



Sexuality Education in Georgia

Desk Research

INTRODUCTION:

Over the recent years, teaching of healthy lifestyle has been gradually introduced in the Georgian education system, which to a certain extent is a part of comprehensive education on human sexuality. The process has received backlash from many people. One of the goals of NGO Medical-Psychological Center Tanadgoma is to contribute to introducing a comprehensive education on human sexuality. To that end, it has decided to prepare the present desk research that describes and discusses the situation in this field.

In our country, there are different understandings of sexuality education. Some view it in a narrow context and to them, sexuality education is only related to providing information about sexual intercourse. In Georgia, teaching of sexuality education in schools within a biology class is limited to teaching anatomy and describing the reproductive system.

In the field of education in Georgia, issues that are related to sexuality education are referred to as „healthy lifestyle“.

The following terms are used interchangeably in the present document: teaching of healthy lifestyle, comprehensive or complex sexuality education, education about human sexuality and sexuality education.

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MAIN TERMINOLOGY/ABBREVIATIONS

Gender – refers to socially constructed roles of women and men, which is ascribed to them because of their sexual characteristics (<http://www.nplg.gov.ge/gwdict/index.php?a=term&d=5&t=3256>).

Gender equality - Equal representation of women and men. Gender equality does not imply that women and men are the same, but that they have equal value and should be accorded equal treatment. (International guidance on sexuality education, UNESCO, 2009)

NC – National curriculum

Reproductive health - a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system, and not merely the absence of reproductive disease or infirmity. Reproductive health deals with the reproductive processes, functions and systems at all stages of life, and implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life, the capacity to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. (International technical guidance on sexuality education, UNESCO, 2018)

Subject-based standard – A particular outcome to be achieved by a student in a specific discipline, after completing a specific period.

Sexual health - is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. (International technical guidance on sexuality education, UNESCO, 2018)

Sexuality education – the process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality. It aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to: realize their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and, understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives (International technical guidance on sexuality education, UNESCO, 2018).

Sexuality - A natural part of human development through every phase of life and includes physical, psychological and social components (WHO Regional Office for Europe and BzGA, Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe, 2010).

Sexual rights embrace human rights that are already recognized in national laws, international human rights documents and other consensus statements. They include the right of all persons, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, to:

- the highest attainable standard of sexual health, including access to sexual and reproductive health care services;
- seek, receive and impart information related to sexuality;
- sexuality education;
- respect for bodily integrity;
- choose their partner;
- decide to be sexually active or not;
- consensual sexual relations;
- consensual marriage;
- decide whether or not, and when, to have children; and
- Pursue a satisfying, safe and pleasurable sexual life.

The responsible exercise of human rights requires that all persons respect the rights of others." (International technical guidance on sexuality education, UNESCO, 2018);

Sexual citizenship - the rights and responsibilities of citizens in sexual and intimate life, including debates over equal marriage and women's human rights, as well as shaping thinking about citizenship more generally. <https://www.wiley.com/en-us/-Sexuality+and+Citizenship-p-9781509514205>

SRHR – Sexual and reproductive health and rights

Healthy lifestyle – A way of living that lowers the risk of being seriously ill or dying early. Health is not just about avoiding a disease or illness. It is about physical, mental and social well-being too (WHO. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/108180>).

WHAT IS SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Comprehensive sexuality education aims to support children and adolescents in the process of sexual development. This particular stage of development is especially important for adolescents. Sexuality education is the process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality, in order to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to handle information received from the Internet or other sources, distinguish false and mutually exclusive messages about sexual relationships and gender stereotypes.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) provide exact definitions of sexuality education:

- WHO: Sexuality education means learning about the cognitive, emotional, social, interactive and physical aspects of sexuality (WHO Regional Office for Europe and BzgA, Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe, 2010);

- UNESCO: the process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality. It aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to: realize their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and, understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives (International technical guidance on sexuality education, UNESCO, 2018).

SEXUALITY EDUCATION HAS THE FOLLOWING TWO MAIN GOALS:

- Reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies, spread of sexually transmitted diseases and sexual violence against children;
- Contribute to youth wellbeing by improving their quality of life and human relationships.

During a special session of the UN General Assembly in 2002, the importance of designing and implementing national strategies and programs for promoting healthy lives of children was recognized, which also includes defining appropriate goals and indicators. Such attempts should be made in all regions of the world, as even today, majority of children do not have access to information about reproductive health and rights, as well as about preventive and treatment services in this field. Providing children with access to such information, education and services should become an important objective of future educational programs.

