



# RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY AMONG HEADMASTERS OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND 8-YEAR GRAMMAR SCHOOLS:

## HIV/AIDS PREVENTION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND 8-YEAR GRAMMAR SCHOOLS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC School Year 2023/2024

National Institute of Public Health, 2025



Office of the National HIV/AIDS Programme Manager

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National Institute of Public Health, 2025

## **Results of the questionnaire survey among headmasters of primary schools and 8-year grammar schools: HIV/AIDS prevention in primary schools and 8-year grammar schools in the Czech**

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## Introduction

The growing prevalence of HIV in Central and Eastern European countries is linked to the stigma surrounding people living with HIV. This is confirmed by a study conducted in the Czech Republic in 2021–2022 among HIV-positive respondents (1), in which most participants stated that they had learned to live with their HIV-positive status, but some admitted that their status negatively affected their self-esteem. Stigmatization of these individuals in all areas of life can be prevented through education by helping to instil fundamental values and attitudes in children. This can be achieved by providing appropriate information to teachers and other professionals already at the primary school level, and subsequently at secondary schools.

The questionnaire survey was based on the *National Programme on HIV/AIDS Prevention in the Czech Republic for the period 2023–2027*, approved by the Government (2). Objective 7 of this programme aims to change the perception of HIV infection as a stigma through education:

1. **Among primary school pupils**, with the goal that by the end of their schooling, more than 95% of pupils have information about HIV/AIDS and are able to form their own opinion on the topic.
2. **Among students of vocational schools, secondary schools and tertiary professional schools**, with the goal that by the end of their studies, more than 95% of students and apprentices have information about HIV/AIDS and are able to form their own opinion on the topic.
3. **Among teaching staff**, with the aim of changing the perception of HIV infection as a stigma.

The survey focused on monitoring the progress in achieving the objective listed under point 1.

In 2022–2023, the National Institute of Public Health (NIPH) conducted the survey “What Do You Know about HIV/AIDS?” in primary schools and 8-year grammar schools in the Czech Republic among pupils and school prevention methodologists (3). The results provided an assessment of pupils’ knowledge about HIV/AIDS, their attitudes towards people living with HIV, and their sources of information on the topic. The survey also involved school prevention specialists, who provided basic information on the subjects through which the topic is taught, the time allocated to it, and possible resources of improving HIV/AIDS education.

Based on the findings, the NIPH, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS), carried out another survey on HIV/AIDS education in the 7th to 9th grades of primary schools and corresponding years of 8-year grammar schools. This time, the target group was school headmasters and school prevention methodologists.

**The questionnaire survey on HIV/AIDS education in primary schools and 8-year grammar schools was prepared and carried out at the NIPH by the office of the National HIV/AIDS Programme Manager and the Department of Biostatistics, in cooperation with the MEYS. Data collection focused on information from the 2023/2024 school year.**

## Objective of the Survey

The objective of the survey was to determine whether and in what way HIV/AIDS education took place during the 2023/2024 school year in primary schools with a second level of education, specifically in grades 7 to 9 and the corresponding years of 8-year grammar schools. The survey also

aimed to identify potential differences in the delivery of education across various regions.

In cases where HIV/AIDS education was conducted, the survey examined what percentage of students in grades 7, 8, and 9 participated and who was involved in delivering the instructions. It investigated whether the education was provided solely by internal teachers or whether external organizations or private entities were involved. In the case of external involvement, the survey focused on whether the school paid for the activity, the amount paid, and what sources of funding were used.

Additionally, the survey examined whether peer education programmes were used in the context of HIV/AIDS education. If so, it was further investigated which students participated in these programmes and whether students from faculties of education or medicine were also involved in such activities.

## Methods

In cooperation between the NIPH (specifically the office of the National HIV/AIDS Programme Manager and the Department of Biostatistics) and the MEYS, an online questionnaire was created for headteachers of primary schools with a second level of education and for headteachers of 8-year grammar schools. The questionnaire focused on the methods and forms of HIV/AIDS education in schools during the 2023/2024 school year. The MEYS sent the link to the questionnaire to school headteachers. Data collection took place from 26 August 2024 to 26 October 2024.

