



WHO CARES ABOUT LABOURING WOMEN?

THE INVISIBLE RISKS OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH OF WOMEN IN HONG KONG

1. DEFINITION

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH (SRH)

GENERAL MEANING: a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system
UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (2022)



Connect to human rights:

- the right to life
- the right to be free from torture
- the right to health
- the right to privacy
- the right to education
- the prohibition of discrimination.

Refer to a board range of SRH services:

- Access to contraception
- Fertility and infertility care
- Maternal and perinatal health
- Prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Protection from sexual and gender-based violence
- Education on safe and healthy relationships



SRH Diseases:

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI): Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Human Papillomavirus (HPV), Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), ...

Pregnancy Issues: Endometriosis, Uterine Fibroid, ...

Menstrual and Hormonal Disorders: Dysmenorrhea, Menorrhagia, Oligomenorrhea, Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS), Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), ...

Latest Trends:

SRH diseases remains an **existing critical issue** in Hong Kong though there has been a slight drop in SRH diseases over the years

HIV infection:

- Drop gradually from 725 cases in 2014 to 365 cases in 2024
- Infection rate: ~0.1% (very low)
- Late Detection Rate: ~47% (relatively high)

Cervical Cancer:

- 9th most common cancer among females
- Slightly increase in ~1% over 10 years from 2013 to 2023

Centre of Department of Health (2025)

2. SITUATION

General Factors to poor women SRH in Hong Kong:

Physical and Psychological Health:

- Prevalence of diseases of affluence (Type 2 Diabetes, Obesity, Hypertension, ...)
- High percentage of anxiety and depression due to high working pressure or academic burden

Social, Economic and Cultural Causes:

- A lack of comprehensive sexual education in the local curriculum
- Social stigmas and discrimination against SRH diseases in a conservative society
- Difficult access to affordable medical services due to poverty



Current Policies in Hong Kong:

Family Planning Association of Hong Kong

Provide medical check-up, contraceptive access, youth services to enhance SRH of Hong Kong women

Hospital Authority

Set up Special Maternity Care Units in 2019

3. MAJOR ISSUES:

WHY ARE SRH OF LABOURING WOMEN IN HONG KONG AT STAKE?

A. FEMALE SEX WORKERS

- In Hong Kong, citizens often **hate being mistakenly treated as sex workers or clients** on the streets
- Will consider sex workers who work on streets as **"offensive"**
- Even for those who only work in their one-sex worker apartments, neighbours may consider them **disturbing**

CONCEPTS SEX WORKERS

- **Labeling theory:** Examine how labels assigned to individuals can influence their self-identity and societal perception
- **Social Constructionism:** Suggest that social realities are constructed through interactions and cultural norms

IMPACTS OF SRH:

- Sex workers may face different levels of **physical and verbal violence** due to society's **stigma**
- May falsely believe that they are discriminated → **are not willing to seek regular health check-ups (e.g. HIV test)**



ROLES:

Community Services, Public Education

TARGET:

Female Sex Workers

HOW DOES AFRO ENHANCE WOMEN'S SRH IN HONG KONG?

- Provide **free and anonymous health check-ups and HIV tests**
- Spread the importance of regular checks and correct sex education concepts.
- Conduct **public education** by recruiting volunteers and holding talks in universities to **reduce stigma society has on sex workers.**

SDG TARGET 5.1:

END ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS EVERYWHERE

ACTIVE PUBLIC EDUCATION

- Allow the public to understand that **sex work is no difference from other jobs**
- Remind the public that sex workers are just normal people they **should not possess any discrimination towards the sex work community**

OUTREACH COMMUNITY SERVICES

- Visiting brothels to **outreach sex workers** to encourage them to have regular health check-ups and the importance of using condoms
- Through **providing free and anonymous health check-ups to raise awareness** on the importance of maintaining sexual health
- **End discrimination among sex workers** towards their own community

CONCEPTS ACTION FOR REACH OUT

- **Liberal Feminism:** Liberal feminists **embrace freedom for women**. They view sex work purely as a transaction where sex is sold for financial profit, similar to any other commodity. In this perspective, **sex work involves a buyer and a seller negotiating to reach the best agreement**. While sex work has no difference with other jobs, sex workers should be respected and should not be discriminated.

