



## Sexuality education status

Transformation of the Georgian education system started back in 2005, when the Law of Georgia on General Education, the National Goals of General Education, and the first competency-based National Curriculum were introduced in the system. The reform aimed to change the education paradigm towards a student-centred approach and equip students with knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for their lifelong education and professional development. Therefore, new generations of the National Curriculum placed more emphasis on skills and competencies, including critical thinking, cooperation, safety and other life skills as cross-curricular competencies to be developed in all subjects and levels of general education. In 2018-2019, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (MoES) realised the need to strengthen the formal education system in terms of introducing topics from the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in response to the international and national commitments assumed by the country. Thus, the 2018 revision of the National Curriculum made the first attempts to integrate the selected topics of the CSE in two school subject standards – “Biology” and “Civic Education”. The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia recognizes that the changes introduced in the National Curriculum and school subject standards in 2018 are not sufficient, therefore, strives to gradually expand the coverage of topics in the formal education system and strengthen the process through informal education means. To support this initiative and assess the current quality of school-based sexuality education in the country, an analysis was conducted using the standardised Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool (SERAT)<sup>1</sup>.

## Legal and policy context

The legal and policy context in relation to many components of the CSE is quite well developed in Georgia (score of 75%). Topics of CSE are reflected in different documents of the educational policies and strategies. The institutional system of the MoES is supportive of having a non-discriminative and violence-free education system in the country. National laws create a solid foundation for the prevention of violence and discrimination, and protection of human rights. Even though there is no separate ministerial structure supporting CSE, all content-related issues are supported by the Preschool and General Education Development Department of the MoES, including those subjects and programmes into which CSE topics are integrated. Despite this positive trend, the SERAT also identified that linkage of the education system with the school-based services or youth friendly centres is poor or non-existent. There is no school-based health service across the country. Only some schools have school doctors deployed, therefore, they do not offer any information on CSE and are not linked to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services.

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<sup>1</sup> SERAT tool and report template available at [UNESCO Health and Education Resource Centre](https://unesco.org/en/themes/education/education-resources/unesco-health-and-education-resource-centre)

## Objectives and principles

The National Curriculum of Georgia is a document that defines the level-based learning outcomes per subject, the assessment approaches, the methodology and other important components of the teaching and learning process. Thus, the learning outcomes unite knowledge, skills and attitudes that each student should possess. When analysing the objectives and principles of the National Curriculum, SERAT concludes that most of the CSE topics given in SERAT are not formulated in the language of the goals and objectives of the National Curriculum. However, the National Curriculum defines cross-cutting skills and attitudes as goals of the teaching and learning process, which can serve as a good foundation for CSE. Curriculum development process was very participatory with involvement of teachers, parents, students and experts. However, the diversity of the stakeholders does not include experts on human sexuality and behaviour change. Furthermore, most of the skills related to CSE are absent in the objectives and principles of the National Curriculum.

## Sexuality education content (5-18+ years old)

Sexuality education is not a stand-alone subject and integrated in other courses including “Biology”, “Citizenship” and “Me and Society”. The analysis of the content of the selected subjects showcased the uneven distribution of the topics from the CSE for different age groups.

For the age group 5-8, analysis revealed that the key concepts of “Values, rights, culture” and “Relationships” are represented in the curriculum more strongly than others. Topics related to healthy lifestyle, violence and SRH (in relation to making distinction between being healthy and sick) are partly covered by the document. Whereas, anything related to human body and development, sexuality and sexual behaviour, gender and gender-related norms are fully absent.

Sexuality education content is represented most weakly for the age group of 9-12. Topics related to relationships are represented somewhat by three out of its nine content items. Similarly, information on the topics related to values, rights, cultures, and diversity is limited and confined to referencing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Key concepts, such as understanding gender, violence and staying safe, sexuality and sexual behaviour, and SRH are absent in the curriculum. Likewise, knowledge on gender norms, human body and development is poorly integrated for the aforementioned age group.

The curriculum for the age group 12-15 covers more topics of CSE. The compulsory theme “Reproductive system and health” is integrated into the biology classes, covering a number of topics such as reproductive systems of men and women, risk factors for the spread of communicable diseases (including sexually transmitted infections (STIs)), risks associated with early sexual intercourse, premature/early marriage and pregnancy, and their causes and prevention. However, it should be noted that the concepts on relationships, violence, skills of health and well-being are superficially introduced in the content and the topic of gender remains underrepresented. While the general curriculum focuses on equity and equal rights for all, gender-specific topics, especially on sexuality, are not provided to students.

As for the age group 15-18, most of the key CSE concepts are absent in the high school curriculum. Additionally, it should be mentioned that the new biology curriculum for upper secondary school does not cover any of the given CSE topics for this age group.

Thus, it can be concluded that overall, CSE content is insufficiently represented in the National Curriculum of Georgia (average score for all age groups is 16%). The major topics fall in the areas of human rights, non-discrimination, non-violence, tolerance, respect, communication skills, conflict resolution and some aspects of reproductive health. The content related to human rights is the strongest part of the curriculum, while the content related to sexuality and sexual behaviour is the weakest.

