



Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future

(O³) Programme (2023 – 2027)

Transforming Lives, Shaping Futures



BACKGROUND

Imagine a Sub Saharan Africa where adolescents and young people are healthy, educated, empowered and thrive as they fulfil their potential!

This is the future envisaged by the program, Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future (O3). Since 2018, UNESCO has been implementing the (O3) programme, the largest comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) programme in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

The programme aims to support the delivery of good quality school-based, CSE that empowers adolescents and young people

(AYP), builds their agency, and equips them with the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and competencies needed to prevent HIV, reduce early and unintended pregnancies (EUPs), and eliminate gender-based violence (GBV).

The O3 Programme aligns with UNESCO's Global Priorities on Gender Equality and Africa, reinforcing its commitment to education, gender equality, and health. The programme also advances human rights and gender equality by challenging negative gender and social norms, promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) by advocating for universal access to quality education for all young people.

Why Adolescents and Young People ?

The SSA region faces ongoing changes in geopolitics, economics, and society, along with climate change impacts like natural disasters and disease outbreaks. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted how existing social determinants of health make young people more susceptible to social disruptions. They encounter significant obstacles in accessing necessary information and health services to make informed decisions about their health and to take action on those decisions. Young people with disabilities, those in conflict zones, those living with HIV, and other vulnerable groups face even greater challenges, putting them at higher risk for negative health outcomes, gender inequity, social exclusion, and violence exposure.

Strengthening the rights of girls and women to quality education is key to eliminate discrimination and to achieve equal rights between genders. This cannot be achieved without solid national legal frameworks that are rights-based, gender responsive and inclusive. While the region has made significant progress in securing political support for ASRHR including CSE; more remains to be done to support country endorsement and implementation of the ESA and WCA ministerial commitments. More work needs to be done to improve the status of national legal frameworks for securing the educational rights of girls and women in SSA.

Through the O³ programme, UNESCO will continue supporting governments' efforts to improve SRH, gender, and education outcomes for AYP in the SSA region in order to sustain reductions in new HIV and other STI infections, EUPs, and school violence, all of which still pose serious threats to learner well-being. UNESCO strongly believes in the power of education to transform the lives of children and young people, but increasingly recognizes that inclusive and transformative education cannot be achieved if learners are not safe, well-nourished, healthy, and free from violence and discrimination.

O³ Programme is designed to address these challenges by enhancing the quality of CSE, strengthening legal frameworks, addressing gender inequality and harmful norms, and reaching marginalized groups. An effective mix of traditional, low-tech, and high-tech solutions will be employed to ensure the programme objectives are reached.

The O³ programme aims to influence the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and the African Union's Agenda 2063, contributing to the achievement of SDGs 3 (health), 4 (education), and 5 (gender equality), and other related goals.



03





Many girls and young women in SSA still lack access to education due to gender inequality and discrimination. Factors like poverty, early marriage, and gender-based violence contribute to high rates of out-of-school and illiterate girls and women.

Vision, Goal, and Objectives



VISION AND GOAL

Children, adolescents, and young people in SSA are healthy, educated, and empowered to thrive and reach their full potential to contribute to the development of their community, country, and region.

IMPACT

Reduction in new HIV infections, early and unintended pregnancy, gender-based violence, and child marriage, and increased school completion rates at all levels.

OBJECTIVES

- 01.** Support an enabling policy and institutional environment for implementation of school health programmes that include CSE and prevention of school violence.
- 02.** Support countries to scale up and strengthen the delivery of accurate, rights-based, gender transformative and good quality teaching and learning on CSE and school violence prevention.
- 03.** Empower AYP and respect their right to make decisions and drive change in their lives and communities using digital innovations.
- 04.** Promote the creation of safer, inclusive school and community environments with linkages to accessible, youth friendly SRH services.
- 05.** Strengthen programme implementation through evidence generated from monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning.

Anticipated Reach

PRIMARY BENEFICIARIES

Children and young people (aged 5-24 years) will be reached through formal and non-formal education, with a specific focus on the needs of adolescent girls and young women, young people living with HIV, young people living with disability, young people in humanitarian crisis settings, and young key populations.