Issues of sexual and reproductive health, rights and healthy life have long been introduced in educational systems of many countries, from preschool through higher education.

It has been recognized that correct information and adequate education make healthy physical and emotional life, prevention of majority of diseases of sexual and reproductive systems possible. One of the most important aspects of raising children should be helping them develop vital skills. Among these skills, healthy lifestyle holds a very special place, for both individual and public well-being.

WHO report on Sexuality Education in 25 countries of the WHO European Region (2018) says the following about Georgia:



„Sexuality education is presently virtually absent from schools in Georgia. Still the government is in the process of introducing Healthy lifestyle education, which is provisionally planned to include some sexuality-education topics. Active support for this development is provided by the UNFPA Georgia and NGO “Tanadgoma”. But it is still too early to predict to what extent sexuality education will indeed be included. There is strong opposition to it, especially from influential Georgian Orthodox Church.” ¹



INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE OF INTRODUCING SEXUALITY EDUCATION

There are many countries in the world where national and school curriculums include issues of healthy lifestyle and reproductive health and rights, in consideration of the local cultural factors and children's age.

Organization of education about healthy lifestyle, reproductive health and rights differs across countries. In some, these issues are taught as a separate subject, while in others they are integrated in the subject of biology. There are countries where these issues are spread over several different subjects, including on the most part natural history/biology, civic education, physical education and sports.

There are different approaches toward organization of teaching about healthy life, reproductive health and rights, however specialists agree that it is important to teach and learn about these issues through different subjects, based on a holistic approach. This will allow students to see from a different perspective the importance of healthy lifestyle for their social, emotional or physical development and allow them to acquire skills and values that will ensure their healthy lives.

1. Sexuality Education in the WHO European Region. Fact sheets of the status of sexuality education in 25 countries 2018.

Main providers of age-appropriate information about issues of healthy living and reproductive health include: school, family, friends, media/social media, and medical workers. If provision of information about these issues is not organized by relevant institutions, children and youth tend to receive the information from their peers or from different sources, including from media outlets that lack credibility.

In many countries, legislation defines that one of the goals of education is to teach about issues of healthy lifestyle and reproductive health (e.g., the Kingdom of Netherlands, Estonia, Latvia, etc.), while details are provided in national and/or regional/school curricula. Based on that, these issues are reflected in undergraduate/graduate programs for teachers and further education programs, as well as in parental education programs.

Sweden was the first country where sexuality education became a mandatory part of education in schools. The subject was called „Sexuality and personal relations“. Initially the new subject was not popular, while teachers' manual was revised by the Swedish parliament on a periodic basis. During that time, it was thought that provision of information on issues of sexuality at early stage would result in early sexual activity among teenagers. Sweden examined this issue in-depth and found that informing teenagers about issues of sexuality is crucial for their development. It also serves as a preparatory stage for their future life. Since 1955, teaching of sexuality education has been mandatory in all schools in Sweden.

Currently issues of sexuality education are integrated in different subjects in Sweden: biology, religion, history, ethics, sociology, literature. Teaching begins from the age of 7 and continues till students finish school.

SEXUALITY EDUCATION AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL DOCUMENTS

The topics of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) are described in the following international documents:

- WHO standards for sexuality education for Europe (WHO & BZGA, 2010);²
- International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) Framework for CSE and Toolkit Enable & Deliver (IPPF, 2010 & 2017);³
- UNESCO's International Guidance on SE (UNESCO, 2018).⁴

2. WHO Regional Office for Europe and BzGA. „Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe“

3. IPPF Framework for Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)

4. UNESCO International technical guidance on sexuality education

The table below provides an overview of sexuality education frameworks for age specific topics provided by WHO&BZgA, IPPF and UNESCO:

