



**inclusive
futures**

FACT SHEET



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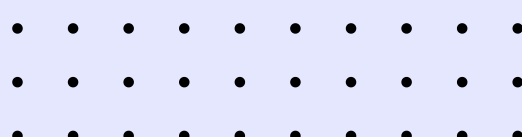


INCLUSIVE FUTURES – ADVANCING GENDER & SEXUAL JUSTICE

FACT SHEET

This factsheet is part of the Inclusive Futures campaign, which tackles anti-gender and anti-rights discourses and misinformation about LGBTQI+ people through local, regional, and global research. The campaign counters harmful discourses and engages a decolonial feminist and sex positive approach. Inclusive Futures includes videos featuring intergenerational conversations with LGBTQI+ individuals living in Trinidad and Tobago, an animated gender-affirming journey, interviews with professionals, a myth-busting talk, and more. The videos are available on CAISO’s YouTube channel and across social media. Inclusive Futures also includes a social media campaign with informative posts, aligning with the videos, available on Instagram at @caisott and Facebook @caiso.

This Inclusive Futures Factsheet provides information about the anti-rights and anti-gender movements and how they affect the Caribbean region. It also provides insights into barriers and discrimination faced by LGBTQI+ communities, affirmation of trans identities, and shares the importance of SRHR (Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights).





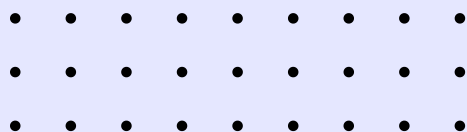
The Anti-Rights and Anti-Gender Movements

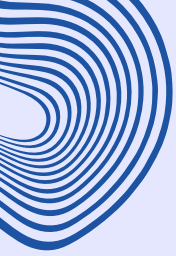
The anti-rights movement uses social, political, and legal pressures to roll back human rights. It often does this through false and misleading information about human rights work and movements. A significant part of anti-rights misinformation is happening through the anti-gender movement.¹

The anti-gender movement refers to the global organised movement of institutions actively working to oppose gender equity, LGBTQI+ rights, and sexual and reproductive rights and justice.

These movements influence public discourse and legislation in ways that restrict human rights, and they spread fear-based narratives. They are driven by political, conservative, and religious bodies that frame understandings of gender as a threat to social good.

However, gender and sexual rights and justice, which include Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) have a studied and documented history of increased social and individual good.²



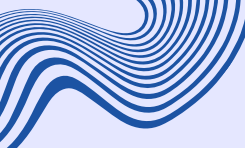


Sexual Rights and Justice

Sexual Rights are a fundamental part of human rights. So what exactly are sexual rights and justice?

HUMAN RIGHTS: “THEY RANGE FROM THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL - THE RIGHT TO LIFE - TO THOSE THAT MAKE LIFE WORTH LIVING, SUCH AS THE RIGHTS TO FOOD, EDUCATION, WORK, HEALTH, AND LIBERTY.” ³