Data processing was carried out by staff from the NIPH's Department of Biostatistics. Information on the number of primary schools with a second level of education and 8-year grammar schools was obtained from databases (4, 5).

Data were processed using SPSS version 29.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA). Continuous variables are described using the mean and median. Categorical variables are presented as absolute frequencies and percentages. The chi-square test was used to compare groups. P-values below 0.05 were considered statistically significant.

Participation in the survey was voluntary. After processing, the data were anonymised, and therefore no approval from the NIPH Ethics Committee was required.

## Results

### Description of the Sample

A total of **2,047 schools** with a second level of education completed the questionnaire, including 1,839 primary schools and 214 grammar schools. Out of all 2,777 existing schools with a second level of education, 73.7% responded. The response rate varied between regions. The lowest response rate was from schools in the Karlovy Vary Region (60.7%), while the highest was in the South Moravian Region and the Vysočina Region (both 83.2%). Other response rates by region are shown in Figure 1. The absolute number of responding schools is displayed at the top of each bar.

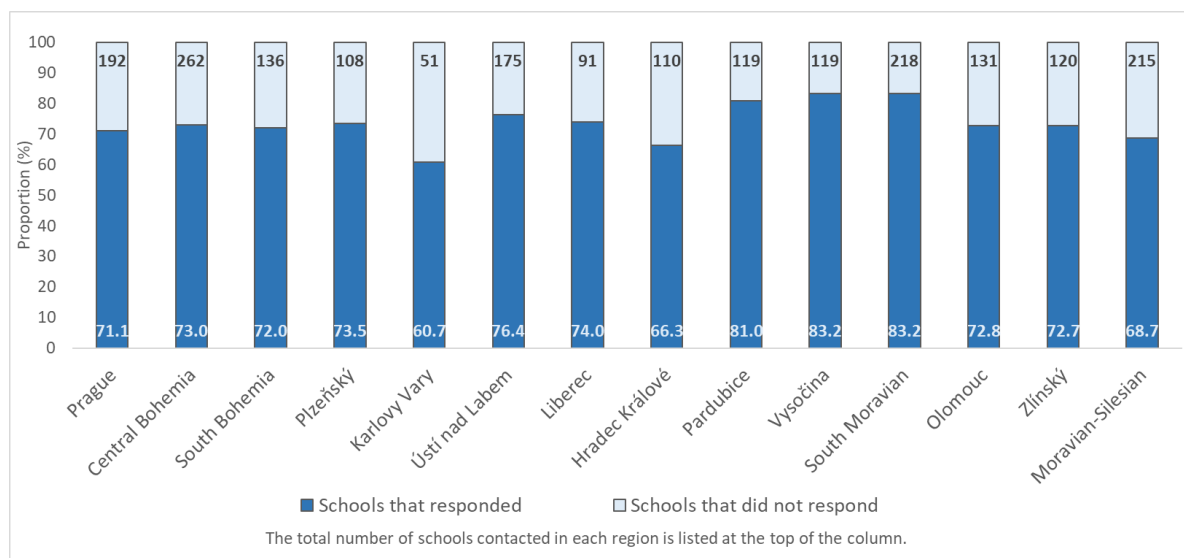


Figure 1: Questionnaire response rate by region in the Czech Republic – absolute numbers and percentages

The responding schools are located in municipalities of various sizes. More than one-third of the schools were from municipalities with up to 5,000 inhabitants and from those with 10,000–100,000 inhabitants. A detailed structure of the responding schools by the size of the municipality is shown in Figure 2.