	Standards for Europe (WHO & BZgA, 2010)	IPPF Framework & Toolkit (IPPF, 2010 & 2017)	International Guidance (UNESCO, 2018)
Age groups:	6 groups: 0-4, 4-6, 6-9, 9-12, 12-15, 15+ years	3 groups: under 10, 10-18, 18-24+ years	4 groups: 5-8, 9-12, 12-15, 15-18+ years
Categories of learning objectives	Knowledge, attitudes and skills	Knowledge and attitudes, skills and engagement	Knowledge, attitudes, and skills
Main thematic categories:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The human body and human development 2. Fertility and reproduction 3. Sexuality 4. Emotions 5. Relationships and lifestyles 6. Sexuality, health and well-being 7. Sexuality and rights 8. Social and cultural determinants of sexuality 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender 2. Sexual and reproductive health and HIV 3. Sexual rights and sexual citizenship 4. Pleasure 5. Violence 6. Diversity 7. Relationships 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relationships 2. Values, Rights, Culture and Sexuality 3. Understanding Gender 4. Violence and Staying Safe 5. Skills for Health and Well-being 6. The Human Body and Development 7. Sexuality and Sexual Behaviour 8. Sexual and Reproductive Health

The scope of sexuality education has expanded overtime, however discussions about what it entails or whether or not it should entail sexual education for different age groups continues.

OVERVIEW OF THE STATE'S POLICY FOR SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN GEORGIA

The importance of learning about healthy lifestyle, sexual and reproductive health and rights has been recognized at the state policy level in Georgia.

There is a legislative environment and certain regulations that encourage education programs about these topics in Georgia. In addition, under several state strategies or international agreements Georgia has undertaken to introduce education about healthy lifestyle, sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Below is a brief overview of these documents:

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS:

► Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse⁵

Georgia has ratified The CoE Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (entry into force: 01/01/2015). Pursuant to Article 6 of the Convention, the state undertakes to ensure that children receive information on the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, as well as on the means to protect themselves, adapted to their evolving capacity. These issues are part of sexuality education.

Article 6 – Education for Children

Each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that children, during primary and secondary education, receive information on the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, as well as on the means to protect themselves, adapted to their evolving capacity. This information, provided in collaboration with parents, where appropriate, shall be given within a more general context of information on sexuality and shall pay special attention to situations of risk, especially those involving the use of new information and communication technologies.

⁵<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2291107?publication=0>

➤ EU-Georgia Association Agreement ეკრულება

"Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Georgia, of the other part" was signed on June 27, 2014, ratified by the Parliament of Georgia on July 18, 2014. Within the Association Agreement, Georgia has undertaken to introduce and promote healthy lifestyle. More specifically:

Chapter 15 – Public Health

Article 355

The Parties agree to develop their cooperation in the field of public health, with a view to raising the level of public health safety and protection of human health as an essential component for sustainable development and economic growth.

Article 336

The cooperation shall cover the following areas, in particular:

(Paragraphs „c“ and „e“ concern issues of healthy lifestyle and dissemination of information about health)

(c) prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, mainly through exchange of information and best practices, promoting healthy lifestyles, physical activity and addressing major health determinants, such as nutrition, addiction to alcohol, drugs and tobacco

(e) health information and knowledge

National policy documents:

➤ “Georgian National Youth Policy Concept for 2020-2030”⁶

On July 17, 2020, the Parliament of Georgia approved Georgian National Youth Policy Concept for 2020-2030 and tasked the Government of Georgia to design an action plan for implementation of the Georgian National Youth Policy Concept for 2020-2030, setting out corresponding measures and agencies responsible for implementing these measures. Health and wellbeing are one of the strategic priorities provided in the youth policy. From seven expected outcomes of this particular strategic priority, two concern reproductive health and rights and youth education about these issues. According to the document, the following outcomes need to be achieved:

Strategic priority N3 Health and wellbeing of young people

Expected outcome 3.2. Increased awareness on reproductive health among young people

„In order to better inform young people about these issues, it is necessary to provide them with evidence-based information through formal and non-formal education, to properly reflect relevant up-to-date subject standards in new textbooks, and to increase the number of well-trained and qualified teachers. Equally important is raising the awareness of parents and general public and mobilizing their support. It is also necessary to integrate a special function - providing young people with youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services - in the relevant areas at the level of primary health care, and to engage young people, especially young educators, in the process of development of these services. It is important to ensure that young people have access to sexual and reproductive health services in accordance with the National Maternal and New Born Health Strategy for 2017-2030 adopted by the Government of Georgia, which ensures provision of these services to young people in a youth-friendly manner.“

6.<http://www.parliament.ge/ge/saparlamento-saqmianoba/komitetebi/sportisa-da-axalgazrdul-saqmeta-komiteti-1155/saqartvelos-axalgazrduli-politikis-koncefcia-2020-2030-wlebistvis>

