



EXCLAIM!

Young people's guide to
'Sexual rights: an IPPF declaration'



About IPPF

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) is a global service provider and a leading advocate of sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. We are a worldwide movement of national organizations working with and for communities and individuals.

IPPF works towards a world where women, men and young people everywhere have control over their own bodies, and therefore their destinies. A world where they are free to choose parenthood or not; free to decide how many children they will have and when; free to pursue healthy sexual lives without fear of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. A world where gender or sexuality are no longer a source of inequality or stigma. We will not retreat from doing everything we can to safeguard these important choices and rights for current and future generations.

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List of acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
MA	Member Association (IPPF)
Para.	Paragraph
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
UN	United Nations
VCT	Voluntary Counselling and Testing
YPLHIV	Young People Living with HIV

WHY A GUIDE ON SEXUAL RIGHTS?

Young people are sexual beings. They have sexual needs, desires, fantasies and dreams. It is important for all young people around the world to be able to explore, experience and express their sexualities in healthy, positive, pleasurable and safe ways. This can only happen when young people's sexual rights are guaranteed.



IPPF/Jeremy Wright/Bangladesh

Sexual rights are human rights related to people's sexuality. Like everyone else, all young people are entitled to them and they are necessary for the development and well-being of all people and societies in which they live. However, discrimination, stigma, violence, fear, ignorance and some cultural and traditional beliefs threaten people's sexual rights around the world and young people are especially vulnerable to sexual rights violations.

To secure and promote young people's sexual rights, we first have to develop a clear understanding about what sexual rights are and how they relate to young people. Exclaim! sets out a framework for understanding how human rights apply to young people's sexuality. IPPF is deeply committed to ensuring the rights of all young people and recognizes that young people's rights are often neglected, ignored or misunderstood.

Therefore, Exclaim! aims to:

- Explore how sexual rights relate to young people in a way that is accessible and relevant to young people, highlighting certain aspects about sexual rights that are specific to young people;
- Reaffirm IPPF's commitment to young people's sexual rights; and
- Elaborate ideas about how to translate sexual rights into actions for and by young people.



IPPF/Chloe Hall/Mauritania

Exclaim! has four sections:

1. A bit of information on young people's sexual rights provides background information about young people's sexual rights, including an examination of the 'evolving capacities' of young people

2. The roots of the matter outlines IPPF's core convictions about sexuality and young people.

3. Young people's sexual rights are human rights examines 10 fundamental sexual rights as they relate to young people. This section also outlines young people's entitlements under each right.

4. From words to action provides a list of strategies for translating sexual rights into concrete actions that improve the health and well-being of young people.

How is Exclaim! related to Sexual rights: an IPPF declaration?

Exclaim! is grounded in IPPF's core values and builds on Sexual rights: an IPPF Declaration (referred to as 'the Declaration' from this point forward). The Declaration was developed in 2007 by a panel of experts and internationally recognized leaders in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Exclaim! is a guide for young people that expands on the Declaration and demonstrates how sexual rights and IPPF's core principles relate to young people, along with how to translate them into action through youth-friendly services, programmes and policies. Taking action on the points in Exclaim! will help to advance the Declaration and young people's sexual rights more broadly.

Who is Exclaim! intended for?

Exclaim! is for young people, IPPF Member Associations (MAs), the IPPF Secretariat, NGOs, health providers, educators, community leaders and anyone working in young people's health, rights and development. It aims to help strengthen rights-based programming, services and advocacy related to young people's sexual and reproductive health.

How was this guide developed?

IPPF Central Office developed Exclaim! in collaboration with young people from all six IPPF Regions. In November 2009, IPPF's annual Youth Working Group Meeting brought together 20 young participants to discuss sexual rights in order to ensure that Exclaim! truly reflects youth perspectives. The participants came from Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Cameroon, Chile, Egypt, India, Iraq, Ireland, Lebanon, Macedonia, Malawi, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Netherlands, Tunisia and the United Kingdom. The participants contributed to Exclaim! during the meeting and also reviewed and edited the final version.



A photograph of two young women with blonde hair, smiling and looking towards the camera. They are outdoors in a grassy field. The image is overlaid with a large orange graphic consisting of splatters and brushstrokes. The text is overlaid on a dark orange horizontal band.

A BIT OF BACKGROUND ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S SEXUAL RIGHTS

Sexual rights are internationally recognized human rights that relate to people's sexuality. They include a number of fundamental human rights, such as: the right to privacy, the right to health, the right to freedom of thought and expression, the right to freedom from violence, and the right to education and information.

Sexual rights, like all human rights, are universal, inalienable, indivisible, interrelated and interdependent, and impose obligations

- **Universal:** Every single person in every part of the world is inherently entitled to human rights.
- **Inalienable:** Everyone is entitled to human rights simply for being human. Human rights cannot be taken away or given up from anyone, irrespective of their age, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, disability, HIV status or health status.
- **Indivisible:** No one human right is more important than another. Nor should one be considered in isolation from the others. Human rights exist in an interconnected relationship as a set. So the denial of any right can prevent the fulfilment of several others. While action is often taken to address specific human rights, the aim is to help realize all human rights.
- **Interrelated and interdependent:** Each human right influences the fulfilment of other rights. Often, the fulfilment of a right depends fully or partially on the fulfilment of others. For example, ensuring the right to health requires the realization of the rights to education and information.
- **Impose obligations:** Whenever there is a right, there is also a duty or responsibility. This means there are 'rights-holders' and 'duty-bearers'. An individual's rights extend until they infringe upon others' rights. At this point, the right-holder also becomes a duty-bearer and must respect the rights of others. For sexual rights, all people are rights-holders and duty-bearers. The main duty-bearer is the State, but other leaders such as religious leaders and civil society are also duty-bearers. Also, everyone has the duty to respect other people's sexual rights.

What is the difference between sexual rights and reproductive rights?

Sexual rights and reproductive rights are closely related, but they are distinct from one another. Sexual rights relate to a person's sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual behaviours and sexual health. This is different from reproductive rights, which relate to a person's fertility, reproduction, reproductive health and parenthood. There can be a lot of overlap between the two concepts: for example, the right to choose whether or not to have children is both a reproductive right and a sexual right (when a couple chooses to have children through sex). However, the right to choose whether or not to have sex is more of a sexual right, because sexual acts are not necessarily done with the aim of having children.

The fact is many aspects of sexuality are not directly aimed at reproduction. So, it is important to recognize that sexual rights are different from reproductive rights and equally important human rights for everyone, including young people.



What makes young people's sexual rights different to those of adults?

