

UNESCO'S SERAT METHODOLOGY

COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN GEORGIA

Report assessing the alignment of
sexuality education in the school
curriculum with international
standards for comprehensive
sexuality education



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Cover photo: UNFPA Georgia/Dina Oganova

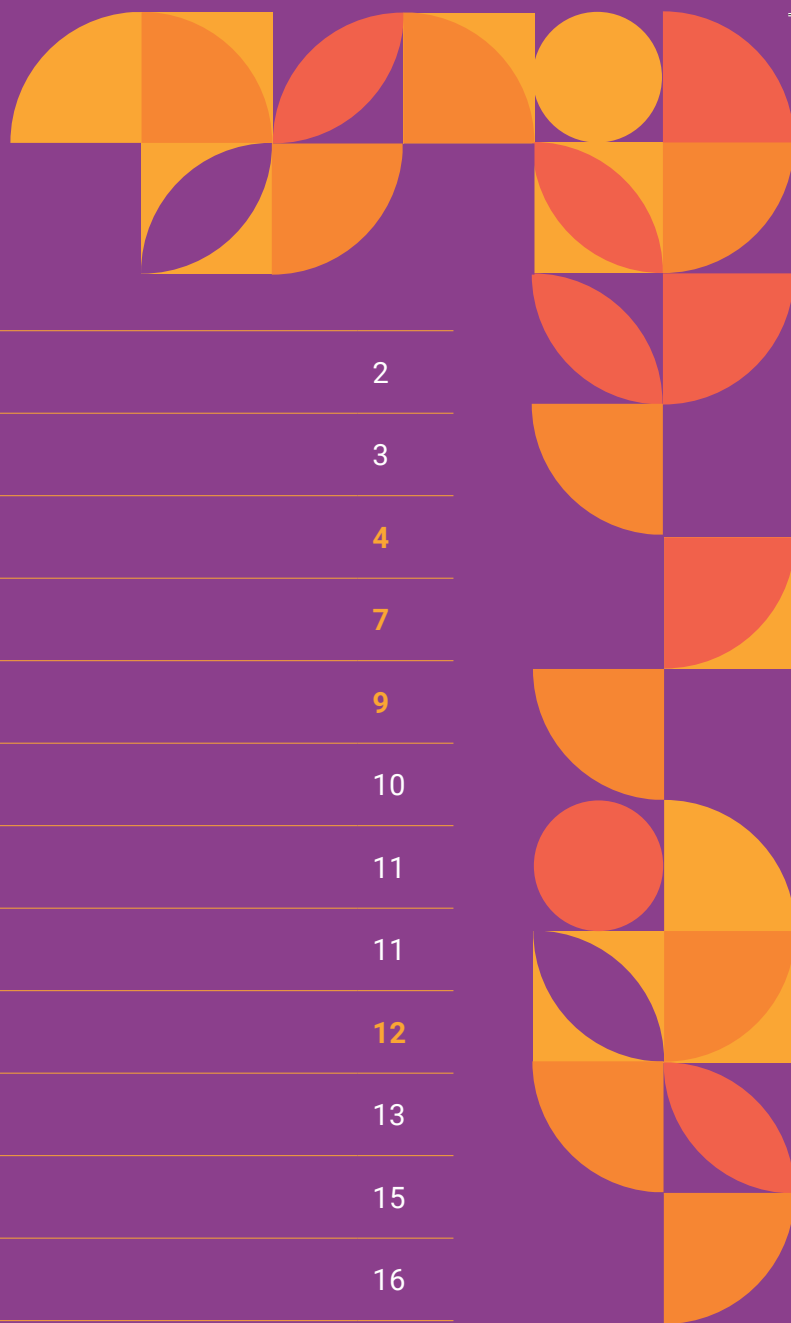




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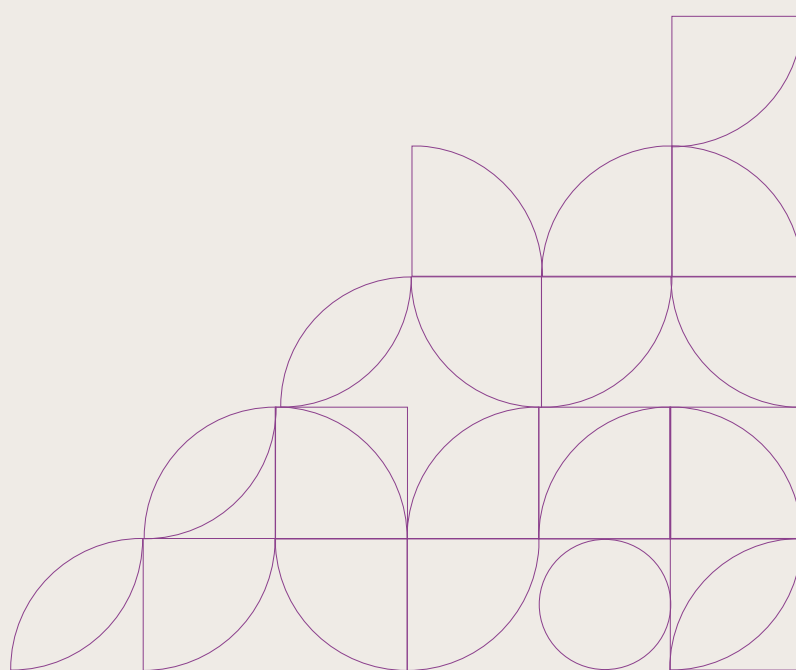
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Abbreviations and acronyms

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
CSE	Comprehensive sexuality education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
GBV	Gender-based violence
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICT	Information and communications technology
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MES	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SERAT	Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool
SHS	School-based health services
SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
TPDC	Teacher Professional Development Centre
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Background

Georgia's education system began its transformation in 2004, when the new Law on General Education, the National Goals of General Education and the first competency-based National Curriculum were introduced. These reforms aimed to change the education paradigm to take a more student-centred approach and to equip students with all the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes that they would need in life, further education and employment.

Subsequent generations of the National Curriculum in 2010 and 2018 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. During the revision of the National Curriculum in 2018 and 2019, some topics of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) were integrated into the subjects of biology and citizenship (civic education) at the basic education level. Despite these developments, CSE is poorly represented in the country's general education system. Policymakers often avoid the topic because of societal stigma around CSE, while experts and curriculum developers still make some efforts to expand CSE topics in the school programme. Anecdotal cases exist of some teachers skipping the chapters in the textbooks that contain information and topics relating to reproduction. Such cases made it necessary to explore the current status of CSE using the Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool (SERAT)¹ in order to get a broad overview and identify strong components, challenges and opportunities for further interventions.

A review was conducted between December 2021 and January 2022 by a national consultant in cooperation with the following stakeholders: the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (MES), the UNFPA Country Office in Georgia and the NGO Tanadgoma.

Methods

The following methods were used for the review:

- a desk review and analyses of the respective international and national normative documents, state programmes, the National Curriculum, syllabi and programmes of universities (faculties of education and pedagogy), statistical information, reports and studies
- five interviews: with the deputy head of the Preschool and General Education Development Department of the MES, the curriculum development coordinator of the MES, representatives of two universities (Akaki Tsereteli State University and Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University), and the CSE component manager of Tanadgoma – the Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health

1. The SERAT tool and reporting template are available at <https://healtheducationresources.unesco.org/library/documents/sexuality-education-review-and-assessment-tool-serat> (accessed on 15 June 2023).

Results

The main results of the review showed that relevant CSE topics are poorly represented in Georgia's general education system. When it comes to CSE content, significant gaps exist in the National Curriculum, the teacher pre- and in-service training programmes, the monitoring and evaluation system, and links to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services. The review showed that, in school, children and young people do not receive important information concerning their feelings, their body, their sexual identity, gender-based violence, healthy relationships or other related topics. Despite the fact that some CSE topics are represented in the National Curriculum, the review showed that they are not reflected in teachers' pre- and in-service training programmes. In addition, there is no national-level monitoring and evaluation system in place to assess curriculum implementation.

As for education and health data, even though UN agencies and national stakeholders produce such data, the review showed that not all of the information is available according to the indicators given in SERAT.

Additionally, the review showed that the legal and policy context is supportive and inclusive (even though CSE is not directly mentioned), especially from a human rights, anti-discrimination and violence prevention perspective. Since there is still a significant stigma associated with the topic in society, however, policymakers frequently avoid openly discussing the issue, which creates additional barriers for CSE advocacy and implementation.

Recommendations

Based on the review, recommendations were developed for the relevant stakeholders. The recommendations are grouped by SERAT focus area: data, legal and policy context, content, teaching and learning approaches and environment, teacher training, and monitoring and evaluation.

The recommendations provided near the end of this document cover five components:

1. revising, updating and developing normative documents to support CSE and linked services
2. developing content and resources, including digital resources: curriculum, pre- and in-service teacher training programmes, manuals for parents, etc.
3. conducting capacity-building on the various CSE topics for the following stakeholders: educators, school health workers, parents, university academic staff, university students of pedagogical faculties (i.e. future teachers)
4. coaching (supporting teachers), monitoring, evaluating curriculum implementation and maintaining a focus on important life skills, including SRH skills and competencies
5. institutionalizing the data collection methodology using SERAT to enable regular data gathering and monitoring

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

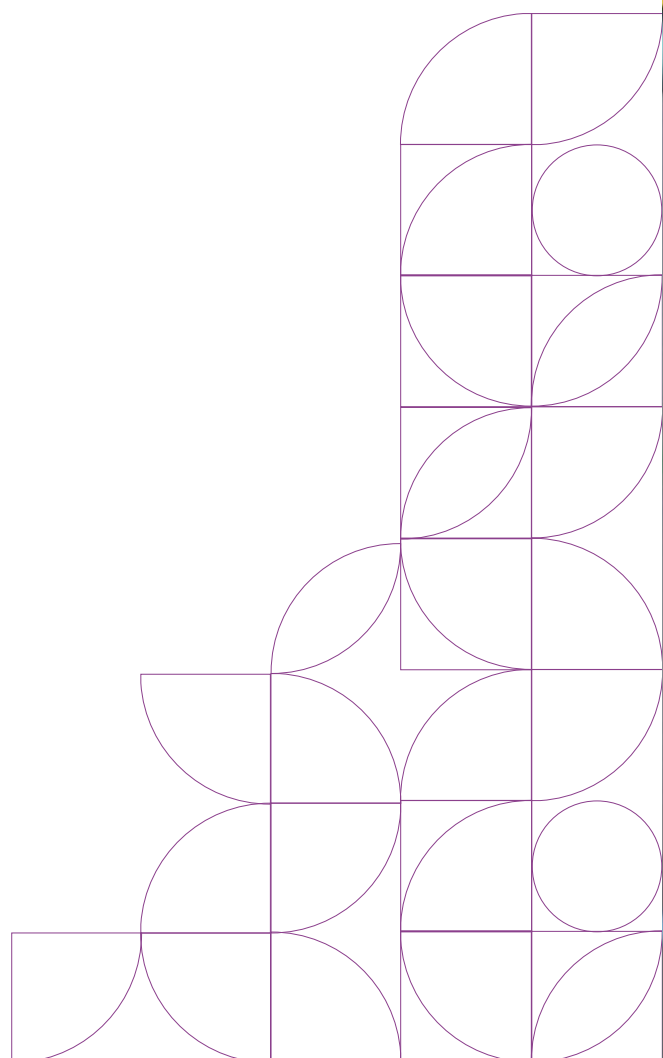


Comprehensive sexuality education has been an unaddressed topic in the Georgian education system for decades. Its importance and necessity were not reflected in legislative or programme documents. Only recently, in 2018 and 2019, were some CSE topics included in the third generation of the National Curriculum, with the support of UNFPA and the NGO Tanadgoma.

