



Setting the scene: Harnessing the power of education

UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, Thematic Segment
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Why Education?



- Education is a right in and of itself.
- It is also **“the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world”** - Nelson Mandela
- Globally, over 90% of children of primary school age and over 80% of children of lower secondary school age are enrolled in school
- They spend, on average, 7590 hours in the classroom over a period of 8-10 years
- This makes schools a unique setting to reach young people

What do we mean by **quality** education?

- The goal of education is **not just the transmission of knowledge**.
- Quality education also “develops the skills, values and attitudes that enable citizens to lead **healthy** and fulfilled lives, make informed decisions, and respond to local and global challenges.” - Incheon Declaration
- **Health and education go hand in hand**: the achievement of SDG 3 and SDG 4 are interdependent



The role of education in the AIDS response

Young people continue to be left behind in the AIDS response:

- Young people (15-24) represent 16% of the global population but account for 27% of new HIV infections.
- Adolescent girls and young women in sub-Saharan Africa are three times more likely to acquire HIV than their male peers.
- Only 38% of young women and 46% of young men in the ESA region are able to demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of HIV.
- Young people living with HIV continue to face unacceptable stigma and discrimination in schools.

The education sector has a key role to play in addressing this, by **supporting learners to fulfil their right to quality education** in a safe, supportive, inclusive learning environment.



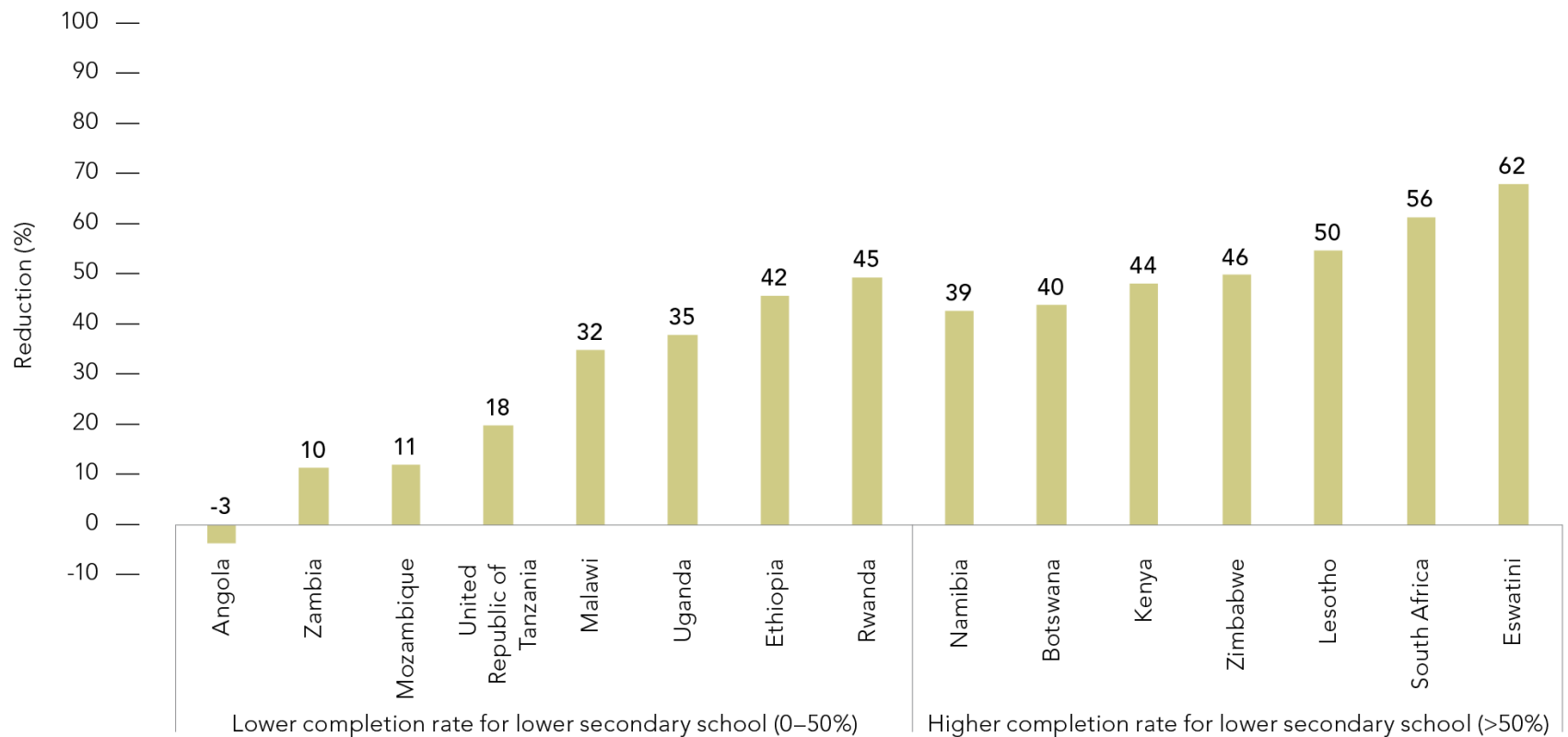
The power of education: the evidence base for secondary education

