

Pleasure in Practice

A look at the practical implications of the pleasure-based approach to sexuality in development interventions



The Pleasure-Based Approach

A pleasure-based (positive) approach could be seen as a response to current focus on the 'negative' in sexuality:

- Problem-focused;
- Persistent narrative of harm and danger;
- Persistence of gender stereotypes and heteronormativity.

Aims not to disregard, but directs focus to the pleasures of sex and sexuality, and aspects of affirmation, love and intimacy.



My Research

Aim: to look at how this pleasure-based approach plays out in practice.

Interviews with professionals working with sexuality:

- Female Health Company
- CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality
- The Pleasure Project
- Love Matters (RNW Media)



Findings

1. Characteristics

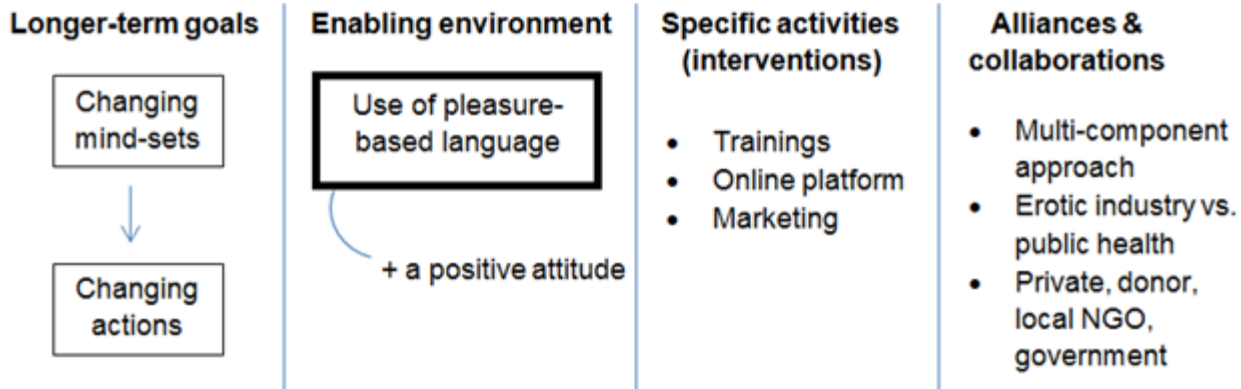
- a. A holistic, integrated and/or comprehensive outlook;
- b. Positivity (with a focus on pleasure-based language);
- c. A rights-based approach to development;
- d. Individual- and context-dependent.

2. Motives

- More effective in promoting safer sex;
- Improves women's agency.

Findings

3. Implementation



4. Difficulties

- Gatekeepers in many levels;
- (Societal dynamics and stigma).



Recommendations

- The list of findings presented here could be used by those interested to transform their approach to sexuality as an insight into how other development initiatives have translated an increased focus on pleasure in practice.
- Innovative collaboration between parties involved with sexuality in different ways will allow for a more integrated approach characteristic of the pleasure-based approach.
- We should strive to construct an environment that enables us to step away from problem-focused, negative narratives. A first step could be to take on positive, open and pleasure-focused language.