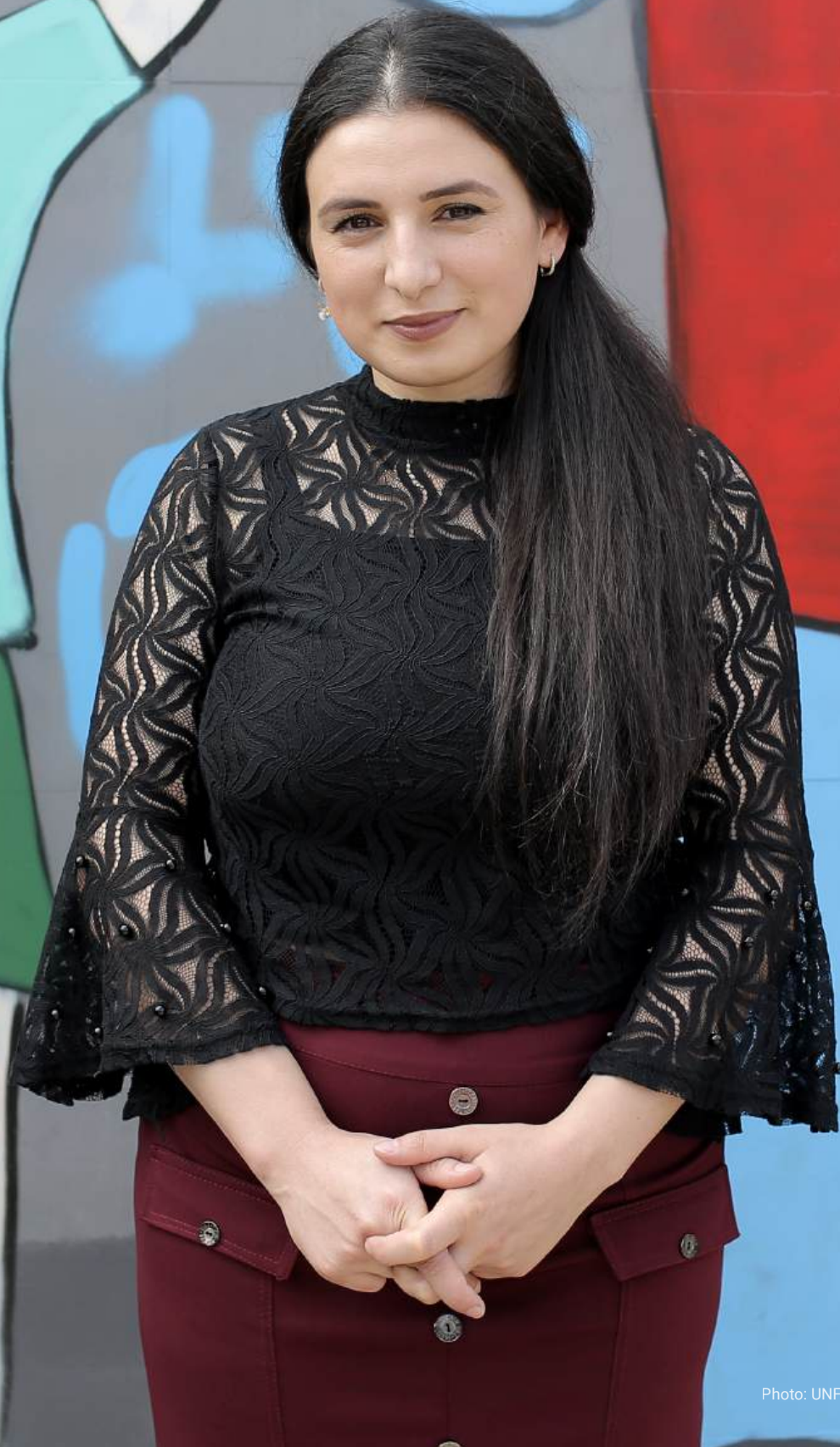
The implementation of the third generation of the National Curriculum started in 2016 with primary grades (ages 6–11) and continued in 2018 with basic grades (ages 12–15), where some CSE topics have mostly been incorporated. Later, in 2021, a review was conducted to see if and how the topics included in the National Curriculum were reflected in teacher training and teacher examination programmes. The review showed that even though the curriculum covers important topics on reproductive health (including HIV, early marriage, sexually transmitted infections [STIs], etc.), these topics are not reflected in teachers' professional standards; consequently, they are not reflected in teachers' pre- and in-service training programmes and teacher examination programmes. This leads to the conclusion that the implementation of reproductive health topics is very limited.

Specific objectives of the SERAT review were to:

- describe the CSE situation in the country
- identify strong components, challenges and opportunities
- develop recommendations and suggest next steps
- use the results in communication with stakeholders and for further advocacy efforts



METHODOLOGY



The following methods were used for the review:

- a desk review of the respective international and national legislation, state programmes, National Curriculum and other educational documents
- a desk review of statistical information and reports developed by national and international organizations on various components of CSE, youth, HIV/AIDS and other topics
- interviews with the deputy head of the Preschool and General Education Development Department of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, the curriculum development coordinator of the MES, representatives of two universities (Akaki Tsereteli State University and Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University) and the CSE component manager of Tanadgoma.

Sources

The following documents were consulted for the review:

- Constitution of Georgia
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Code on the Rights of the Child of Georgia
- Civil Code of Georgia
- Criminal Code of Georgia
- Law of Georgia on Combating Crimes against Sexual Freedom and Inviolability
- Law of Georgia on Violence against Women and/or Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Support for Victims of Violence
- Law of Georgia on HIV Infection/AIDS
- Law of Georgia on General Education
- Law of Georgia on Patient Rights
- Resolution of the Government of Georgia on the approval of child protection referral procedures
- National Curriculum (third generation)
- Strategy of the National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health
- Teachers' Professional Standards
- University pre-service training programmes for future teachers (a 300-credit integrated bachelor's and master's programme for primary school teachers and a 60-credit programme for subject teachers)
- 2018 Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), conducted by UNICEF

SERAT

The Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool (SERAT) is an Excel-based tool developed by UNESCO that helps collect and analyse data on all components (i.e. legislation, content, teacher training, and monitoring and evaluation [M&E]) of sexual and reproductive health education. The tool provides useful information on which components, topics, concepts, content and indicators are important in order to have a clear picture of CSE in a country. The review results are presented in bar charts, which are automatically created by SERAT, to enable immediate analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of CSE. The tool makes it easy to see the situation regarding CSE in each component by indicating whether it is present, present to some extent, absent or missing data.

The SERAT tool is helpful for assessing the situation regarding CSE and connecting it with the legal and policy context with respect to health and gender, which can be useful for various stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, health workers and parents.

Procedure

The major steps carried out as part of the review took the following sequence:

1. Get acquainted with SERAT, its questions and the information required to be filled in.
2. Identify and review available sources of information.
3. Conduct interviews with the key stakeholders.
4. Prepare the final report and validation.

The review was challenging because of the absence of national data and indicators in many areas; therefore, various reports and documents were screened to find the respective data.

RESULTS



Education and public health data

Several data sources were used for eliciting statistical information on various areas of CSE, including the MICS, conducted by UNICEF in cooperation with many partners, including UNFPA. The following sources of statistical data were consulted: the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the official website of the National AIDS Centre of Georgia and the Education Management Information System (EMIS) of the MES.

It should be underlined that the available data are not presented according to the SERAT indicators or age cohorts. Even the MICS, a very comprehensive study, does not cover certain indicators.

Education data: Georgia's general education system has three levels and covers grades 1–12. According to legislation, grades 1–9 are compulsory. According to the data, the enrolment of children in all levels of general education is very high, at 99.38 per cent for primary education (grades 1–6), 98.84 per cent for basic/lower secondary education and 94.96 per cent for upper secondary education.² The relative lowest enrolment numbers in upper secondary education can be explained by the following: (a) since this level is not compulsory, children may decide to pursue vocational education instead or enter the job market; and (b) there are cases where children drop out of school, especially in the upper secondary grades.

The gender parity index is 1.01 in primary school and 1.03 in upper secondary school, and the country has no challenges with respect to girls' and boys' equal access to schooling. The pupil–teacher ratio is 10:1 in primary schools and 6.5:1 in secondary schools.³ There is a shortage of teachers, especially of secondary school teachers of STEM subjects, in small and mountainous villages. The MES offers certain support programmes to send teachers from other regions to remote areas.

HIV and other STIs: According to the available data, Georgia has a low prevalence of HIV, with concentrated epidemics in key populations, mainly among men who have sex with men and transgender persons. The HIV prevalence in the general population is 0.3 per cent. According to the National AIDS Centre of Georgia, by February 2022 a total of 9,221 HIV/AIDS cases had been registered, where 74.7 per cent were men and 25.3 per cent were women. The majority of patients belong to the 29–40 age group.⁴

Data from the 2018 MICS study show that people in Georgia have little knowledge about HIV. Some 16.1 per cent of women between the ages of 15 and 49 have comprehensive knowledge about HIV-related topics, including 11.5 per cent of young women aged 15–24 and 15.2 per cent of young women aged 25–29.⁵ Some 15.3 per cent of men aged 15–49 have comprehensive knowledge about HIV-related topics, including 10.9 per cent of young men aged 15–24 and 20.0 per cent of young men aged 25–29.⁶ Knowledge about HIV/AIDS prevention is lower among those aged 15–19, where only 9.5 per cent of young women⁷ and 8.3 per cent of young men⁸ have complete information.

2. The data are available in the UNESCO Institute for Statistics database (UIS.Stat).

3. Ibid.

4. This information is regularly updated on the website of the National AIDS Centre of Georgia (https://aidscenter.ge/epidsituation_eng.html).

5. National Statistics Office of Georgia, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018: Survey Findings Report* (Tbilisi, 2019), p. 97.

6. Ibid, p. 101.

7. Ibid, p. 97.

8. Ibid, p. 101.

Because the number of HIV infections is increasing among young people, their low level of knowledge about prevention mechanisms is dangerous and should be addressed, especially via education. It is also necessary to increase efforts to reduce the stigma around people living with HIV and to do so via education.

In total, 39.7 per cent of women⁹ and 38.9 per cent of men¹⁰ aged 15–24 express an accepting attitude towards people living with HIV. This number shows that there is still a stigma around people living with HIV due to the lack of information.

It was not possible to find data on the prevalence of STIs among the 15–24 age group.

Adolescent sexual behaviour: The fertility rate is 21.5 among adolescents aged 15–19, as per the data from 2022.¹¹ The percentage of those who had sex before the age of 15 is low, at 1.7 per cent of young women¹² and 0.0 per cent of young men.¹³

Contraception: Overall, 40.9 per cent of women aged 15–49 are using some method of contraception. Only 13.8 per cent of women aged 15–19¹⁴ are using modern methods of contraception (this figure combines married women and sexually active women who have never been married). In addition, 22.4 per cent of women aged 15–19 have unmet needs for family planning,¹⁵ according to the MICS.

Gender-based violence and gender equality: Data on sexual violence and abuse as well as data on people's attitudes towards husbands hitting or beating their wives, as formulated in the SERAT tool, are not available. However, UN Women's National Study on Violence against Women (2017) indicates that almost one third of women and men agreed with at least one of the justifications for a husband to hit his wife,¹⁶ showing a high level of acceptance and condoning of violence in Georgia. In addition, 26 per cent of women reported having experienced sexual violence and/or sexual harassment by a non-partner, including sexual abuse as a child.¹⁷ Finally, MICS data show that 0.9 per cent of women and 0.6 per cent of men aged 15–49 experienced physical violence or robbery or assault in the 12 months before the survey.¹⁸

The percentage of women who marry before the age of 15 is declining and was 1.5 per cent in 2018.¹⁹ Moreover, 17.3 per cent of women were married before the age of 18.²⁰ These numbers are lower for men, with 0.3 per cent of men marrying before the age of 15 and 2.7 per cent marrying before the age of 18.²¹

There is no proof of the existence of the harmful practice of female genital mutilation/cutting in Georgia, though some anecdotal evidence was shared; accordingly, there are no empirical data on it.

9. Ibid, p. 121.

10. Ibid, p. 122.

11. National Statistics Office of Georgia, "Births". Available at <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/319/births> (accessed on 12 August 2023).

12. National Statistics Office of Georgia, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*, p. 246.

13. Ibid, p. 249.

14. Ibid, p. 71.

15. Ibid, p. 83.

16. UN Women, "National study on violence against women 2017: summary report", 2018, p. 12.

17. Ibid, p. 9.

18. National Statistics Office of Georgia, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*, p. 24.

19. Ibid, p. 246.

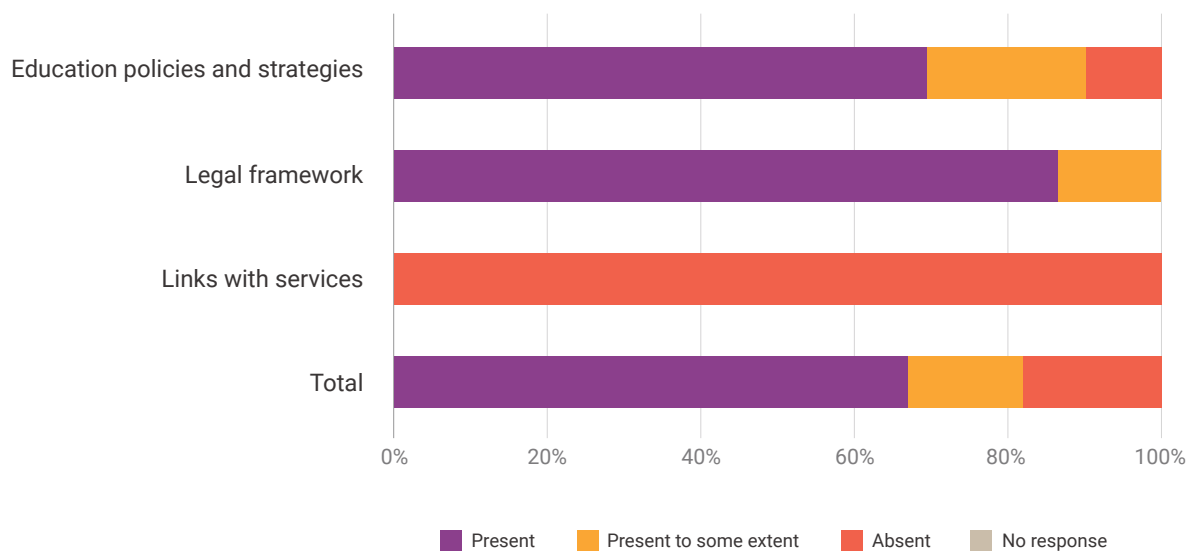
20. Ibid, p. 247.

21. Ibid, p. 249.

Legal and policy context

As seen in Figure 1, the legal and policy context for many components of sexuality and reproductive health is quite well developed in comparison with the general components of education.