Young people's sexual rights are different and more complex than adults' sexual rights. One reason for this is the widespread denial of young people's sexuality. There is a common misconception that young people are not, or should not be sexual beings with the exception of certain groups, such as married young people or young people above a certain age. Sexuality is a central aspect of being human during all phases of each person's life.

Another reason why young people's sexual rights are particularly complex is because of the need to both protect and empower young people. There is a common assumption that young people are incapable of making decisions for themselves, so parents or other adults should have full authority over decisions related to their sexuality. Resistance to recognize young people's sexuality and their decision-making abilities makes the realization of young people's sexual rights all the more challenging.

One of the most fundamental challenges of working from a rights-based perspective is finding the balance between young people's right to be protected and their right to participate and take responsibility for exercising their own rights. Since each young person develops at their own pace, there is no universal age at which certain sexual rights and protections gain or lose importance. Therefore, striking the balance between protection and autonomy should be based on the evolving capacities of each individual young person.

What does the 'evolving capacity of young people' mean?

Childhood and youth are periods of transition and change. The concept of childhood may vary from one country to the next, but in general young children need more protection and help from adults to make decisions than older youth. As children grow older, their emotional, intellectual, physical and mental abilities develop. At the same time, young people may still have limited experience or information, especially about sexuality.

'Evolving capacity' means that each young person gradually develops the ability to take full responsibility for their own actions and decisions. This happens at a different pace for different young people. At any given age, some young people will be more mature and experienced than others. Social inequities also influence young people's capacities. Thus, striking the right balance between protection and autonomy is a complex process that requires looking at the individual capacity of each young person, rather than focusing on someone's age.

Adults, parents, guardians, carers and the State have a responsibility to ensure that young people's rights are met at all ages. This involves ensuring a conducive environment for development, while at the same time guaranteeing protection from harm when young people lack the knowledge, skills or experience to fully protect themselves. In all situations, the evolving capacities of young people to autonomously exercise their rights must be recognized.

We must approach young people's sexual rights in a progressive way. They should be simultaneously empowered to exercise rights on their own behalf, while being protected and guided with their best interests in mind. Programmes and services for young people must also respect their diversities, for example ethnic, cultural and sexual differences.

The concept of the evolving capacity of young people stems from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It draws attention to the rights of children and adolescents, as well as calls on leaders and societies to value young people's opinions and decisions in light of their evolving capacities.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 5

"Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom, legal guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child, to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the present Convention."

Article 12.1

"Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child."

Conociendo y expresando
derechos sexuales y reproductivos
con libertad y responsabilidad

THE ROOTS OF THE MATTER

IPPF's core convictions about sexuality and young people

IPPF believes strongly in a number of core convictions about young people and their sexuality. These principles are at the centre of IPPF's work with young people and IPPF's approach to young people's sexual rights.

...world of possibilities

What is a principle?

A principle is a basic and essential truth, conviction, law or assumption. Principles frame the way we think about issues and the way we develop strategies to address them. They form the foundation of programmes, policies, services, advocacy and other initiatives.

We can think about principles like a tree's roots. The roots hold the tree in place and are necessary for the tree to grow and flourish. The deeper the roots, the stronger the tree and the more able it is to confront challenges, like stormy weather and predatory insects.

Principles feed into policies, laws and rights that create a framework for action, just as a tree's roots feed into the trunk, which gives the tree strength and determines how high and broad it will be. A tree's branches are like the programmes, services and action delivered as part of the overall framework. They may branch off in different directions but are all working towards similar goals. Finally, a tree's flowers and fruits are like the outcomes that result from programmes and interventions.

Just as roots are necessary for the growth and strength of a tree, principles are equally important for the growth and strength of a rights-based framework for development.

There are three main principles that are at the root of IPPF's approach to young people's sexual rights.

The following core convictions are fundamental to IPPF's understanding of young people's sexuality and sexual rights. They underlie the sexual rights outlined in the next section and should be applied in all of IPPF's work with young people.



IPPF/Chloe Hall/Kyrgyzstan

1. Sexuality is an integral part of being human for all young people

All young people are sexual beings - whether or not they are sexually active. Sexuality is a central part of being human for young people of all ages across the world.

Young people are very diverse and experience their sexualities in different ways. Many biological, social, cultural, economic, environmental, religious and contextual factors influence young people's sexual behaviours, relationships, feelings, identity, desires and attitudes. Therefore, each young person's experiences and expressions of sexuality are unique.

Despite these differences, every young person is entitled to personal fulfilment and to freedom from coercion, discrimination and violence, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, marital status, HIV status, sexual orientation, health status.

"Sexuality is something we feel, something we do, that comes from within ourselves."

16 yrs, male, Guatemala



2. Sexuality and sexual pleasure are important for all young people, irrespective of reproductive desires

Sexuality refers to the way young people experience and express themselves as sexual beings. It refers to each young person's growing awareness, experience and expression of eroticism, sexual pleasure, intimacy, sexual orientation and gender identity. Sexuality can include reproductive desires, but many expressions of sexuality are not directly aimed at reproduction. All young people are entitled to sexual well-being and pleasure, whether or not they want to have children. Therefore, it is important to recognize sexual rights as distinct and equally important to reproductive rights.

"There are many of us in this world with different characters, and in the same way there are as many images of sexuality and ways of expressing it."