## Teaching methods and teacher training

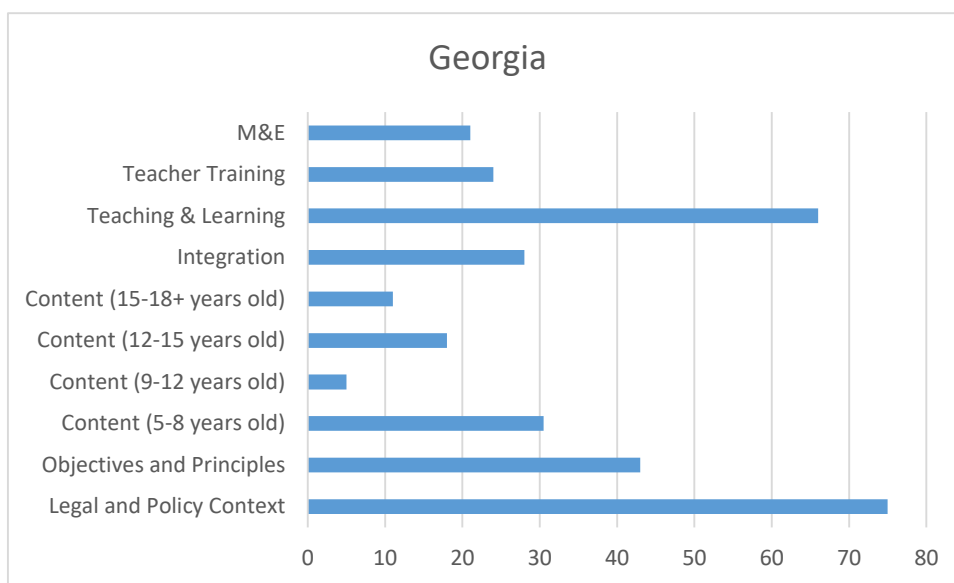
The Law on General Education, teachers' professional standards, the document "Subject benchmarks of higher education for teacher education" and the pre-service training programmes of two universities were explored to analyse the coverage of CSE through teacher education. In addition, an interview with a specialist from the Teacher Professional Development Center (TPDC) of the MoES was conducted to screen the in-service teacher trainings to find out whether and how they incorporate CSE topics. Such words as "sexual", "sexuality education" and "sexuality" are not mentioned in the documents of the education system, including the teacher pre- and in-service training programmes. Teacher training curricula in both pre- and in-service training programmes lack content on CSE topics. Despite this, learner-centred learning techniques and different teaching strategies for sexuality education, including participatory methods, are well integrated (score of 65.5%).

## Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of CSE is one of the weakest sections. As CSE is not an independent program or stand-alone subject and is weakly represented in the education system of the country, the MoES and its agency Education Management Information System (EMIS) have no statistical information on it. There is also no national-level data or information on the cost, fidelity of implementation or student perceptions of their learning experience.

### **Summary of SERAT findings**

The figure below summarizes the scores\* from SERAT per section in percentages and it demonstrates the sexuality education program's strengths and areas for improvement.



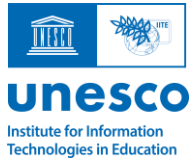
\* Weighted score = “present” x 1 (100%) + “present to some extent” x 0.5 (50%)<sup>2</sup>. % for “present” and “present to some extent” are derived from the graphs automatically generated by SERAT.

## Recommendations and way forward

As seen from the summary results, all components of CSE, including the curriculum, teacher training and monitoring and evaluation, need further development and enhancement. The biggest challenge of CSE is that there is a social stigma around sexuality-related issues, especially in the case of children and school education. One of the first steps to support CSE is to have an open dialogue on the topic led by health professionals, child psychologists, medical personnel and other experts via different channels, including social media, in-person meetings and webinars. These discussions will not only distribute the knowledge but also make education policy on CSE, including curriculum and teacher training programme development, more comprehensive and holistic. Below are some relevant recommendations with more details provided in the country report:

- Support the assessment of the CSE needs of children and young people in order to develop the strategy for their involvement in the curriculum development process;
- Introduce appropriate CSE content at all levels of education by developing age- and developmentally-appropriate content in accordance with international standards;
- Strengthen and expand the school doctor programme “Doctor’s Hour”, with trainings for doctors on how to deliver and develop relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes of students on SRH;
- Develop digital resources for students, teachers, parents and medical personnel who are working in schools to give them a better understanding of CSE;
- Reflect CSE topics in teacher pre-service programmes and revise existing programmes;
- Create professional development programmes for academic staff and teachers, and conduct seminars (and trainings) to include CSE topics;

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO et al. Global status report: The journey towards comprehensive sexuality education. UNESCO, 2021. Available at [Global Report](#)



- Strengthen curriculum implementation monitoring and assessment and incorporate classroom observation components for CSE topics.