Figure 1. Legal and policy context



Source: Data collected through the SERAT tool.

Education policies and strategies: CSE topics are reflected in various educational policy and strategy documents. First, Georgia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1994. Based on the Convention, the Parliament of Georgia adopted the Code on the Rights of the Child in 2019. The Law on General Education, adopted in 2005, underlines the importance of a non-discriminatory, non-violent, supportive and tolerant educational environment for all. The vision of the law is reflected to a great extent in the National Curriculum.²²

The MES's institutional system supports having a non-discriminatory, violence-free educational system in the country. The Ministry's various departments enshrine similar principles in their work: the Preschool and General Education Development Department deals with educational content, including the National Curriculum, textbook evaluations and guidelines for curriculum implementation; the Audit Department deals with cases in which the rights of a child, teacher or other member of the school community have been violated; and the Office of Resource Officers of Educational Institutions deals with safety in schools and the provision of psychological support for school students (the Office has eight regional operational centres whose sole purpose is to provide psychological support). In addition, the Agency for Educational and Research Infrastructure Development is responsible for school infrastructure, including water, sanitation and hygiene facilities.

22. Currently, the third generation of the National Curriculum is being used in all schools across the country.

There is no comprehensive sexuality education programme (or stand-alone subject) in schools; accordingly, there is no ministerial department that supports it explicitly. However, the MES's Preschool and General Education Development Department supports all content-related issues, including those subjects and programmes into which CSE topics are integrated.

Legal framework: This is the strongest component, with well-developed legislation on human rights, all forms of violence, discrimination and harassment. In addition to the international and national laws mentioned in the "Education policies and strategies" section of this report, several other national laws also create a good foundation to combat violations and discrimination in any form and protect human rights. The Criminal Code of Georgia specifies how violence (in any form) and the sexual abuse of children are to be measured. There are several laws explicitly covering gender-based violence, domestic violence and crimes against sexual freedom, such as the Law of Georgia on Violence against Women and/or Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Support for Victims of Violence (2006) and the Law of Georgia on Combating Crimes against Sexual Freedom and Inviolability (2020); in 2016, the Government of Georgia also introduced a resolution on the approval of child protection referral procedures. The Civil Code of Georgia, the Law of Georgia on Patient Rights and the Law of Georgia on HIV Infection/AIDS also provide relevant declarations on safety and protection.

Links with services: This part is the least developed; as the entire report shows, the links between education, policy and legislation and services are quite weak or absent in the country. First, there is no school-based health service across the country. Some schools have doctors, but the majority do not. Accordingly, there is no precedent for school doctors to offer any kind of SRH services to students. In 2021, the MES, in partnership with the UNFPA Country Office in Georgia and Tanadgoma, piloted a Doctor's Hour programme²³ in six schools to introduce components of CSE led by school doctors. As per the deputy head of the Preschool and General Education Development Department, this programme will expand and gradually cover other schools.

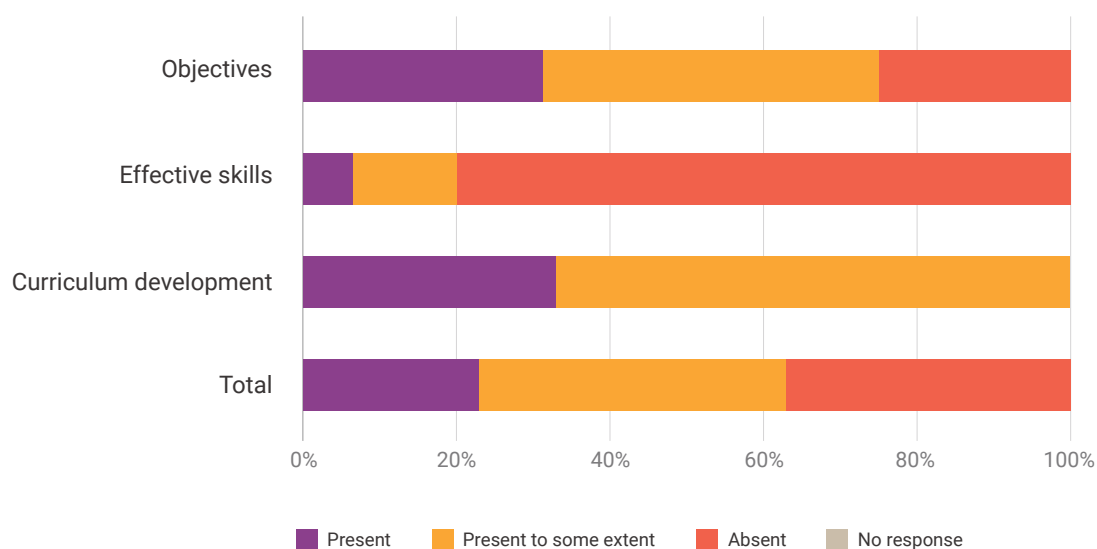
On 21 March 2022, the Minister of Education and Science issued Decree No. 41 on Approval of Standards for the Functions of Medical Personnel in General Education Schools and Rules for the Functioning of the Medical Service (Office) in Schools. The MES plans to introduce medical personnel (a doctor or nurse) in all schools across the country.

Objectives and principles

The primary document used for the description and analyses of data for this section was the National Curriculum (third generation), including its general part, as well as subject curricula and content. The National Curriculum is a compulsory document throughout the entire country for all public and private schools. In addition, the Strategy of the National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health was analysed to find out whether and how public health priorities are reflected in the National Curriculum.

23. The programme aims to introduce age-appropriate SRH content to students in grades 1–6. The project was piloted in six schools during the first semester of the 2021/22 academic year. In the framework of the project, topics and lesson plans were developed according to UNESCO standards. Plans are in place to introduce the programme in schools gradually.

Figure 2. Objectives and principles



Source: Data collected through the SERAT tool.

Programme objectives: The National Curriculum specifies 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 and are formulated as follows: “The student should be able to ...”.

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 specifies cross-cutting skills and attitudes as goals of the teaching and learning process, which can serve as a good foundation for CSE; these competencies include problem-solving, critical and creative thinking, collaboration, communication, ethics, entrepreneurship, responsibility, ICT, literacy and others. In addition, the document lists human rights, a healthy lifestyle, civic safety and conflict management among other priority topics.

Effective skills: As shown in Figure 2, most of the skills related to CSE are absent in the objectives and principles of the National Curriculum. Some subjects focus on the building of life skills and positive communication.

Curriculum development: The curriculum development process is very participatory, with the MES involving all respective stakeholders. Subject experts, researchers, psychologists and pedagogical specialists work on curriculum development. A draft document is shared with schools and universities and is accessible via social media for feedback from all interested parties. Despite this, there is no precedent for the involvement of experts on human sexuality and behaviour change in the curriculum development process. It should be mentioned that Tanadgoma, with the support of UNFPA, conducted a needs assessment on CSE topics before these topics were integrated into the curriculum. In addition, some CSE topics were piloted in all respective subjects before the official adoption of the new curriculum.

Moreover, it should be noted that the word “sexual” and its variants as well as phrases containing the word (e.g. “sexuality”, “sexual behaviour”, “sexuality education”) are not used in education-related documents, including the National Curriculum. There are two reasons for this. First, there is little knowledge and no experience of teaching and learning CSE topics, which means that curriculum developers as well as teachers lack a modern understanding and knowledge of how CSE topics can be incorporated into a curriculum, how they should be translated as learning outcomes and indicators and what essential content the curriculum should cover. Second, policymakers and educators are trying to avoid a public backlash, as CSE is highly stigmatized and debated.

Content

Content (ages 5–8)

Georgia’s general education system consists of three levels: primary (grades 1–6, ages 6–12), basic (grades 7–9, ages 12–15) and general/upper secondary (grades 10–12, ages 15–18). The primary level of education has two sublevels: grades 1–4 (ages 6–10) and grades 5–6 (ages 10–12). A child should be 6 years old when starting school. In addition, preschool education is not compulsory; accordingly, not all 5-year-olds attend preschool.

The National Curriculum specifies the learning outcomes and content for each level of education per subject. For the SERAT “Content (ages 5–8)” section, the curriculum/learning outcomes and content for the sublevel of primary school covering grades 1–4 (ages 6–10) were analysed; and, respectively, for the “Content (ages 9–12)” section, the curriculum/learning outcomes and content for the sublevel covering grades 5–6 (ages 10–12) were analysed.

The following three subjects were analysed for the 5–8 age group: natural science, Me and Society (social science), and physical education and sports.

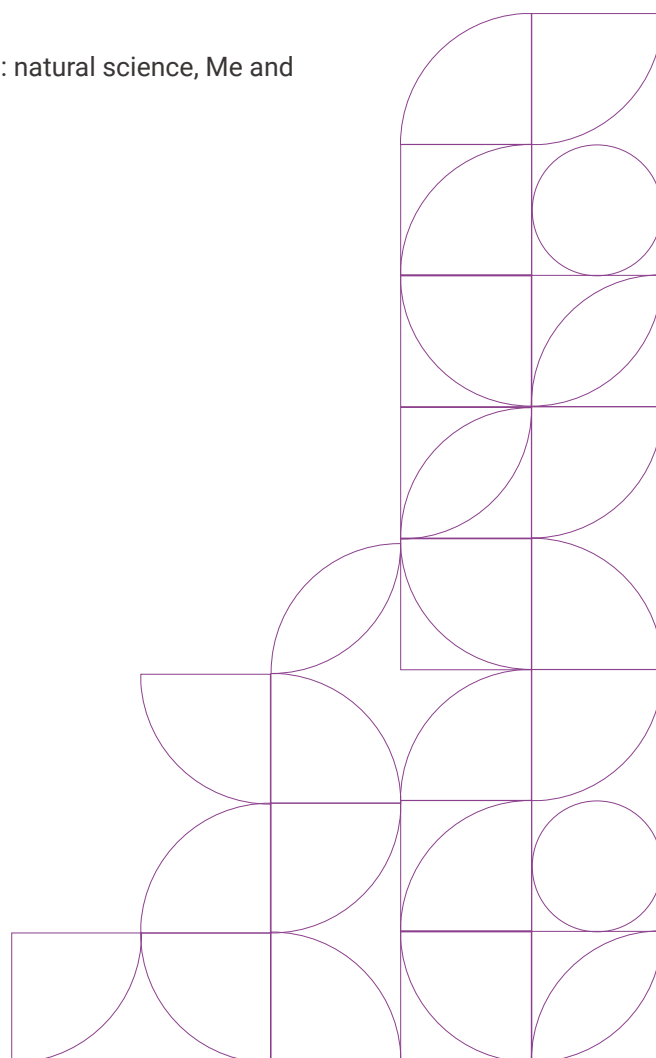
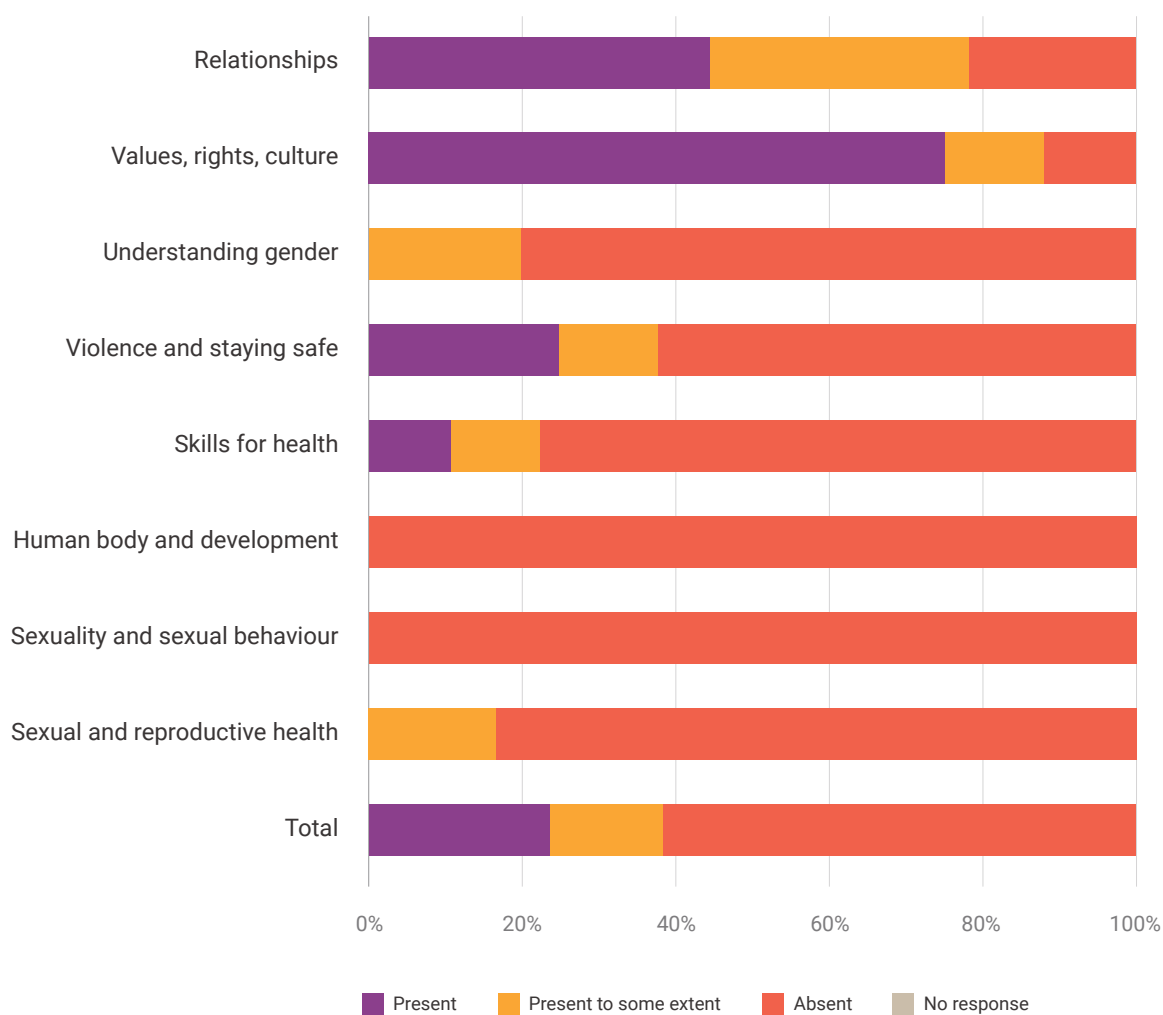


Figure 3. Content by key concept (ages 5–8)



Source: Data collected through the SERAT tool.