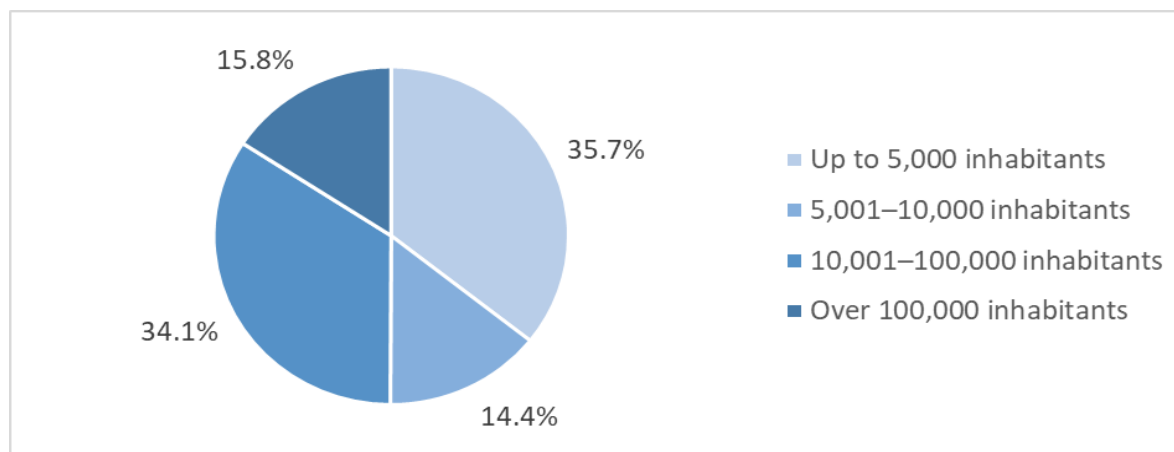


Figure 2: Proportion of schools by size of municipality in which the school is located (N=2,047)

Table 1 shows the representation of schools that participated in the survey by their founding authority. The largest share, nearly half, consists of schools established by municipalities (45.5%), followed by those established by towns or city districts (31.1%) and regional authorities (15.9%). Other types of founding bodies are represented only in small numbers.

Founder	Number	Percentage
Municipality	932	45.5
Town (city district)	637	31.1
Region	326	15.9
Private entity	106	5.2
Church	37	1.8
MEYS	9	0.4
Total	2047	100.0

Table 1: Distribution of schools that responded to the survey by school founder

## Implementation of HIV/AIDS Education in the 2023/2024 School Year

According to the Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education issued by the MEYS (6), HIV/AIDS education is included within the subject area *People and Their World*, and to a lesser extent in *Health Education* and *Biology*. In the 2023/2024 school year, HIV/AIDS education was implemented in at least one of the 7th to 9th grades in **92.4% of schools** (1,892 schools), while **7.6% of schools (155 schools)** did not provide any HIV/AIDS education in these grades.