17 yrs, female, Armenia

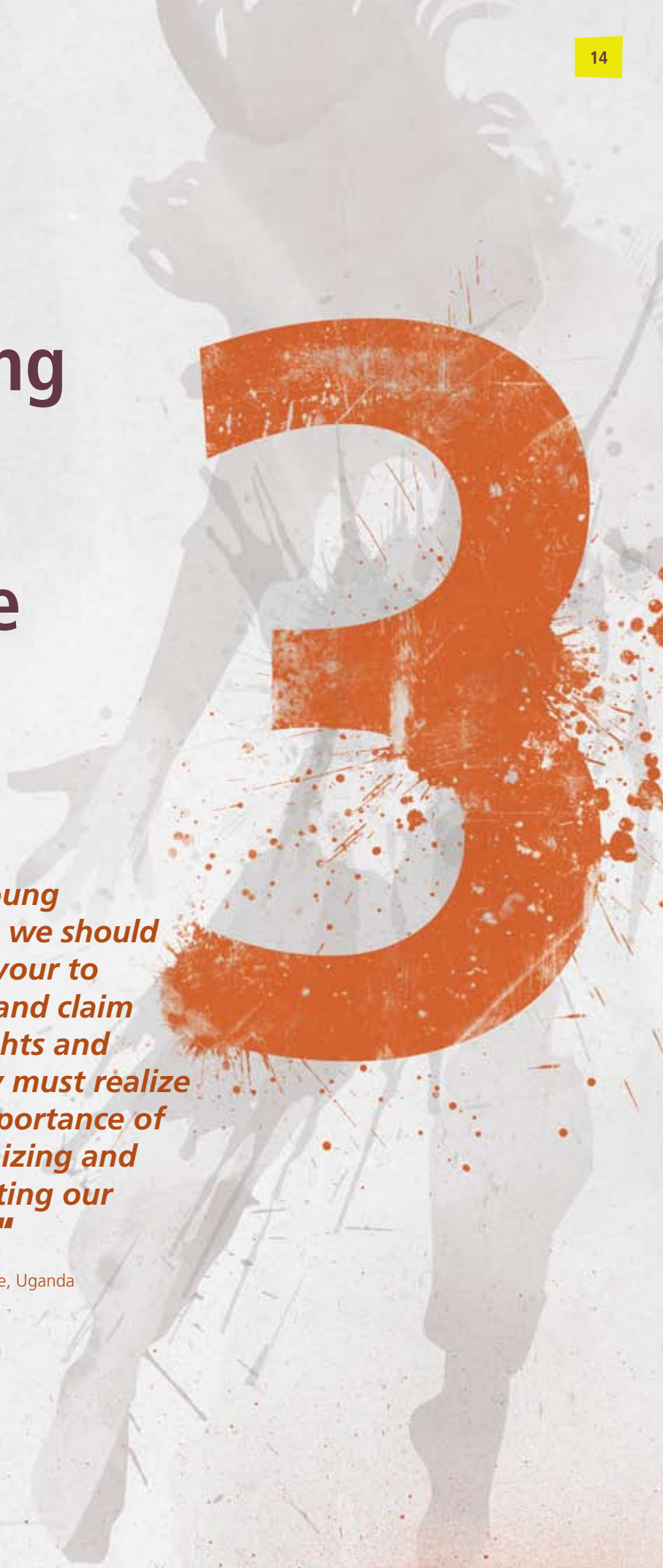
3. The evolving capacities of children and young people must be recognized

All people under 18 years should enjoy the full range of human rights, including sexual rights. The importance and relevance of some rights change as a person transitions from infancy to childhood to adolescence. Therefore, the rights of children and youth must be approached in a progressive and dynamic way.

The rights and protection of young people under the age of 18 differ from those of adults. Particular attention must be given to these differences in relation to sexual rights. The evolving capacity of young people to make decisions about their health and well-being must be recognized, while also ensuring appropriate protection of their best interests.

"As young people we should endeavour to know and claim our rights and society must realize the importance of recognizing and respecting our rights."

19 yrs, female, Uganda





IPPF/Chloe Hall/Bolivia

What is sexual pleasure?

Sexual pleasure is much more than mere physical stimulation or orgasm. It refers to diverse forms of emotional, psychological and social fulfilment. Sexual pleasure for some people can be sharing an intimate moment lying next to a partner. For others, it can be feeling a sense of acceptance and affirmation of one's sexual identity. Others may also feel sexual pleasure from providing mutual pleasure or stimulation with a partner. Some aspects of sexual pleasure are individual while others are more social. A person's idea of sexual pleasure can change and differ from one situation to the next.

Unfortunately, mainstream media often gives the false impression that the height of sexual pleasure for all people is orgasm. It is important to recognize that the very notion of sexual pleasure is shaped by an endless mix of social, individual, cultural, political and economic influences. Therefore, the meaning of sexual pleasure can vary considerably.

Young people's early encounters of sexual pleasure are very important, since they can shape the way they experience and express their sexuality in the future. Ensuring that all young people understand that they are entitled to sexual pleasure and how to experience different forms of sexual pleasure is important for their health and well-being.



YOUNG PEOPLE'S SEXUAL RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

Sexual rights are human rights and apply to everyone no matter what age. The ten core sexual rights outlined in the Declaration all relate to young people. Each right is equally important, so the order in which they appear does not mean that any is more important than the other.

The right to equality

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Therefore, all young people should be able to exercise and fulfil their rights equally, including sexual rights. No young person should be discriminated against on the basis of sexuality, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, HIV status, marital status, physical or mental disability, socio-economic status, or any other status. Barriers must be removed so that everyone, especially marginalized and under-served groups, can enjoy all human rights. Non-discrimination is at the heart of promoting and protecting human rights.

The right to equality is closely related to the principle of equity. Equality is when everyone receives the exact same treatment, quantity, or quality of something. However, in most societies, certain groups

of people are treated less favourably because of personal characteristics and this creates different levels of advantage and disadvantage. Therefore, offering identical treatment, quantities or qualities to everyone does not translate into equal experiences for all people. Equity is a principle that recognizes the diversities among people and how specific conditions or characteristics (for example sex, gender, age, religion) affect each person's capacity to fulfil his or her rights.

Here's an example: let's say a government is trying to reduce the risks associated with pregnancy or childbirth among young women. In this particular country, young women in rural districts are three times more at risk of death or disability related to pregnancy. Using an equality approach means that the government should invest the same amount of resources in urban and rural settings with the aim of making sure all young women receive the exact same services. In contrast, an equity approach would involve the government investing more resources in rural districts to respond to the higher risks among rural young women compared to those faced by young women in urban settings.

What does this right entitle young people to?

- The ability to enjoy and exercise every human right, including sexual rights.
- Legal protection from any form of discrimination, regardless of sex, gender, sexual orientation, or any other personal characteristic.
- Gender-sensitive and gender equitable laws, policies and services.
- Equal age-of-consent and age-of-marriage for both same-sex and different-sex couples.
- Elimination of laws, policies, practices and attitudes that promote gendered stereotypes and misconceptions that certain sexes, genders or gender expressions are better than others.
- Elimination of laws and policies that punish consensual sexual activity among young people of the same sex, in line with the evolving capacities of young people.
- Elimination of all forms of gender-based discrimination that affect young people.
- Removal of parental involvement or spousal consent laws that prevent young people from seeking sexual and reproductive health services.
- The ability to make decisions about one's sexuality and to have these decisions respected based on each young person's evolving capacities.

The right to participation



Everyone has the right to actively and freely participate in all aspects of human life. All young people are political beings. This means that all young people, including those under the age of majority, married and unmarried young people, young people living with HIV, young people living with disabilities, young migrants and young people of all sexual orientations and gender identities have the right to meaningfully participate in decision-making that affects their lives and to influence changes in their societies.



What does this right entitle young people to?

- Meaningful participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of all sexual health and rights services, programmes and policies.
- Involvement in identifying the best ways for young people to participate in decision-making and governance at a community, national, regional and international level.
- Commitment from adults and communities to build equal partnerships with young people and support the development of young people's capacities to participate meaningfully.
- Structures and processes that allow young people to participate meaningfully.

