School-based sexuality education in Portugal: strengths and weaknesses


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Description:
Portugal, like many other countries, faces obstacles regarding school-based sexuality education. This paper explores Portuguese schools' approaches to implementing sexuality education at a local level, and provides a critical analysis of potential strengths and weaknesses. Documents related to sexuality education in a convenience sample of 89 schools were analysed and findings confirm both the results of the few existing Portuguese studies on the subject and commonalities in sexuality education between Portugal and other European countries. These include strengths, such as the existence of teams in charge of sexuality education in schools and the provision of resources, but also weaknesses, such as too heavy a focus on health-related issues, difficulties in cross-curricular teaching, low levels of community participation and poor-quality evaluation. Findings point to the need for a greater sharing of information and good practice between countries, and the need for clearer guidelines. Suggestions are made for improving the quality of sexuality education in Portuguese schools.

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