

# Sexuality Education in the WHO European Region

## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (Canton Sarajevo)



# BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



## Status of sexuality education

Sexuality education differs widely within Bosnia and Herzegovina, depending on the region ('canton'). This factsheet focuses on the situation in the canton Sarajevo, which is the only canton that has introduced sexuality education to its formal school curriculum. It is included as an optional course and covers a variety of topics.





## Laws and policies

There is no national law relating specifically to sexuality education. The governmental strategy on sexual and reproductive health and rights (2010)<sup>1</sup> calls for providing a high level of knowledge in the field of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) through formal and informal education.

## Implementation of sexuality education

In Sarajevo, sexuality education is part of Healthy Lifestyle Education, which includes five other subjects ('chapters'). The official title of the sexuality-education chapter is 'Protecting Reproductive Health and Gender Questions – Development of Protective Attitudes and Values'. The Healthy Lifestyle Education curriculum is optional and can be chosen as one of three options, the other two being 'Religion' and 'Society, Culture and Religion'. The curriculum is taught from the fifth through the ninth grade (ages 10–14 years) and covers in total 175 teaching hours of 45 minutes each. In the eighth and ninth grades, the sexuality-education chapter is taught throughout the entire 2 years. A variety of topics such as biological aspects, HIV and sexually transmitted infections, love, marriage, relationships, gender roles, online media and sexuality, mutual consent to sexual activity, and human rights and sexuality are covered extensively in the curriculum. There is also a link to youth-friendly SRH services: teachers explain how and where to access these services. In addition, learners<sup>2</sup> are requested to conduct different activities, such as visiting these services and their webpages.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of canton Sarajevo is responsible for monitoring and evaluating Healthy Lifestyle Education, but because of the lack of resources, these activities have not yet been implemented at the governmental level.

## Training of teachers on sexuality education

Together with Association XY (IPPF member association), the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Canton Sarajevo provides technical assistance and capacity-building activities in preparing schools for implementing Healthy Lifestyles Education. For this purpose, a 'cantonal' curriculum was developed, including a teachers' handbook and a students' workbook. Other partners, including teachers, young people, parents and healthcare professionals, were involved in the development, testing and evaluation of the curriculum.

**Almost all sexuality-education teachers were trained in special 2-3-day courses.** Association XY supported the creation of a teachers' network to guide implementation of different sexuality-education lessons using a participatory learning approach.



## Sexuality education outside the formal school setting

A wide variety of educational activities are provided outside the formal school setting. These include peer-education sessions, counselling in youth centres, TV programmes focusing on parents and other stakeholders, and education through websites and articles in youth magazines. A sex-positive website ('Pazi Sex')<sup>3</sup> provides additional learning opportunities and counselling services for five Balkan countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As part of the programme funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, different non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were involved in SRH education and service delivery programmes, targeting various groups of underserved young people. This programme ended in the first half of 2016, and now Association XY is one of the few NGOs to continue work with these population subgroups.

## Challenges

There is some resistance to sexuality education, mainly from parents, teachers and governmental representatives. The lack of understanding of the positive outcomes of sexuality education and traditionalist views influence their perception of the relevance of sexuality education. A lack of financial support is also perceived to be an obstacle to strengthening teacher training and providing additional tools.

# Country facts



## Bosnia and Herzegovina

Total population <sup>4</sup>	3 843 000
Population aged 15–19 years (% of 15–19-year-olds in total population) <sup>4</sup>	279 000 (7.3 %)
Government expenditure on education (% of GDP) <sup>5</sup>	N/A
Youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24 years) <sup>6</sup>	66.9
Gender Inequality Index rating <sup>7</sup>	0.158
Births per 1 000 women aged 15–19 years <sup>8</sup>	8
% of 15-year-olds who have had sexual intercourse <sup>9</sup>	N/A
Average age of mother at birth of first child <sup>10</sup>	26.7

N/A: not available

For references go to last page

## References / Definitions

- 1 Strategija za Unapređenje Seksualnog i Reproductivnog Zdravlja i Prava u Federaciji Bosne i Hercegovine, 2010–2019 [Strategy for Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2010–2019]. Sarajevo: Federal Ministry of Health; 2010 ([http://www.nationalplanningcycles.org/sites/default/files/country\\_docs/Bosnia%20and%20Herzegovina/srz\\_strategija\\_vlada.pdf](http://www.nationalplanningcycles.org/sites/default/files/country_docs/Bosnia%20and%20Herzegovina/srz_strategija_vlada.pdf), accessed 25 March 2017).
- 2 **Learner:** a child or young person who is enrolled or attends classes in school, including primary (basic/elementary), secondary (middle) and high school.
- 3 Pazisex [website] (<http://pazisex.net>, accessed 25 March 2017).
- 4 Population by age, sex and urban/rural residence, 2016 [online database]. New York: United Nations Statistics Division; 2017 (<http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=POP&f=tableCode%3A22>, accessed 25 March 2017).
- 5 Human development report 2016: human development for everyone. New York: United Nations Development Programme; 2016 (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/2016-report>, accessed 25 March 2017).
- Government expenditure on education:** current, capital and transfer spending on education, expressed as a percentage of GDP. Range in the region is approx. 2.0–8.5.
- 6 Human development data, 2015 [online database]. New York: United Nations Development Programme; 2017 (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/data#>, accessed 25 March 2017).
- Youth unemployment rate:** percentage of the labour force population aged 15–24 years that is not in paid employment or self-employed, but is available for work and has taken steps to seek paid employment or self-employment.
- 7 Human development report 2016: human development for everyone. New York: United Nations Development Programme; 2016 (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/2016-report>, accessed 25 March 2017).
- Gender Inequality Index:** a composite measure reflecting inequality in achievement between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market. It varies between zero (when women and men fare equally) and one (when men or women fare poorly compared with the other in all dimensions).
- 8 Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1 000 women ages 15–19). Washington (DC): World Bank; 2016 (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT>, accessed 25 March 2017).
- 9 Growing up unequal: gender and socioeconomic differences in young people's health and well-being. HBSC 2016 study report (2013/2014 survey). Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2016 (<http://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/growing-up-unequal.-hbhc-2016-study-20132014-survey>, accessed 25 March 2017).
- 10 Mother's mean age at first birth. Index Mundi [data from CIA world factbook, various years] (<https://www.indexmundi.com/factbook/fields/mother's-mean-age-at-first-birth>, accessed 25 March 2017).