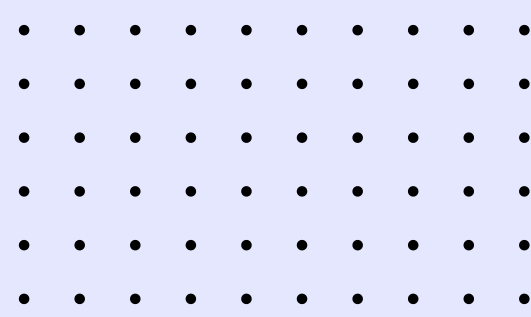
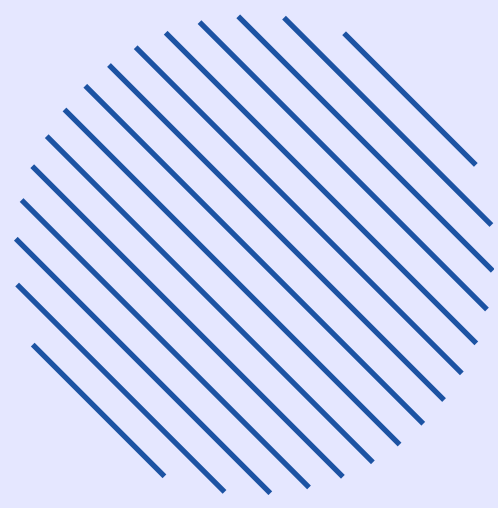
“SEXUAL RIGHTS REST ON THE RECOGNITION THAT ALL INDIVIDUALS HAVE THE RIGHT — FREE OF COERCION, VIOLENCE, AND DISCRIMINATION OF ANY KIND — TO THE HIGHEST ATTAINABLE STANDARD OF SEXUAL HEALTH; TO PURSUE A SATISFYING, SAFE, AND PLEASURABLE SEXUAL LIFE; TO HAVE CONTROL OVER AND DECIDE FREELY, AND WITH DUE REGARD FOR THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS, ON MATTERS RELATED TO THEIR SEXUALITY, REPRODUCTION, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, BODILY INTEGRITY, CHOICE OF PARTNER, AND GENDER IDENTITY; AND TO THE SERVICES, EDUCATION, AND INFORMATION, INCLUDING COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION, NECESSARY TO DO SO.”⁴



Sexual rights and justice involve the freedom to control our own bodies and sexuality without discrimination, coercion, or violence. To achieve these rights, it is essential that sexual health, education, pleasure, and consent are prioritised in non-discriminatory and inclusive ways.


For women and girls, denying sexual rights and control over their own bodies and sexuality increases gender-based violence and places severe limitations on mobility, education, employment, and participation in public life. Similarly, lesbians, gay men, bisexual, queer, transgender, intersex, gender non-conforming people and sex workers (and others who disrupt sexual and gender norms) face greater risks of violence, stigma, and discrimination, which deny their sexual rights and justice because of sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Bodily autonomy, protection against sexual violence, gender equity, ability to access safe healthcare, reproductive rights, and comprehensive sex education are vital components of sexual rights. Access to comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health and rights are crucial for women and marginalised groups. **Everyone has the right to make informed choices about their bodies.**



How Are We Affected in the Caribbean by the Anti-Rights and Anti-Gender Movements?

- Anti-rights and anti-gender movements fuel conservative voices and religious perspectives that emerge from colonial era gender and sexual norms and laws and oppose movements to decriminalise them. ⁵
- LGBTQI discrimination and stigma are exacerbated by U.S.-based Catholic and Evangelical organisations, which have poured resources into the Caribbean with the goal of promoting anti-LGBTQ+ ideologies and preventing gender equity advancements. ¹
- Utilising financial resources, cultural clout, and fear mongering, the movements maintain social and political power, thereby obstructing developments that would challenge their ideological stance. ¹

\$173 
MILLION

dollars (US) were invested over a 5-year period in anti-gender rights movements in Latin America and the Caribbean. ¹

 **3X**

the amount (55 million USD) invested in Gender Rights movements. ¹

- Global North conservative organisations, such as Agenda Europe and the World Congress of Families, have funded anti-gender movements and laws internationally and held conferences in the Caribbean, namely in Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados. Their agendas include opposition to divorce, birth control, same-sex marriage, pornography, and abortion. ^{6,7,8,9}



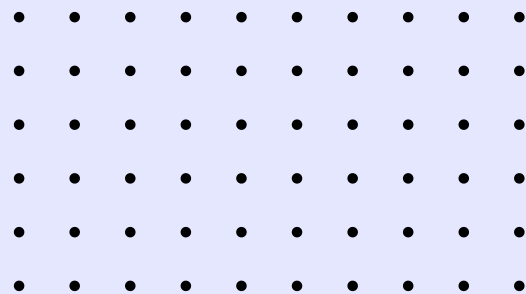
- The founder of World Congress of Families is directly tied to ideologies, organisations, and individuals who are concerned that feminism has led to a decrease in the number of white Christian babies. They have funded the spread of junk science around abortion despite reviewed scientific evidence that has debunked these myths.^{6,7,8}
- In the Caribbean, the anti-gender movement has blocked provision of comprehensive sexuality education, intensified violence against LGBTQI+ individuals and limited access to sexual and reproductive healthcare.