- Education is **one of the best HIV prevention tools available**
- **Each additional year of secondary schooling can lead to a reduction** in the cumulative risk of HIV infection
- Benefits can be further amplified when **complemented by measures to promote retention** in school (cash transfers, school feeding, etc.)
- **Girls reap particular benefits** from completion of secondary education



The power of education: the evidence base for secondary education

Relative reduction in new HIV infections since 2010 among adolescent girls and young women (ages 15–24 years), by completion rate for lower secondary school, eastern and southern Africa



Source: UNAIDS epidemiological estimates, 2020 (see <https://aidsinfo.unaids.org/>); UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).

CSE is core component of quality education

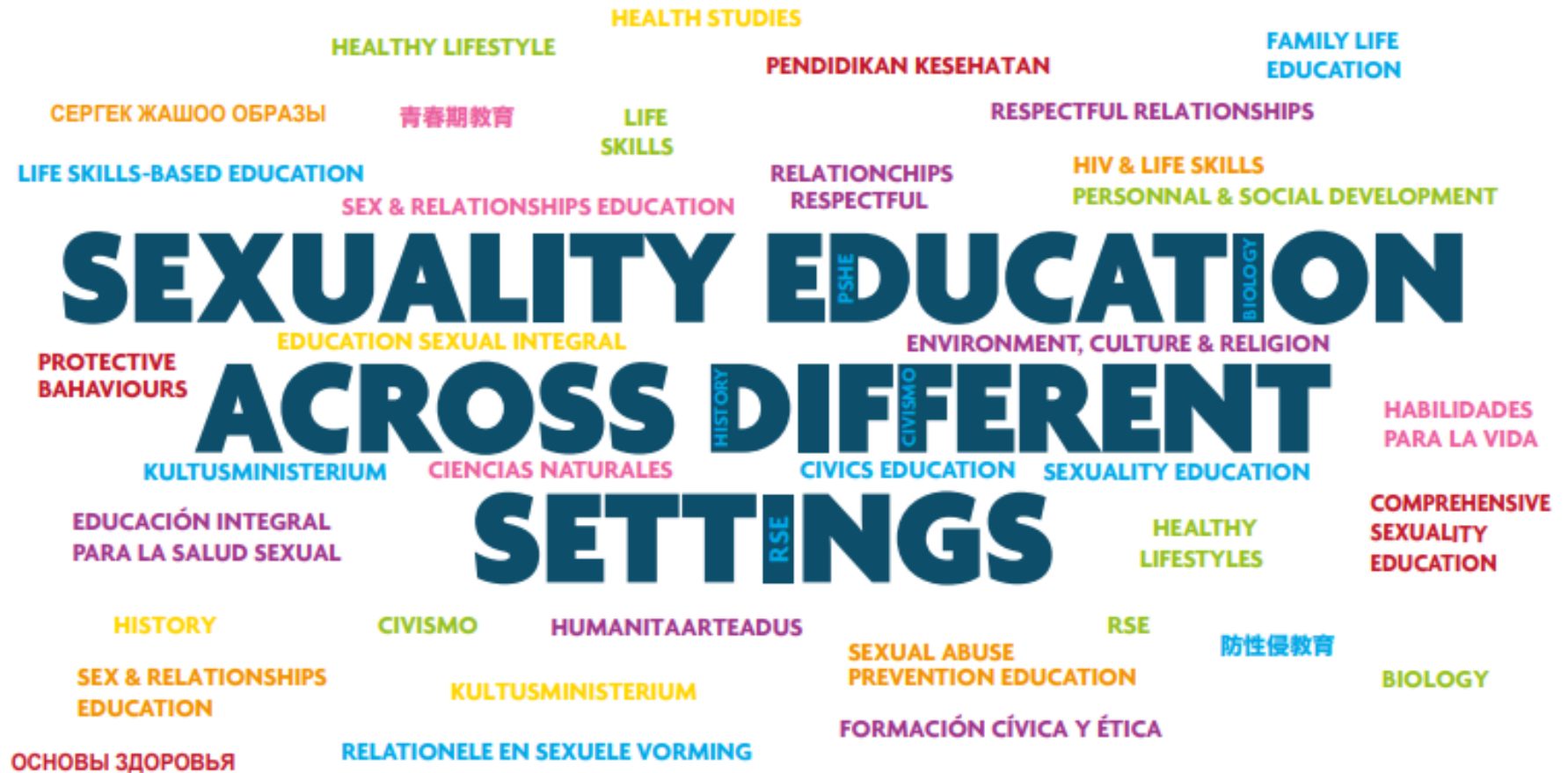


- Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality.
- It aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to:
 - realize their 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.
- Gender equality is intrinsic to CSE



CSE is not 'one-size fits all': national policies and curricula may use different terms to refer to CSE

The names and contexts may change, but CSE programmes share certain similarities such as a firm grounding in human rights and gender equality, and the development of learners' knowledge, skills and attitudes for positive sexuality and good SRH



What is the evidence base for CSE?

Curriculum-based sexuality education programmes contribute to the following outcomes:

- Delayed initiation of sexual intercourse
 - Decreased frequency of sexual intercourse
 - Decreased number of sexual partners
 - Reduced risk taking
 - Increased use of condoms
 - Increased use of contraception
 - Gender equitable attitudes
 - Reduced GBV
 - Self efficacy and confidence
