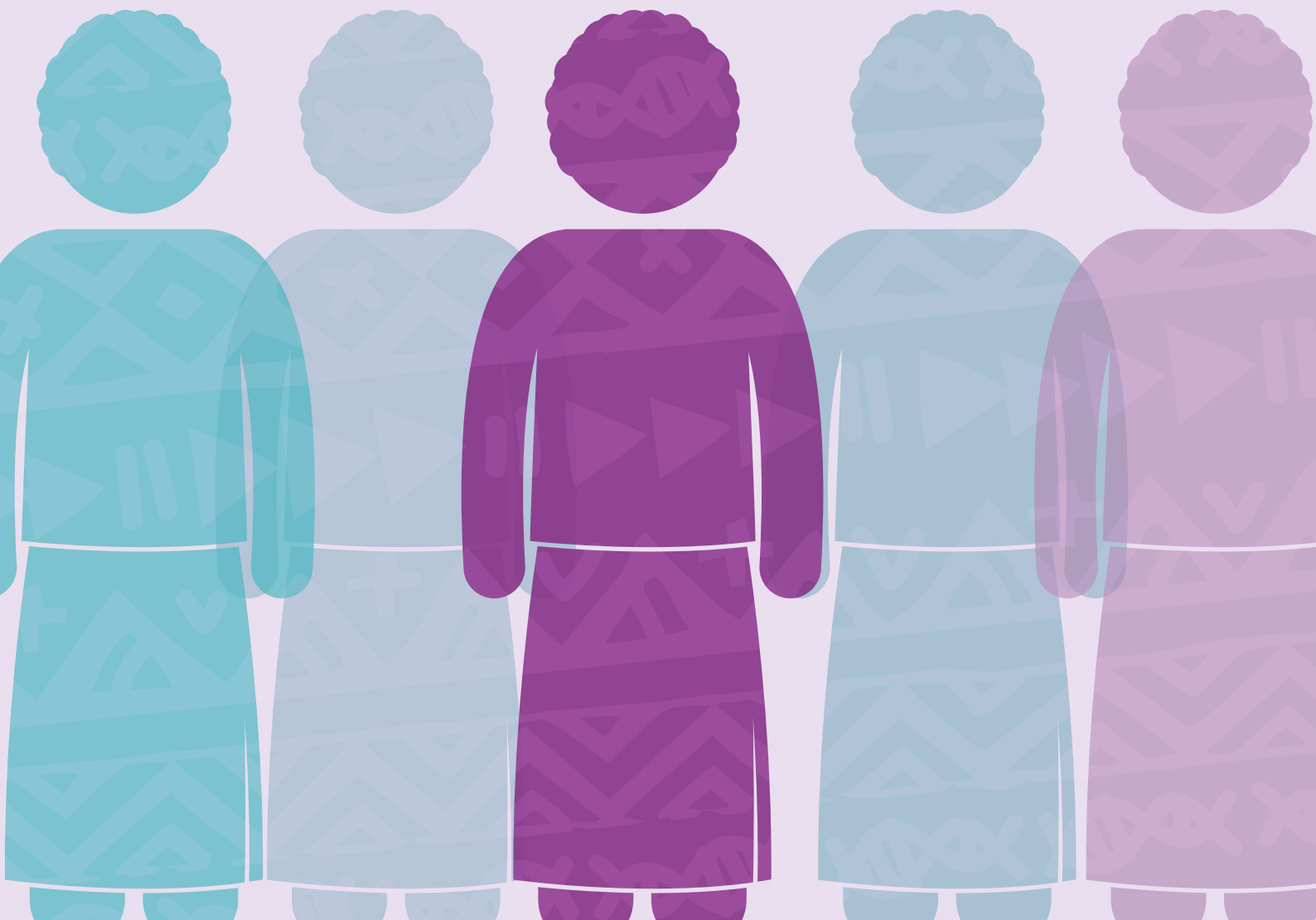


SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS IN THE PACIFIC

FACT SHEET



INTRODUCTION

This Factsheet provides an overview of the Pacific Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Reader and Manual currently being developed by the SRHR Working Group with coordination and support from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team (SPC RRRT).

The SRHR Working Group is a group of representatives from organisations working to address SRHR in the Pacific region. The following organisations are represented in the SRHR Working Group:

- Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) Pacific
- Diverse Voices and Action (DIVA) for Equality
- Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM)
- International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)
- Oceania Society for Sexual Health and HIV Medicine (OSSHHM)
- Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)
- Pacific Youth Council (PYC)
- SPC Public Health Division (PHD)
- SPC Human Development Programme (HDP)
- SPC Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT)
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

About the SRHR Reader - A collection of essays on SRHR in the Pacific

The Reader is a collection of essays written by the subject matter experts from within the SRHR Working Group. Whilst there is a growing body of literature on SRHR, there is limited information available written specifically for the Pacific context. This Reader aims to contribute to building the literature on SRHR in the Pacific region.

The Reader takes a rights-based approach to SRHR and explores the SRHR of marginalised and vulnerable groups such as women, young people, people with disabilities, people living with HIV and LGBTIQI people.

