



## MAURITIUS RAPID ASSESSMENT OF ADOLESCENT SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH (ASRHR)

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Youthtraining in Mauritius.

Photo: Gender Links

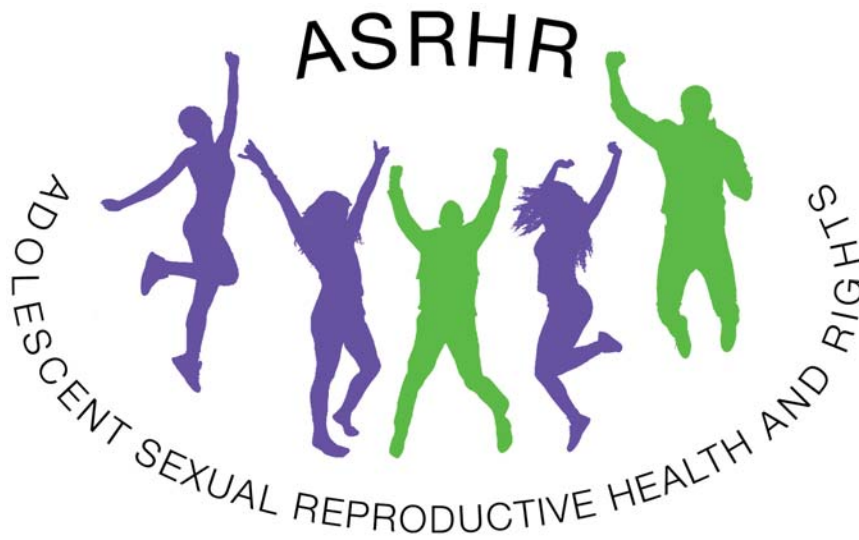
Mauritius has improved in its provision of quality Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Services (ASRHR) services to its youth. Nonetheless, access to ASRHR services is still restricted. This is a need to promote gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment, and reproductive rights, including for the most vulnerable and marginalized women, adolescents and youth in Mauritius. Youth rate confidentiality and privacy highly in Mauritius but after-hours services are limited. It is noteworthy that the government has accounted for the provision of free sanitary towels for secondary school students whose families are registered under the social register in the previous budget 2021-2022. Yet, only (43%) of young people said they received services without their parent being present. The government in Mauritius provides these services freely, compared to an average of \$2 per visit for other countries in the survey.

These are among the findings of the ASRHR Rapid assessment undertaken in Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe from November 2019 to December 2020. The research aims to strengthen youth-led and focused efforts to promote ASRHR through gender and youth responsive local governance. Overall, the study included 13,395 young people between ages 10 and 19 (52% female and 48% male). In Mauritius, 1119 youth participated in the survey (50% female, 2% gender non-conforming and 48% male). Gender Links Mauritius conducted the study in seven Centres of Excellence for Gender in Local Government - Beau Bassin-Rose Hill, Curepipe, Grand Port, Moka, Port Louis, Quatre Bornes and Savanne. This pamphlet should be read together with the detailed report of the eight-country study that includes the objectives, methodology and recommendations.

## KEY DATA FROM THE RAPID ASSESSMENT OF ASRHR SERVICES IN MAURITIUS

Indicator	Region	Mauritius	Beau Bassin Rose Hill	Curepipe	Grand Port	Moka	Port Louis	Quatre Bornes	Savanne
Total sample	13 395	1 119	121	92	232	271	104	123	176
% female	52%	50%	49%	45%	52%	50%	42%	50%	53%
% gender non-conforming	0.3%	2%	11%	4%	0%	1%	0%	5%	1%
% male	48%	48%	40%	51%	48%	49%	58%	45%	46%
<b>Logistic information on health facilities</b>									
Health facility 10km from your home %	71%	95%	95%	100%	99%	100%	84%	96%	88%
The facility opens after school? %	57%	57%	100%	70%	67%	0%	29%	99%	83%
The facility opens on weekends? %	62%	59%	98%	99%	75%	0%	28%	100%	73%
Comfortable waiting and consultation area? %	82%	90%	95%	99%	84%	95%	88%	100%	77%
Does the facility charge a fee? %	29%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Average fee in USD	\$2	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
<b>Quality of care</b>									
Peer counsellors available %	53%	13%	26%	0%	18%	0%	4%	17%	24%
Young people treated with respect %	89%	90%	83%	97%	88%	99%	86%	87%	84%
Young people treated without parent present %	58%	43%	49%	12%	29%	85%	15%	50%	15%
Young people have privacy %	85%	92%	92%	97%	87%	99%	86%	98%	87%
Young people have confidentiality %	89%	93%	93%	97%	92%	99%	85%	98%	87%
Sufficient time with young people %	75%	84%	92%	80%	74%	99%	74%	96%	66%
Appropriate information %	74%	54%	91%	76%	69%	0%	57%	85%	58%
<b>Sexual and reproductive health services (%)</b>									
<b>Maternal health</b>									
% young people who requested contraceptives	31%	3%	3%	1%	3%	0%	1%	5%	6%
% requested contraceptives that received contraceptives	79%	21%	0%	0%	14%		0%	0%	50%
% young women requested a pregnancy test	29%	2%	1%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%	5%
% young women who received a pregnancy test	70%	33%	100%	0%	0%			0%	40%
% young women who were pregnant	9%	3%	7%	4%	0%	0%	0%	7%	6%
<b>Menstrual health</b>									
% young women who requested pads	14%	2%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	1%	6%
% of those who requested pads that received pads	64%	67%			100%			0%	67%
<b>HIV and AIDS and STI</b>									
% young men who requested male circumcision	40%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
% of those who requested male circumcision received	87%	100%	100%				2%		
% who requested HIV test	45%	2%	9%	0%	1%	0%		4%	4%
% of who received HIV test	83%	15%	0%		0%		50%		43%
% who requested STI test	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
% who requested who received STI test	83%	33%			0%		50%	0%	
% who requested anti-retrovirals (ARVs)	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
% who requested who received ARVs	64%	0%						0%	

