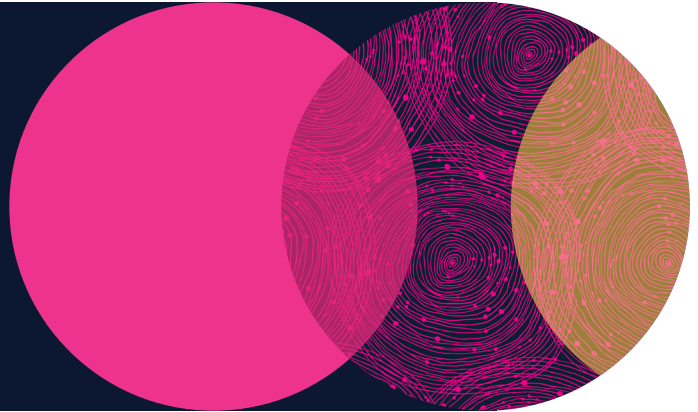


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# SHIFTING THE NARRATIVE

## The importance of CSO-generated evidence on SRHR in Asia Pacific

*What is measured and why in relation to human rights? Who decides what gets measured and who defines what success looks like? Which people and groups are invisibilized by existing measurement frameworks?*



### HOW DO CURRENT MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORKS LIMIT HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY?

The Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health (APA) undertook research to understand the data deficit in relation to four priority issues in Asia and the Pacific – comprehensive sexuality education (CSE); abortion; sexual orientation/gender identity and expression/sex characteristics-related rights (SOGIESC), and sexual pleasure. Methodology included a desk review, a survey completed by advocates and monitoring experts in the region, and in-depth interviews.

Existing information on the respect, protection and fulfilment of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) does not provide sufficient insight into the inequalities faced by marginalized communities. More evidence is needed to expose the intersections of overlapping systems of disadvantage that compound SRHR violations in Asia and the Pacific.

The findings show that:

- Advocates in Asia Pacific need more and higher-quality evidence relating to CSE, abortion, SOGIESC and pleasure to be effective
- Available evidence often hides the way that people experience the systems and processes of the government and invisibilizes marginalized communities
- Civil society organisations (CSOs) are well-placed to generate evidence at community level that fills gaps in the available evidence
- Experiential evidence that centers the lived realities of individuals and communities is needed in order to fully understand whether human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled
- Governments and CSOs can play complementary roles, recognizing the value add of evidence generated by both

### EVIDENCE THAT IS CURRENTLY BEING UTILIZED

Much of existing data used by CSE, abortion, SOGIESC and pleasure activists in Asia Pacific relates to legality; often CSOs are utilizing evidence generated at the global level by research institutions and UN agencies. According to advocates, the most utilized is:

- evidence relating to curriculum content, teacher training, and budget allocations for CSE
- evidence on access to abortion services (particularly for marginalized groups such as sex workers and young people), health providers' knowledge of legal indications, and transparency of the laws
- evidence on violence against LGBTIQ, existence of SOGIESC-sensitive health care services and prevalence of HIV
- evidence relating to integration of pleasure positive approaches into CSE and training of sex educators

### WHERE ARE THE GAPS?

Advocates in Asia Pacific need more testimonies, case studies and research that centers on lived realities, particularly of groups that are invisibilized in state-sponsored data collection methods, and more disaggregated data and locally-rooted evidence.

Many advocates, however, face challenges generating their own evidence, including resource and time constraints. There can be challenges in the 'acceptability' of data by policy-makers who value evidence generated by academic institutions using rigorous, resource-intensive methodologies, and that is nationally representative.

CSOs play a crucial role in generating evidence that centers on the lives and realities of human beings. As part of this initiative, several APA members undertook mini-research projects through which they generated evidence to support their advocacy.

## YOUTH SEXUALITY AND SEX-POSITIVE APPROACHES

### Aliansi Remaja Independen (ARI) Indonesia

ARI looked at sex-positivity in sexuality related education and messaging across three different organizations in Central Java Province, Indonesia.

ARI researchers examined documents and curricula used by 1) a human rights based organization, 2) a government organization, and 3) a religious organization, in order to analyse the content against a set of pre-determined parameters on sex-positivity and pleasure. They also conducted interviews with young people aged 15-24 years who had received capacity building on sexuality. Finding included:

- The different organisations used different terminology for sexual activity, which can have different meanings for young people
- There is a gap between organisations' perspectives on sexuality as stated in their documents or at a national level and what trained young people believe or practice on the ground
- While one organisation professed to be against child marriage, respondents revealed they were encouraging girls with unplanned pregnancies to marry (thereby perpetuating child marriage)
- One organisation openly discussed diversity at the national level; however, its members at the local level do not feel comfortable revealing their diverse sexual orientations



ARI is a youth-led organisation working across several parts of Indonesia on young people's SRHR

## CSE TEACHERS' TRAINING

### YUWA, Nepal

To date, there has been no systematic monitoring or evaluation of the impact of CSE teacher training in Nepal. YUWA researchers conducted interviews with a total of 20 trained CSE teachers and 10 untrained CSE teachers, from rural and semi-urban areas, male and female identifying, and teaching different subjects.

Trained teachers were asked about the content, duration and impressions of the training received, as well as how it has impacted their ability to deliver CSE. Untrained teachers were asked about their comfort levels in teaching CSE. Both were asked about their understanding of CSE, challenges faced and resources needed. The findings included:

- There has been no follow-up with teachers who have been trained
- There are limitations in the Nepali CSE curriculum that do not reflect on the teachers' ability to deliver CSE
- Most interviewees avoided using Nepali words for 'sex' and 'sexuality,' especially male teachers
- The understanding of CSE amongst trained teachers is still incomplete, though there is better understanding of issues such as menstruation and family planning given the number of NGOs working on these issues
- Most trained teachers said that the training had increased their confidence levels and many cited changes in their personal lives as a result of the training
- Untrained teachers expressed that they do not have enough information to deliver CSE fully, with some saying that they are uncomfortable doing so



YUWA is a youth-led organisation in Nepal focused on active citizenship and SRHR



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The Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights mobilizes civil society advocacy across the region to hold governments and other stakeholders accountable for their obligations and commitments to realize the SRHR of all persons in Asia and the Pacific. APA is a network of national, regional and global civil society organizations with a common set of rights-based values that underpins their work in the areas of advocacy, human rights, service delivery and public health research.