And How Do We Respond?

Regional and local women's, human rights, and LGBTQI+ advocacy groups are actively battling this movement by seeking to expand legal safeguards against discrimination and violence.

Community organisations and activists play a critical role in defending the rights of marginalised communities and amplifying the voices of people in the region. We do this in many ways – from working with communities and providing services, to challenging the misinformation and misconceptions being pushed through the anti-gender and anti-rights movements.



Confronting Misinformation

Data About LGBTQI+ Discrimination

“There is no data about discrimination against LGBTQI+ people. There is no proof that they are experiencing harm.”

“They just talking. Nobody doh do dem nuttin!”

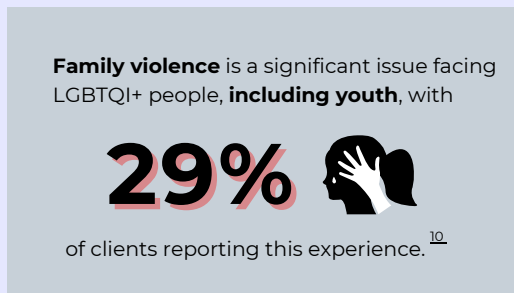
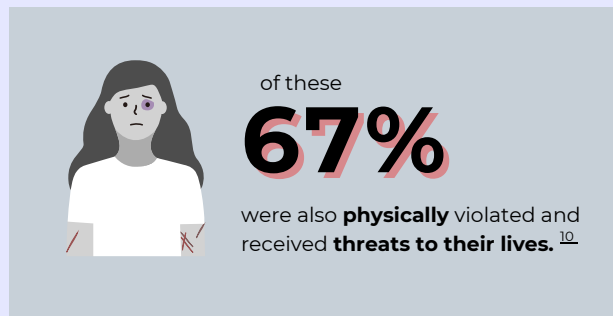
LGBTQI+ people face many forms of violence and discrimination. Discrimination occurs when attempting to access services. Clients have indicated barriers and discrimination when attempting to access several services including social and police services, healthcare, and housing. Currently, LGBTQ+ individuals face discrimination without many important forms of legal recourse, leading to wrongful terminations, denial of services, and exclusion from educational opportunities.

CAISO’s Wholeness and Justice Programme has been collecting data about discrimination and violations since 2020 through service provision and policy recommendations based on the experiences of LGBTQI+ community members.

Wholeness & Justice Insights Report 2023 indicated that “in Trinidad and Tobago, people are often discriminated against based on their (real or perceived) sexual orientation and gender identity and/or expression.”¹⁰

Discrimination makes sections of the community more vulnerable to physical assault because the pervading negative attitudes towards LGBTQI+ people, the absence of legal recognition or protective laws, and the dearth of community-sensitive systems for care and redress, foster an environment where perpetrators believe their actions will be met with impunity.

Key numbers from the report indicate that:



Further, the Report discusses the following overall key insights produced from a third year of service provision to Trinidad and Tobago's LGBTQI+ communities:

- The Equal Opportunity Act, a law meant to provide legal avenues for justice and equality, limits avenues of redress for LGBTQI+ people who experience discrimination, by excluding sexual orientation as a protected status.
- Inaccessible and inadequate social service institutions continue to disenfranchise a wide class of people, particularly LGBTQI+ working-class people, people with disabilities, and migrants.
- Police violence significantly hinders access to justice. Clients expressed anxiety and fear around engaging law enforcement, which results in LGBTQI+ people not reporting violations. Clients reported experiences of ridicule, intimidation, and verbal abuse, and situations where police officers blatantly refused to investigate or get involved in matters involving LGBTQI+ people.
- The “anti-rights movement” promotes violence that increases the vulnerability of LGBTQI+ people. In 2023 during notable moments of backlash, LGBTQI+ people reported receiving threats to their life and property and experiencing increased public harassment.¹⁰

Transgender Identities

**"There are only two genders.
Transgender Identities Are Not Real."**

**"Nah! Allyuh just making up tings now, so if
das d case I identify as a helicopter!"**

Caribbean Gender Diversity is not new

Gender diversity has been part of human history for centuries, including in Caribbean cultures. Being transgender is not a trend but a legitimate identity and experience. While the words used to describe gender identity may have had different names, there is a long history of diverse gender expressions. It is important to remember that contexts and language are always evolving!