As seen in Figure 3, the key concepts of “values, rights, culture” and “relationships” are represented in the curriculum more strongly than others, while “human body and development” and “sexuality and sexual behaviour” are absent. An important finding from the analyses was that the subjects of natural science and physical education and sports do not reflect any CSE topic, while the subject Me and Society, introduced in schools in 2016, covers only such topics as child rights, values, safety and other related issues.

Relationships: This key concept has been incorporated into the programmes from the perspective of different kinds of families (more precisely, from the perspective of single parents and extended families with several generations), types of friendship and ways to show trust, respect and tolerance.

Values, rights, culture: The results in this key concept are the strongest. The likely reason for this is that the subject Me and Society, which starts from grade 3 (age 8), is aimed at promoting such values as responsibility, friendship, trust, respect, understanding, empathy, dignity, tolerance and equity.

Understanding gender: Figure 4 shows that gender, including norms and gender-related norms specifically, is the weakest focus of learning in this age group. This may come from the existing stigma around gender-related topics, including gender-based violence (GBV), as well as the fact that the curriculum developers have limited knowledge of gender issues. While the subject Me and Society develops equity, tolerance and other important values, it does not teach about gender, the differences between gender and biological sex, or GBV.

Additionally, it should be mentioned that recognition of the fact “that female genital mutilation/cutting is a form of GBV that violates girls’ rights” is not covered in the content, as there is no empirical data on the existence of the practice in Georgia.

Violence and staying safe: These key concepts are poorly developed. Topics missing from the programme include recognition of the types of violence between parents and partners, demonstrations of how students should respond if someone touches their bodies and ways to talk to trusted adults. Topics on bullying, violence and child abuse are discussed in the subject Me and Society.

Skills for health: All three subjects of the curriculum cover the topic of a healthy lifestyle, but the SERAT content given for this age group under the concept “skills for health” do not include this topic. Content related to acknowledging “that not all information provided by different forms of media is true” is covered somewhat and needs to be reinforced in other age groups as well.

Human body and development: These key concepts are absent in the programme. Content related to identifying “the physical and emotional changes that occur during puberty” is covered in grades 7–9 (ages 12–15) of basic school. As mentioned above, the MES together with UNFPA and Tanadgoma developed the Doctor’s Hour programme, which intends to cover these and other topics for children in primary school in greater depth.

Sexuality and sexual behaviour: This key concept is completely absent in the programme. It is expected that some content will be covered in the Doctor’s Hour programme.

Sexual and reproductive health: From this key concept, only the content relating to describing “the concepts of ‘illness’ and ‘health,’ including ways that people can protect their health” is presented somewhat in the curriculum.

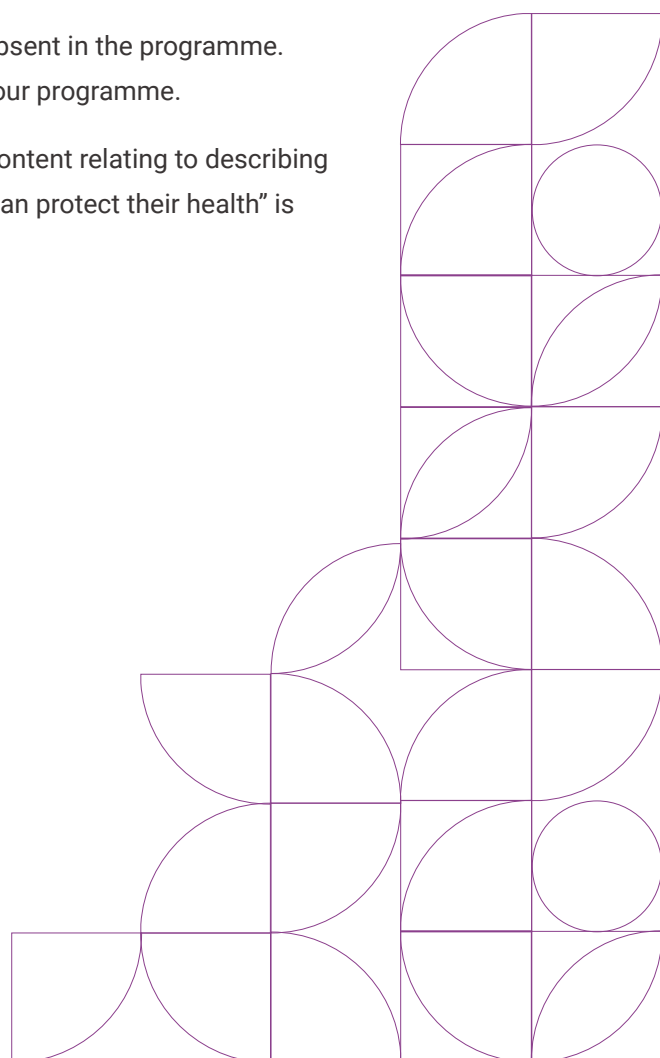
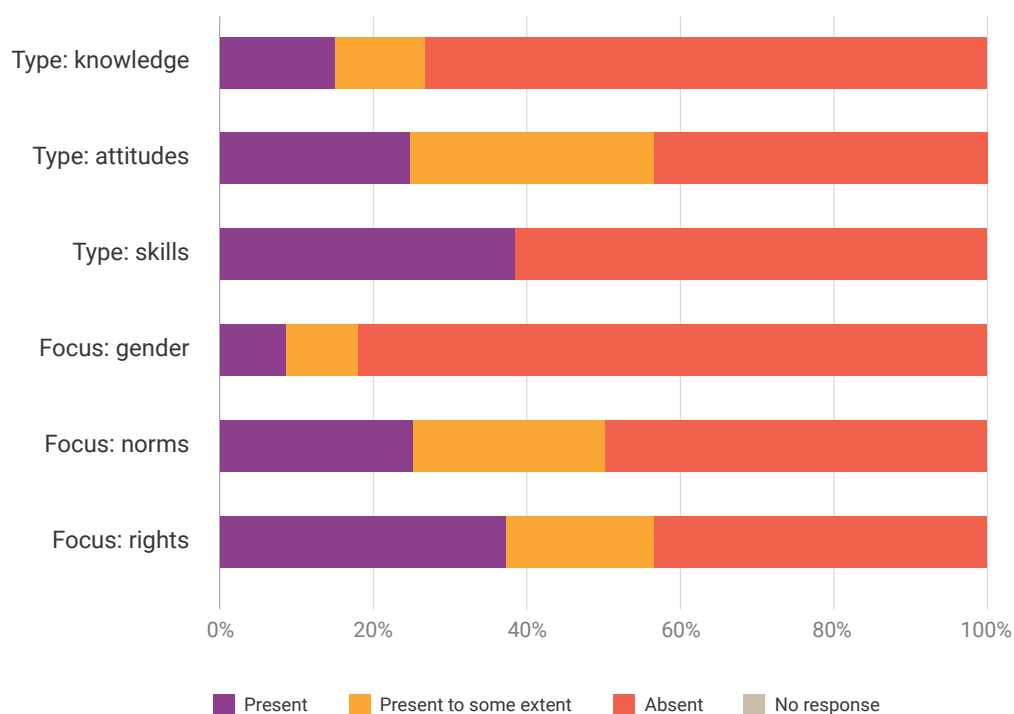


Figure 4. Content by type and focus of learning (ages 5–8)



Source: Data collected through the SERAT tool.

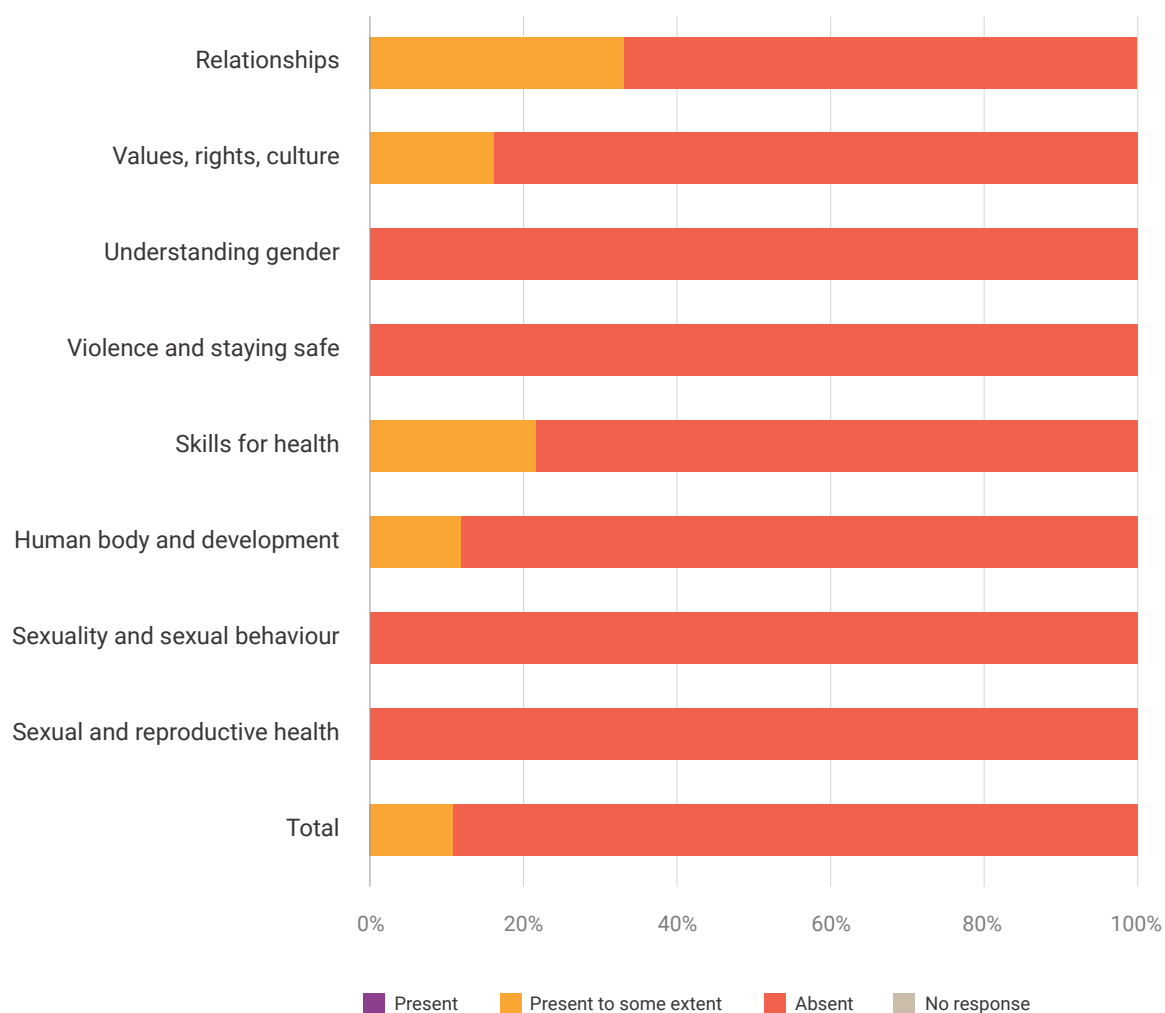
Content (ages 9–12)

For the SERAT “Content (ages 9–12)” section, the curriculum/learning outcomes and content for the sublevel of primary school covering grades 5–6 (ages 10–12) were analysed for three subjects: natural science, Our Georgia²⁴ (social science), and physical education and sports.

As seen in Figure 5, the key concepts and content prescribed by the UNESCO standards for this age group are largely missing in Georgia’s National Curriculum. Of all groups, CSE content is least represented in this age group.

24. This subject integrates history, geography and civics.

Figure 5. Content by key concept (ages 9–12)



Source: Data collected through the SERAT tool.

Relationships: This key concept is represented somewhat by three of its nine content items. These three items cover tolerance, inclusion, respect for others, countering harassment and bullying, culture, religion and society. The content items “express support for gender equitable roles and responsibilities within the family” and “reflect on the way in which they express friendship and love to another person changes as they grow older” are included in the subject Me and Society in grades 3–4 (ages 6–10). The content “list negative consequences of child, early and forced marriage on the child, the family and society” is covered in the social and natural sciences in grades 7–9 (ages 12–15).