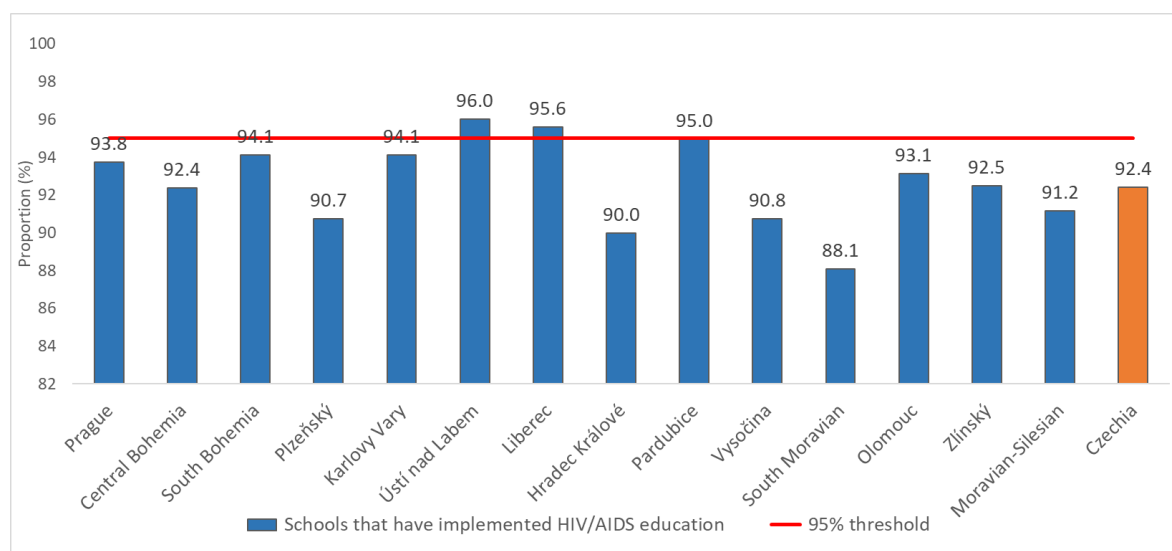


Figure 3: HIV/AIDS education in the Czech Republic in the 2023/2024 school year – percentage of schools implementing the education by region (N=2,047)

Differences between regions are shown in Figure 3. The 95% threshold, which should be achieved in order to meet the educational goals in this area, was reached in only three regions: Ústí nad Labem, Liberec and Pardubice. In contrast, in the South Moravian Region, **nearly 12%** of the schools that participated in the survey reported not implementing HIV/AIDS education at all.

## Implementation of HIV/AIDS Education

Schools that provided HIV/AIDS education in any of the 7th to 9th grades were asked in which grade(s) the lessons took place and who was responsible for delivering them (Table 2). The table also shows the percentage of students who were present during the lessons. Most commonly, the lessons were conducted in the 8th grade of elementary schools and the corresponding year of 8-year grammar schools. The majority of lessons were delivered by internal teaching staff (74.5% of schools). External organisations or service providers were most frequently involved in lessons for 9th-grade students.

	The entity that implemented the teaching in the school						No classes conducted	
	Teachers of the school			External educators				
	Schools (n)	Schools (%)	Students (%)	Schools (n)	Schools (%)	Students (%)	Schools (n)	Schools (%)
7th grade	978	47.8	95.5	155	7.6	92.8	982	48.0
8th grade	1,524	74.5	96.0	342	16.7	93.3	363	17.7
9th grade	1,301	63.6	95.5	469	22.9	93.8	510	24.9

Table 2: HIV/AIDS education in grades 7–9 of primary schools and corresponding years of 8-year grammar schools, school year 2023/2024, N=1,892



## Use of External Organisations or Providers

In the 2023/2024 school year, an external organisation or individual (lecturer) was involved in HIV/AIDS prevention education at 30% of schools (614 schools). In contrast, 70% of schools (1,433 schools) delivered the lessons without the involvement of external providers. Among the schools that chose to complement their teaching with the help of external organisations, the lessons were most often provided to 9th-grade students (462 schools, 75%), as shown in Figure 4.