- Young people's professional development.
- Building youth leadership in sexual and reproductive rights movements globally, regionally and nationally.

What is meaningful youth participation?

Meaningful youth participation refers to a range of processes that empower young people to take an active role in decision-making. It enables young people to take up leadership roles in identifying, addressing and promoting the issues that matter most in their lives. Youth participation is about young people working in equal partnership with adults and supporting each other to achieve mutual benefits.

Meaningful youth participation means that young people are involved in all stages of the design, implementation and evaluation of a programme or activity. It may also mean changing the way things happen in order to make sure that young people can fully participate (for example holding meetings at times that don't conflict with school schedules). On-going capacity building for young people is essential for young people to gain the knowledge and skills necessary for meaningful participation.

3 The right to life and to be free from harm

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and to be free from harm. This includes the right to express one's sexuality and gender free from coercion or violence. No one can be harassed, harmed, punished 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 unmarried women, YPLHIV, young lesbians, gay, bisexual, intersex and transgendered young people must be especially protected from harm and punishment.

All children and young people must have special protection from all forms of exploitation and harm, especially sexual exploitation, child prostitution, trafficking, forced sexual activity, and being used in pornographic performances or materials. Harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation, forced parenthood and child marriage, must be addressed to protect and fulfil all young people's sexual rights.

What does this right entitle young people to?

- Protection from sexual violence, sexual exploitation, honour crimes, sexual abuse and human trafficking.
- Guaranteed protection from sexual harassment or abuse in schools, community and work settings.

- Health care aimed at ensuring young people's well-being and their right to health. No health procedure should be imposed on a young person if it might put their health or life at risk. The refusal to perform health procedures, such as safe abortion, should never place a young person's health or life at risk.
- Removal of laws that require parental, guardian or spousal involvement or consent for young people to access contraceptive services, safe abortion care, HIV and other STI testing or treatment, and any other sexual health service.
- Elimination of harmful traditional practices inflicted on young people without consent, including female genital mutilation and forced or child marriage.
- Elimination of forced maternity and forced medical procedures, including forced sterilization and forced abortion, especially for young people living with HIV and young people living with disabilities.
- Decriminalization of safe abortion services, including post-abortion care, for young people.

"I would like to be guaranteed privacy and confidentiality. Of course, I would also like to be told all the truth."

19 yrs, anonymous, Lesotho

The right to privacy

All young people have the right to privacy and to make autonomous decisions about their sexuality privately. All young people also have the right to decide if, when, how and with whom to share information about their sexual choices without forceful interference from other people.

What does this right entitle young people to?

- Privacy and confidentiality at sexual and reproductive health services. For example, implementing service guidelines to help ensure that information shared with health care providers remains confidential and that the physical layout of clinics encourages confidentiality.
- Privacy and confidentiality of information about young people's sexual behaviour, sexual orientation, HIV status, contraceptive use, history of sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy or abortion.
- Privacy of young people's correspondence, such as letters, diaries and electronic communication.
- Ensuring that young people give their consent before any personal sexual health information is disclosed to parents, families, spouses, partners or communities.
- Autonomy to make decisions about one's sexuality in line with the evolving capacity of young people and without forceful interference from parents, guardians or other adult figures.

4

5 The right to personal autonomy and to be recognized as an individual before the law

All young people have the right to decide freely on all matters related to their sexuality and to fully experience their sexuality and gender in a pleasurable way. Everyone has the right to do so while being recognized as an individual before the law.

Sexual rights can only be limited by laws in democratic societies that must be introduced to ensure the general public's welfare or health, or in order to protect people's rights and freedoms. Any limitation on sexual rights must be non-discriminatory, including on the grounds of age.

What does this right entitle young people to?

- Recognition, protection and fulfilment of young people's legal rights at all times, no matter their age, gender or sexual orientation.
- Freedom to explore one's sexuality in a safe and pleasurable way, irrespective of sexual orientation or gender identity.

- Societies that celebrate all forms of diversity.
- Empowerment to decide freely when, with whom and how to have sex.
- Ensuring that no young person who is in prison, detained, institutionalized, living in conflict settings or in post-conflict situations experiences abuse or harm.
- Elimination of all forced medical procedures, such as sex reassignment surgery, sterilization or hormonal therapy. These procedures should also be eliminated as conditions for the legal recognition of a person's gender identity.
- Identity papers that show a person's self-identified gender or sex.
- Access to information so that all young people are aware of their legal and human rights.

"Each person must be able to enjoy her sexual rights as long as that does not interfere with the sexual rights of others."

20 yrs, female, Mali

The right to think and express oneself freely

6

All young people have the right to express their thoughts, opinions, needs and desires related to sexuality without limitations based on dominant cultural beliefs or political ideologies. All young people have the right to explore their sexualities and should be able to have dreams and fantasies, and voluntarily express their sexuality without fear, shame or guilt, while respecting other people's rights. This should occur in a non-discriminatory environment that respects the evolving capacities of young people.

What does this right entitle young people to?

- Access to participatory comprehensive sexuality education and accurate information about sexuality and sexual health.
- The ability to form, join, lead or participate in groups to express thoughts, ideas, opinions and desires about sexuality, gender and sexual rights, in an environment where all young people's rights and freedoms can be fully realized.
- Meaningful participation in public processes, including policy-making and public decision-making, related to sexuality and sexual rights.
- Ensuring all young people can freely express their identities in whatever way they choose, including through lifestyles, types of clothing, hair styles, and other body characteristics.
- Building the necessary skills to effectively express one's sexuality and gender identity in a positive and healthy way.
- The ability to display affection for one's romantic or sexual partners in public without threat of violence.
- Channels of open and equitable communication with parents, guardians, teachers and other adults about sexuality and gender.



7

The right to health

Every young person has the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and well-being, including sexual and reproductive health and the underlying factors that contribute to health. Young people also have the right to be protected from social, environmental and economic factors that lead to poor health status.

What does this right entitle young people to?

- Access to the most comprehensive package of youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services that respond to the specific realities of diverse groups of young people. All health services and interventions must be especially sensitive to the special needs of marginalized young people and their communities. Service providers' values and beliefs should not interfere with the provision and quality of services.
- Education, knowledge and skills that will enable all young people to insist on safer sex and prevent unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

- Meaningful participation of young people in establishing public health laws, policies, programmes and services in their communities, countries and on an international level.

- Removal of laws that require parental, spousal or guardian consent that discriminate against young people based on age or gender and prevent young people from accessing sexual and reproductive health services.