The Reader aims to contribute to the literature on SRHR in the Pacific region and inform those working in the area of SRHR, including in the not-for-profit sector, government, civil society and academia.

About the SRHR Manual - SRHR in the Pacific: Awareness. Analysis. Action.

The Pacific Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Manual aims to build on the Reader and provide information, resources and practical tools for advocates, policymakers, health workers, trainers and legislators, to assist them in advancing SRHR in the Pacific.

The Manual will include comprehensive learning modules with clear objectives, and will contain a range of practical learning tools, including activities, discussion questions and Pacific case studies.



SOME OF THE THEMES COVERED IN THE FORTHCOMING SRHR PUBLICATIONS ARE:

Defining Sexual and Reproductive Health

Sexuality and reproduction lie at the foundation of families and communities and at the heart of what it is to be human and alive. The Reader and Manual explore the connections between sexual and reproductive health, sexuality and human rights, highlighting that the free expression of one's sexuality is central to both sexual and reproductive health.

The concept of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) as we know it, originated at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The conference saw the expansion of reproductive health to include sexual health and agreement among participating states that reproductive rights are human rights that are already recognised in domestic and international law. The ICPD Programme of Action articulates sexual and reproductive health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Taking a rights based approach to sexual and reproductive health

Human rights are the basic freedoms and protections that we are all entitled to. Among them, are our sexual and reproductive health rights. Sexual and reproductive health cannot be achieved and maintained without respect for, and protection of human rights.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights are not a separate and distinct set of human rights; rather, they refer to certain rights that are already recognised in international and regional human rights documents and in national laws, which are critical to the realisation of sexual and reproductive health. The Reader and Manual review the national laws, policies and international conventions that enshrine SRHR in law and international consensus documents that influence the global agenda for the achievement of sexual and reproductive health. These

include, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Platform for Action (BPA), UN Convention on the rights of People with Disabilities, Pacific Sexual Health and Well-being Shared Agenda 2015-2019 and the Moana Declaration; to name a few.

Understanding SRHR issues in the Pacific

The Pacific region is home to a diverse population of over 7 million, who speak more than 800 indigenous languages.

With this diversity come a wide range of SRHR issues, which are experienced differently by differently people. Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICT) are making slow progress to ensuring universal access to reproductive health (Target 5.b for MDGs), with only Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue and Palau on track to achieve this Target. Of particular concern in the Pacific region are an increase in the number of reported HIV cases; high rates of STIs; gender-based violence and sexual assault; high rates of adolescent pregnancy; and low contraceptive prevalence. Further, PICT are experiencing a 'youth bulge', meaning that they have very large populations aged between 15 and 24 years old that are in, or entering, their reproductive years and putting pressure on SRH care services.

Despite these continuing challenges, there have been notable signs of progress in the Pacific. The number of countries with national population policies is steadily increasing. SRH programmes have received considerable attention and the integration of SRH into primary health programmes has also improved.

Access to SRH Services

The Reader and Manual explore some of the factors that play a role in determining people's access to SRH services in PICT, including, cultural, religious, financial, logistical, institutional, and legal and policy.

Specific Needs and Issues of Marginalised and Vulnerable Groups

All members of the community, regardless of their age, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, ability or marital status, have the right to the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. The Reader and Manual explore the specific barriers that marginalised or vulnerable groups may experience to achieving their SRHR. Examples of barriers and rights violations explored include: discriminatory laws and practices; a lack of targeted SRHR information for groups with special needs, including young people, older people, LGBTQI people and people with disabilities; stigma; difficulties accessing SRH services; and violence.

Violence against Women and SRHR Violations.

Unequal power relations and patriarchal systems of governance in many communities in the Pacific region impact societal attitudes towards women's empowerment and contribute to violence against women. Violence against women in the Pacific is widespread; approximately two in three Pacific women report having experienced physical or sexual violence from their partner during their lifetime.

The Reader and Manual explore the impact of violence on women's sexual and reproductive health, exploring the relationships between violence and a number of SRHR issues, including, unwanted pregnancies; abortion or unsafe abortion; sexually transmitted infections including HIV; pregnancy complications and family planning.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are not a separate and distinct set of human rights, rather, they refer to certain rights that are already recognised in a number of international and regional human rights Conventions and consensus documents.

The right to life, liberty, autonomy and security of the person

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000)

The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and outcomes of review conferences

International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) (1994) and outcomes of review conferences

Moana Declaration - Outcome Statement of Pacific Parliamentarians for Population and Development (2013)

The right to the highest attainable standard of health.

The right to education and access to information

The right to be free from torture or cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment

The right to self-determination

The Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration (2012)

The right to privacy

The right to non-discrimination

Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979)

Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development (APPC6) (2013)

Revised Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality (2005)

The Pacific Sexual Health and Well-Being Shared Agenda (2015 - 2019)



These rights are guaranteed by the International Bill of Human Rights comprised of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).



These international and regional human rights instruments and consensus documents, set the agenda for and are key to progressing sexual and reproductive health and rights in the Pacific.