Expected Outcome 3.3. Decreased rates of child/early marriage and adolescent pregnancy

„It is important to provide public with more information on the legal norms governing the minimum age for marriage and gender-based violence defined by the Georgian legislation, as well as with evidence-based information on the issues (principles) of sexual and reproductive health, gender equality and healthy living. It is necessary to promote the elimination of stigmatizing attitudes and practices, as well as to change the social norms that reinforce gender stereotypes in society.“

➤ The National Maternal & Newborn Health Strategy 2017-2030⁷

On October 6, the Government of Georgia adopted The National Maternal & Newborn Health Strategy 2017-2030 and Action Plan 2017-2019 for its Implementation. Its main objective is to maintain and expand evidence-based and effective interventions in order to save mothers and newborns and to protect their health.

Sexual and reproductive health is among the three priority areas of the Strategy. For realization of this particular objective, the government has undertaken to ensure full access of youth to age-appropriate education about sexual and reproductive health issues:

Objective 6:

Youth have full access to age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health issues;

The Strategy is accompanied with the action plan for its implementation in 2017-2019. The list of measures specified in the action plan do not include sexuality education issues. These issues will be included for the next stage of implementation of the strategy.

7. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3825285https%3A//matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3825285?publication=0>

➤ **“Sexual and reproductive health and rights: national assessment document”.**

In 2019, the Office of the Public Defender of Georgia prepared a national assessment document on „Sexual and reproductive health and rights“.⁸ One of the areas addressed by the document is comprehensive sexuality education. Based on the key findings, the Public Defender’s Office has elaborated the following recommendations:

- Carry out inclusion of comprehensive education on human sexuality in the formal education system appropriate for each age group;
- Include this commitment in education plans and strategies at the different levels of education;
- Adjust comprehensive education components on human sexuality to align with international standards and UNESCO guidelines;
- Develop educational materials for comprehensive education on human sexuality for students appropriate to their age;
- Outline the role of municipalities in the development of non-formal education programs on comprehensive education on human sexuality and their on-site implementation process;
- Support teachers and schools in the regions, especially in high mountainous villages, in strengthening informal and formal learning on human sexuality;
- Ensure parental involvement in school life and encourage their full awareness;
- Develop learning materials based on human rights for target groups of teachers and promote their continuing education.

8.<http://www.ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2019070211091439761.pdf>

➤ Decree of the Government of Georgia on „The National Goals of General Education“⁹

Decree N84 of the Government of Georgia (dated 18 Oct 2004)¹⁰ represents the normative document that sets out the skills and competencies that an adolescent should possess based on the experience received in the general education system.

According to the document, „the system of education helps youth develop their mental and physical skills, gives them necessary knowledge and promotes healthy lifestyle. It helps students develop civic awareness based on liberal and democratic values and understand their duties and obligations before their family, society, state and community.“

The foregoing normative document is a framework document that serves as the basis for the national curriculum. Referring to the National Goals of General Education, NC outlines means for achieving these goals and provides a detailed description of knowledge, skills and values that students should acquire during their education at school and by the time they complete general education.

➤ National Curriculum

(Orders of the Ministry of Education and Sciences: №36/n, 11 March 2011; №40/n, 18 May 2016);¹¹

Article 7. Goals of learning and teaching

2. In view of the national goals of secondary education, the National Curriculum identifies the following priority topics:

- a) Protection of cultural heritage;**
- b) Environmental protection**
- c) Healthy living;**
- d) Civic security**
- e) Conflict management**
- f) Financial security**
- g) Cultural diversity.**

Order N63/n of the Minister of Education and Sciences of Georgia, 3 May 2018, webpage, 11.05.2018.

9. <http://www.ombudsmen.ge/res/docs/2019070211091439761.pdf>

10. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/11098?publication=0>

11. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3285991?publication=0>

Article 18. School culture

1. School should promote the following through teaching and learning of subjects, school projects, sports, artistic and club activities (with involvement of teachers, students and parents):

f) Introducing healthy lifestyle and protecting security – following a healthy lifestyle is crucial for mental and physical wellbeing of students, in order for them not to endanger their own and other people's life, health and wellbeing. In view of this, school culture should help students avoid influence of negative factors, understand the essence of healthy living (everything in moderation, exercise, healthy diet, rational life regime, avoiding risks, giving up bad habits, etc.) and understand its importance.

