

Sexuality and Social Justice: A Toolkit

Strategies for making sexuality rights real



At the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) we are deeply concerned by the number of people who are excluded from the process and benefits of development because of their sexuality. Policies designed to lift people out of poverty, to provide employment and access to crucial services, all too often exclude those who do not conform to 'normal' sexual or gender identities. In many countries, this exclusion is also enforced through law.

Engaging with political processes and legal systems to bring about social change brings many challenges, not least the threat of physical danger. But researchers from IDS have been working closely with partners and local communities that are most affected, to provide evidence-based, practical campaign options to help activists and policy makers overcome these challenges, strengthen sexuality rights and challenge social injustice. They have now released a unique, free interactive [Toolkit for Sexuality and Social Justice](#) that shares learning on strategies to strengthen rights and improve the lives of those marginalised because of their sexuality.



What's the problem?

Evidence is emerging to show that sexuality - and efforts to define and control it - has a profound effect on people's everyday lives. Having a sexual orientation or gender identity that does not conform to the majority norm can affect your ability to earn a livelihood and gain employment, access education and healthcare, form the family and personal relationships that you desire, live free from violence and harassment, and seek justice through the law.

Yet globally, funders and policymakers have been slow to recognise that not all recipients of policies and programmes are heterosexual couples living in nuclear families. They have been reluctant to acknowledge the diversity that exists in relation to gender and sexuality; how people understand themselves and their desires; and how this alters across contexts, geographic locations and throughout peoples' lifetimes. Sometimes the silence around sexuality occurs because people consider sexuality to be a private matter and thus outside the scope of public policy. Others wrongly believe that sexuality - particularly the pursuit of pleasure - is an issue of little importance to poor people who are struggling to survive.



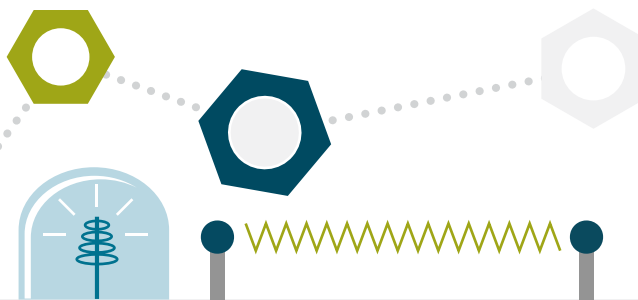
Access 'Sexuality and Social Justice: A Toolkit' at www.spl.ids.ac.uk/toolkit



What should be done?

Increasing knowledge about the links between sexuality and poverty and how they are implicated in policy making and the law, is vital. This includes documenting successful and unsuccessful efforts to improve decision-making in this area and the strategies which are currently being used to increase or shut down the possibility of sexual rights. We need to know more about what works and under what circumstances.

With this aim, this toolkit provides guidance, supported by up-to-date **case studies**, on the ways in which activists, lawyers, donor agencies and NGOs, amongst others, can use policy and the law to challenge exclusion and marginalisation related to sexuality. It breaks down legal jargon and outlines the key aspects of policy-making and legal processes in an accessible format. It also provides insights into the challenges of working on the law in relation to sexuality, such as the dangers of visibility in sexuality-activism and the risk of more punitive laws or violent backlash when sexuality-related issues are raised.

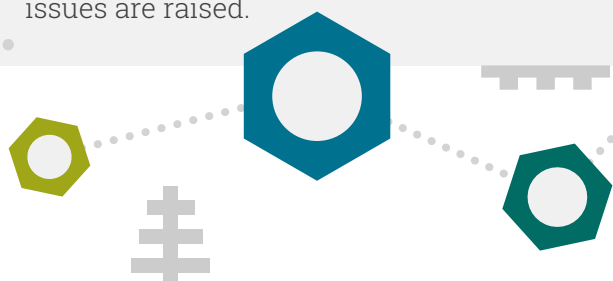


How can I use the toolkit in my work?

The toolkit documents the learning from the IDS Sexuality, Poverty and Law Programme as it unfolds. Throughout the toolkit you will find links to case studies, examples of different ways you can approach or challenge policy and the law, and 'inside stories' from our partner organisations. Alongside this material are links to supporting reading, practical guides, articles, blog posts, video clips and images from a range of sources.

The toolkit is interactive and we welcome suggestions for examples, information and resources to include on the site. These will be updated on a regular basis to provide a growing resource centre for activists and practitioners.

We also encourage you to share the toolkit with others who may benefit from it. This may be done in a number of ways, for example, on your organisational website or via social media.



Where can I get further information?

Access 'Sexuality and Social Justice: A Toolkit' at www.spl.ids.ac.uk/toolkit

To send in suggestions for content or to comment on the site please email spltoolkit@ids.ac.uk

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