



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# EVALUATION OF SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Berlin  
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## Global perspectives



# International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (2009)



## RATIONALE

Young people - 40% of all new adult (15+) HIV infections worldwide

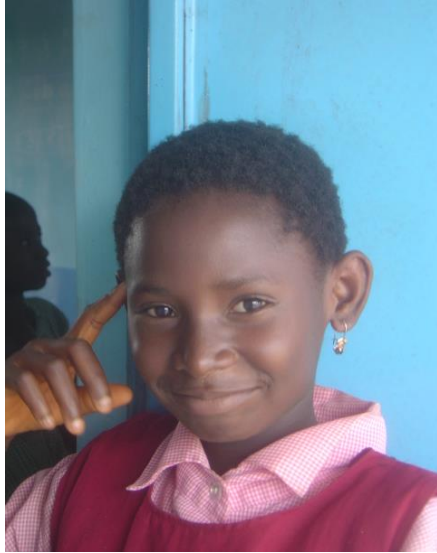
<40% of young people have basic information about HIV

Numerous studies show that with the right information and skills, young people can change their behaviour to reduce the risk of acquiring HIV infection or passing it on to others

Young people are clear in their demand for more – and better – sexuality education, services and resources to meet their prevention needs <sub>2</sub>

## Purpose

- Promote an understanding of the need and rationale for sexuality education (SE)
- Provide a clear understanding of the objectives, components and possible learning outcomes of SE
- Provide guidance to education and health authorities on how to build support for SE
- Build teacher preparedness and institutional capacity to deliver good quality SE
- Offer guidance on SE materials development



## Goal of Sexuality Education

Equip children and young people with knowledge, skills and values to make responsible choices about their sexual and social relationships.

***Sexuality education is defined as an age-appropriate , culturally relevant approach to teaching about sex and relationships by providing scientifically-accurate, realistic, non-judgemental information. Sexuality education provides opportunities to explore one's own values and attitudes and to build decision-making , communication and risk reduction skills about many aspects of sexuality***





## Why evaluate?

- Understand the impacts
- Use data to advocate
- Ensure that a programme / curriculum is achieving its goals

### Audience:

- National education sector: ministries, policy-makers, educators
- Civil society, multi- & bi-lateral partners, teachers unions
- Stakeholders in other sectors
- Donors – often in health...

**Decision makers & programme implementers**

## What does the evidence review say?

Sexuality education programmes  
do not increase sexual activity

Some sexuality/HIV education programme

- Delay initiation of sexual intercourse

- Reduce number of sexual partners or

- Increase use of condoms/contraception

- Reduce unprotected sex

- Reduce pregnancy and STI rates

Some do none of these



*Review of sexuality education programme impact on sexual behaviour (87 studies from around the world including 29 from developing countries)*

# 2008 review of impact of sexuality education on sexual behaviour

	Developing Countries (N=29)	United States (N=47)	Other developed countries (N=11)	All countries (N=87)	
<b>Initiation of sex</b>					
• Delayed initiation	6	15	2	23	37%
• No significant impact	16	17	7	40	63%
• Hastened initiation	0	0	0	0	0%
<b>Frequency of sex</b>					
• Decreased frequency	4	6	0	10	31%
• No significant impact	5	15	1	21	66%
• Increased frequency	0	0	1	1	3%

# 2008 review of impact of sexuality education on sexual behaviour

	Developing Countries (N=29)	United States (N=47)	Other developed countries (N=11)	All countries (N=87)	
<b>Number of sexual partners</b>					
• Decreased number	5	11	0	16	44%
• No significant impact	8	12	0	20	56%
• Increased number	0	0	0	0	0%
<b>Use of condoms</b>					
• Increased use	7	14	2	23	40%
• No significant impact	14	17	4	35	60%
• Decreased use	0	0	0	0	0%



