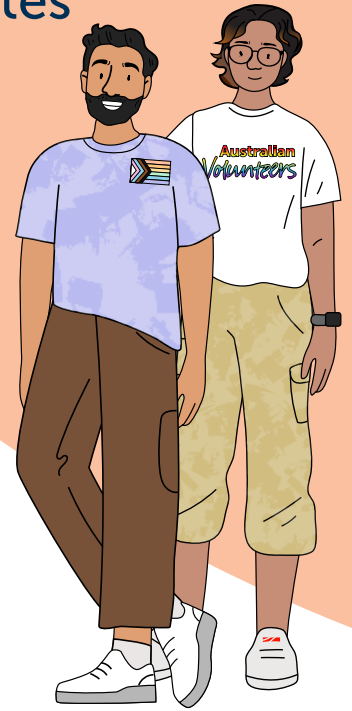


# Pride Guide | The Federated States of Micronesia



The Australian Volunteers Program strives to provide a safe, supportive and equitable environment for LGBTIQ+ volunteers, approved accompanying dependents, partner organisations and all program staff. The Australian Volunteers Program has supported volunteers with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) in all program countries and has ongoing connections with community organisations in almost every country we work in.

Diverse SOGIESC program participants must be aware of the country context before undertaking an assignment. This guide is designed to introduce some key issues related to people with diverse SOGIESC and their participation in the program.

## If you are a volunteer with diverse SOGIESC, you will need to:

- Do your own research. You will be required to follow the local laws, even if you disagree with them.
- Understand what the local law says you can and can't do when in-country;
- Be aware of what the legal protections are for LGBTIQ+ people in your destinations;
- Consider whether or not you are comfortable living and working in a place where you may be discriminated against and unable to live as openly as you can in some parts of Australia.

## Language

Terminology may differ across urban and rural contexts, and across provinces or ethnic and cultural groups. Information sourced online can be outdated or inaccurate. For current and accurate information, please confirm with an appropriate diverse SOGIESC Civil Society Organisation (CSO) or ask your in-country team.

## Legal and policy context

Same-sex sexual acts have never been criminalised in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The age of consent is 14 regardless of gender or sexual orientation, however same-sex marriage and civil unions are not legally recognised. FSM is a signatory of the United Nation's Joint Statement on Ending Acts of Violence and Related Human Rights Violations Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

In 2018, legislation to ban transgender people from working in government was supported by Yap, Chuuk and Pohnpei states, while Kosrae state voted against it. This came just after the passing of a bill prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. There are no women in the national legislature and only a small number of women in state legislatures.

## Discrimination

Some legal protections exist for people with diverse SOGIESC in the Federated States of Micronesia. In 2018, anti-discrimination laws were updated to include sexual orientation, but not gender identity or intersex status. There is no constitutional protection for people with diverse SOGIESC, and there are no laws that protect against hate crimes or incitement to hatred on the basis of holding diverse SOGIESC.

