

A Study of Sexual Rights as a Foundation for Sexuality Education in Switzerland

Concepts by youths, parents and the professional system of sexuality education

Clients

SEXUAL HEALTH Switzerland
Haute école de travail social Genève
(HETS)
Lucerne School of Social Work (HSLU)

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Duration

2015 bis 2017

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Web pages

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In Brief

This research project investigates the perspectives of stakeholders in sexuality education including youths, parents, educational- and specialized personnel. It will ask especially whether and to what extent sexual rights – including that of corporal integrity – are being integrated into sexuality education within the family and in schools. Research in this context would investigate how well known and/or relevant sexual rights are for the actors involved and what significance these actors accord to sexuality education. Recommendations derived from the research results would constitute the foundation for the continuing conceptual development of sexuality education in theory and practice.

Currently

Globally, we observe a trend toward recognition of sexual rights as a precondition for individual realization of sexual health. This perspective also impacts sexuality education, because sex-related human rights (and therefore the associated fundamental democratic rights) explicitly constitute the ethical point of reference. This recent development recognizes at the specialized level the concept of a comprehensive sexuality pedagogy as the WHO Europe Region submitted as standards for sexuality education in Europe in 2010-11. The associated intrinsic democratic values in relationships, lifestyle and sexuality are currently a matter of dispute within society, especially concerning schools. Here, significant differences can be observed across Switzerland. Also, there are no definite findings in Switzerland on sexuality education within families, which are the concrete findings of this education. Based on these observations the study will endeavor to better understand perceptions, interpretations and the practice of sexuality education in relation to sexual rights within the relevant actors' systems- of youths, parents, educational personnel and specialists in sexual health. It will seek to provide data-based foundations for corresponding recommendations for a concept of comprehensive sexuality education in Switzerland.

Goals

The research project exploits:

- Concepts of family and/or informal sexuality education through parents and/or among youths. It also takes into consideration concepts of formal sexuality education in the context of schools by teachers and specialized personnel. It would show especially what values that guide action form the foundation for the respective practices.
- The role and status of sexual rights in informal and formal sex education.
- How family- and school-based sexuality education would ideally be designed in the views of the various actors.

Implementation

The joint research project with the Haute École de travail social Genève (HETS), Lucerne School of Social Work (HSLU) and SEXUAL HEALTH Switzerland – is an explorative investigation with a qualitative design being conducted in the three language regions of German-speaking Switzerland, Romandie and Ticino. Implementation is taking place in two phases. The first stage, from the spring of 2015 to the fall of 2016, sets the focus on family-based and/or informal sexuality education of parents and youths. It comprises a total of 28 guideline-supported individual interviews with 14 mothers and 14 fathers who have at least one child between the age of 13 and 16. Also, youths of this age are also interviewed with the help of case vignettes in 14 gender-separated focus groups with four to six participants. The second stage will begin in the fall of 2016 and last until fall 2017. It will be concerned with formal sexuality education within the context of public schools focusing on the perspectives of teaching and specialist personnel in sexual health and, as a supplement to the first phase of the project, should ensure the comprehensive representation of all concepts present in the practiced conceptions of participating actors' systems.