SECONDARY BENEFICIARIES

Pre-and in-service teachers, school management, policymakers, parliamentarians, parents, guardians, and traditional, community, and religious leaders.

ANTICIPATED REACH

The project is expected to reach 39,6 million learners in 206, 547 primary and secondary schools; 225,000 pre-service teachers; and 325,650 in-service teachers. The project is also expected to reach 50 million stakeholders (parents, guardians, religious, traditional and community leaders), and 40 million young people specifically, through traditional and social media platforms.

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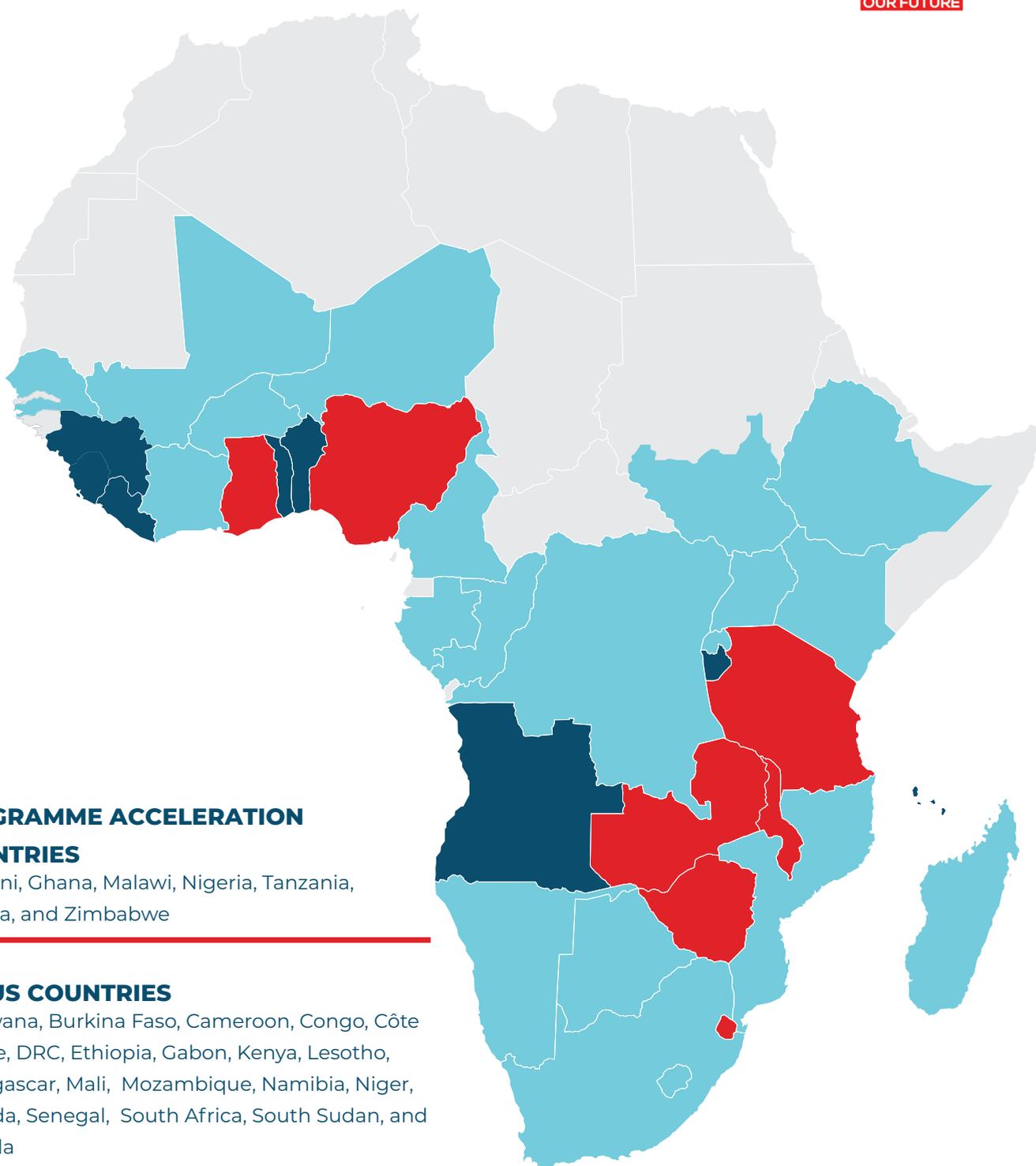
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O³ Phase 2 Coverage