People of trans experience have always existed and will continue to exist. Researchers in Caribbean sexuality studies have long documented Caribbean gender and sexual diversity. They have noted the ways that gender identity and expression in the Caribbean are situated in our cultural contexts and reflect the complexities of our lived experiences.^{11,12}

Explore Caribbean Sexuality Studies Research & Archives:

Caribbean IRN's collection
"Sexualities and Social Justice":

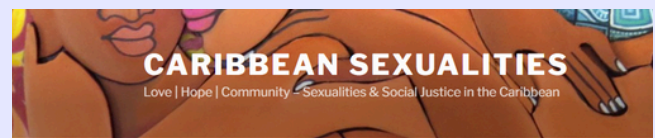
✦ caribbeansexualities.org

Caribbean IRN's Digital Library
of the Caribbean Archives

✦ dloc.com/collections/icirn

Queer Archives
of Trinidad & Tobago:

✦ queerarchivestt.org



Identity is Important

Identity is an important part of who we are and how we understand ourselves. The formation of our identity is usually a combination of factors such as genetics, socialisation, learning and personal choice and our identities may evolve. Gender is one part of our identity. Language to describe gender identity has changed and shifted over time. But here are key terms to help us understand:

Gender Identity refers to a person's internal and deeply felt sense of being a woman or man or neither. Gender identity is distinct from sexual orientation. Gender identity can be affected by a combination of personal, environmental and cultural factors. ¹³

Transgender is an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity and/or expression does not match the cultural expectations of the sex they were assigned at birth. People of transgender experience may or may not make this experience part of how they self-identify publicly; they may simply identify as a man or woman. Some people may choose to identify as neither i.e. non-binary or gender non-conforming. ¹³

Gender affirming care refers to treatments, practices, procedures or therapies that people get to bring their bodies into more comfortable alignment with their gender identity. This care is an important part of bodily autonomy and integrity.

“Gender affirming care (GAC) refers to any combination of social, legal, and medical measures that help people feel happy, healthy, and safe in their gender. GAC takes a holistic approach to making sure a person's mental and physical needs surrounding their gender identity and expression are met.” ¹⁴

Many people access gender affirming care. However, this process is usually more difficult or potentially illegal when trans and gender-nonconforming people attempt to access it. This is of particular concern as gender affirming care has been found to be lifesaving.

The anti-rights and anti-gender movements disregard and violate the bodily autonomy and integrity of our diverse population. Caring for our diversity requires that sexual rights and health be a priority. Attacks on gender rights and sexual rights are rooted in misinformation about sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) lead to 'promiscuity' and danger

SRHR is about informed choice, access, and rights: it is fundamentally about empowering individuals to make informed choices about their bodies, health, pleasure, and relationships. The goal of SRHR is "the achievement of complete physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing regarding sexuality and reproduction."¹⁵

This means providing access to comprehensive, accurate, and age-appropriate information about sexuality, contraception, and STDs and STIs, as well as ensuring access to quality, expansive healthcare services. It's about equipping individuals with the knowledge and agency to make decisions that align with their own values, circumstances, and safety.¹⁶

"Dey want to encourage people to sex dong and mash up d place."

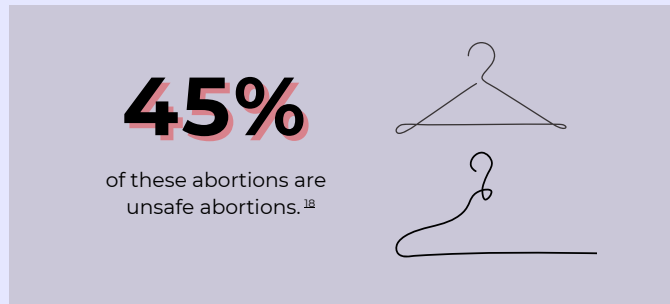
SRHR also includes addressing the systemic factors that influence sexual and reproductive health. These include tackling gender inequality, power imbalances within relationships, harmful social norms, homophobia, and social determinants of health-like poverty.¹⁷

By addressing these root causes, we create an environment where individuals have greater control over their lives and can make healthier choices for themselves. Comprehensive Sexuality Education covers many of these issues and is an important part of SRHR.