Values, rights, culture: This key concept is represented somewhat only by the content “recognize children’s rights that are outlined in national laws and international agreements (e.g., Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child)”.

Understanding gender, violence and staying safe, sexuality and sexual behaviour, and sexual and reproductive health: These four key concepts are absent in the content for this age group. This situation may be explained first of all by the very limited representation of CSE topics in the entire curriculum and

especially topics related to sexuality. As for gender and violence, these topics are better represented in other age groups, especially in the subjects covered by civic education. In addition, as mentioned before, one of the priority topics of the National Curriculum is human rights; components of this topic are distributed throughout different education levels and subjects.

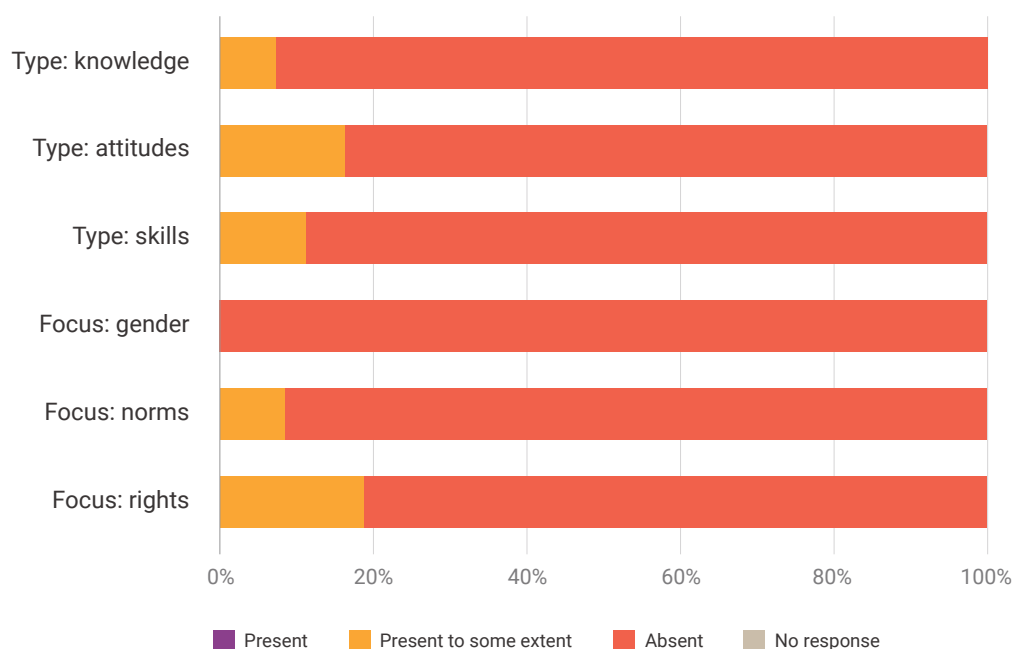
Skills for health: This key concept is represented somewhat by two of its nine content items: “recognize that negotiation requires mutual respect, cooperation and often compromise from all parties” and “demonstrate effective ways to communicate wishes, needs and personal boundaries, and listen and show respect for those of others”. In general, cooperation, respect and communication are important cross-curricular skills in the National Curriculum and are represented in different subjects, levels and methodological approaches. It is worth mentioning that services and ways to reach them are also a weak part of the curriculum because there is a deficit of such services provided for school students and youth in the country. Such content items as “demonstrate ways to seek out and access help in the school or wider community for problems like abuse, harassment, bullying, illness, violence in their family or surroundings, etc.” are also absent, which can be explained by the weak speak-up culture in schools (and in society).

Human body and development: This key concept is represented only by the content “appreciate the importance of personal hygiene and sanitation practices, including menstrual hygiene”. No components on puberty and sexuality are covered in this age group.

As seen from the results, four of the eight key concepts are not covered in the National Curriculum, while the remaining four are covered somewhat – and very insufficiently.

As per Figure 6, gender remains the weakest part of the learning focus for this age group, just as it is for the 5–8 age group.

Figure 6. Content by type and focus of learning (ages 9–12)



Source: Data collected through the SERAT tool.

Content (ages 12–15)

For the SERAT “Content (ages 12–15)” section, the curriculum/learning outcomes and content for basic school grades 7–9 (ages 12–15) were analysed for three subjects: biology, citizenship (social science), and physical education and sports.

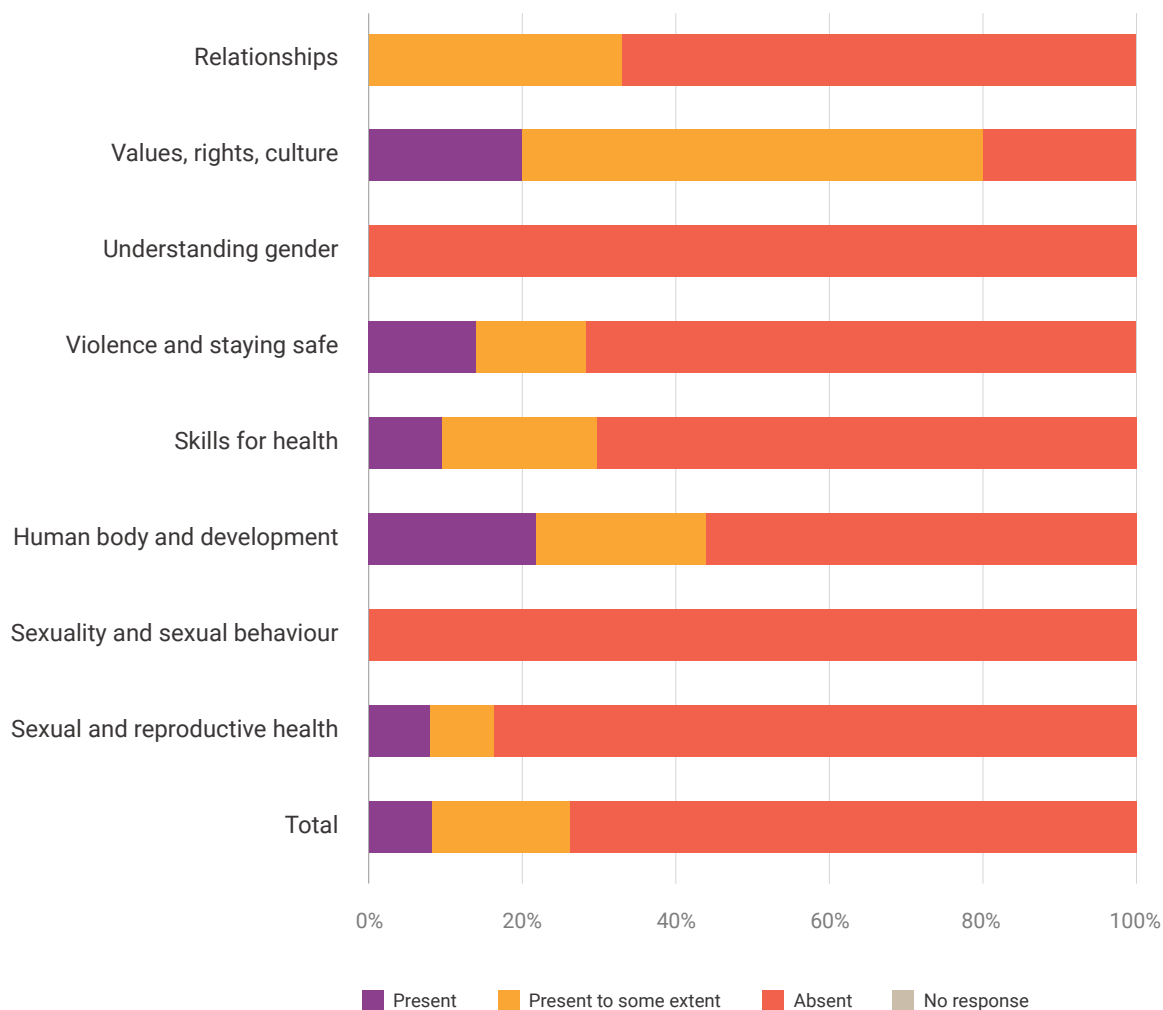
As shown in Figure 7 and Figure 8, the curriculum for this age group covers more CSE topics than for other age groups. The reason for this is that UNFPA and Tanadgoma collaborated with the MES in 2018 and 2019 to revise the curriculum for basic school (grades 7–9) in order to incorporate CSE topics into subjects in the natural and social sciences.

As a result, the compulsory theme “reproductive system and health” was integrated into the biology curriculum, covering the following topics:

- reproductive systems of men and women
- reproductive systems of other organisms
- how a parent’s failure to maintain a healthy lifestyle affects fetal development
- risk factors for the spread of communicable diseases (including STIs), and understanding the importance of personal hygiene and sanitation for preventing the spread of infectious diseases (e.g. HIV, hepatitis C, etc.)
- risks associated with early sexual intercourse, premature/early marriage and pregnancy, and their causes and prevention
- the role of the physician and the importance of their recommendations and analyses of the results of self-medication
- scientific and technological achievements in the field of reproductive health
- relating the knowledge gained about human reproductive health to different professions and fields of activity, such as health care and infertility control (e.g. sexologist, gynaecologist, reproductive specialist, etc.)

In addition, the same subject covers such topics as infections and diseases, the specifics of puberty (including related changes and risks), the importance of healthy food and the influence of bad habits (such as drugs, digital and other types of addiction) on human health.

Figure 7. Content by key concept (ages 12–15)



Source: Data collected through the SERAT tool.

Relationships: This key concept is represented through general provisions rather than very concrete content. For example, the content “recognize that love, cooperation, gender equality, and mutual respect are important for healthy family functioning and relationships” is not represented directly with respect to family functioning, but general provisions are given on love, cooperation, equality and respect (subject: citizenship/social sciences in basic school, grades 7–9). The same can be said about the content “recognize that inequality and differences in power within relationships can be harmful”, which is represented only through general provisions on inequality (subject: citizenship/social sciences in basic school, grades 7–9), or the content “examine consequences of stigma and discrimination on people’s sexual and reproductive health and rights”, which does not speak directly about sexual and reproductive health and rights but provides only general statements on stigma and discrimination (subject: citizenship/social sciences in basic school, grades 7–9).

As for “resolving conflicts and misunderstandings with parents/guardians”, this content is also not detailed, but, as mentioned above, the National Curriculum has eight priority topics, including conflict resolution/management and human rights, which can be good grounds to develop the topic further. In addition, conflict

management and resolution are among the objectives of the subject of citizenship in basic school (grades 7–9) and are represented by such skills as problem-solving, persuading, joint decision-making, respecting, listening and understanding.

Values, rights, culture: Values and rights are the strongest component of the entire curriculum, which is also reflected in the results of the SERAT exercise. Despite this, SRH rights are nearly absent in the curriculum. For example, there are no provisions in the laws concerning reproductive health rights. At the same time, analyses, provisions and discussion of national and international laws on human rights, child rights and other instruments are part of the subject of citizenship in basic school (grades 7–9).

While the issues of tolerance and respect for different values, beliefs and attitudes are fully represented in this age group, social and cultural norms impacting sexual behaviour are absent.

Understanding gender: This is the weakest part for this age group. While the general curriculum focuses on equity and equal rights for all, gender-specific topics, especially on sexuality, are not covered for students.

Violence and staying safe: This key concept is represented in the curriculum by the topic of violence only; various forms of violence are covered, with the exception of sexual abuse and sexual assault.

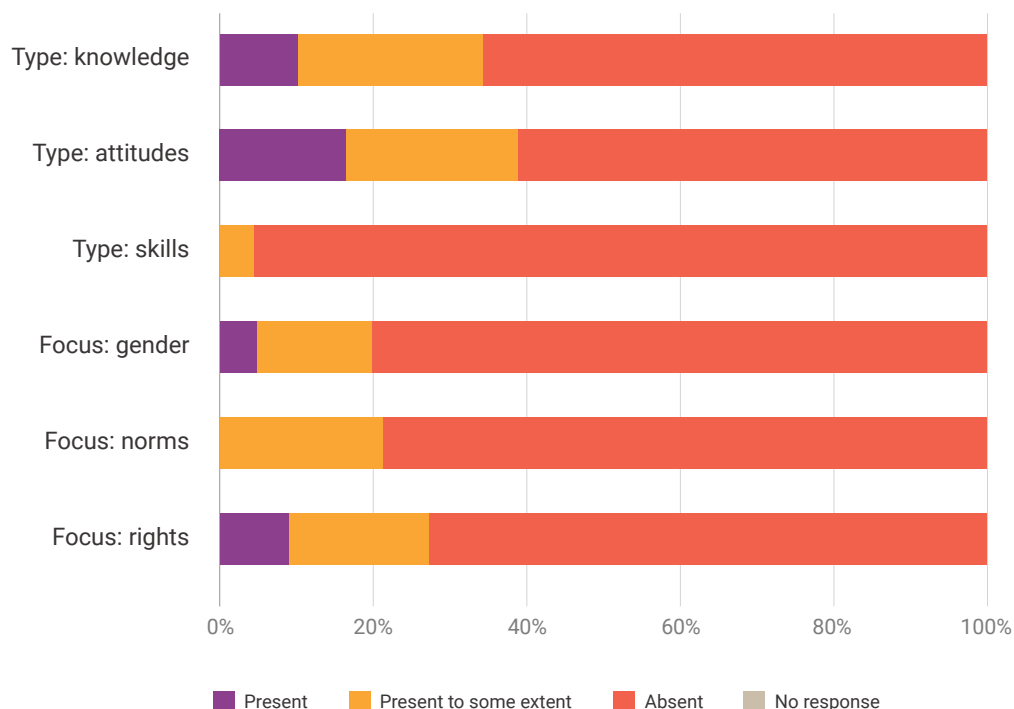
Skills for health: This concept is also poorly covered in the curriculum. For example, there are general provisions on harmful habits and addictions, but they are not connected with sexuality or sexual behaviour. As for support services – “understand that there are places where people can access support for sexual and reproductive health (e.g., counselling, testing and treatment for STIs/HIV; services for modern contraception, sexual abuse, rape, domestic and [gender-based violence], abortion and post abortion care and stigma and discrimination)” – the role of doctors and self-treatment is explained in the curriculum. The biology curriculum also provides information on different professions connected with reproductive health.