# 2008 review of impact of sexuality education on sexual behaviour

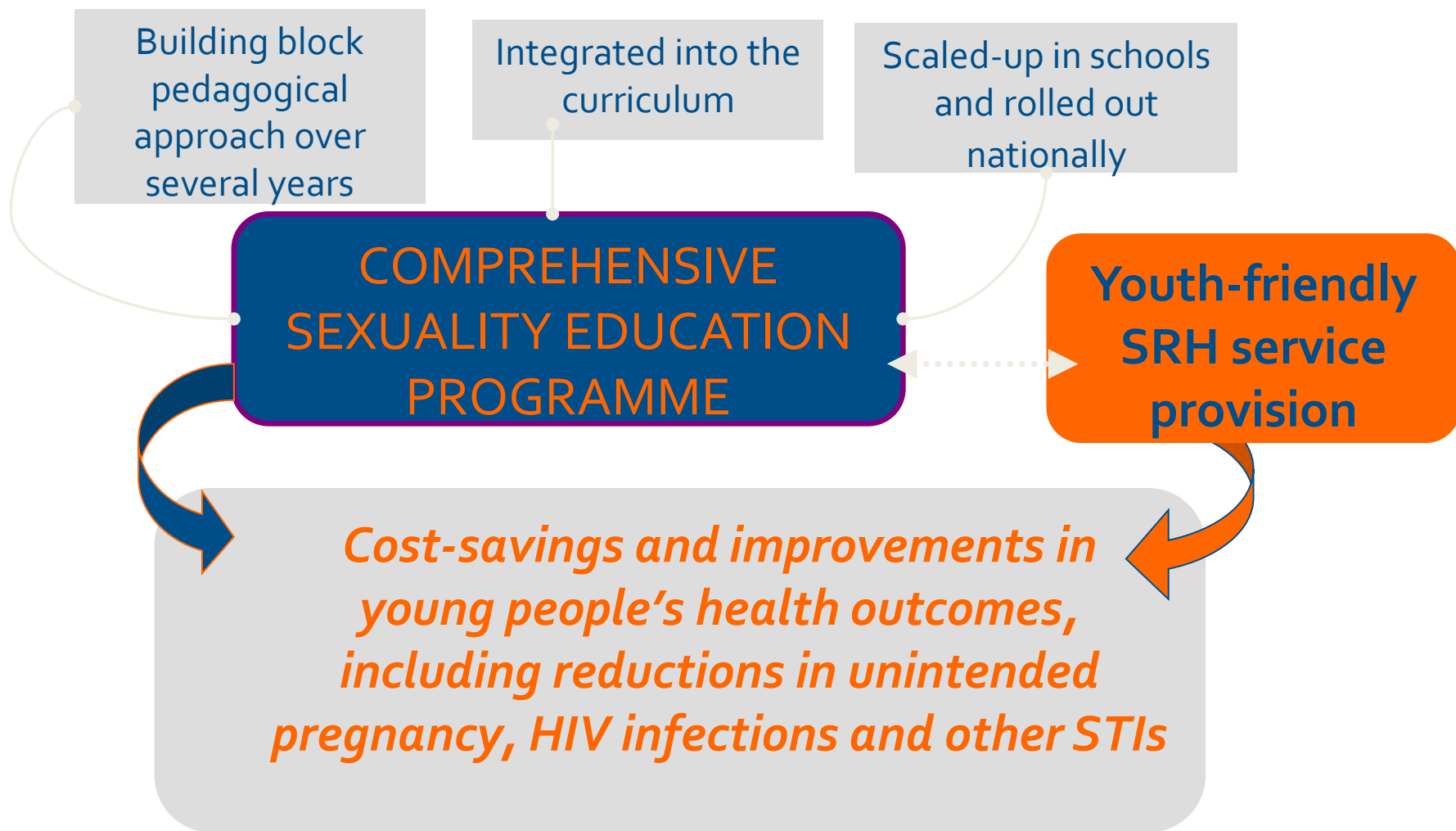
	Developing Countries (N=29)	United States (N=47)	Other developed countries (N=11)	All countries (N=87)	
<b>Use of contraception</b>					
• Increased use	1	4	1	6	40%
• No significant impact	3	4	1	8	53%
• Decreased use	0	1	0	1	7%
<b>Sexual risk-taking</b>					
• Reduced risk	1	15	0	16	53%
• No significant impact	3	9	1	13	43%
• Increased risk	1	0	0	1	3%

## Cost & Cost-effectiveness study (2011) Estonia

- **Research question:** What is the cost-effectiveness of SE programmes?
- Cost per unintended pregnancy, STI, HIV infection averted
  - Costs of the SE programme are offset by the savings resulting from averted HIV infections
    - Lifetime treatment costs us\$67,825
- *Contribution of Sexuality Education programme not separable from youth-friendly service delivery*

**Conclusion: SE programmes are potentially highly effective, cost-effective and even cost-saving**

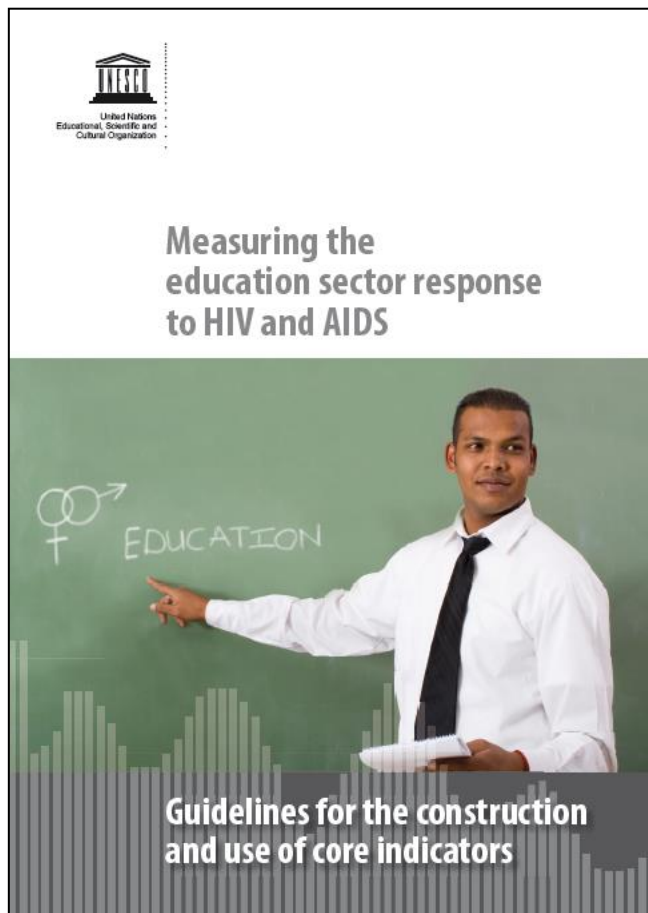
# Conclusions from cost-effectiveness study