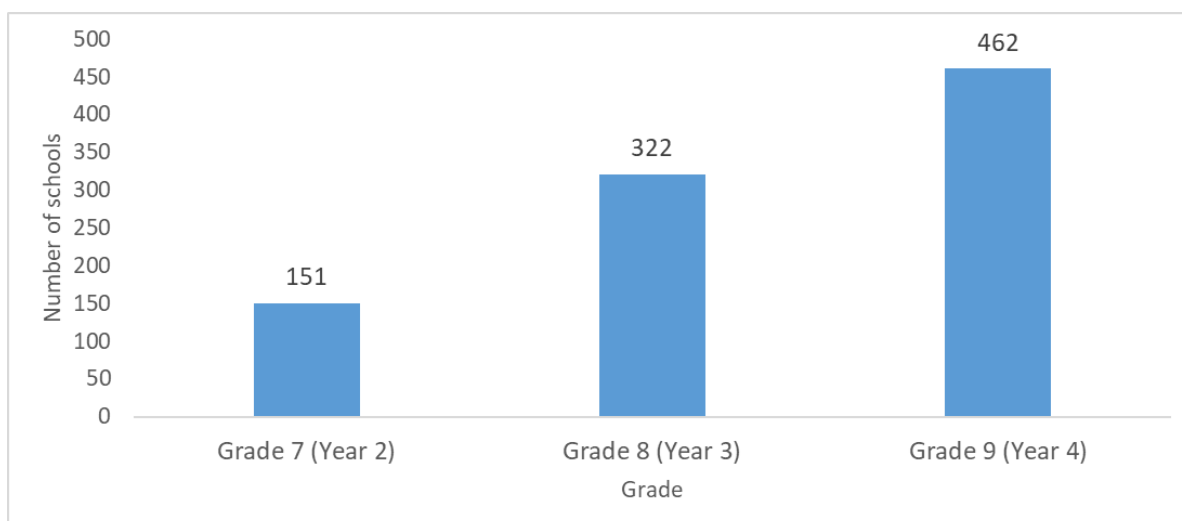


Figure 4: Number of schools that used external entities to provide HIV/AIDS education in individual grades in the 2023/2024 school year (N=614)

Figure 5 illustrates the involvement of teachers and external providers in HIV/AIDS prevention education—either individually or in combination—across the 7th to 9th grades of lower secondary schools and 8-year grammar schools. It also shows the proportion of schools that did not address this topic in a given grade.

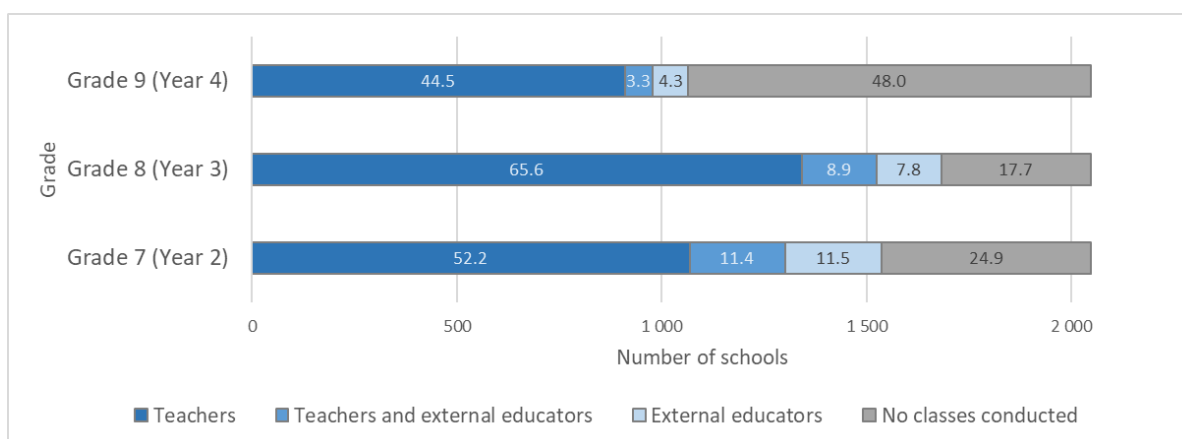


Figure 5: Use of an external organization/person/lecturer in HIV/AIDS prevention education in grades 7–9 (N=2,047)

In nearly half (48.0%) of 7th grades, no HIV/AIDS education took place in the 2023/2024 school year. When it was provided, it was most commonly delivered by internal teachers. External providers collaborated with teachers in only 3.3% of schools, and in 4.3% of schools the topic was covered solely by external lecturers.

In 8th grades, the topic was addressed in 88.3% of schools—mostly by teachers (65.6%), with collaboration of external providers in 8.9% of schools, and exclusively by external providers in 7.8% of schools.

In 9th grades, HIV/AIDS education was delivered in three-quarters of participating schools (75.1%). It was conducted solely by teachers in 52.2% of schools, in cooperation with external lecturers in 11.4%, and in 11.5% of schools (236 in total) exclusively by external providers.

## Funding of External Providers

A total of **614 schools (32%)** reported using an **external organization, provider, or lecturer** for HIV/AIDS prevention education in the 2023/2024 school year. Of these, **55.7% financed the activity**, with some schools citing multiple funding sources. A breakdown is presented in Figure 6.

