

THE COMPASS

RFSU's Fundamental Values

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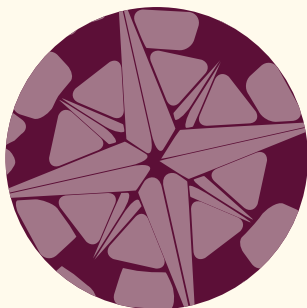
INTRODUCTION

The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU) is a non-profit organisation working on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

This is the Compass, which describes the fundamental values that are the basis for RFSU's work. It is called RFSU's Programme of Ideas (Idéprogrammet). It guides RFSU as it takes a stand on complex societal issues that cannot be resolved with simplistic answers. To navigate a multifaceted reality, we need to understand the various structures that permeate our societies, how they interact and reinforce one another.

Through knowledge, mobilisation and policy, RFSU contributes to a world in which everyone is free to enjoy, and make decisions about their own bodies and sexuality. RFSU is an organisation that works in a feminist, anti-racist and norm-critical way to make this a reality for everyone, regardless of their power

or resources. As a vibrant organisation, we need to constantly nuance, engage and listen to disparate perspectives to move forward.



RFSU has three governing documents that are adopted by the Congress:

- 1 RFSU's Statues describe how the organisation is structured and how decisions are made.**
- 2 The Compass describes RFSU's fundamental values.**
- 3 The Sextant is our strategic framework, which describes RFSU's vision, strategies and goals.**

FREEDOM TO DECIDE ABOUT ONE'S OWN BODY, IDENTITY AND SEXUALITY

Everything RFSU does is based on the conviction that everyone is of equal value.

Our vision is derived from this conviction: A world in which everyone is free to make decisions about their own bodies and sexuality. This includes the right of everyone to identify themselves and to choose their own relationships. These rights are absolute and should never interfere with anyone else's self-determination or freedom of action.

RFSU believes that everyone has the right to identify themselves, including their own gender. There are many genders, which are expressed and perceived in various ways. The right to be oneself applies regardless of gender, gender identity, gender expression or prevailing norms.

Everyone is also entitled to decide whether to have sexual relations, how, when and with whom. All relationships and sexuality shared with others should be voluntary and reciprocal.



Everyone has the right to make decisions regarding their own reproduction, i.e. whether or not to have children, when and how many. Everyone should also be able to take care of their children and raise them in a safe environment. Somebody's desire to have children should not interfere with another person's bodily autonomy.

People have different goals in their lives regarding relationships or family. Societal norms and legislation must provide everyone the freedom they need to form their own relationships and families. RFSU wants everyone to be able to establish the relationships and families they want.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE FOR ALL



The realisation of sexual and reproductive rights for everyone requires sexual and reproductive justice. Restrictive norms, lack of resources, hierarchies and discrimination are all barriers between formal rights and the people who benefit from them. Sexual and reproductive justice means working actively and consciously to overcome these obstacles.

Power structures permeate our societies and interact with and reinforce one another. They affect people's freedom to make decisions about their own bodies, their sexuality and

their relationships. It is, therefore, essential to have an understanding of power that takes account of the multiple dimensions of power simultaneously. RFSU wishes to draw attention to how power is distributed, both among and within groups in society.

RFSU believes that decision-makers and those in power should take responsibility for ensuring that people's sexual and reproductive rights are protected, respected and realised. Welfare should be organised in line with freedom of choice and people's needs.

Those of us who face discrimination and restrictive norms should be involved in determining what changes are necessary. This is true both in RFSU and in wider society generally.

DESIRE IS AT THE HEART OF THE MATTER



RFSU's work is grounded on the realisation that sexuality is a key part of what it means to be human.

RFSU believes that the ability to experience pleasure and enjoyment in relation to oneself and others is key. RFSU works to ensure that everyone has the freedom to feel and express desire.

RFSU believes that everyone has a right to explore and enjoy their sexuality on their own

terms and throughout their lives. People are aroused by different things. The fact that each person experiences desire differently is a natural and good thing as long as it is voluntary and reciprocal.