Human body and development: This concept is covered by the topics of puberty, the specifics of the teenage years, the role of hormones and the development of the reproductive organs. Topics on shaming or stigmatizing others based on puberty-related changes and “common practices that people use to try to change their appearance (e.g., using diet pills, steroids, bleaching cream), as well as various disorders connected to body image (e.g., anxiety and eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia)” are covered somewhat, including through general provisions on violence and healthy foods.

Sexuality and sexual behaviour: No topic within this concept is covered due to the absence of the topics of sexuality and sexual behaviour in the entire curriculum.

Sexual and reproductive health: The prevention of unintended pregnancy and its effects as well as information on contraception are covered in the curriculum. Information about transmissible infections, including HIV/AIDS, is covered somewhat. However, there is no mention of sexual feelings, sexual partners, negotiating safe sex or other related information.

Figure 8. Content by type and focus of learning (ages 12–15)



Source: Data collected through the SERAT tool.

While the type of learning and focus of learning are better in this age group than in the 9–12 age group, it is obvious that the majority of topics under the key concepts are not covered in the curriculum. It should be mentioned that, in many cases, the curriculum (standards and compulsory topics) does not specify the issue but rather gives broader provisions. Furthermore, these general provisions may be reflected either in textbooks or in teacher’s guidelines.

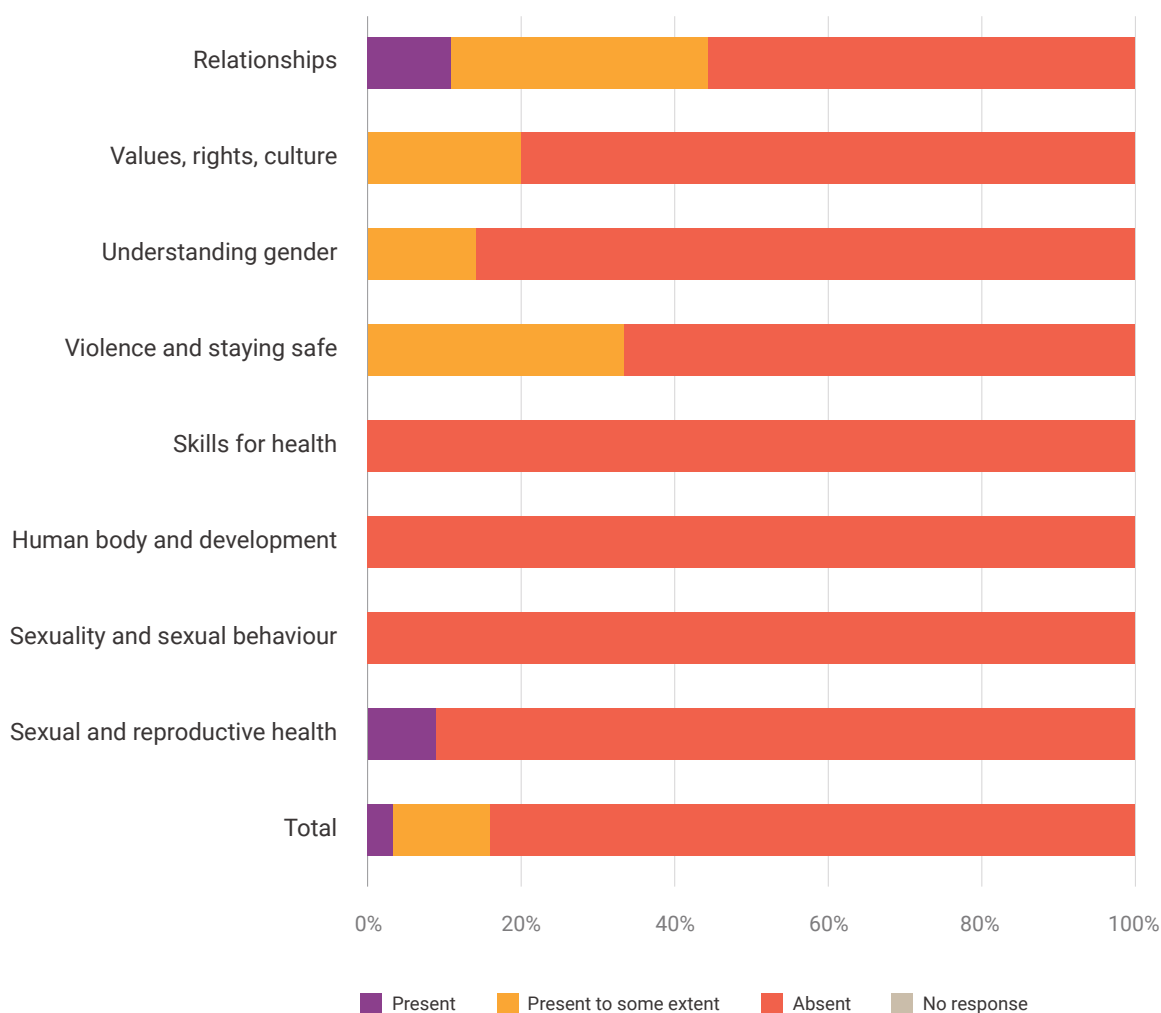
Content (ages 15–18+)

For the SERAT “Content (ages 15–18+)” section, the curriculum/learning outcomes and content for upper secondary school grades 10–12 (ages 15–18) were analysed for three subjects: biology, citizenship (social science), and physical education and sports.²⁵

As seen in Figure 9, 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.

25. The MES officially adopted a new curriculum for upper secondary grades on 17 December 2021. The implementation of this new curriculum will start in the 2022/23 academic year in grade 10.

Figure 9. Content by key concept (ages 15–18+)



Source: Data collected through the SERAT tool.

Relationships: Of the nine topics under this concept, only one (“advocate for inclusion, non-discrimination, and respect for diversity”) is fully covered. Three other topics (“acknowledge that excluding or expelling a student because of pregnancy or becoming a parent is a violation of human rights”; “categorize key physical, emotional, economic, health and educational needs of children and associated responsibilities of parents”; and “perceive the importance of equality, respect and shared responsibilities between parents”) are covered somewhat. These topics are included in the subject of citizenship.

Values, rights, culture: The topic “demonstrate ways to resolve conflict with family members due to differing values” is covered somewhat from the perspective of non-violence and conflict resolution and management, although family is not mentioned.

Understanding gender: The topic “advocate for gender equality and changing harmful social norms that promote or support harmful practices and other forms of GBV” is covered somewhat from the perspective of non-violence and non-discrimination, but there are no links with harmful social norms.

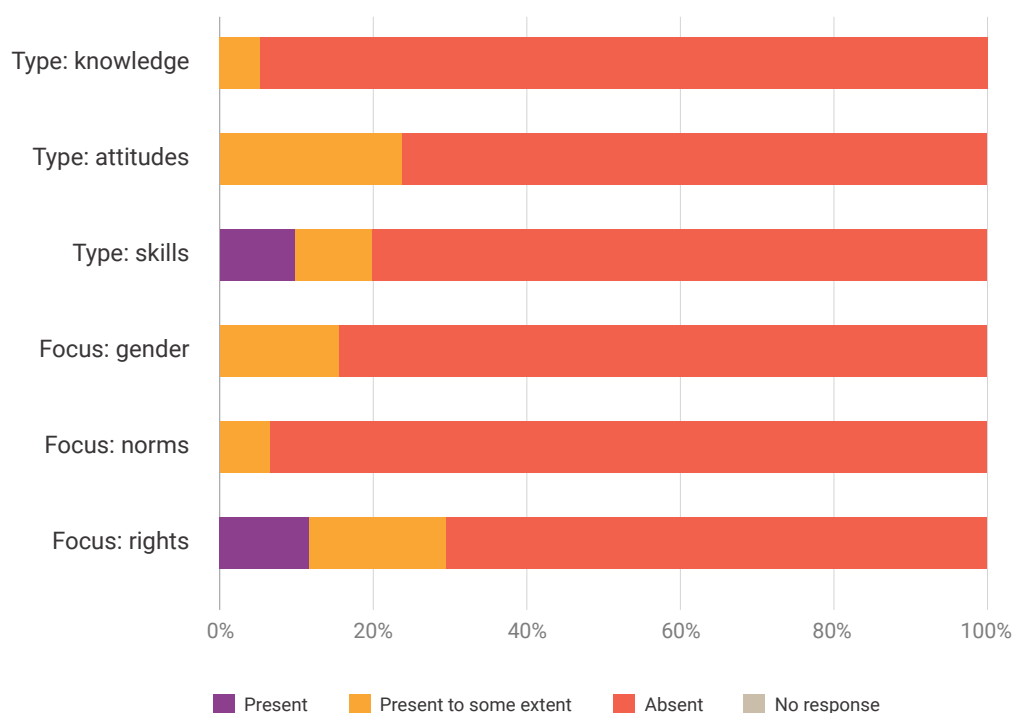
Violence and staying safe: Some components of media literacy and recognizing disinformation are included in the citizenship curriculum, which somewhat covers the following concept topic: “acknowledge that social media use has many benefits, but can also result in unsafe situations or violations of law”.

Skills for health, human body and development, and sexuality and sexual behaviour: These three key concepts are absent in the National Curriculum for this age group. The topics “list options for those who would like to conceive but who are experiencing infertility” and “consider and apply risk reduction strategies to prevent pregnancy and STIs, including HIV and/or to prevent transmission of STIs to others” are discussed in the biology curriculum in grades 7–9.

Sexual and reproductive health: Of the 11 topics under this concept, only one (“advocate for everyone’s right, including people living with HIV, to live free of stigma and discrimination”) is covered, in the subject of citizenship.

While human rights and child rights are well represented in the National Curriculum, gender and norms remain the weakest points of focus, as seen in Figure 10. According to one respondent (the curriculum development coordinator at the MES), the understanding of gender is very weak and inaccurate in the country, which makes it quite a stigmatized topic for discussion in the curriculum. Nevertheless, the curriculum tries to introduce and advocate for equity, non-discrimination and non-violence through different concepts.

Figure 10. Content by type and focus of learning (ages 15–18+)

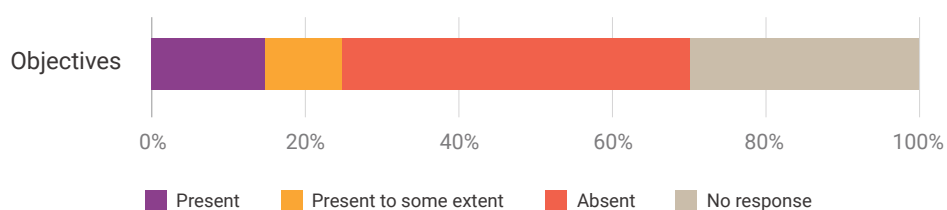


Source: Data collected through the SERAT tool.

Integration into the official curriculum

As seen in Figure 11, CSE content is poorly represented in Georgia’s National Curriculum. The major topics in the National Curriculum from the listed CSE content fall in the areas of human rights, non-discrimination, non-violence, tolerance, respect, communication skills and conflict resolution, and include certain topics related to 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. According to the respondents representing the MES, the reason for this is that certain topics to be included in educational programmes are stigmatized in the country, so it is hard to even start discussions. On the other hand, respondents believe that work with stakeholders, including parents, will help with understanding the importance of CSE topics and gradually introducing them into the educational system.

Figure 11. Integration into the official curriculum



Source: Data collected through the SERAT tool.

The results also show the differences in the presence of key concepts in the curriculum for different age groups, as seen in Figure 3, Figure 7 and Figure 9. While almost all key concepts are represented or represented somewhat in all age groups, the key concept “sexuality and sexual behaviour” is absent from every age group’s curriculum. The key CSE concepts are strongest for the 5–8 and 12–15 age groups, which can be explained by (a) the new civic education subject Me and Society in grades 3–4, focusing on human rights, some gender-related aspects, violence, relationships, healthy habits and safety; and (b) the revised biology and citizenship curricula in grades 7–9, focusing on reproductive health topics.