- Liberalisation of abortion legislation to enable all young women to access safe abortion care.

- Access to a wide range of contraceptives and to the newest advances in reproductive technology.

What are youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services?

Youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services respect the diversities of young people. Youth-friendly services are accessible to young people no matter how old they are and no matter if they are married or not. They are offered at convenient times for young people and are either free of charge or offered at an

affordable cost. They provide accurate information to young people and guarantee confidentiality, privacy and a non-judgemental environment. They also make young people feel welcome, safe and comfortable.

Youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services should include prevention, diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, prevention of cervical cancer, a full range of effective contraception methods, safe abortion care, antenatal care, skilled birth attendance, post-natal care, prevention and treatment of infertility, care for survivors of sexual violence, and services that meet the needs of young men and women.

"My honour, my body, my health are mine."

20 yrs, female, India

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. All young people have the right to access accurate, easy to understand information and education about sexuality, sexual health, reproductive health, sexual rights and reproductive rights in order to make decisions freely and with informed consent.

- Improving sexuality education programmes focused on anatomy, reproduction and bio-medical aspects of sexuality to include a more comprehensive approach to information and education on sexuality.
- Bringing an end to abstinence-only sex education programmes and promoting evidence informed approaches to comprehensive sexuality education.

What does this right entitle young people to?

- Access to accurate, comprehensive sexuality education for all young people, including those who are out of school.
- Access to education aimed at eradicating stigma, discrimination and all forms of violence, promoting the development of young people as informed actors and empowering young people to participate in policy making on sexual health and sexuality education.
- Meaningful involvement of young people in the development, delivery and evaluation of comprehensive sexuality education programmes and sexuality-related policies.
- Development of skills for building strong, equitable and healthy relationships.
- Full access to education for girls and young women.
- Ensuring that all young people are able to complete their studies, especially pregnant female students, students who are young parents and YPLHIV.

What is comprehensive sexuality education and why is it important?

Comprehensive sexuality education is essential for young people to develop healthy and fulfilling lives. It refers to the access to information and education about sexuality and the knowledge and skills necessary to enjoy sexuality in a healthy and positive way. Comprehensive sexuality education must include information on gender, sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV and AIDS, sexual citizenship, pleasure, violence, diversity and relationships. Comprehensive sexuality education offers information on a full range of possibilities for young people to practice safer sex and does not just promote abstinence.

There is a large and growing body of evidence showing that high quality, comprehensive and rights-based sexuality education can help delay when young people have sex for the first time, reduce unprotected sex, decrease the number of sexual partners that young people have, increase contraceptive and condom use, and ultimately help decrease unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections among young people. (For more details, refer to IPPF's 'From evidence to action: Advocating for comprehensive sexuality education'). While these are important outcomes of comprehensive sexuality education, young people's access to accurate information is a fundamental right on its own.



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.

What does this right entitle young people to?

- Elimination of forced marriage and child marriage.
- Legal frameworks that recognize same-sex marriages or unions and allow same-sex couples or individuals to adopt children.
- Ability to choose one's partner(s) regardless of race, caste, class or religion.
- Services and programmes for young people who have been forced into child marriage.
- Access to information, education and services that enable all young people to decide freely if, how, and when to have children, as well as the number of children they want to have.
- Access to all forms of safe, effective, acceptable and affordable methods of contraception.
- Removal of laws that require parental, guardian or spousal consent, which prevent young people from accessing effective contraceptive services.
- Liberalization of abortion laws to enable all young women to access safe abortion care.
- Abolishment of forced sterilization.
- Access to medically assisted fertilization.
- Access to equitable family-related social welfare, such as maternity benefits, child benefits, family allowance benefits and inheritances for all types of families.
- Support for young parents, such as educational programmes that allow them to complete their studies, health services designed specifically for young parents and their children, community programmes for young parents, childcare options, job-seeking services and other forms of support to help young parents build healthy families.
- The choice to marry and not have children.
- State intervention against child marriage and support for young people who were forced into child marriage.

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.

While governments have the main responsibility to ensure rights, civil society also plays an important role. Many leaders, institutions and stakeholders influence people's ability to exercise their rights and are therefore responsible for upholding people's rights. Every young person is entitled to hold their leaders accountable to their commitments and responsibilities to uphold sexual rights.

All young people must have access to legal or judicial procedures in case any of their rights are violated. States must put mechanisms into place that positively protect, respect and fulfil rights, as well as mechanisms that discourage violations from happening in the first place. States should ensure that sexual rights violators are brought to justice.

What does this right entitle young people to?

- State and civil society accountability mechanisms that are accessible and relevant to young people.
- Access to accountability mechanisms during and following armed conflict, especially in relation to sexual and gender-based violence.

- Access to information about how to report and have action taken against sexual rights violations, including access to legal actions to address rights violations (e.g. lawsuits, criminal investigations, petitions to legislators).

- Ensuring that leaders not only protect and uphold the rights of all people, but also challenge processes, systems and practices that give rise to sexual rights violations.

- Resources and support to empower young people to hold their leaders accountable.

**"Change is possible!
There is always
something you can
do, no matter how
large or small."**

18 yrs, male, Kenya

10

The right to
have your
rights upheld

A photograph of two young men looking at a laptop screen outdoors. The man on the left is wearing sunglasses and a plaid shirt, while the man on the right is wearing a brown jacket. They are both smiling and looking intently at the screen. The background shows a clear blue sky and some outdoor structures. The image is overlaid with an orange graphic design consisting of splatters and brushstrokes.

FROM WORDS TO ACTION

Here are some concrete strategies and activities that you can undertake to translate sexual rights into actions for and by young people. These ideas were developed by young people from countries around the world. This list is by no means exhaustive. It is intended to stimulate and inspire ideas for action!

Increase your own knowledge about young people's sexual rights

- Participate in workshops, courses or seminars on sexuality and/or sexual rights.
- Conduct research on young people's sexual rights in your community, country, region or internationally (either through reading existing sources or by undertaking new research using surveys, interviews, focus groups, participant observation or other research approaches).
- Look up more background information about sexual rights, including Sexual rights: An IPPF declaration.
- Participate in conferences and events that address young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Conduct mapping exercises to gain an understanding of different organizations, institutions, government agencies, individuals and other stakeholders that work on young people's sexual rights or human rights more broadly.

Increase your community's knowledge and awareness about young people's sexual rights

- Hold information sessions on young people's sexual rights with Directors, staff, volunteers and the governing body of your organization, institution, association or clinic.
- Organize events to discuss the importance of young people's sexual rights with parents, teachers, service providers, religious leaders and other community leaders.
- Become involved as a peer educator to increase awareness and understanding about sexual rights among your peers.
- Volunteer at help lines or other services that provide information about sexual and reproductive health and rights to young people.
- Work with musicians and artists to produce songs or other performance art that bring awareness about young people's sexual rights.