A lack of comprehensive SRHR has had many negative outcomes, with some ultimately being fatal. This represents itself in many forms including restricted access to safe and legal abortion services.¹⁸

Key Facts & Numbers:

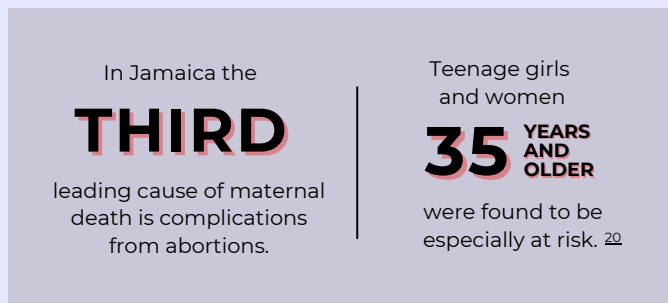
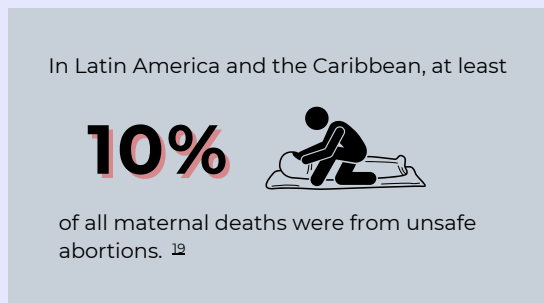
Abortions are Happening, Globally.



Unsafe Abortions have Fatal and Disabling Impacts.



Unsafe Abortions Contribute to High Maternal Mortality Rates.



Abortion Access is a Class Issue and a Public Health Issue.



Comprehensive Sexuality Education is a Significant Component of SRHR

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is about the cognitive, emotional, physical, and social aspects of sexuality and is meant to be implemented in culturally sensitive ways. It is a part of the right to quality education.

The anti-rights movement often vilifies CSE as dangerous and inappropriate. It politicises a public health issue and makes claims that are not evidence based. It spreads misinformation about sexual health, violence, age of initiation, the benefits of CSE, and more.

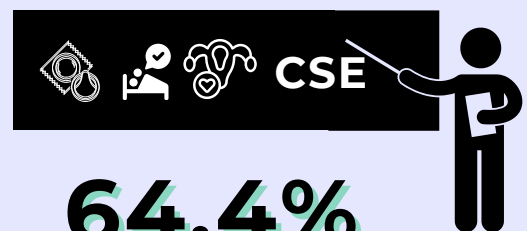
CSE includes teaching and understanding consent, bodily autonomy, and mutual respect. Research across the region and globally affirms that CSE is necessary for young people to be empowered and included in the creation of an enabling and safe learning environment.

Teachers and counsellors must be supported and better equipped to provide social, emotional, and social justice learning, as well as creative strategies and restorative justice approaches to dealing with violence.²¹

“Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) gives young people accurate, age-appropriate information about sexuality and their sexual and reproductive health, which is critical for their health and survival.”