- Sexuality education – in or out of schools – **reduce rates** of sexual activity, sexual risk-taking behaviour or STI/HIV infection rates
 - Sexuality education has **positive effects**, including increasing knowledge and improving their attitudes related to SRH and behaviours
 - Abstinence-only programmes have been found to be **ineffective** in delaying sexual initiation, reducing the frequency of sex or reducing the number of sexual partners.
 - Programmes addressing **both pregnancy prevention and STI/HIV prevention** are more effective than single-focus programmes

The role of CSE in preventing and addressing HIV-related stigma and discrimination

CSE is a crucial tool in combatting HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

The first topic the ITGSE recommends covering on HIV, for 5-8 year olds, is **“People living with HIV have equal rights and live productive lives”**.

By addressing the issue of rights and stigma early, before HIV prevention, it sends the message that PLHIV are valuable in their own right, not just in relation to how they can prevent transmission to others

“Increasingly, children living with or affected by HIV will be among those being taught about HIV and HIV prevention in schools, and there is a duty of care to ensure that this information is provided without perpetuating stigma and prejudice against those living with HIV” -M. Conway, 2015



Out-of-school CSE is delivered outside the school curriculum. It can serve a number of purposes, including:

- provide CSE to children and young people in situations where CSE is not included in the school curriculum
- provide CSE to children and young people who are not in school
- supplement in-school CSE, particularly in contexts where it is not comprehensive or of high quality
- provide CSE that is tailored to the needs of specific groups of children and young people

