> Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for All
> Access to Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) for young people especially adolescent girls

53RD UPR: Samoa

Delivered by Samoa Family Health Association

1. Access to SRHR for all

- Only **14% of women or their partners use at least one contraceptive method** of any type (modern/traditional)
- **42% of women of child-bearing age**, who are married or in a union, either do not want or wish to delay childbearing and yet are currently **not using contraceptives** (unmet need for family planning)
- Only **32% of demand for family planning is satisfied** with modern methods of contraception
- Conservative cultural and religious norms continue to discourage use of contraception and open discussion of sexuality. SFHA is observing growing ambivalence towards family planning among young people.

Lack of access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services

- Policies have not translated into equitable access to SRHR services, particularly for adolescents, rural communities, communities on the outer islands, Lalomauga uta, Falemauga, Tapatapao,
- Limited availability of contraceptives for young people
- Few healthcare providers cater to young people's specific contraceptive needs. Stigma discourages young people from accessing contraception, counselling and other SRH services. Additionally, fear of judgement reduces healthcare utilisation.
- Early and unintended pregnancies mean girls are often forced to drop out of school, denied their right to an education, which limits their future potential and makes it harder for their families to escape the cycle of poverty.

2. Access to Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Progress since the last UPR

Family Life Education (FLE) (contextually specific Comprehensive Sexuality Education):

- FLE integrated into school curriculum (2021)
- Teachers accredited for in-school and out-of-school delivery
- FLE incorporated into teachers' education at the National University of Samoa

- The government of Samoa has demonstrated commitments through
  - National SRH Policy (2018–2023) (currently under review)
  - Health Sector Plan (2019–2030)
  - National Policy on Gender Equality and Rights of Women and Girls (2021–2031)
  - Including regional commitments such as the Moana Declaration and Pacific Gender Equality Declaration.
- However implementation remains inconsistent due to limited financing, service inequities and persistent social stigma.

Country context: Samoa

- Total population: 218,697 (estimated)

- Young population: > 68,000 aged 10-24 years (estimated)
- 38% of the population are below 15 years
- **7.4% of girls subject to child marriage before 18**
- **High adolescent fertility**: 55 births to girls aged 15-19 per 1000 women

Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Samoa

- In the last UPR, the Government of Samoa accepted recommendations to align Family Life Education (FLE) with UNESCO's International Technical Guidelines on Sexuality Education. The Government has made significant progress, including:
  - Integrating FLE curriculum into schools
  - Accrediting teachers as FLE facilitators: 30 for in–school programmes and 27 for out-of-school programmes
  - Offering FLE as an academic minor within the Bachelor of Education programme at the National University of Samoa.
- Complemented by out-of-school programmes delivered by SFHA.
- However, programmes face significant funding constraints that threaten sustainability.

Recommendations

1. **Develop and fully fund** a multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral and **comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Policy**, prioritising on Family Life Education (FLE), accessibility and availability of SRH services, and behaviour change communications programmes. The **policy should especially target rural areas, outer islands, and maritime communities.**
2. **Develop a clear and inclusive FLE curriculum** that meets age-appropriate standards and follows the UN guidelines on Sexuality Education. This curriculum should be **part of mandatory education for primary and secondary schools, as well as for young people who are not in school**. **Provide ongoing training for teachers** and **set up a system to monitor and evaluate how well these programs are working**.

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