B. FEMALE CAREGIVERS

- In Hong Kong, female caregivers usually have **long working hours with insufficient rest**
- In particular, there are some specific issues that **domestic helpers or full-time housewives** are facing:
 - **Domestic helpers (local and foreign):** low education level, insufficient knowledge of employment rights, language barrier (foreign)
 - **Full-time housewives:** have to **work 24/7 + non-paid** → strong economic dependence on the companion

IMPACTS OF SRH:

- **Lower Education Level:** **unaware of potential signals of cervical cancer**
- **Lack of knowledge of Employment Rights:** being **deprived from her employer**, so not aware of her **entitled medical benefits and rest days** for SRH check-ups and medication
- **Economic Dependence:** **vulnerable to sexual abuse** and violence from a husband
- **Language Barrier:** **restricted access to medical services** for foreign domestic helpers
- **Period Poverty:** unable to afford the **cost of menstrual pads**
- **Long Working Hours:** **insufficient rest + physical pressure** higher chance of suffering from **SRH chronic diseases (i.e., cervical cancer)**

IN CONCLUSION

Achieving **SDG Goal 5: GENDER EQUALITY** is so **urgent and important** to help labouring women in Hong Kong get rid of the negative impact of SRH

SDG TARGET 5.6: ENSURE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS



HOW CAN THE COMMUNITY PARTNERS DO TO ENHANCE SRH OF LABOURING WOMEN IN HONG KONG?

4. SOLUTIONS:

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE is the key to addressing SRH of labouring women in HK

CONCEPTS OXFAM HONG KONG

- **Collaborative Governance:** linking and sharing of information, resources, activities and capabilities by organisations in **two or more sectors** to achieve jointly an outcome that could not be achieved by organisations in one sector separately (Emerson et al., 2012)
- The term "collaborative governance" is similar to Oxfam's **"partnership approach"**, meaning that a social issue could not be tackled without the concerted effort and shared visions of each stakeholder in society. Therefore, **Action for Reach Out and KPMG are equally important to enhancing labouring women's SRH in Hong Kong.**
- The following section can make sense of how each Community Partner utilises their strengths to enhance women's SRH in the "ROLES" section



ROLES:

Policy Advocacy, Public Education, Partnership

TARGET:

Female Caregivers under Poverty

HOW DOES OXFAM ENHANCE WOMEN'S SRH IN HONG KONG?

CONTINUOUS POLICY ADVOCACY

- Respond to **public policies and fiscal budgets**, and submit consultation papers regarding **poverty alleviation, social welfare policies in Hong Kong**

GLOCAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

- Organise **inter-active walking tours** and human library events to educate the public on difficulties that **female caregivers, street workers and ethnic minority women** are facing under poverty
- Introduce the concepts of **global citizenship** where everyone should know more about **poverty, climate change, social inequalities and sustainable development** from a global perspective

PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

- Collaborate with **governments, local NGOs and business corporates** on tackling social issues out of poverty (e.g., granting funds to social projects, advising ESG policies, organising CSR initiatives, ...)

SDG TARGET 5.4:

RECOGNIZE AND VALUE UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK

ROLES:

ESG, Diversity and Inclusion (DEI), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

TARGET:

Women in Business



HOW DOES KPMG ENHANCE WOMEN'S SRH IN HONG KONG?

Modern Slavery Statement: combat modern slavery and human trafficking within its operations and supply chain to avoid labouring women suffering from sexual exploitation

Podcast and sharing session by women leaders: motivate female colleagues to continue to thrive in their career path

Content creation celebrating women's power: blog posts, podcasts, short interview clips

SDG TARGET 5.5:

ENSURE WOMEN'S FULL AND EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP

INCLUSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE WORKPLACES

- Assist in organising **different sharing sessions**
- **Help create a safe space** that women feel comfortable sharing their experiences and concerns
- Take part in content creation and encourage colleagues to **wear purple to celebrate International Women's Day**

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

- Improve **understanding and access to resources**
- Encourage colleagues to **do family planning** without worrying about their career advancement

CONCEPTS KPMG

- **Empowerment theory:** empower other women colleagues by giving them **inspiration and support**
- **Social Cognitive Theory:** observational learning and social influences through showcasing successful women leaders navigated their return to work post-birth, highlighting KPMG has strong maternity policies, flexible work arrangements, and resources for new mothers.