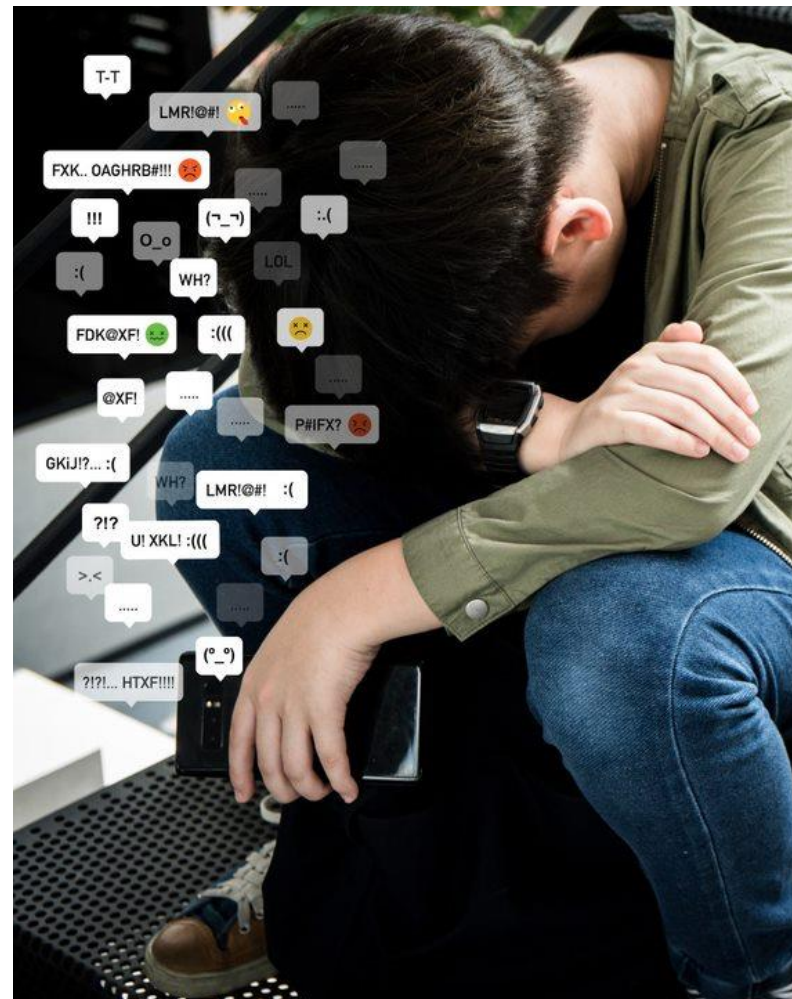


Safe, inclusive and enabling learning environments

In addition to the content of education, the context is important!

Schools must provide safe, inclusive learning environments free from violence, bullying, stigma and discrimination.

- Globally, an estimated **246 million children and adolescents** experience some form of violence in and around school every year.
- Girls are particularly vulnerable. **School-related gender-based violence** affects millions of children, families and communities.
- Almost **1 in 3 students has been bullied** in the past month, and cyberbullying affects 1 in 10.
- Students who identify as or are perceived as **LGBTI+** are at a significantly higher risk of violence.



School violence and bullying affects almost 1 in 3 students worldwide

Figure 19. Educational consequences of bullying



Frequently bullied

Not frequently bullied

Expected to end their education at the secondary level

44.5%

34.8%

Feel like an outsider (or left out of things at school)

42.4%

14.9%

Skipped school at least 3-4 days in previous two weeks

9.2%

4.1%

Feel anxious for a test even if well prepared

63.9%

54.6%

Data source: Relationship between being frequently bullied and other student outcomes, OECD average, PISA 2015