In addition to the results of curriculum screening, sexuality education is not an examinable subject, since even those topics on reproductive health that are part of the National Curriculum are not included in teacher training and examination programmes. As for student examinations, high school graduation exams were abolished in 2019, but CSE topics may be included in university entrance exams on such subjects as biology and civics.²⁶

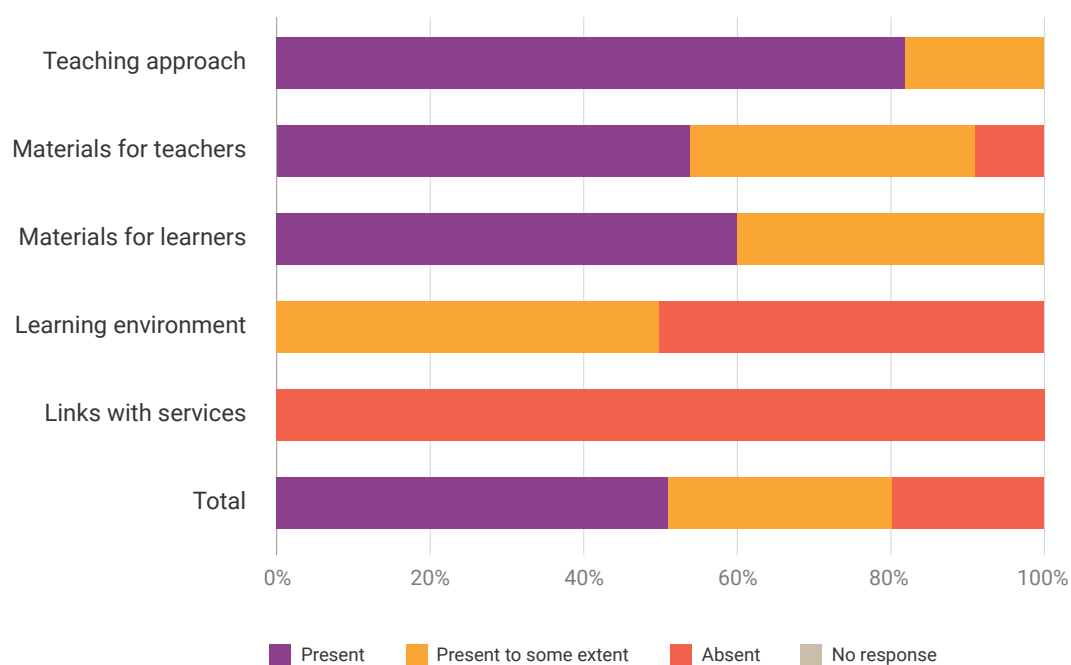
The MES has no policy on extracurricular activities. In this regard, the Ministry conducts two types of interventions: (a) in partnership with various organizations, the MES develops and implements projects on specific topics in selected schools (e.g. on healthy food, child rights, etc.); and (b) it provides expertise for those interventions that are developed by other organizations to be implemented in schools.

26. Until 2022, there were mainly three university entrance exams: Georgian Language and Literature, Foreign Language, and Math or History. Some specialities required additional entrance exams in specific subjects – for example, biology (medicine).

Teaching and learning approaches and environment

The National Curriculum, the textbook policy and the Law on General Education were explored in analysing this topic. Terms such as “sexual”, “sexuality” and “sexuality education” are not mentioned in education system documents, including the National Curriculum. Indeed, the idea of a “sexuality education programme” is currently conveyed through the topics covered under the biology, Me and Society, citizenship, and physical education and sports curricula.

Figure 12. Teaching and learning approaches and environment



Source: Data collected through the SERAT tool.

Teaching approach: The National Curriculum takes a unified approach (student-centred) to all subjects in terms of the teaching and learning methodology, including those subjects (i.e. biology, civics, physical education and sports) into which CSE topics are integrated.

The teaching approach is the strongest component of this topic. The reason for this is that the National Curriculum declares five guiding principles for the entire teaching and learning process and identifies major methodological benchmarks, as follows:

Guiding principles:

1. Teaching and learning should help activate students’ inner strengths.
2. Teaching and learning should facilitate the gradual construction of knowledge based on prior knowledge and experience.
3. Teaching and learning should facilitate the interconnections between and organization of knowledge.

4. Teaching and learning must ensure the mastery of learning strategies (learning to learn).
5. Teaching and learning should include all three categories of knowledge: declarative, procedural and conditional.

Methodological benchmarks:

- student-centred approach
- equity in the process of teaching and learning
- profound, in-depth teaching
- increased student motivation
- discipline
- student involvement/participation

In addition, policy documents, including the National Curriculum, promote diversity in teaching and learning approaches, strategies and processes to achieve learning results. For this purpose, inviting various professionals, conducting lessons outside the classroom and engaging in other activities are recommended, and schools and teachers are free to do so.

Materials for teachers: There are two types of teacher manuals: (1) the teacher textbook for a specific subject, which is in the package together with the student textbook; and (2) teacher manuals and guidelines on different topics.

The first (teacher textbook) is developed by the textbook author(s) and/or publisher(s), and the MES assesses and either approves or rejects the package based on the textbook assessment criteria. These teacher textbooks follow the student textbooks and provide methodological and practical guidance for teachers in conducting lessons on specific topics. Since the author(s) and publisher(s) are different in various subjects, and because there are alternative textbooks for any one subject, some of these textbooks may provide more detailed information than others, including step-by-step instructions for each lesson.

Additionally, the MES and some of its agencies develop different manuals for teachers, including subject-based manuals to support curriculum implementation. These manuals contain practical information for teachers on how to better deliver the curriculum, plan lessons, conduct class management and integrate ICT and other topics that are important for the educational process. They may also include examples of students' formative assessments. Manuals and guidelines on various topics are also developed by partner organizations, including NGOs. For example, Tanadgoma developed teaching and learning materials for the reproductive health and healthy lifestyle topics that have been piloted in public schools, with the assistance of the UNFPA Country Office in Georgia.

The National Curriculum is a competency-based document that provides learning outcomes that students are expected to achieve to complete each level of their education. Accordingly, the document does not provide such details as the learning objectives or step-by-step instructions for each lesson. Teachers are free to plan their own curriculum, including the objectives and the sequence of the lessons, evaluation methods and other components, taking into consideration that all of these activities should serve the objective of

achieving the learning outcomes prescribed in the National Curriculum for each subject and level. Despite this, the MES is developing subject-based guidelines that include step-by-step instructions for teachers.

As for the quantity of resources, those textbooks that are approved by the MES have books for teachers, and the MES has to provide teachers with them. Additionally, most of the manuals developed, besides the textbooks, are accessible to teachers in electronic format. Unfortunately, testing teacher manuals prior to their use by teachers is either a very rare or non-existent practice.

Materials for learners: Since 2013, the MES has provided free textbooks to all students in grades 1–12 across the country. According to the textbook policy and respective regulations, the MES, after adopting a new National Curriculum, announces an open competition for textbook authors and publishers in the respective subjects. Authors and publishers should develop their textbooks based on the standards, learning outcomes and methodological principles presented in the National Curriculum. Textbooks are assessed according to the special evaluation criteria developed by the MES. These criteria include non-discrimination, violence- and stigma-free content, equity, cultural diversity, human rights and the like, in addition to the subject-specific requirements. Textbooks provided by authors and publishers are either approved or rejected by the MES. Approved textbooks are then selected by schools (if there are alternative textbooks – for example, textbooks for grade 7 biology). This also means that not all of the alternative textbooks necessarily contain the same content. An additional analysis is needed to review the textbooks to assess whether they reflect the diversity of young people in the country.

Learning environment: Some of the issues related to the learning environment are covered to a certain extent in the programme – for example, how to foster a culture of tolerance and solidarity in relation to different conditions and statuses. However, there is no information on how to address learners' disclosure of sexual abuse or harassment.

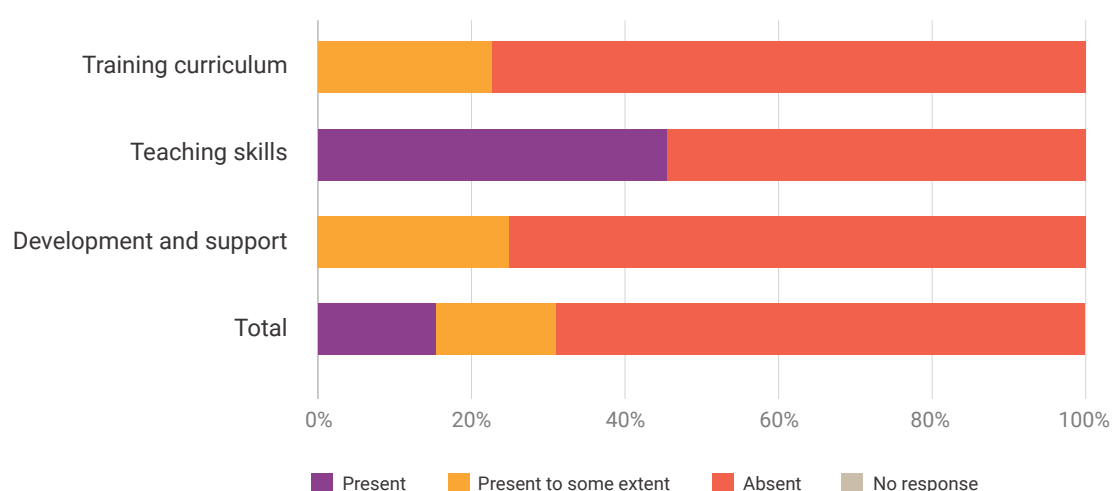
Links with services: There are no school-based SRH services – neither counselling nor the provision of contraceptives – for students.

As seen from the results in Figure 12, teaching and learning approaches are well represented in Georgia's education system, including in policy documents such as the National Curriculum. "Teaching and learning approaches and environment" is the strongest component of the system, together with "legal and policy context". In contrast, "links with services" is the weakest part of the curriculum. This can be explained by the absence of an overall policy on services, including sexual, reproductive and mental health services, established for schools and for school students by the central and/or local government. Additionally, there is a stigma around CSE in schools, even when some topics are included in the National Curriculum.

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 in analysing this topic. In addition, an interview with a specialist from the MES’s Teacher Professional Development Centre (TPDC) was conducted to screen in-service teacher training courses to find out whether and how they incorporate CSE topics. Terms such as “sexual”, “sexuality” and “sexuality education” are not mentioned in education system documents, including the pre- and in-service teacher training programmes.

Figure 13. Teacher training



Source: Data collected through the SERAT tool.

Teacher training is provided by the TPDC, state and private universities and other organizations. While universities provide pre-service training, the TPDC and other organizations are engaged in in-service training. Since there is no unified programme for pre-service teacher training that specifies the content, each university has its own training programme. The MES’s National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement develops and adopts the “subject benchmarks of higher education for teacher education”. This document specifies the general requirements for teacher education in higher education institutions, specifically in three competencies: the formation of a positive educational environment; the planning, organization and assessment of the student-centred and results-based educational process; and professional development. As for in-service training, the system is centralized, with the TPDC as the main provider of in-service training. The MES also has a procedure to recognize the training programmes developed by other organizations, but this process is very passive.

Training curriculum: As seen in Figure 13, the teacher training curriculum in both pre- and in-service training programmes lacks content on CSE topics.

Pre-service teacher training is conducted by several state and private universities in Georgia in two modalities: (1) a 300-credit integrated (bachelor’s and master’s) programme; and (2) a 60-credit programme

for those professionals already holding at least a bachelor's degree in a related subject and who want to become teachers.

The pre-service programmes of two universities (Akaki Tsereteli State University, in the Imereti region, and Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, in the Autonomous Republic of Adjara) were analysed to find out whether there are any stand-alone courses or whether CSE topics are integrated into the programmes. The analyses showed that there are no stand-alone courses on CSE. Some components of CSE are covered in courses on subjects such as safe schools and conflict resolution, multicultural education, natural sciences, the school environment and the health of students. The components of CSE covered in the above-mentioned courses are human rights, gender and multiculturalism, the specifics of puberty, healthy lifestyles, healthy food, hygiene, infections, addictions and conflict resolution. There are no topics specifically covering sexuality, sexual behaviour, relations with partners or other components, which are the biggest part of CSE.

As mentioned above, in-service training is provided by the TPDC. This training is not compulsory, as it is neither intense nor systematic. Periodically, the TPDC announces a call for registration on certain training topics, which interested teachers can apply for. In-service training on sexuality education has never been developed or conducted by the TPDC; as a result, no standards exist for sexuality education.

As for non-MES-led training, if the training provider wants recognition of its programme, it should apply to the TPDC to receive it. In all other cases, schools and teachers are free to participate in any training that they are interested in and that is available in the market from diverse organizations (e.g. international and local NGOs, universities, private organizations, etc.).

Teaching skills: While there are no MES-recognized teacher training programmes on sexuality education, the content listed in SERAT is absent. At the same time, all training modules should cover (and usually do cover) skills such as conducting learner-centred activities; planning and delivering lessons on knowledge, skills and attitudes; and creating an equal and inclusive environment for learners.

Development and support: Because the schooling system does not cover sexuality education as a specific subject, there are no professional development opportunities for teachers on this topic. However, there are some topics on which teachers receive training and information, including child rights and the prevention of violence. As mentioned above, in 2021 the MES, in partnership with UNFPA and Tanadgoma, developed and piloted the Doctor's Hour programme, which is an extracurricular activity led by school doctors on CSE topics that are appropriate for the particular age group. According to one respondent (an MES representative), the MES is planning to expand and gradually implement the programme in all schools.