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT



Young people constitute 60% of the population of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and 33.5 % for Mauritius but access to SRH services is still problematic. Restricted access to timely and crucial SRH services is compounded with rising rates of teenage pregnancy, complications resulting from unsafe abortion, early marriage and rising rates of GBV. Youth-led advocacy to challenge social and gender norms on ASRHR needs to be strengthened. Despite considerable progress since the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) 25 years ago, millions of people especially youth, and mostly disadvantaged youth and adolescents still lack access to ASRH information and services. The *National Sexual & Reproductive Health Policy of Mauritius* dates back to 2007 and there are contradictions and limitations with regard to ASRHR legislation, policy and practice.

## FINDINGS

### Logistic information on health facilities

The study found that 95% of youth have a health facility within 10 km of their home, compared to 71% in the study overall. No major differences were noted between urban and rural areas. After-hours access

to services is also a challenge. Only 57% of youth said they could access the facilities after school and only 59% said they were able to access the facilities at weekends. Access to ASRHR services after-hours varied greatly between councils in the range of 0% to 100%, irrespective of geographical location. All ASRHR facilities are free in Mauritius, compared to an average of \$2 per visit charged in other countries in the study.

### Quality of care

Overall, Mauritius scored well in terms of the respectful treatment of young people (90%) and the maintaining of the privacy (92%) and confidentiality (93%) of young people. Yet, only 43% percent of young people said they received services without their parent being present which is much lower than the regional overall score of 58%. Furthermore, only 13% of peer counsellors were available across the seven councils. It is noteworthy that 84% of youth reported that health workers spent sufficient time with them, yet only 54% of youth asserted that they received appropriate information. In addition, work needs to be done to ensure a uniform provision of quality care across all areas as some fluctuations were noted in the quality of care provided.

## Sexual and reproductive health services

**Access to contraception:** In Mauritius and in the eight countries where this study took place substantially less than one third (3% and 31% respectively) of the youth requested contraceptives. Moka, Curepipe and Port-Louis are among the areas which recorded no requests or minimal requests for contraception (1%). This is a concern since adequate access to contraception is a key objective of ASRHR services. Where these are not being accessed, the risk of teenage pregnancy, unsafe abortion, as well as HIV and AIDS, is higher. Of the 3% youths who requested for contraceptives, 21% received them. While this is a positive point, it may be concluded that young people are still not able to avail themselves for the SRH services provided.



**Teenage pregnancies:** Only 2% of young women surveyed requested a pregnancy test compared to 29% overall. Only thirty-three percent of those who asked, received a pregnancy test

compared to 70% in the study overall. The response by area varied widely from overwhelmingly positive (100% in Beau Bassin-Rose Hill) to no tests being administered (3 Councils). Three percent of all the young

women surveyed in Mauritius reported being pregnant, compared to 9% in the study overall.



**Menstrual health:** In the Mauritius budget 2021-2022<sup>1</sup>, the government has accounted for the provision of free sanitary towels for secondary school students whose families are registered under

the social register of Mauritius.<sup>2</sup> Two percent of the sample (compared to 14% in the study overall) asked for pads and 67% (compared to 64% in the study overall) received pads. Providing free sanitary pads across all educational institutions will be more conducive to end period poverty.

## HIV and AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STI's)

Only 2% of the sample in Mauritius requested an HIV test and 15% received the test. There was no demand for male circumcision but 100% of those who requested for it received it. More efforts should be geared towards encouraging people to be tested for HIV in Mauritius while raising awareness on HIV, AIDS and STIs at an early age.



<sup>1</sup> [https://budgetmof.govmu.org/Documents/2021\\_22budgetspeech\\_english.pdf](https://budgetmof.govmu.org/Documents/2021_22budgetspeech_english.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://socialsecurity.govmu.org/Documents/Publications/Social Register Mauritius.jpg>

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** go to:

<https://genderlinks.org.za/what-we-do/governance/local-action-for-voice-and-choice/>

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