Schools can provide linkages to important multisectoral services

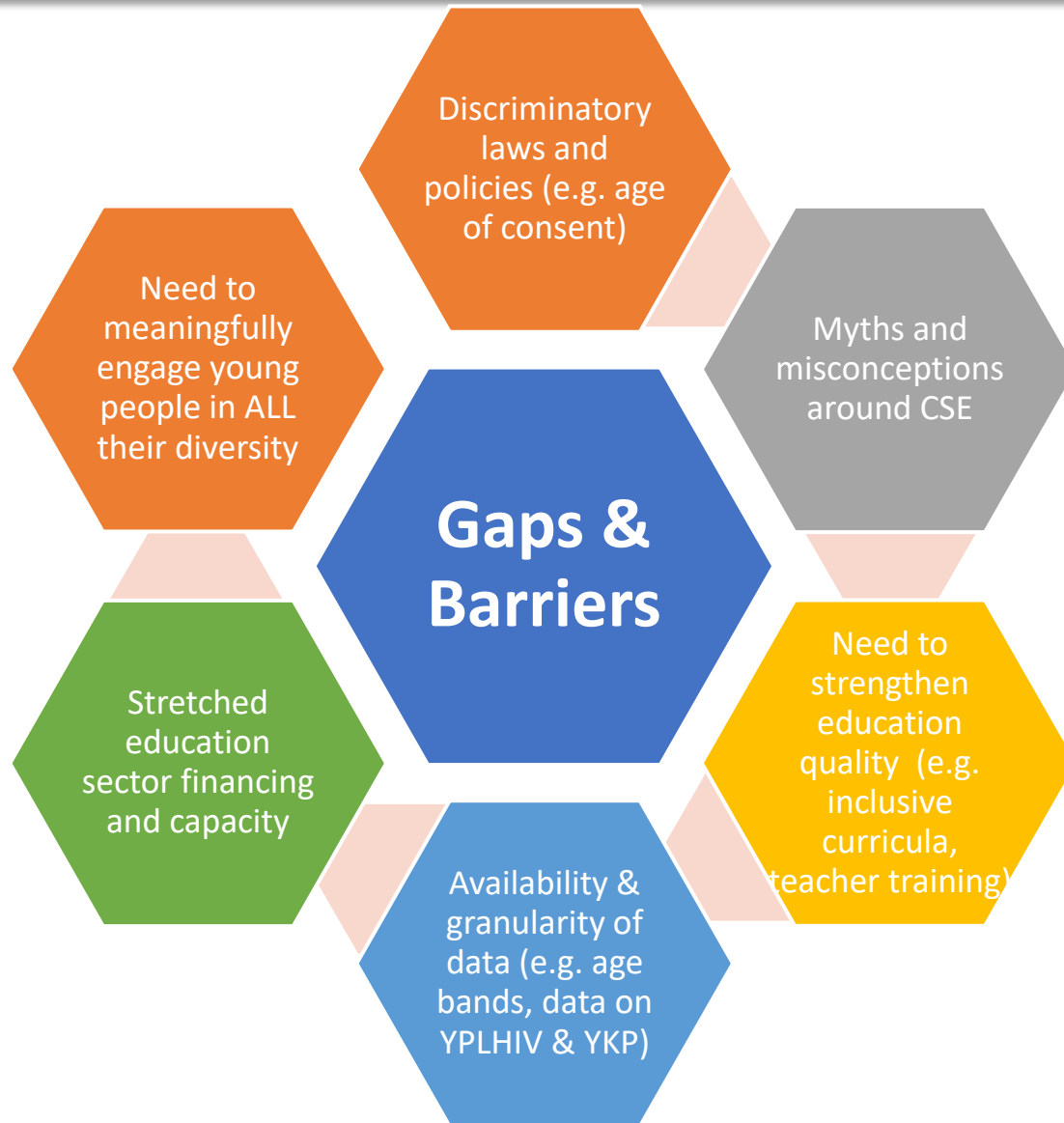


A health-promoting school environment doesn't end in the classroom, or at the school gates.

