

2022

Co-Creation



Conference

***ACCESS TO QUALITY INFORMATION
ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH AND RIGHTS***

Summary of the narrative review

Share-Net
International





This evidence brief summarizes the key messages and evidence of the Narrative Review on 'Access to quality SRHR information' conducted to inform the Share-Net International Co-Creation Conference, which will take place in June 2022 in Colombia.

Key messages:

- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) are undergoing a broad process of increasing political and legal recognition, often driven by international treaties that provide the basis for their fundamental protection.
- Despite national and international policies and treaties, the recognition and protection of SRHR are restricted in practice by political, cultural, social, economic and geographical factors. These dynamics prevent the generation and dissemination of clear, concise and up-to-date information in an appropriate and effective manner.
- While 127 States have adopted constitutional, statutory and policy commitments to providing public access to information (UNESCO, 2022), comprehensive access to SRHR information is not a priority for many governments.
- SRHR is a taboo in many countries. In many parts of the world, there are still legal and socio-cultural restrictions limiting access to services and information, and exercise of rights.
- SRHR information is often framed solely in terms of reproduction. Governments do not consider the importance of bodily autonomy, eroticism, pleasure, and other aspects of a positive, rights-based conception of sexuality.
- In countries where SRHR are highly restricted, less information is produced and disseminated by governments.
- Children, adolescents, rural populations, ethnic minority and racialised communities, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ communities, women, migrants, and elder people have more difficulty accessing information on SRHR.



- Unverified social networks and media have become a substitute for comprehensive sexuality education.

Conclusion:

- Access to information is a fundamental right and is closely connected to the full exercise of many other rights (not only SRHR). Despite this, it is often not addressed in a focused way and as an issue in its own right, but in reference to other identified issues.
- Formal recognition and ratification of laws and international treaties that promote SRHR at the global level is increasing. However, there is a wide gap between such legislation and agreements on the one hand, and implementation and material protection on the other. These frameworks are fundamental to the creation of and access to quality information on SRHR. They provide the tools to demand investments and programmes from governments, including public policies that address the needs of the most vulnerable populations and the main SRHR issues in each country and region
- Information continues to be subject to politicisation and the agendas of individual governments, and is often limited to official national languages. This restricts the ability of ethnic minority communities and other diverse populations to improve their SRHR knowledge, since the information produced is often culturally and/or linguistically inaccessible, and efforts are not made to translate texts or create appropriate alternatives.
- Even in countries where the components of the essential package of SRHR interventions have been addressed, these are often limited to issues directly relating to the biological aspects of reproduction, ignoring the right to autonomous and independent sexuality.
- It is necessary to carry out direct dialogues with communities to understand their specific needs and facilitate their meaningful participation in projects.