

4.5.1 Human Sexuality: Sexual rights

Sexual rights relate to a person's sexuality, to sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual behaviours and sexual health. Sexual rights, because they are human rights, belong to everybody.

1. The right to equality: Everyone is born free and equal in dignity and rights. No person should be discriminated against on the basis of their sex, gender or sexuality.
2. The right to participation: Young people should have a say on anything that affects their lives. This includes what sexual health information and services they get, including what they learn at school.
3. The right to life and to be free from harm: No one should be harassed, harmed, punished, trafficked or killed because of their sexual practices, gender identity or expression, nor as a way to protect the reputation or honour of a family or community. Young women, young people living with HIV, LGBT young people must be especially protected from harm and punishment.
4. The right to privacy: Young people have the right to privacy about their sexuality, they should decide if they want to share information about themselves.
5. The right to personal autonomy and to be recognized as an individual before the law: Young people have the right to decide on matters about their sexuality. They are free to explore their sexuality in safe and pleasurable ways, as long as they do not interfere with someone else's rights.
6. The right to think and express oneself freely. All young people have the right to explore their sexualities and should be able to have dreams and fantasies, and express their sexuality without fear, shame or guilt, while respecting other people's rights.
7. The right to health: all young people have the right to the best physical and mental health and wellbeing and to be protected from anything that might harm their health, including their sexual health.
8. The right to know and learn: All young people have the right to education and information, including comprehensive, gender-sensitive and rights-based sexuality education.
9. The right to choose whether or not to marry or have children: Every young person has the right to choose when, if, how and whom to marry and have children in an environment that recognizes diverse family types. No-one should be forced to marry or marry when they are a child.
10. The right to have your rights upheld: Governments must respect, protect and fulfil all sexual rights for young people. Respect means not interfering directly or indirectly with young people's enjoyment of their rights. Protect means taking measures to prevent others from interfering with young people's human rights. Fulfil means adopting laws, policies and programmes that enable young people to fully realize their sexual rights.