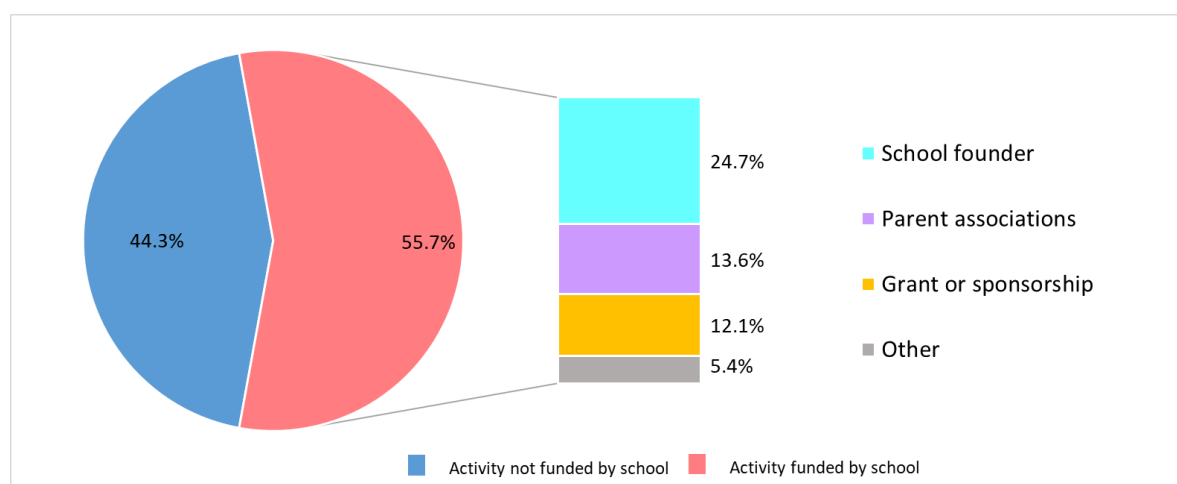


Figure 6: Participation of external entities in HIV/AIDS education with and without remuneration in the Czech Republic, school year 2023/2024

The largest share of payments for external entities was covered by school founders (24.7%, 161 schools), followed by parents' associations (13.6%, 89 schools). Grants and sponsorships were used to cover the participation of external entities in teaching at 79 schools (12.1%). Other funding sources or a combination of sources were reported by 5.4% of schools. Schools paid external providers an average of CZK 2,500 per class per lesson, with a median payment of CZK 2,000. However, the amounts varied considerably.

External providers involved in HIV/AIDS education included public institutions, non-governmental organizations, and private entities. Figure 7 illustrates the most frequently used external providers.

