



# STATE OF SELF CARE REPORT 2023 PROGRESS AND POTENTIAL OF SELF-CARE: TAKING STOCK AND LOOKING AHEAD

## WHY CREATE THIS REPORT NOW?

The sexual and reproductive health (SRH) field is witnessing a burgeoning array of self-care policies and programs globally, and practical evidence from diverse self-care interventions is beginning to emerge. As momentum around self-care builds, capturing key lessons and consolidating learning from country and global experience is essential. These experiences could play a role in global efforts to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC). This report aims to take stock of these experiences and share examples of country and global efforts, offering insights into how self-care can help advance rights-based, equitable access to SRH care for all.

## WHO IS THIS REPORT FOR?

This report is intended for use by ministries of health, program implementers, researchers, advocates, donors, and other stakeholders interested in designing, implementing, and supporting effective SRH self-care policies and programs. We hope this report will inspire new lines of inquiry, stimulate innovation, and increase investment in self-care.

## WHAT DOES THIS RESOURCE DO?

The goal of this report is to provide a rich resource for global and national advocacy, to inform implementation of self-care guidelines, and to provide links to evidence and learning exchanges. There is an extensive reference and further reading section. The report provides a snapshot of effective SRH self-care interventions in a variety of settings and offers practical lessons for researchers, implementers, and advocates to move forward.

## HOW WAS THIS REPORT DEVELOPED?

This report relies on literature and document reviews, scanning of self-care tools, websites, and resources developed by the Self-Care Trailblazer Group and other organizations. Case studies and country examples were written by a diverse group of individuals and institutions, working across the spectrum of SRH self-care. Organized into four sections, the report consists of:

- **Self-Care Basics** provides definitions, terminology, and frameworks currently in use, and connects readers to a self-care glossary and resources.
- **Where Self-Care Policy, Enabling Environment, Practice, and Program Strategies Meet** highlights lessons from contraceptive self-injection,

self-managed abortion, HIV self-testing, self-administration of emergency contraceptive pills, digital health, and fragile settings. The powerful role that advocacy plays in building support for self-care at individual, community, and national levels is highlighted.

- **Measuring and Monitoring Self-Care Practices** argues for innovation in the measurement and monitoring of self-care practices, and for increased attention to the development and refinement of indicators and data collection approaches. Links to ELWG
- **Looking Ahead** outlines areas of ongoing interest and offers practical suggestions of how to engage.

## WHAT DOES THIS REPORT TELL US?

- Self-care has the potential to reshape the way health care is delivered, and the ways in which individuals seek care. And although the practice of self-care is long-standing and universal, it is not yet formally integrated into health systems in most settings.
- Self-care can contribute to progress towards universal health coverage by making health systems more equitable and efficient. It is an essential component of strong, robust, and resilient health systems, and is at the foundation of primary health care.
- Linking self-care more intentionally to Health System Strengthening (HSS) efforts is an important strategy.
- Investment is needed to ensure that self-care interventions, including health literacy, are supported, and integrated into health systems, and that self-care's contributions to health outcomes are appropriately measured.
- Moving a country-led self-care agenda forward requires leadership from Ministry of Health, and engagement of rights holders, community advocates, as well as health professionals and technical experts working together to define and

implement a plan of action. Robust stewardship of the process is critical.

- Development of multi-sectoral National Self-Care Networks (NSN) to advance self-care policy and programming at country level is a promising approach.
- Global and country advocacy plays a critical role in socializing the concepts of self-care, and in creating an enabling policy and legal environment.
- Engaging the private sector more strategically could offer multiple benefits.
- Harnessing the power of digital technology to expand access to, and use of, health products and services, and to improve health outcomes is an important strategy.
- Scaling-up of effective self-care interventions, in tandem with evidence generation, is essential for future programming.
- Continuing research, collaboration, and learning around self-care is needed to move the self-care field forward with evidence-informed programs and policies.

## HOW CAN YOU ENGAGE?

Enormous progress over the past few years has opened up more possibilities for self-care in the future. With an ever-expanding array of self-care initiatives, it is an opportune moment to create a forward-looking agenda and build the next generation of self-care efforts. Join the Self-care Movement. Become a member of the Self-Care Trailblazer Group!

## WHERE CAN I FIND FURTHER INFORMATION?

Get the full report [here](#).  
Contact the SCTG.

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