PROGRAMME ACCELERATION COUNTRIES

Eswatini, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

FOCUS COUNTRIES

Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, and Uganda

NETWORKING COUNTRIES

Angola, Benin, Burundi, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritius, Sierra Leone, Togo, Seychelles and Comoros

O³ Game Changers

01.

IMPROVING QUALITY OF CSE DELIVERY

The O3 programme heightens the quality of CSE through innovative teaching methods, comprehensive teacher training, and refined curriculum development. It empowers young people by involving them in curriculum design and harnesses diverse resources like digital technology. With the guidance of a diverse advisory group and robust monitoring and evaluation systems, the programme ensures learner feedback and the use of regional CSE monitoring tools to continuously improve CSE quality.

02.

SOCIAL AND GENDER NORMS TRANSFORMATION

The O3 programme takes on the challenge of transforming ingrained social and gender norms, specifically targeting children aged 5-12 years. By fostering thoughtful dialogues on gender, power, and identity, it aims to challenge harmful practices and address gender inequality. Through the programme, educators and communities are equipped to reform social norms that inhibit educational participation, tackling pressing issues like gender inequality, early and unintended pregnancies, child marriages, and female genital mutilation/cutting.

03.

RENEWED FOCUS ON CSE FOR YOUNGER LEARNERS

The O3 programme places a strong emphasis on fortifying CSE for young learners aged 5-12 years. It equips children with health literacy, prepares them for puberty, promotes gender equality, and nurtures healthy relationships. The programme also highlights the importance of social and emotional learning skills as an integral part of CSE, helping young learners navigate sexual risks and protections.

04.

SUPPORTING YOUTH AGENCY

The O3 programme champions youth agency, inspiring young people to take charge of their lives and communities. This includes their active involvement in education, specifically CSE, through student clubs, digital platforms, and community engagement. By using differentiated approaches for special groups, it ensures inclusivity while promoting online safety through digital health education, empowering youth to responsibly navigate the digital world.

O³ Game Changers (cont).

REACHING HARD-TO-REACH YOUNG PEOPLE

05. The O3 programme is committed to engaging hard-to-reach adolescents and young people, including those with disabilities, key populations, humanitarian settings and non-formal education and those living with HIV. By implementing inclusive policies and programmes, it aims to reduce their vulnerability and bolster their agency. It provides adequate resources and services, ensuring a safe learning environment, fulfilling the principle of leaving no one behind.

SUSTAINABILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND DOMESTIC SUPPORT FOR THE SRHR AGENDA

The O3 programme is dedicated to fostering sustainability, accountability, and domestic leadership in SRHR. It works to strengthen advocacy movements and hold leaders accountable for SRHR commitments. It encourages local ownership of the SRHR agenda and aims to increase domestic financing for SRHR. The programme also harnesses local funding sources and provides technical assistance to ensure its sustainability.