RFSU seeks to affirm these progressive and positive aspects, not only of sexuality and relationships but also of knowledge and engagement. Desire can be found in interpersonal relationships, in activities we undertake and in various forms of engagement and participation.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

RFSU believes that knowledge is essential in order for everyone to be free to make decisions about their own bodies and sexuality. Knowledge is diverse and can consist of research (evidence and other scientific proof), as well as proven experience and practical skills.

For RFSU, learning and the creation of new knowledge is a collective endeavour characterised by participation, dialogue and humility in the face of the fact that we will never truly be fully informed. RFSU wants everyone to have equal opportunities to participate in these learning processes.

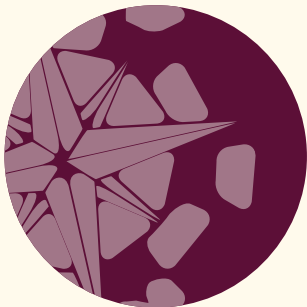
RFSU recognises and responds to the fact that knowledge is not created in a vacuum but within the framework of prevailing social norms. This means that everyone's knowledge is valued differently and that we need to adopt a critical approach to knowledge through the prism of power.



Having knowledge about one's own body, sexuality and relationships, about one's rights and about how norms affect sexuality provides more opportunities to make independent decisions on important issues. Knowledge empowers people to take control of their lives and increase their autonomy. RFSU, therefore, believes that everyone has the right to high-quality sex education.

Knowledge is also fundamental to bringing about social change and is a prerequisite for people to campaign with others for their rights.

DEMOCRACY AND FREE CIVIL SOCIETY



A free and democratic society is essential for people to fulfil their sexual and reproductive rights. Fundamental freedoms such as freedom of association, freedom of assembly and freedom of expression, including freedom of the press, are indispensable in a functioning democracy. A democratic society is also characterised by transparency and functioning institutions, such as an independent judiciary.

RFSU is committed to strengthening democratic space and free civil society. A vibrant and free civil society is an essential element

of democracy because social change begins when people come together and organise for their rights. The experience and knowledge accumulated in civil society also play an important role in shaping sustainable societies.

RFSU stands side by side with activists around the world in promoting sexual and reproductive rights and defending democracy and free civil society. RFSU is part of a global movement in which we cooperate with, learn from and strengthen each other.

Working for sexual and reproductive rights is based on people being able to organise themselves freely. This should be done in solidarity and collaboration with the people affected. When RFSU broadens participation, we learn and become more relevant.

OUR VISION CALLS FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

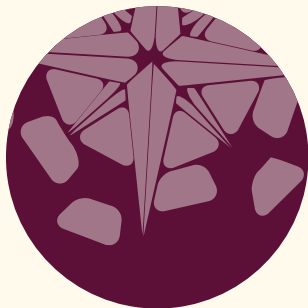
In a sustainable society, people's needs are met without jeopardising the lives of future generations. For RFSU, it is crucial to weave sexual and reproductive health and rights into the broad tapestry of sustainable development.

Only a sustainable and peaceful society can provide the conditions necessary for everyone to have full autonomy over their own body and sexuality. RFSU believes that this relationship also applies in reverse: a society that protects sexual and reproductive rights is also more sustainable.

For everyone to be free to make their own decisions about their body and sexuality, economic inequality needs to be highlighted when identifying problems and solutions. RFSU believes that poverty can only be eradicated when everyone has power over their own bodies and sexuality.

Natural and environmental crises are urgent and collective concerns that threaten the most basic living conditions of everyone on the planet. It goes without saying, therefore, that these crises are about human rights and that, as such, they involve sexual and reproductive rights.

No sustainability issue can be solved without challenging the power structures and inequalities that permeate our societies. We need to mobilise resistance to the crises that are undermining our world. Equal and equitable societies are essential if we are to succeed in this endeavour.



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