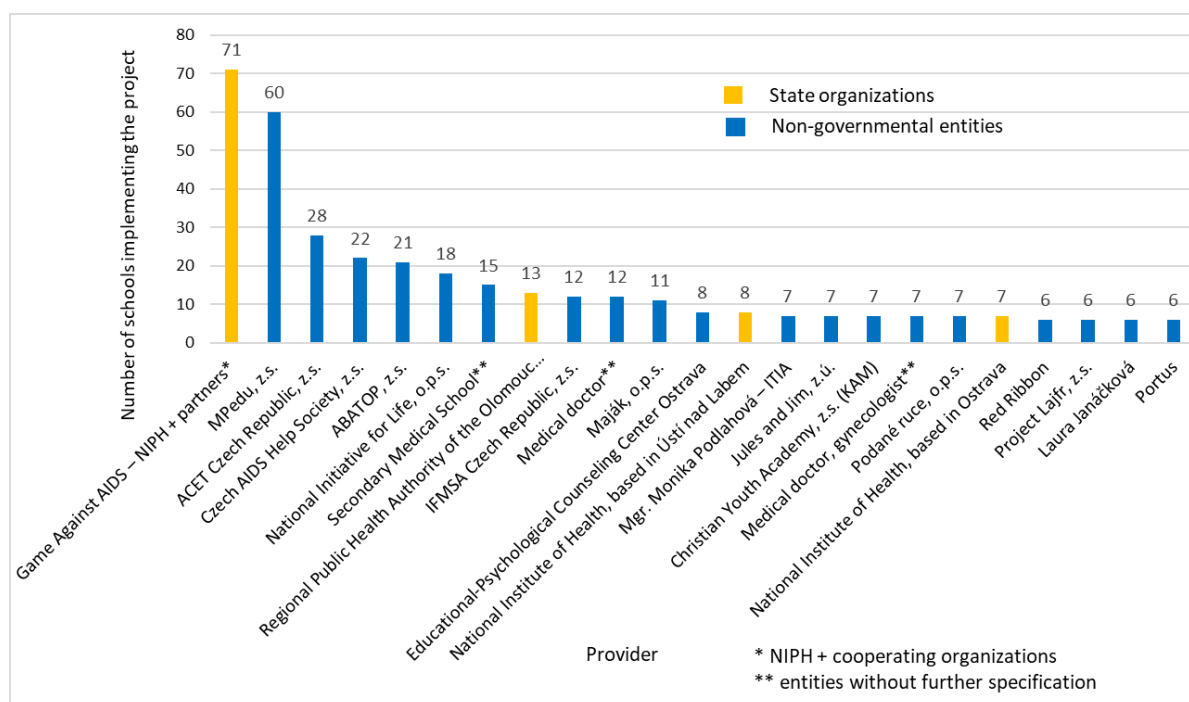


Figure 7: Most frequently represented external entities involved in HIV/AIDS education at lower secondary schools and 8-year grammar schools in the Czech Republic, school year 2023/2024

The most frequently used educational programme in the 2023/2024 school year was the National Institute of Public Health's project *Game Against AIDS* (7). It was implemented either directly by the NIPH or in cooperation with regional public health authorities and other partners. The project was also carried out in the form of a peer education programme, with students from secondary medical schools and other secondary schools most often involved in delivering the educational content.

## Involvement of Students from Other Schools in HIV/AIDS Prevention Education (Peer Programmes)

Students from other schools participated in HIV/AIDS prevention through peer education programmes in a total of 104 schools (5.1%) during the 2023/2024 school year. Most frequently, these were students from **secondary medical schools and higher vocational schools**, although some schools reported involving students from multiple types of institutions. Detailed participation of students from other schools is shown in Figure 8.

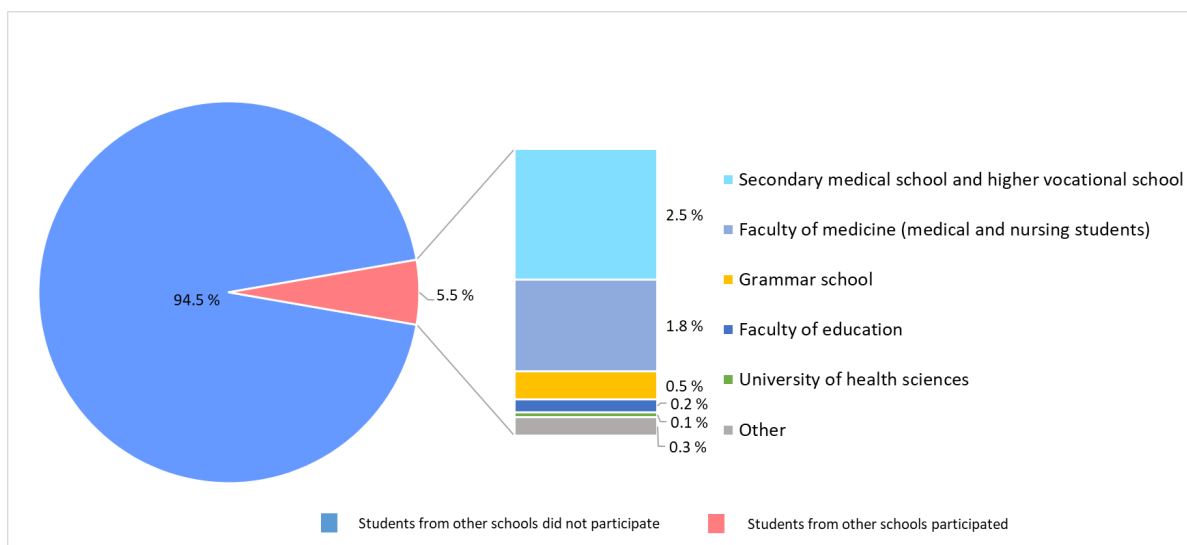


Figure 8: Involvement of students from other schools in HIV/AIDS prevention at primary schools in the Czech Republic, school year 2023/2024