The foregoing provision from the National Curriculum not only provides a foundation for introducing and promoting a healthy living by teaching and learning of certain subjects but it also requires schools to make it an integral part of school life and environment. This provision provides an effective basis for designing curricula for specific subjects.

The following areas deal with healthy lifestyle, health and rights:

Chapter IX. Compulsory and elective subjects

Article 49. Social sciences

2. The main goal of social sciences subjects is to promote raising of informed, active and responsible citizens; provide students with information about their native environment; help them determine their native country's place in international historic and geographic processes; to raise them as patriotic and human individuals. In addition, teaching of social sciences subjects is crucial for development of civic values in students.

Article 50. Natural sciences

The main goal of natural sciences subjects is to help students understand basics of sciences and develop research skills, which will allow students to understand the world, get involved in different spheres of public activity, feel responsibility before himself/herself, society and environment.

Article 53. Sport

2. The purpose of sport subjects is to engage students in physical activities and promote their physical development, also for students to understand the importance of healthy living in people's lives.

Georgian legislation

➤ Code on the Rights of the Child¹²

The Parliament of Georgia adopted the Code on the Rights of the Child on 20/09/2019. The purpose of the Code is to ensure the welfare of the child by promoting the effective implementation of the Constitution of Georgia, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its supplementary protocols and other international legal acts recognized by the State.

The Code on the Rights of the Child creates a legislative environment that encourages sexuality education. According to Article 15 of the Code, „The child shall have the right to obtain information on his/her rights and freedoms, as well as other topics deemed pertinent to the physical, mental, intellectual, psychosocial and cultural development and well-being of the child.“

Chapter II

Fundamental rights and freedoms of the child

Article 15. Right of the child to obtain information

1. The child shall have the right to obtain information on his/her rights and freedoms, as well as other topics deemed pertinent to the physical, mental, intellectual, psychosocial and cultural development and well-being of the child.

2. Early and pre-school educational institutions and general educational institutions shall ensure that information on the rights and safeguards of the child is provided to the child according to the age and individual capabilities of the child, through a means of communication which is accessible to the child.

12. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4613854?publication=1>

3. The State shall ensure that information disseminated by national and international mass media, and educational and cognitive materials, which concern psychosocial well-being, and the physical and mental health of the child, are accessible to the child.

4. In order to properly protect the rights of the child to well-being, health-care, and other rights of the child through mass media, the State shall facilitate:

a) dissemination through mass media of information and materials containing useful information for the cultural and social development of the child, in accordance with the goals of child education, taking into account the different language needs of children;

b) international cooperation in order to exchange, disseminate and prepare information from diverse national and international sources that is pertinent to the development of the child;

c) the development and dissemination of literature for children;

d) the development and dissemination of guidelines for protecting the child from harmful information and materials.

5. The State shall ensure that information on the rights and safeguards of the child is disseminated by responsible agencies in a language which the child understands and through a means of communication which is accessible to the child.

Pursuant to Article 41 of the Code, „Each child shall have the right to use high standard healthcare for the protection of physical and psychological health. The State shall carry out all necessary administrative, social and educational activities to ensure that no children are restricted from the right provided for by paragraph 1 of this article, throughout the territory of the country.“

Article 41. Right of the child to high standard healthcare

1. Each child shall have the right to use high standard healthcare for the protection of physical and psychological health, including the right to have geographical and financial access to healthcare services (including primary healthcare, inpatient services, and rehabilitation).

2. The State shall carry out all necessary administrative, social and educational activities to ensure that no children, including children with disabilities and/or vulnerable children, are restricted from the right provided for by paragraph 1 of this article, throughout the territory of the country. These activities shall cover measures to:

g) develop preventive healthcare sectors;

➤ The Law of Georgia on General Education;

(The Government of Georgia approved the updated version of the Law on 15.07.2020); The Law of Georgia on General Education sets out main policy objectives of the state in the field of secondary education.¹³

The legislation of Georgia in the field of general education consists of the Constitution of Georgia, the Constitutional Agreement, international agreements and treaties, this Law, and other primary and secondary legislation. This Law regulates the conditions for carrying out general educational activities, the principles and procedures for managing and funding of general education; it also defines the status of all general education institutions (irrespective of their organizational and legal form), rules for their establishment, functioning, reorganization, liquidation, authorization and accreditation, as well as the conditions and procedures for implementing teaching activities in general education institutions in Georgia.

13. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/29248?publication=87>

Article 3, paragraph „b“ deals with healthy lifestyle as one of the policy objectives of the state in the field of education:

Article 3 - Basic goals of the state policy in the field of general education

1. Basic goals of the state policy in the field of general education are to:

a) create conditions for developing pupils into free persons with national and universal human values;

b) develop intellectual and physical skills of pupils, provide them with necessary knowledge, establish healthy lifestyles, form civil awareness based on liberal and democratic values, ensure respect for cultural values by the pupils and facilitate understanding of rights and obligations before their family, society, state and community.

ISSUES OF SEXUAL EDUCATION IN THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

The National Curriculum holds a leading place in documents that regulate general education. NC is the so-called „standard for students“ that determines outcomes that students should achieve in terms of their knowledge, skills and values in a specific discipline and in a concrete period of time. NC is approved by the Minister of Education and Sciences, and according to the Law of Georgia on General Education, it is „a normative document regulating the distribution of teaching hours for all levels of general education, the conditions and recommendations for organizing educational environment, the necessary study load for pupils, the list of the achievements (skills and knowledge), which must be acquired by pupils after completion of each educational level, and the description of ways to acquire these skills and knowledge.“

NC was prepared in Georgia for the first time in 2005. Introduction of the second-generation NC began in 2011, while the third generation NC for elementary and basic education (grades I-IV and VII-IX) has already been prepared and approved. The process of introducing the third generation NC began in 2018 and is still ongoing. Currently subject-based standards for secondary education (grades X-XII) are being developed and they will be introduced in schools until 2024.

The system of education in Georgia consists of the following three steps:

- 1. Elementary - I-VI;**
- 2. Basic - VII-IX;**
- 3. Secondary - X-XII;**

Subject-based standards are prepared according to these steps. In the education system, NC is the foundation for different components of the education system.

The following should be prepared based on the NC:

- Professional standard for teachers;
- Activities for training, in-service education and professional development of teachers;
- Educational resources (textbooks, guides, electronic resources, teaching aids, etc.);
- Standards for scientific laboratories;
- School infrastructure standards (functional planning of the space, technical planning of labs, library standard, etc.).

Issues of healthy lifestyle, sexual and reproductive health and rights are distributed in the new NC between elementary and basic levels (working on the subject-based standard for secondary level has not been completed). In some subjects, these issues are reflected in goals, while in others they are reflected in learning outcomes.

Generally, issues of healthy lifestyle and sexual and reproductive health and rights are distributed among the following six subjects: 1. Natural history (grades I-IV); 2. Society and I (grades III-IV); 3. My Georgia (grades V-VI); 4. Biology (grades VII-IX); 5. Citizen (grades VII-IX); 6. Physical education and sport (grades I-VI).

The table below provides distribution of SRHR and healthy lifestyle issues in subject-based standards, according to individual subjects and grades:

Elementary	Grades I-IV	Grades III- IV	Grades V-VI
Natural history	Names of personal hygiene products and importance of following rules of hygiene (e.g. hairbrush, toothbrush, towel)		Discussions about different harmful factors affecting health
Society and I		Following healthy lifestyle (personal hygiene, healthy diet, sports)	
My Georgia			Understanding the importance of a healthy lifestyle (personal hygiene, healthy diet, sports)
Physical education and sport	Following basic rules of personal hygiene and safety		Health as a determinant of successful existence in the society (harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol and drugs on health)

Basic level	Grades VII-IX
Biology	<p>Understanding the importance of a healthy lifestyle and following it.</p> <p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human life cycle (teenage years) • Health and environment • Effects of psychoactive substances • Women's reproductive system • Men's reproductive system • Impregnation and development of fetus • Sexually transmitted diseases • Healthy and balanced diet • Dependence on chemical substances, negative habits • Physical activity and its importance for maintaining health • Risks associated with early marriage/pregnancy
Citizen	<p>Evaluating and correcting someone's own opinions, behavior, managing emotions (self-reflection);</p> <p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy diet; • Teenage years; • Early marriage; • Addiction; • Equality in school • Violence/bullying.
Physical education and sport	<p>Understanding the importance of engaging in physical activity, both for strengthening health and promoting socialization.</p>

The third generation NC focuses on development of knowledge and skills about important issues related to healthy living and reproductive health and rights, including: teenage years, reproductive system, sexual anatomy, negative habits and how they affect health, early marriage and others. These competencies will promote a person's social development and form values of tolerant, informed, active and responsible citizen.