IPPF/Neil Thomas/ Uganda

- Produce radio or television programmes that share information about sexual and reproductive health and rights in an attractive way to young people.
- Disseminate information about young people's sexual rights in youth centres and other spaces where young people spend a lot of time.
- Translate Exclaim! and other toolkits and publications on young people's sexual rights into your local language.



IPPF/Jenny Matthews/Nicaragua

Improve youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services

- Work with service providers, clinics or hospitals in your area to develop accessible, youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services. Services should be accessible to all young people, which often means designing specific services that are responsive to the realities of certain groups, including: young people living with HIV, young people living with disabilities, young adolescents, unmarried young people and other marginalized groups.
- Undertake needs assessments or studies to investigate the barriers that prevent young people from accessing sexual and reproductive health services and possible strategies to overcome these barriers.
- Look up the laws in your country that relate to young people's sexual and reproductive health services. Work with service providers to gain a better understanding of these laws and the implications they have on young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Work with service providers, clinics or hospitals to develop, implement and evaluate guidelines and protocols on how to deliver youth friendly services that respect, protect and fulfil sexual rights. Special emphasis should be placed on confidentiality and privacy of services, as well as guaranteeing privacy, confidentiality and a non-judgemental and non-discriminatory approach to service delivery.
- Ensure clinics in your area offer a comprehensive package of youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, including: prevention, diagnosis and treatment of STIs, including HIV, prevention of cervical cancer, a full range of effective contraception methods, abortion care, antenatal care, skilled birth attendance, pre- and post- counselling for all services, prevention and treatment of infertility, care for survivors of sexual violence, and targeted services for young men and women. Services should be delivered in an integrated manner, for example counselling young women about STI prevention when they seek contraceptive services.
- Develop and implement rights-based child protection policies that recognize young people's evolving capacities.
- Build service providers' capacity to effectively deliver sexual and reproductive health services to all young people, including young people living with HIV, young people living with disabilities, young transgendered or transsexual people, young gay, lesbian and bisexual people, among other marginalized groups. This involves regular training on medical and technical skills, as well as developing rights-based and youth-friendly approaches to service delivery taking into consideration young people's evolving capacities and diversities.
- Increase service providers' awareness and understanding about young people's sexual pleasure and the importance of pleasure for achieving the highest attainable standard of sexual health. Train service providers on how to discuss sexual pleasure with young people in a confidential and non-judgemental way.
- Expand and improve the availability of voluntary counselling and testing facilities (VCT), including mobile VCT units that can reach out to young people who are not likely to access services in health clinics.
- In settings where abortion is restricted, adopt harm reduction models for pre- and post-abortion care.
- Work with general practitioners and family doctors to develop a strong referral system for young people to access sexual and reproductive health services.
- Allocate funds from your Association's budget to support youth sexual and reproductive health and rights initiatives. Prioritize resource mobilization for youth programmes.
- Partner with organizations that work specifically with under-served young people in order to understand their realities and their sexual and reproductive health needs.



IPPF/Chloe Hall/Indonesia



IPPF/Jane Mingay/Georgia

Improve and expand comprehensive sexuality education

- Work with the Ministry of Education, school boards and educators to help design comprehensive sexuality education programmes.
 - Involve young people in the design, implementation and evaluation of comprehensive sexuality education programmes.
 - Develop language to use in comprehensive sexuality education that is easily understood and acceptable in your region.
 - Create and implement sexuality education programmes, or update existing (peer) education programmes, to ensure that they cover all areas of the IPPF Framework for Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE),
- Sexuality Education and sexuality education guidelines.
- Train and support teachers to raise professional standards in delivering comprehensive sexuality education in schools. Provide training to educational staff on all levels to be sensitive to gender, age, race, (dis)ability status, HIV status.
 - Develop high quality information, education and communication materials with messages that are rights-based, non-judgemental and that address a range of issues (not just reproductive health), making use of innovative media and distribution methods. You can refer to IPPF's 'Dos and don'ts of IEC materials' when developing new materials.
 - Make special efforts to provide information and education through outreach and facility-based programmes to vulnerable and marginalized groups,
- such as young people who are out of school street children, young people living with HIV, among other groups.
- Develop on-line or computerized educational tools to inform young people about sexual and reproductive health and rights.
 - Develop educational materials that are attractive to and relate to diverse groups of young people.
 - Develop monitoring and evaluation techniques to assess comprehensive sexuality education that are not narrowly focused on health outcomes.

National or district level advocacy:

- Survey national or district-level laws, policies and practices and assess if they promote, protect, jeopardize or violate young people's sexual rights. Bring public awareness about the impact of these laws, policies and practices. Organize campaigns to support those that promote and protect young people's sexual rights; and to oppose those that violate or jeopardize rights.
- Find out what international or regional human rights agreements your country has signed and use them to hold leaders in your country accountable to their commitments.
- Share Exclaim! and Sexual rights: An IPPF declaration with your National Youth Council or other national youth organizations.
- In countries with a constitution, check if sexual rights are included. If so, use it to hold your government accountable for ensuring young people's sexual rights are respected, protected and fulfilled.
- Develop and circulate petitions to promote young people's sexual rights. This can also be done at an international level.
- Advocate towards your own Member Association to fully endorse and take ownership over the Declaration, as well as commit to use Exclaim! when implementing the Declaration
- Advocate for comprehensive sexuality education to be a mandatory subject in primary and secondary schools.
- In settings that are strongly resistant to young people's sexual rights, advocacy should initially focus on topics that are suitable within the given context and work towards a progressive realization of rights.
- Advocate for the development and implementation of child protection policies in all settings and institutions that work with young people. Involve young people in the development of child protection policies.
- Engage in public budgeting processes and national development planning to ensure that budget lines are allocated for young people's sexual and reproductive health services, comprehensive sexuality education and youth programmes.
- Gather best practices of effective youth-friendly services, comprehensive sexuality education and other programmes addressing young people's sexual rights. Use them as case studies to advocate for improved youth-friendly services, programmes and policies.
- Write letters or engage with parliamentarians or other elected officials, policy-makers, community leaders, the media, service providers. Find out what they are doing to address or promote young people's sexual rights.
- Develop campaigns to bring awareness about sexual rights and demand action on protecting, respecting and fulfilling young people's sexual rights. For example, use ribbons, bracelets or other accessories of a certain colour to bring people's attention to sexual rights.
- Partner with rights-based organizations, progressive religious leaders and other community groups and leaders to advocate for young people's sexual rights.