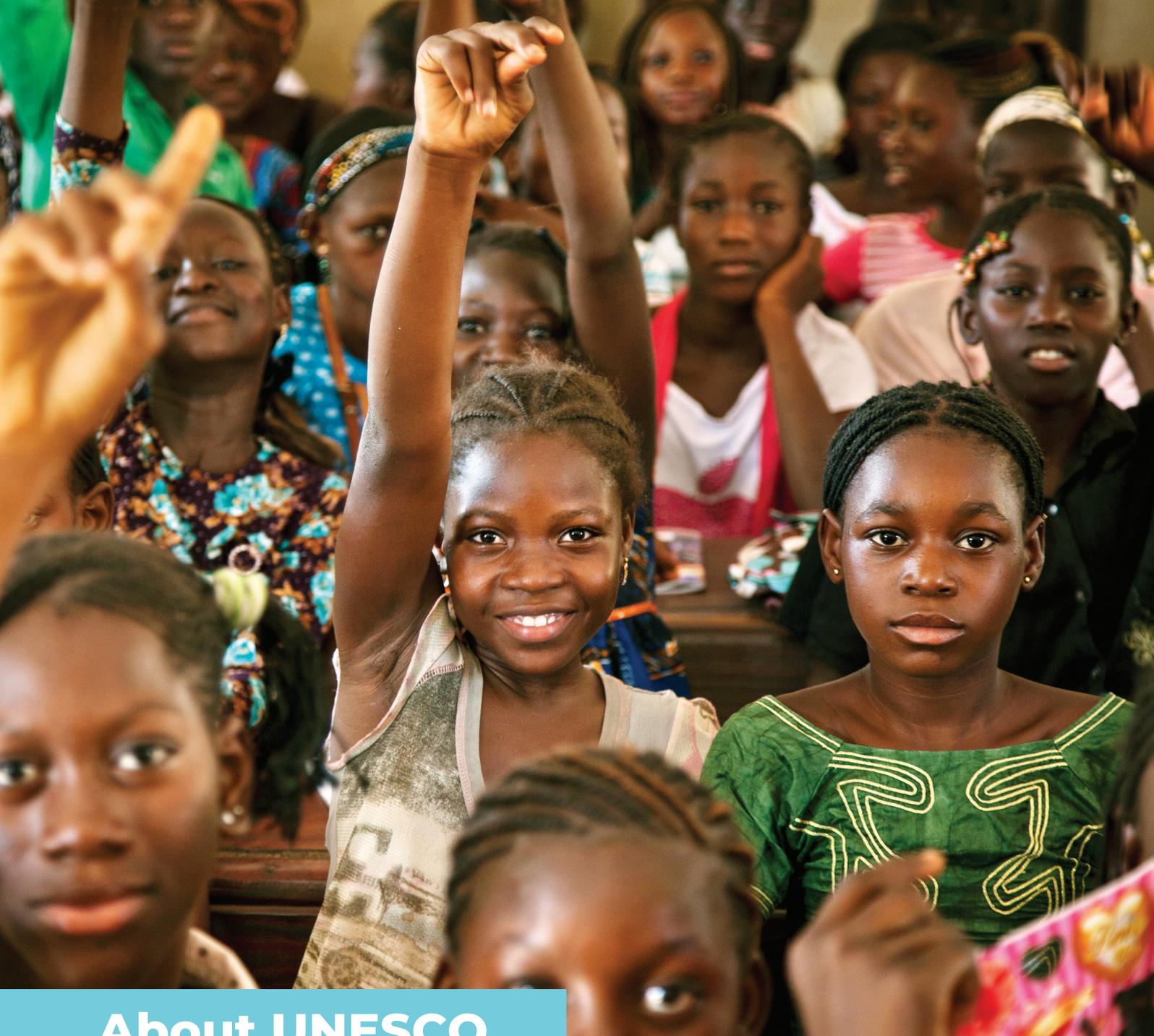
06.



Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The O3 Programme will make a direct contribution to the achievement of the SDGs around education, health and gender, and their specific targets. It will also advance the attainment of other key SDGs, especially those related to poverty, hunger, and peaceful and just societies. The Programme is guided by UNESCO's strategy on education for health and well-being, which is designed to achieve the SDGs through:





About UNESCO

UNESCO is a United Nations' specialized agency for education. It provides global and regional leadership in education, strengthens national education systems, and responds to contemporary global challenges through education, with a special focus on gender equality and Africa.

Through the Global Strategy on Education for Health and Well-being; UNESCO envisions a world where all learners thrive. To achieve this vision, UNESCO pursues three strategic outcomes that seek to ensure that all learners:

- Are supported by resilient school health systems that promote learners' physical and mental health and well-being.
- Are empowered by good quality, gender-transformative CSE that includes HIV, life skills, family and rights.
- Benefit from safe, inclusive learning environments free from all forms of violence, bullying, stigma and discrimination.



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