Schools can facilitate linkages to crucial services including:

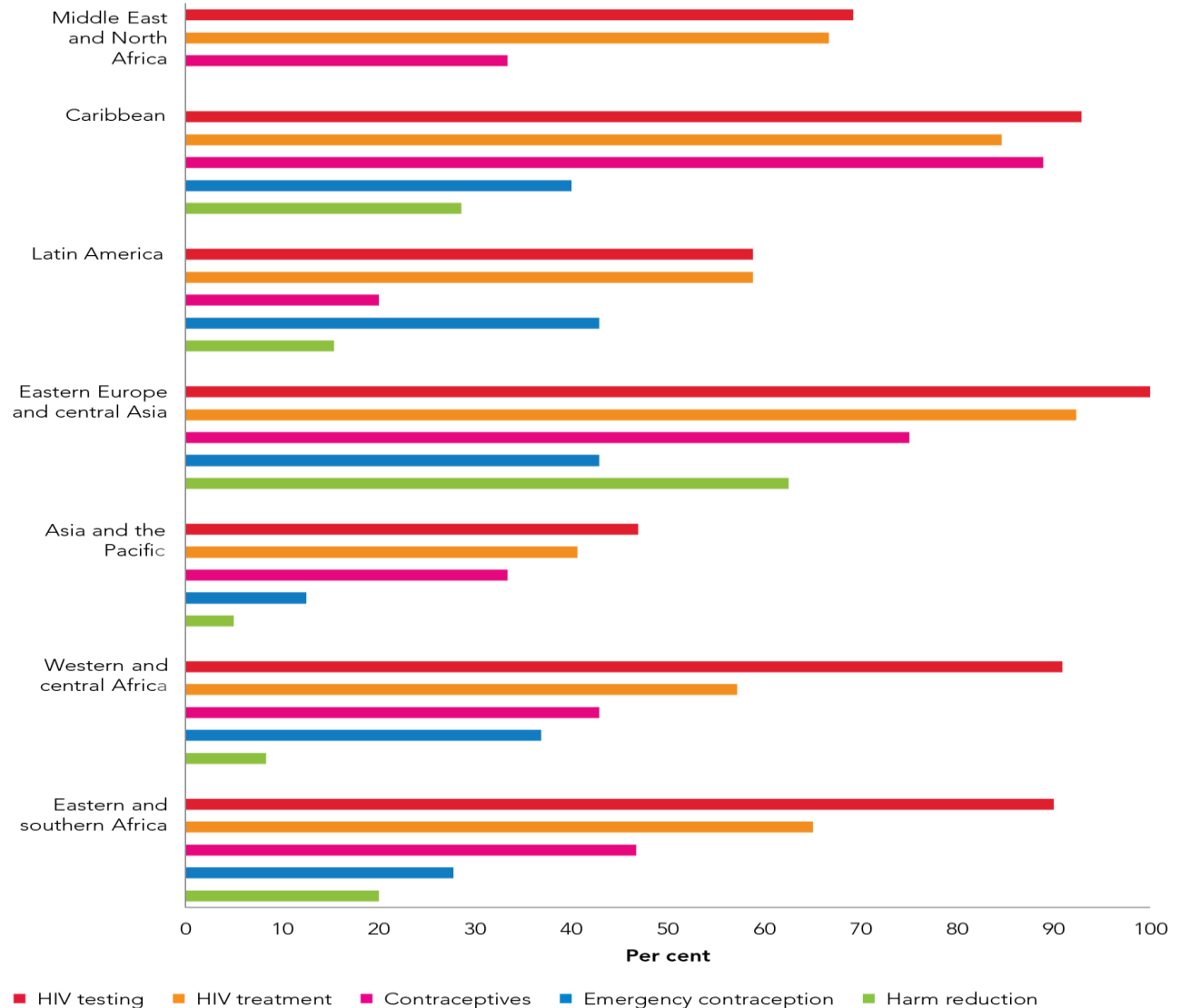
- SRH services
- School meals and feeding programmes
- Social protection, mental health and harm reduction services
- Employment and transition to the world of work

Schools also play an important role in engaging parents and communities.