IPPF/Peter Cator/India

International or regional level advocacy

- Monitor the work of human rights treaty bodies and engage in advocacy efforts at international or regional decision-making processes, including sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women and sessions of the Commission on Population and Development.
- Monitor and participate in human rights processes, such as the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx)
- Engage in advocacy efforts to increase support and commitment to Millennium Development Goals that address young people's sexual rights, specifically MDG 3: – To promote gender equity and empower women; MDG 5: – To improve maternal health, especially target 5b “achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health” and MDG 6: – To combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
- Advocate towards international donors and funding agencies to support programmes that promote young people's sexual rights.



IPPF/Chloe Hall/Indonesia

Strengthen youth leadership

- Ensure meaningful participation of diverse young people in staff, advisory bodies, governing bodies and other structures that address young people's sexual rights.
- Provide training for young people and adults to develop skills for effective and equal partnerships.
- Provide capacity building opportunities for young people to develop advocacy skills. Young people are the most aware of their needs and realities. It is important that young people are fully equipped with the skills necessary to have their voices heard in decision-making processes. (For more details, refer to IPPF's Young Advocates Toolkit).



GLOSSARY

Bisexual: an individual who is sexually and romantically attracted to both men and women. A bisexual person may feel equally attracted to both men and women or may feel more attraction to one sex, and this may change over time. Being bisexual does not mean that a person desires more than one sexual partner at a time.

Discrimination: unfair, unequal or inequitable treatment of people based on a person's identity rather than on merit.

Equality: providing identical types, qualities or quantities of services or goods to everyone, irrespective of differences between or among groups of people.

Equity: a notion of social justice that involves providing differentiated treatment, or quality and quantity of services or goods based on specific conditions or characteristics with the aim of ensuring everyone is equally able to exercise and fulfil their rights.

Evolving capacity: a concept recognizing that young people, as individuals, gradually develop the ability to take full responsibility for their actions and decisions. This happens at a different pace for different young people. In practice, this means looking at the capacity of young people rather than their age when trying to strike the balance between protection and autonomy. Therefore, it is necessary to approach young people's sexual rights in a progressive way, respecting their diversities and ensuring they are both empowered to exercise rights on their own behalf, while also being protected and guided with their best interests in mind.

Gay: a person who is romantically, physically or sexually attracted to people of their same gender. The term may also refer to people who identify as being a member of a gay community. Sometimes, the term is only used to refer to gay men, but other times it can be used to refer to both gay men and women.

Gender: the socially constructed roles, identities, attitudes, personality traits and behaviours that societies expect of males and females. It is a dynamic concept that changes over time and can be very different in different places and communities across the world. Gender is not same as sex, which refers to biological differences.

Gender identity: the way a person self-identifies as male, female, both or neither. It is different from a person's biological sex.

Homosexual: a formal or clinical term that refers to someone who has sex with person(s) of the same sex. The term most often refers specifically to homosexual men, but sometimes it can also refer to lesbians or bisexual individuals.

Human rights: fundamental protections and entitlements that apply to all human beings.

Lesbian: a woman who is romantically, physically or sexually attracted only to other women, and self-identifies as being lesbian.

Reproductive rights: human rights that relate to a person's fertility, reproduction and reproductive health.

Sex: the biological characteristics that define humans as female or male.

Sexual citizenship: a concept that looks at the private and public spheres of sexuality and highlights the social, cultural and political factors that influence sexual expression. Good sexual citizenship fosters societies where people can freely express and experience their sexuality, while taking responsibility for their own sexual well-being and the sexual well-being of others. Participation and accountability are essential elements of sexual citizenship.

Sexual identity: how people identify themselves in terms of various aspects of their sexuality, including their sexual attractions, desires and expressions. Sexual identity is often closely linked to sexual orientation, but also includes how social and cultural factors influence the way a person chooses to self-identify.

Sexual orientation: a person's main preferences and sexual attraction towards other people, based on their sex or gender. This can include being straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual.

Sexual rights: human rights that relate to a person's sexuality, sexual health, sexual orientation and sexual identity.

Sexuality: is how people experience and express themselves as sexual beings. It includes sexual behaviour, gender identities, gender roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. However, these elements are not always experienced or expressed. Many biological, social, cultural, economic, environmental and contextual factors contribute to people's sexual behaviours, relationships, feelings, identity, desires, and attitudes. Therefore, each person experiences and expresses his or her sexuality in a unique way.

Stereotype: a simplified and generalized perception of a concept without regard for actual differences and diversities that exist in the concept.

Stigma: assigning shame, disgrace or disapproval of others and/or the process of shunning, rejecting or marginalizing a group or class of people based on characteristics or actions that are stereotyped by some as undesirable or unacceptable. Stigma often leads to discrimination.

Transgender: a gender identity of someone who self identifies as being a gender that is different from the gender assigned to him or her by society. The term also refers to people who appear or behave in a way that does not conform to dominant cultural norms.

ANNEX 1: How can I use human rights agreements to promote sexual rights?

Library Image

Which international human rights agreements relate to sexual rights?

Sexual rights are alluded to in a number of international conventions, treaties and agreements. For example: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the Beijing Platform for Action from the 4th World Conference on Women, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons living with Disabilities.

International treaties and conventions such as the CRC and CEDAW are legally binding human rights instruments. This makes them powerful advocacy tools to hold leaders accountable. Governments often fall short of fulfilling the commitments outlined in international treaties and agreements; however by signing or ratifying an agreement, they are legally bound to uphold these commitments. Therefore, advocates can use international agreements to hold governments to account.

How do human rights agreements influence young people's sexual health and rights?

For every UN treaty, there is a committee of human rights experts that monitors its implementation. These committees regularly assess countries' progress in implementing a particular convention or treaty. If countries fail to follow through with their commitments, the monitoring group can make recommendations, write statements and hold governments accountable.

Other international agreements, such as the ICPD Programme of Action and the Beijing Platform for Action, are also influential policy documents. Even though they are not legally binding, governments that sign these agreements can still be held accountable to their commitments. These agreements also set international standards that can be used to place pressure on leaders to respect human rights, including sexual rights.

Sometimes international and regional human rights agreements can seem very abstract, but they actually have a lot of influence at a country-level. By signing or ratifying a treaty, governments are duty-bound to take all the necessary steps to fully implement it. This can include changing, strengthening or upholding laws, policies and programmes that directly affect young people's lives. For example, the types of health services and education made publically available to young people are directly influenced by international or regional agreements.