Students from faculties of education were involved in HIV/AIDS-related health literacy activities in only five schools across the entire sample. Yet, their engagement in ongoing education during their studies could be a key factor in ensuring high-quality instruction on this topic in the future, thanks to the hands-on experience gained for their own teaching careers.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Nearly 75% of lower secondary schools (a total of 2,047 schools) across the Czech Republic participated in the joint survey conducted by the NIPH and the MEYS. The questionnaires were completed by school headmasters or school prevention methodologists.

The results showed that not all schools fully comply with the Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education (RVP ZV), (6). HIV/AIDS education was carried out in 92.4% of participating schools, though there were significant regional differences – for example, only 88.1% of schools in the South Moravian Region conducted such education, compared to 95%–96% in the Ústí nad Labem, Liberec and Pardubice Regions. Typically, 93%–96% of students participated in HIV/AIDS-related lessons.

These findings indicate that the expectations outlined in Objective 7, Measure 1 of the *National Programme on HIV/AIDS Prevention in the Czech Republic for the period 2023–2027* are not currently being met.

HIV/AIDS education was most commonly conducted in the eighth grade (or the third year of 8-year grammar schools), predominantly delivered by internal teaching staff. Collaboration with external providers occurred in 30% of schools, most often in the ninth grade (or fourth year of 8-year grammar schools).

In the 2023/2024 school year, elementary schools in the Czech Republic worked with more than one hundred external entities in providing or supplementing HIV/AIDS education. More than half of the schools financed this cooperation from various sources or combinations of sources. The average fee paid to external providers was CZK 2,500 per class per lesson, with a median of CZK 2,000, although the amounts varied considerably.

Peer education programmes were used in approximately 5.5% of schools. Students from faculties of education were rarely involved, whereas medical students participated more frequently.

These findings highlight the necessity of dedicating at least the amount of time and curriculum coverage to HIV/AIDS prevention required by the **Revised Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education (2021 and 2023 versions)**. These RVPs align with the tasks outlined in the *National Programme on HIV/AIDS Prevention in the Czech Republic for the period 2023–2027*, which is based on the WHO's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets to end AIDS and the epidemics of viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections by 2030 (8).

At the same time, it is essential to focus on educating teaching staff (3) to reduce HIV-related stigma. Support for the continuing education of teachers in HIV/AIDS prevention can include the use of resources from professional institutions such as the NIPH (9, 10), online webinars, consultation days, or expert seminars in collaboration with the MEYS. The Joint Action SHIELD programme, currently under review by the European Commission, may be used to support the education of pre-service teachers.

To achieve the goals set by the WHO/UNAIDS/ECDC and corresponding national objectives, it is crucial to build a network of qualified external organizations working with the MEYS and the Ministry of Health (MZ ČR), regional authorities, and regional public health offices under the methodological guidance of the NIPH, which ensures content quality and professional standards.

Given the above, follow-up surveys are essential to assess the effectiveness of the proposed and subsequently implemented measures. Additionally, it is necessary to focus on fulfilling Measure 2 of Objective 7 of the *National Programme on HIV/AIDS Prevention in the Czech Republic for the period 2023–2027*, i.e., directing similar attention to students and teachers at vocational schools, vocational training centres, and higher vocational schools, as required by Measure 3 of the same national programme.

## List of Abbreviations

CZ	Czech Republic
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HVS	Higher Vocational School
MEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
MHCR	Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic
NIPH	National Institute of Public Health
PS	Primary School
RVP ZV	Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education
SS	Secondary School
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
WHO	World Health Organization

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