Public attitudes toward sexuality education have never been surveyed in Georgia.

The present chapter summarizes studies with contents that are close to a public attitude survey on sexuality education.

1. National Youth Survey in Georgia – Analysis of the situation and needs of youth in Georgia; UNICEF, Tbilisi, 2014.

National Youth Survey in Georgia was conducted by the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat), in close cooperation with UNICEF, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The study aimed to promote identification of the basic needs and problems faced by young people in Georgia as well as promote knowledge and evidence-based youth policy development.

The study has revealed the following:

- Young people in Georgia have limited knowledge about the rights and duties of citizens and civic duties;
- Georgian youth are not actively involved in public life. Their majority (90.4%) believes that they have the right to participate in decision-making about issues that affect youth;
- With regard to substance abuse among young people, there are striking gender differences.
- Most young people have never used contraception and nearly half of registered abortions are obtained by women aged 15-29.
- 43,3% of young people perceive the stigma of disability as the social norm.

Georgian youth believe that an increase in the number of available jobs is the most significant factor that would contribute to building a better world, while among five most important factors the respondents have named healthcare improvement, availability of affordable and adequate food, quality education, honest and accountable government.

2. From Prejudice to Equality - "Women's Initiatives Support Group" (WISG), Tbilisi, 2016

The purpose of the study was to analyze in an in-depth manner attitudes toward LGBT people and to study in general terms public opinion about their equal rights. Based on that, the study aimed to provide recommendations and long-term strategy for overcoming homo/bi/transphobia in the country.

The findings of the study suggest that homo/bi/transphobia is a comprehensive problem in Georgia and overcoming the problem requires joint efforts and coordinated work from different actors (authorities, different professional groups, media and civil sector).

3. Women's sexual and reproductive health and rights in Georgian context – Non-profit (non-commercial) legal entity "Supporters of Social Changes", Tbilisi, 2018

This is an analytical overview of sexual and reproductive health and rights of women in Georgia.

Efforts should be intensified in order for sexual health and rights to be recognized alongside reproductive health. Achieving this goal is crucial in order for the issue of sexuality to no longer be excluded from and ignored in the social/political discourse, which in the contemporary Georgia is largely caused by clearly locking the issue of sexuality in the frame of sexual orientation.

Therefore, formation of a comprehensive vision and positive attitudes should be encouraged, first of all within the social discourse.

4. Assessment of parental attitudes and needs - Hera XXI, Tbilisi, 2018

The purpose of the study was to assess attitudes of parents that live in Georgia toward informing their children about reproductive and sexual health and rights.

The study has revealed that parents, regardless of whether or not they themselves have discussed these topics, believe it is necessary to inform their children about issues of sexual and reproductive health. Parents believe that most optimal period of starting to discuss sexual and reproductive health and rights with their children is early teens (ages 10-12 and 13-15).

From sources of information about sexual and reproductive health, family and school enjoy the highest level of credibility among parents.

5. Men, Women, and Gender Relations in Georgia: Public Perceptions and Attitudes - UNFPA, Tbilisi, 2020

This research report, developed within the scope of the UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality, sheds light on the present status of gender relations in Georgia while noting trends over time. It presents the results from a 2019 survey and qualitative research based on the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IM- AGES) and provides insights on how perceptions and behaviors have changed since 2013, when the first adaptation of IMAGES was implemented in Georgia.

The research has revealed the following:

- Gender norms continue to affect how household tasks are divided—and keep women from pursuing other opportunities
- Childcare also continues to be viewed primarily as a woman's domain.
- Certain inequitable attitudes about women's leadership, role in public life, and employment persist in Georgian society
- Greater awareness is required about policies of parental leave and laws on gender equality.

In Georgia, some gender inequitable attitudes and behaviors continue to persist, but alongside a growing receptivity to the idea of—and willingness to change for—a more equitable future.

Conclusion

Introducing sexuality education in formal education field remains a problem in Georgia. Irrespective of projects implemented by the Ministry of Education with the support of NGOs and different international organizations, intense discussions about the need of sexual education and its possible negative consequences continue.

Many myths or distorted perceptions of sexuality education continue to exist in the society. Lack of awareness, lack of knowledge, activities of religious or other organizations that oppose this issue contribute to strengthening of negative attitudes about sexuality education in the society.

ტანადგომა

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