 2021 to guide future investments in CSE research.

With regard to SDG 5 on gender equality

UNESCO provides global leadership, standard-setting and strategic vision on gender equality in and through education. In 2021, a key focus was the inception of the Education Plus initiative, co-convened with the UNAIDS Secretariat, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women, and addressing the disproportionate HIV risk and vulnerability of adolescent girls and young women in sub-Saharan Africa. UNESCO is contributing to this initiative through its longstanding experience of working with ministries of education and by linking efforts with ongoing initiatives, including the “Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future” (O3) programme, which seeks to transform gender norms and attitudes of learners, challenge rigid notions of masculinity and promote gender equality.

UNESCO continues to play a leading role in work to eliminate school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV), co-chairing the Global Working Group to End SRGBV with the UN Girl's Education Initiative. It also coordinated three regional meetings on the issue in 2020–2021. Work on school-related gender-based violence continues through the “Connect with Respect” curriculum tool, which supports teachers to prevent and address the issue. The curriculum was piloted in seven countries in Africa and Asia, which produced a wealth of data on the effectiveness of the intervention and on effective approaches for teacher training and for integrating the short course into school curricula. In 2021, a key focus of efforts was the development of a [multicountry synthesis report](#) highlighting key findings and recommendations, alongside an updated version of the "[Connect with Respect](#)" [toolkit for the eastern and southern Africa region](#). The report and the toolkit were published in 2022.

UNESCO remains at the forefront of efforts to defend the right to education of gender-diverse learners. In 2021, the UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring team published a policy brief "[Don't look away: no place for exclusion of LGBTI students](#)". The brief provides evidence-informed recommendations for governments to protect the rights of LGBTI+ learners, improve monitoring of school-based bullying and violence, and create a positive, supportive learning environment. In May 2021, UNESCO also supported the NGO MAG Jeunes LGBT and OutRight Action International to co-organize a virtual global conference on the rights and inclusion of LGTBI+ youth. Among other matters, it focused on strategies for combating school violence and bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

HIV in the context of the COVID-19 response

UNESCO helped schools and learners cope with COVID-19, while continuing to respond to learner's HIV and SRH-related needs. UNESCO continues to co-convene a technical advisory group (with WHO and UNICEF), and a research network working group (with WHO) on COVID-19 and educational Institutions. UNESCO also contributed to the development of a range of informational and normative materials, addressing such issues as school re-openings, gender-based violence, ensuring safe learning experiences. UNESCO

supported national education ministries in five countries (Botswana, Eswatini, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe) to develop guidelines for school re-openings following COVID-19-related lockdowns.

A key focus has been on addressing the gendered-impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In September 2021, UNESCO released a global study “When schools shut”, which exposed the immediate and long-term threat that school closures posed for gender equality, with gender-specific effects on health, well-being and protection. UNESCO supported the development of e-learning and distance-learning solutions to ensure that young people still had access to HIV and health education, including through “Youth talk” radio programmes or the “Let’s talk at home” campaign on early and unintended pregnancy. With the Malala Fund, Plan International, the UN Girl’s Education Initiative and UNICEF, UNESCO also launched “Building back equal: girls back to school guide”. The guide was released with the African Union and used for Liberia’s national strategy for girls’ education and Nepal’s back-to-school planning. In western and central Africa, the “Keeping girls in school” campaign trained media and young people to advocate for girls to return to school by using, for instance, a variety of topical messages broadcast on radio and television programmes to raise awareness on the protective effect of education. Community-based dialogues with religious and community leaders also addressed gender disparities in education.

Case study: Reaching religious leaders in the United Republic of Tanzania on adolescent and sexual and reproductive health and rights



The involvement of religious leaders is of paramount importance for reaching more young people, including those who are not in mainstream education. In October 2021, UNESCO provided over 560 copies of the [religious leaders’ adolescents, sexual and reproductive health and rights toolkit](#) to the Tanzania Interfaith Partnership.

The toolkit aims to equip religious leaders with resources for engaging with their communities to address the needs and challenges related to adolescent SRHR. The toolkit addresses key needs and challenges with respect to SRH, HIV and gender-based violence. Two versions of the toolkit, one for Muslim and the other for Christian denominations, were developed, adapting the generic toolkit developed in 2019 by the World Council of Churches to the Tanzanian context. Each version of the toolkit included citations from the Quran and the Bible.

The Tanzania Interfaith Partnership hailed UNESCO for the support and for its move to create ties with clerics as key entry points to affect the attitudes and behaviours of young people. Clerics who participated in the handover ceremony acknowledged the importance of SRHR to help young people create more mindful, respectful, equal and informed communities.

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