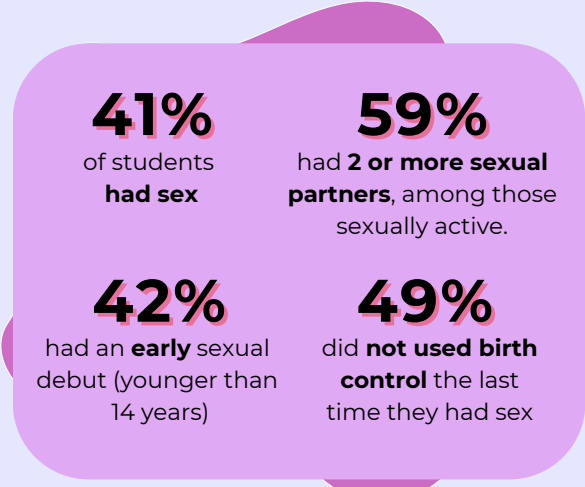
-World Health Organization

“Trinidad & Tobago’s National Climate School Survey 2019 Report” provides compelling evidence that young people need and want access to CSE.



of students surveyed noted the value of sex education in helping them be prepared for sexual situations.²¹

The global school-based student health surveys (GSHS) in the Dominican Republic (2016), Suriname (2016), Jamaica (2017), and Trinidad and Tobago (2017) indicate that:²²



Young people indicated interest in learning about topics like:

abortion, bodily autonomy, consent, contraception and, family planning, menstrual health, and pleasure,



and indicated the importance of CSE informed by **gender diversity and sexual orientation.**²⁴



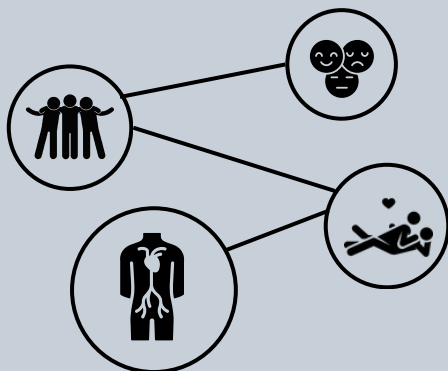
Research examining over

3 DECADES


of CSE studies have confirmed that young people made more informed decisions after being the recipients of CSE, and delayed having sex as a result.²³

Young people have identified that sexuality education is often delivered too late, and often not in a comprehensive manner.²³

Young people often desire more information on the **emotional and social** issues that also **impact sexual and biological discussions.**²⁴



“The Right Way” by Feminitt is a great SRHR and Comprehensive Sexuality Education resource guide grounded in the Caribbean.

 feminittcaribbean.org/the-right-way

Benefits of Comprehensive Sexuality Education

- Reduction of **violence** (physical, verbal, gender and sexual orientation based)
- Increase in **rights awareness**
- Reduction of **sexual violence** and abuse
- Increase in **family planning**
- Reduction in **STI, STDs, HIV and AIDS**
- Better interpersonal **relationships**
- Better relationship with **body and self.**²⁵

Key Facts & Numbers:

CSE is a key pathway to violence prevention, ensuring public health, and affirming consent and bodily integrity. These areas are pressing concerns globally and regionally.

Studies show that CSE is effective at reducing sexual violence and GBV. ^{25,26}

Sexual violence and abuse are prevalent globally and in our region.

Though data is often limited, the rate for **childhood sexual violence** in Latin America and the Caribbean is as high as:

25%



²⁷

Physical and Sexual Abuse of Women and Girls in Four Caribbean Countries:

1 in 4

GRENADA



1 in 3

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



1 in 2

GUYANA



1 in 4

JAMAICA



²⁸

In **nine** Caribbean countries,

48%



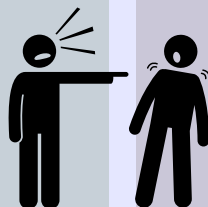
of **adolescent girls' sexual initiation** was 'forced', or 'somewhat forced'. ²⁹



Victim Blaming is Pervasive and Contributes to GBV

VICTIM BLAMING:

Harmful beliefs that women and girls cause or justify the violence perpetrated against them, persist. These include widely held views that what women and girls wear or how they behave may provoke their abusers. ³⁰




In a study in the Eastern Caribbean


69%


of respondents believed that girls invited sexual assault by the way they dress. Additionally, a culture of silence around sexual violence and GBV contributes to their continuation. ³⁰


Violence against LGBTQ+ people

Client data from CAISO's Wholeness and Justice Programme in 2023 indicated that

1 in 3 experienced discrimination and harassment 

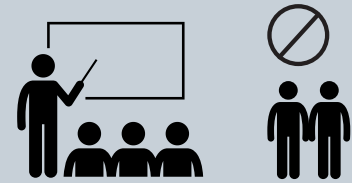
1 in 3 faced family violence 

1 in 6 faced intimate partner violence 

1 in 4 experienced physical assault. 