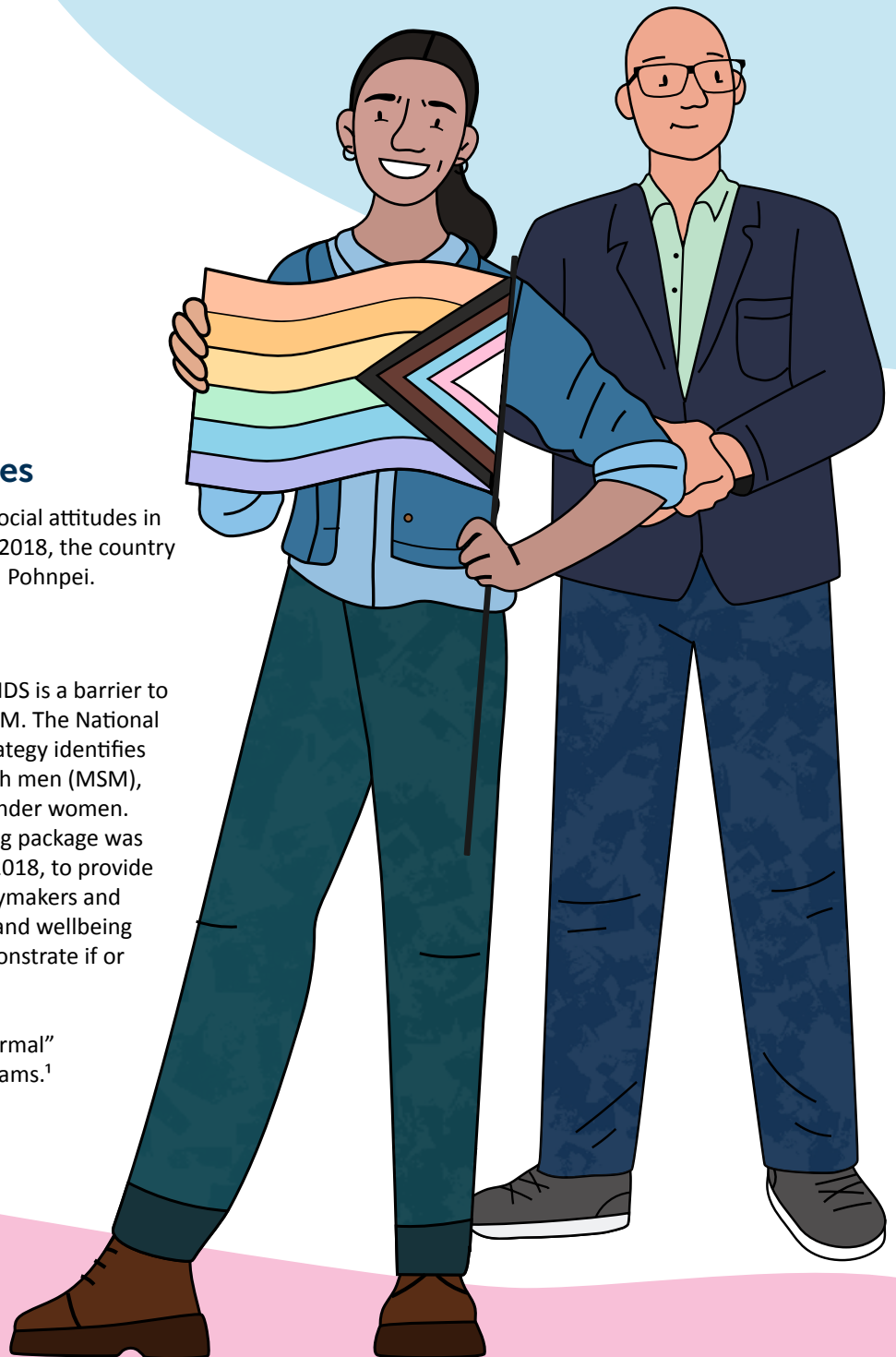
## Cultural and societal attitudes

There is limited information on cultural and social attitudes in FSM toward people with diverse SOGIESC. In 2018, the country hosted its first ever Pride parade and event in Pohnpei.

## Health and wellbeing

Stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV/AIDS is a barrier to accessing treatment and health services in FSM. The National HIV & Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Strategy identifies at-risk groups as being men who have sex with men (MSM), sex workers, injecting drug users and transgender women. The Asia Pacific Trans Health Blueprint training package was created and disseminated to government in 2018, to provide a resource for healthcare professionals, policymakers and community advocates on the specific health and wellbeing needs of trans communities. No reports demonstrate if or how the package is being used.

Homosexuality has been referred to as “abnormal” within adolescent school sex education programs.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Project Gutenberg, "LGBT Rights in the Federated States of Micronesia. Societal opinions," Article, accessed June 18, 2021, [http://www.self.gutenberg.org/articles/eng/LGBT\\_rights\\_in\\_the\\_Federated\\_States\\_of\\_Micronesia?View=embedded%27%27#Summary\\_table](http://www.self.gutenberg.org/articles/eng/LGBT_rights_in_the_Federated_States_of_Micronesia?View=embedded%27%27#Summary_table).