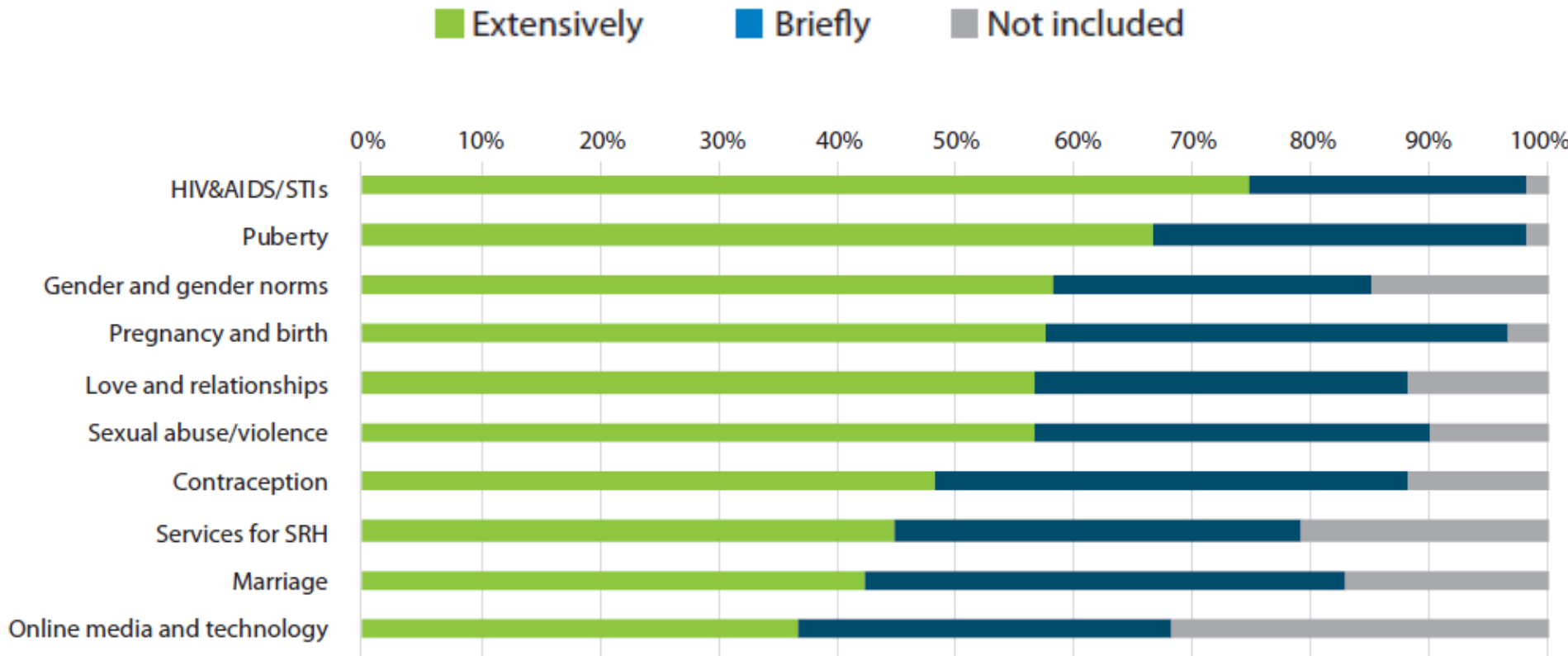
Gaps & Barriers: discriminatory laws and policies

Percentage of reporting countries with laws requiring parental or guardian consent for adolescents to access contraceptives, HIV testing, HIV treatment, emergency contraception and harm reduction, by region 2017-2019



Gaps & Barriers: breadth, quality and relevance of CSE

Reported extent of inclusion within curricula of a range of key CSE topics (Secondary education)



Source: Analysis of 2019-20 Survey on the Status of CSE

Gaps & Barriers: need to place young people at the center!



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