10

Studies aggregating data from numerous Caribbean countries have also found that Sexuality Education is not comprehensive or required. The closest approximate, Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) fails to meet standards for comprehensive sexuality education, for many reasons including being cis-centric and heteronormative.²⁴



Public Health Indicators Reflect a Need for CSE

Pregnancy

Evidence-based research recommends the need to strengthen implementation and expansion of CSE to support many public health indicators including those around pregnancy.²⁵

The region of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has the

2nd

highest rate of adolescent pregnancy in the world.³¹



While the global average for adolescent pregnancy is 46 births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19, the rate within the LAC region stands at 66.5 per 1,000.³¹



46
girls

VS



66.5
girls

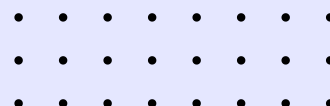
PER 1,000 BIRTHS

Approximately **15% of all annual pregnancies** in the region occur in girls

below the age of

20

³¹



Sexual Health - HIV and AIDS

While meaningful reductions in HIV and AIDS rates in the Caribbean – in part due to work done on public sexual education and testing – much more needs to be done. Experts recommend robust CSE.



1

The Caribbean has the highest rate of HIV/AIDS in the Americas .



2

The Caribbean region has the second highest rate of HIV/AIDS in the world (after Africa).³²

Approximately

5,100



people die annually in the Caribbean from HIV-related causes.³²

Consent - requires willingness, choice, agreement, mutual respect, and permission.

Bodily Integrity and Autonomy is about having control and self-determination over one's own body.

Pleasure refers to enjoyment, happiness, desire, and satisfaction

Consent, Pleasure, and Bodily Integrity

Consent, pleasure, and bodily integrity are also significant parts of healthy growth and adulthood. These are all components of sexual health and rights, which are fundamental to human rights and dignity.

SRHR addresses the complexity of these issues by highlighting dynamics of healthy relationships, growing bodies, sexuality, and autonomy. Sex-positive approaches in CSE aim to ensure ideal and consensual experiences and prevent negative ones.

There is a strong positive relationship between sexual health and pleasure and psychological well-being. Denying the positive and pleasurable relationship between people and their bodies reinforces ideas that certain bodies are only valuable for their reproductive capacity and the pleasure of others.

CSE that includes teaching a clear understanding of consent, pleasure, and bodily integrity is essential in order to affirm sexual health and reproductive rights.

Importance of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) for All

Comprehensive Sexuality Education needs to be provided for all. A robust CSE should be grounded in a framework that emphasises human rights and anti-discriminatory practices. CSE must also include the specific knowledge needs of LGBTQI+ people around sexual health that acknowledges their social, cognitive, and emotional realities and the differences they may encounter as a marginalised group.



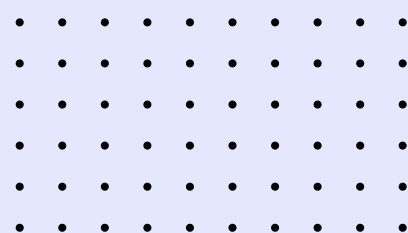
Conclusion

The anti-rights movement is fueled and funded by colonial, western, conservative perspectives and funding. This has significant impacts on how we work together to use evidenced based information to make the best decisions for our community and culture.

Some ramifications of the anti-rights movement include an increase in discriminatory and violent acts against women and gender-diverse people and the curtailment of sexual and reproductive rights and health.

Central to the anti-rights movement is the anti-gender movement, which has catastrophic implications for the entire society. LGBTQI+ people, women and girls, working class and rural communities, and other marginalised groups (including those at these intersections) are directly harmed by these movements.

Confronting misinformation as we have done in this guide offers one important pathway for knowledge needed to make healthy, just, and informed decisions.



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