

The rights-based approach

Much has been written about rights-based approaches, and different people and/or organisations will have different understandings of a rights-based approach and how it should be put into practice. Nevertheless, we believe there are some key principles of rights-based approaches that come forward in all definitions and applications:

- accountability
- empowerment
- non-discrimination
- participation

Most actors working in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights, nowadays have adopted a rights-based approach. The goal of a RBA is to give people the power, capacities, and access needed to improve their own lives, strengthen their own communities and influence their own destinies. Many countries have laws that guarantee sexual and reproductive health and rights. International human rights standards provide tools to hold governments accountable to implement these rights at national level.

However, in practice it is not always easy and straight-forward to implement a RBA in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Limits and challenges to the implementation of a RBA exist due to political, social, cultural, economical and religious barriers. For example, how can one address the accountability of governments without jeopardising constructive cooperation? Or how does your organisation deal with sexual diversity in a country where only heterosexuality is allowed. These are just examples of a whole range of dilemmas that may occur.

http://www.youthincentives.org/rutgersniso_groep/youthincentives/Rights-based_approach/Rights-based_approach

http://www.wpf.org/organisation_article/rights_based_approach

<http://www.unhchr.ch/development/approaches-04.html>