Youth advocates can use treaties and agreements to hold governments accountable to their commitments and obligations to young people. Gaining an awareness of treaties and agreements can also help young people and youth advocates engage more meaningfully in influencing future agreements or treaties that have an impact on young people.

RELEVANT HUMAN RIGHTS AGREEMENTS FOR SEXUAL RIGHTS

Right	International Agreements	Regional Agreements
1. Right to Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR, articles 1 and 2 • CESC, article 3 • CERD, article 2 • CEDAW, articles 2 and 5 • CRC, article 2 • Key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD, article 49 • Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, article 4(b), (e) and 5.2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Convention on Human Rights, article 1.1 • Protocol of San Salvador (Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights), article 3 • African [Banjul] Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, articles 2, 18.3, 28 • African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, articles 3, 21.1(b), & 26 • Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, articles 2, 22(b), 23(b) • European Convention on Human Rights, article 14
2. Right to Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR, article 27 • CEDAW, articles 7, 8 and 14.2(a) • CRC, article 12 • ICPD Programme of Action, para 6.15 • Key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD, para 21(b) and 73(c) • Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, article 29 and 30 	
3. Right to life and to be free from harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR, articles 3 and 5 • ICCPR, articles 6, 7, 8 and 9 • ICESCR, article 12 • CERD, article 5(b) • CEDAW, articles 2(f), 5 and 6 • CRC, articles 6, 19, 24.3 and 34 • Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, para 96 • Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, article 30 • Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, article 15 and 16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Convention on Human Rights, articles 4, 5, 6.1 • African [Banjul] Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, article 4 • European Convention on Human Rights, article 2 • Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, article 5 • African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, article 21
4. Right to Privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR, article 12 • ICCPR, article 17 • CRC, article 16 • ICPD Programme of Action, para 7.45 • Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, para 267 • Key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD, article, para 73(a) • Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, article 22 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Convention on Human Rights, article 11 • African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, article 10 • European Convention on Human Rights, article 8
5. Right to personal autonomy and to be recognized as an individual before the law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR, article 7 • ICCPR, article 16 • Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, article 5.1, 12 	
6. Right to think and express yourself freely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR articles 18 and 19 • ICCPR, articles 18, 19 and 22 • CRC, articles 13 and 14 	

Right	International Agreements	Regional Agreements
<p>7. Right to Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR, article 25 • ICESCR, article 12 • CERD, article 5(d) • CEDAW, articles 10(h), 12 and 14.2 • CRC, article 24 • ICPD Programme of Action, para 7.46 and 7.47 • Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, para 96 and 108(f) • Key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD, para 21(b), 52 (c), 62(d), 67, 73 and 74 • Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, article 30 • Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, article 25 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol of San Salvador, article 10 • African [Banjul] Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, article 16 • African Children's Charter, article 14 • Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, article 14 • Maputo Plan of Action on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights • European Social Charter (Revised), article 11
<p>8. Right to know and learn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR, article 26 • ICESCR, article 13 • CRC, articles 23, 24.2(e), 24.2(f), 28 and 29 • CEDAW, article 10 (4) • Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, para 107 (e) and (g), 108(k), 267 and 281(e) • Key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD, para 15 (c), 21(b), 34, 35(b) and 73(c) • Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, article 26 and 30 • Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, article 24.2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Convention on Human Rights, article 13 • African [Banjul] Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, article 17.1 • African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, article 11 • Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, article 12 • European Convention on Human Rights, article 10 • European Social Charter Article 17
<p>leaders uphold your right</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR, article 16 • ICCPR, article 23 • ICESCR, article 10.1 • CEDAW, article 16 • CERD, article 5(d) • ICPD Programme of Action, para 7.47 • Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, para 96 • Key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD, article 42 • Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, article 23.1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, article 6, 7 and 14 • American Convention on Human Rights, article 17.2-17.4 • African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, article 21.2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR, article 8 • ICCPR, article 2.3 • Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, article 13 	

- CEDAW:** Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
- CERD:** Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination
- CRC:** Convention on the Rights of the Child
- ICESCR:** International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- ICCPR:** International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- ICPD:** International Conference on Population and Development
- UDHR:** Universal Declaration of Human Rights

ANNEX 2: EXCLAIM! Poster

Library Image



What are sexual rights?

Sexual rights are human rights that relate to people's sexuality. They include widely recognized rights, like the right to health, the right to privacy and the right to education. They are included in a range of international human rights treaties and agreements, including UN conventions. This means governments must uphold all people's sexual rights, including young people.

So, what does this mean for me?

Every young person is entitled to sexual rights. However, it's important to recognize that our sexual rights are different from those of adults. Young people are constantly developing new skills and abilities as we grow and we become more able to make decisions on our own. At the same time, we may not always have a lot of experience or information, especially with issues of sexuality. So, we may still need some guidance and protection. Ensuring sexual rights for young people means recognizing

our progressive ability to exercise rights on our own behalf, while also guaranteeing guidance and protection when we need it, with our best interests in mind.

A few things to remember...

When we talk about sexual rights, there are a few things that we always need to remember:

- Sexuality and sexual pleasure are important parts of being human for everyone - no matter what age, no matter if you're married or not and no matter if you want to have children or not.
- Young people's capacities to make decisions for themselves evolve over time and must be recognized, especially when it comes to sexuality.
- No one should be discriminated against for any reason at any time.
- Everyone should be free to be themselves and be protected from harm.

- Governments and leaders have a duty to respect, protect and fulfil all sexual rights for everyone.

IPPF's commitment to sexual rights

IPPF is strongly committed to young people's sexual rights. In 2008, IPPF published a declaration on sexual rights to reaffirm the importance of sexual rights for all and to promote an understanding of sexuality grounded in human rights, dignity and respect for all people, including young people. IPPF strives to respect, protect and fulfil young people's sexual rights in all areas of its work.



From choice, a world of possibilities



Let's face it – young people are sexual. We have sexual needs, desires, fantasies and dreams. But we also have a lot of questions and uncertainty. It's important for all young people around the world to be able to explore, experience and express our sexualities in healthy, positive, pleasurable and safe ways. This can only happen when our sexual rights are guaranteed.

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EXCLAIM!

YOUNG PEOPLE'S GUIDE TO SEXUAL RIGHTS: AN IPPF DECLARATION

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IPPF or any of our national affiliates by
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visit our website at www.ippf.org or
contact IPPF Central Office in London, UK.

Young people are sexual beings. All young people should be able to explore, experience and express their sexualities in healthy, positive, pleasurable and safe ways. This can only happen when young people's sexual rights are understood, recognized and guaranteed.

Exclaim! seeks to increase awareness and understanding about young people's sexual rights. This youth guide explores what sexual rights are and how they relate to young people.

It also examines strategies to translate sexual rights into actions for and by young people around the world.