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THE STATUS OF COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN ASIA-PACIFIC: A SUMMARY REVIEW 2020

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This factsheet is based on findings from a joint UNFPA, UNESCO and IPPF regional review on the status of comprehensive sexuality education in the Asia and Pacific region conducted in 2019, which includes Ministry of Education (MoE) questionnaires, expert questionnaires, and an online youth survey.

To access the background research report [click here](#)

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE LAWS AND POLICIES IN PLACE?

- National laws and regulations mandating the provision of sexuality education in schools are vital for ensuring an environment where accurate comprehensive sexuality education can be taught.<sup>1</sup>
- With laws and policies, the implementation of sexuality education becomes a matter of institutional policy, rather than the personal choice of individuals.<sup>2</sup>

**The majority of country respondents are aware of laws or policies related to sexual and reproductive health and/or sexuality education for young people in their country. However, commitment to sexuality education as represented by resource allocation and implementation varies across the Asia and Pacific region.**

Of the 28 Ministry of Education surveys received (20 Asia / 8 Pacific),

Only **two** countries - the Philippines and Thailand - mandate the provision of sexuality education for young people by law.

Countries where respondents report that they are aware of national laws and policies relating to sexual and reproductive health and/or sexuality education for young people

### Asia

**75%** (15 out of 20 countries)



### The Pacific

**63%** (5 out of 8 countries)



Source: MoE questionnaire

<sup>1</sup> WHO. (2015) Sexual health, human rights and the law. Geneva: WHO Press.

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO et al. (2018) *International technical guidance on sexuality education*. 2nd edn.

## COUNTRIES REPORTING THAT GOVERNMENT FUNDING IS ALLOCATED SPECIFICALLY TOWARDS SEXUALITY EDUCATION

### Asia

**70%** (14 out of 20 countries)



### The Pacific

**63%** (5 out of 8 countries)



Source: MoE questionnaire

## WHAT ARE THE REMAINING CHALLENGES?

- The commitment to sexuality education within these policies and strategies depends on national priorities which are often guided by traditional or religious practices and belief systems.
- For countries that have decentralised education systems, the decision to apply a mandatory sexuality education curriculum is implemented at the state or provincial-level and therefore, it is not necessarily mandatory nationwide.



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## TAKE ACTION

- Include the provision of sexuality education, ideally comprehensive sexuality education, in national laws, policies and strategies to promote age-responsive school-based sexuality education, from early primary through to secondary school.
- Make sexuality education in schools mandatory by law.
- Ensure that, where possible, the implementation of sexuality education is consistent across states/provinces.
- Build on community support for sexuality education to reduce social resistance.

**While there is a commitment to deliver Life Skills Education [LSE]<sup>3</sup>, given cultural and social constraints the delivery of all components of LSE, as detailed in the *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE)*, may not always be feasible.**

(MoE questionnaire, Bangladesh)

**The Ministry of Education Malaysia has taken various measures to address the needs and to expand the teaching of sexual and reproductive health in schools.**

(MoE questionnaire, Malaysia)

<sup>3</sup> National curricula in Asia and the Pacific may refer to sexuality education differently, such as Life Skills Education or Family Life Education