Monitoring and evaluation

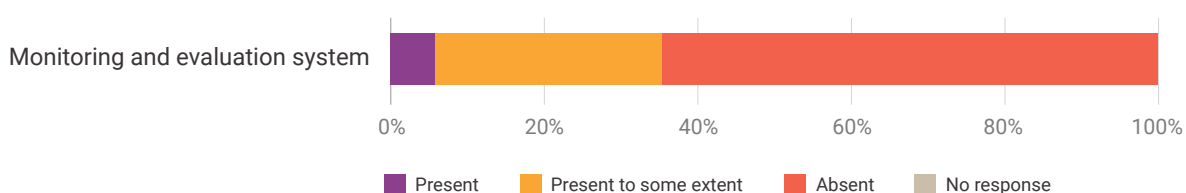
As seen in Figure 14, monitoring and evaluation of CSE in the education system is quite weak. There are several reasons for this. The first is that there is no M&E system for the implementation of the entire curriculum; accordingly, the teaching and learning of those subjects that CSE topics have been integrated into is not monitored or evaluated, and data are not gathered. In 2013, the MES started a curriculum implementation monitoring programme, developed the concept and instruments, and monitored all three levels of education, but this programme is no longer being implemented.

As CSE is not an independent programme or stand-alone subject and is poorly represented in the country's education system, the MES and its Education Management Information System have no statistical information on CSE. There are also no national-level statistical data or information on the cost, fidelity of implementation or student perceptions of their learning experience.

Since there are no data on CSE, which seems to be the lowest priority of the education system, most national-level indicators listed in SERAT are absent. The EMIS is collecting some statistics on out-of-school children or those children who have left school; schools have to systematically report on their student numbers (e.g. those leaving school, changing schools, etc.).

With support from the UNFPA and UNICEF Country Offices, information and data are available on CSE topics, including the needs of young people. The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, which covers many sectors influencing children's lives, is conducted by UNICEF countrywide, and secondary analyses of the data are conducted for different sectors, including on CSE.

Figure 14. Monitoring and evaluation



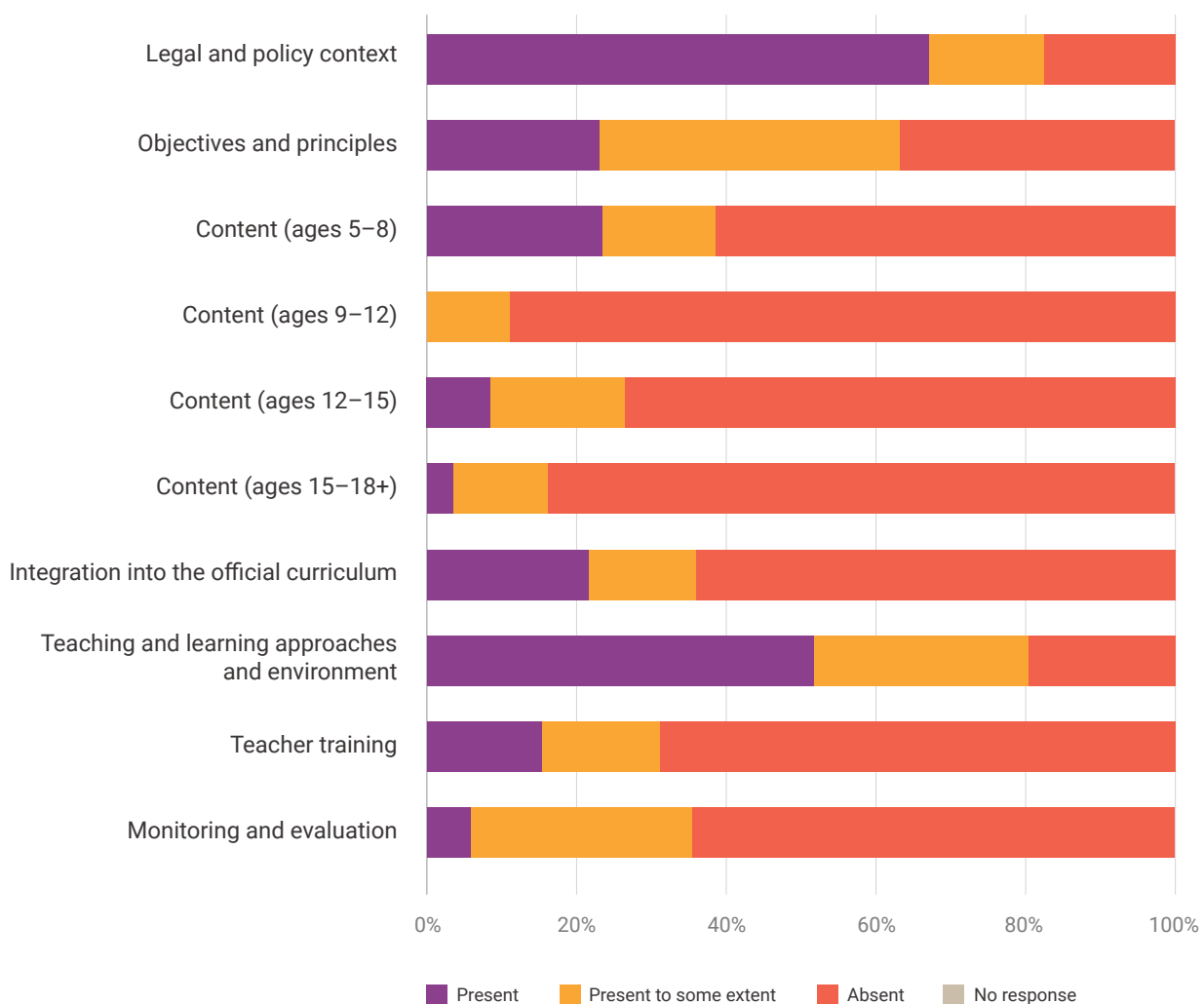
Source: Data collected through the SERAT tool.

PROGRAMME COHERENCE



As seen in Figure 15, CSE has a strong legal and policy context, with many related legislative documents and state programmes. Despite this, the legal philosophy has not been sufficiently translated into education-related documents. The National Curriculum’s objectives and principles are broader and aimed at developing broader concepts and competencies. Thus, although the National Curriculum may not have a place for detailed CSE goals, its content can still be enriched by CSE topics. Taking into consideration the limited knowledge of young people (and the public at large) of different components of CSE (e.g. HIV, STIs, relationships, etc.), the education system has to play an important role for knowledge dissemination and competency development. The integration of CSE topics into both the curriculum and teacher training programmes should be supported by a comprehensive M&E system, which is absent for now.

Figure 15. Country summary results



Source: Data collected through the SERAT tool.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Photo: UNFPA Georgia/Dina Oganova

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 CSE-related challenge is that there is a stigma in society around sexuality-related issues. This stigma is even stronger when it comes to children and education in schools. One of the first steps to supporting CSE is to have an open dialogue on the topic led by health professionals, including child psychologists, and other experts via various channels, including social media, in-person meetings and webinars. Such discussions would not only share knowledge but would also make education policy on CSE, including curriculum and teacher training programme development, more comprehensive and holistic.

The recommendations below follow the sequence of the topics from the summary results and also reflect the recommendations made by the experts during the key-informant interviews.²⁷

Legal and policy context

- Strengthen the importance of CSE in major policy documents, including those in the education sector.
- Introduce school-based services, including counselling, for young people.

Objectives and principles

- Support the assessment of the CSE needs of children and young people in order to develop a strategy for their involvement in the curriculum development process.
- Enhance the involvement of parents in curriculum development.
- Consult on CSE topics with respective experts.
- Communicate the importance of and need for CSE among different audiences in order to fight against stigma and social norms around talking about and educating on sexuality; develop a special information campaign for this purpose.
- Enhance the objectives of the curriculum and specific programmes to reflect young people's needs for relevant skills.

Programme content and integration

- Introduce appropriate CSE content at all levels of education by developing age- and developmentally appropriate content in accordance with UNESCO standards with more focus on gender, violence (including sexual violence and abuse), skills for health, social norms, sexuality, sexual behaviour and SRH. Pay special attention to the content for the 9–12 age group, which lacks almost all relevant information on SRH. Integrate programme content into existing subjects.
- Develop and introduce CSE-specific courses as elective subjects for upper secondary (high) school.
- Strengthen and expand the Doctor's Hour school doctor programme, with training and coaching for doctors on how to develop students' knowledge, skills and attitudes. Coaching is an important

27. Khatuna Khajomia, CSE component manager at Tanadgoma; Nikoloz Silagadze, curriculum development expert at the MES; Mzia Varazashvili, biology expert at the MES.

part of ensuring that the programme is delivering as planned and that, at the same time, it provides opportunities to monitor the situation and adjust to the needs of schoolchildren.

Teaching and learning approaches and environment

- Develop digital resources for students, teachers, parents and medical personnel who are working in schools to give them a better understanding of CSE. When digital resources are not accessible due to a lack of equipment and Internet connectivity, brief and easy-to-understand manuals for students, the school community, teachers and parents should be printed and distributed, especially in remote areas and communities. Support should be provided for the development and/or translation of these resources for ethnic minority languages.
- Strengthen links with services by training teachers, resource officers and school administrators to give them a better understanding of the topic so that they can support learners in different situations.

Teacher training

Teacher pre-service education

- Reflect CSE topics in teacher pre-service programmes and develop a pilot programme with selected universities to revise existing programmes/syllabi (integrated programme for primary school teachers [300 credits] and a subject teacher programme [60 credits]). Incorporate the topic into the programmes' practice component so future teachers will be able to work with schools to deliver lessons on various aspects of CSE.
- Develop special programmes (which can be seen as professional development programmes for academic staff) and conduct seminars (and training) for those academic staff who deliver the respective courses. Conduct seminars with university students who are enrolled in the above-mentioned programmes to become future teachers.
- Develop special educational resources for academic staff and students (e.g. readers, informational packages, methodological guidelines, etc.).
- Pilot the new syllabi. Analyse the pilot results and share the knowledge and experience gained with other universities.

Teacher in-service education

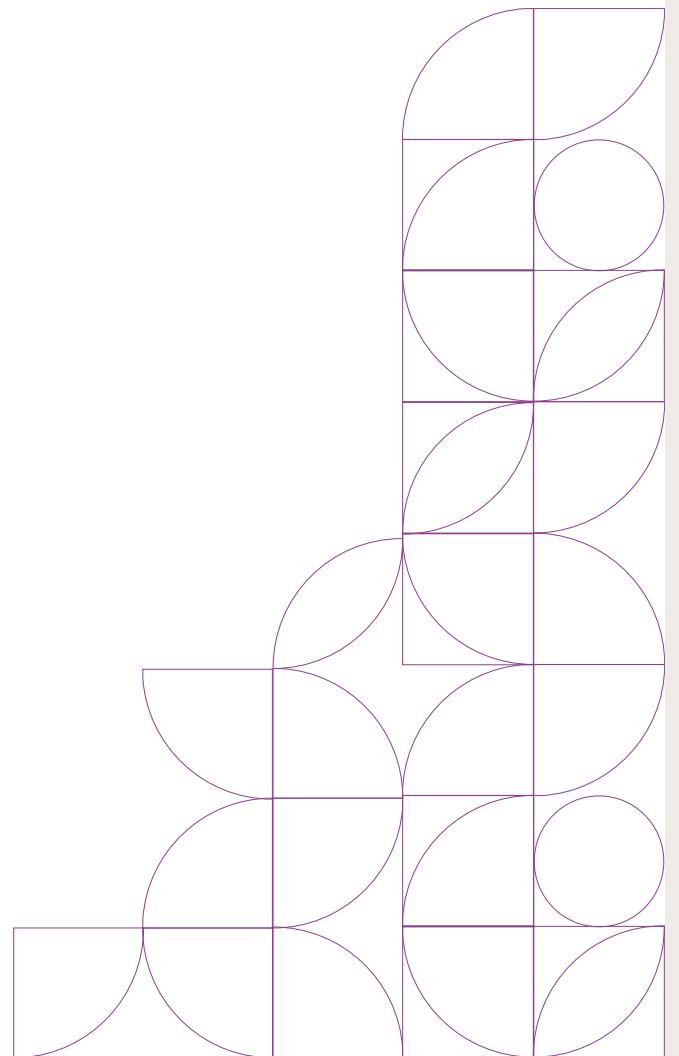
- Advocate and work together with partners (MES, UNFPA and NGOs) to include CSE topics in professional development standards for teachers and teacher examination programmes.
- Develop an in-service teacher training programme and apply for its accreditation (this can be done by UNFPA with partner organizations).
- Develop a pilot school support programme – with teacher training, coaching, classroom monitoring and an annual teacher conference – to make the topic visible, acceptable and important. Gradually expand the list of participating schools.
- Develop a series of open webinars for teachers, students and parents on CSE topics in partnership with local NGOs and associations.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Together with the EMIS, discuss and decide which data will be collected and incorporated into the EMIS.
- Strengthen curriculum implementation monitoring and assessment, and incorporate classroom observation components of CSE topics.

Next steps

The next steps for applying the review results to the education system should be discussed with the MES and other stakeholders. All activities mentioned in the recommendations are a high priority and should be analysed for implementation.



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