# MONITORING OR EVALUATION?

How can countries measure their national programmes?

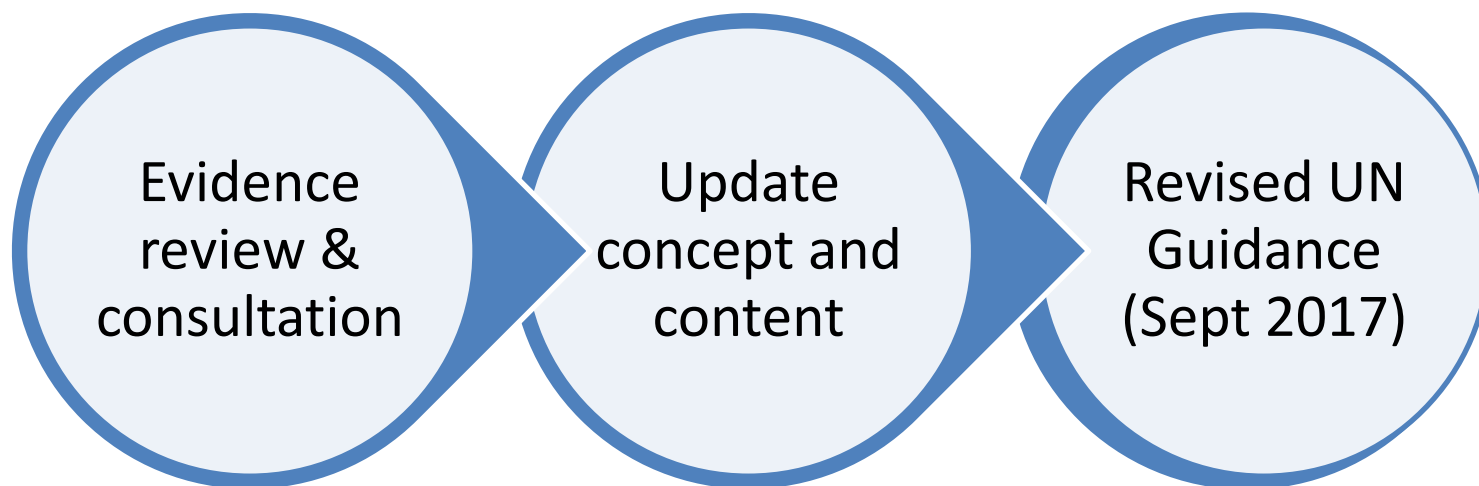
*Monitoring indicators can give idea of coverage – but understanding **quality** of delivery is still a major challenge.*



# UPDATING THE INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL GUIDANCE ON SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Shifts in sexuality education evidence and practice

Guidance to remain relevant to young people's lives





## REVISED DEFINITION OF SEXUALITY EDUCATION (forthcoming UN definition)

***Comprehensive sexuality education*** is a curriculum-based **process of teaching and learning** about the **cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects** of sexuality.

It aims to equip children and young people with the **knowledge, skills, attitudes and values** that will  
empower them to realise their **health, wellbeing and dignity**,  
develop **respectful** social relationships,  
consider the **wellbeing of others** affected by their choices,  
and understand and act upon their **rights** throughout their lives.

## **REVISED DEFINITION OF SEXUALITY EDUCATION (forthcoming UN definition)**

*CSE is education, delivered in formal and non-formal settings, that is:*

*Scientifically accurate*

*Incremental*

*Age-and developmentally- appropriate*

*Gender-sensitive*

*Culturally relevant and transformative*

## Updated evidence review (2016)

Based on analyses of 22 systematic reviews of sexual health interventions for young people :

- Sexuality education does not increase sexual activity, sexual risk-taking behaviour or STI/HIV infection rates
- Mixed impact:
  - increasing young people's knowledge and improving attitudes
  - limited effects on biological measures (unwanted pregnancy, HIV/STIs)

***Updated understanding on role of gender and social context on sexual health. Also recognises importance of combination approaches including services, parents and media.***



## Challenges of evaluating sexuality education

- Goals are broad – multiple measurements
- Attribution of results especially behaviour
- ‘Interventions’ not ongoing educational process – good for scientific evaluation, terrible for learners
- Infused throughout many subjects... which one to measure?
- Evaluate or assess?

# Thank you

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