

# RFSU INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME STRATEGY: 2015-2020

## SRHR FOR ALL





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This is the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education's (RFSU) international programme strategy for the years 2015-2020. It provides strategic guidance for decision-making relating to RFSU's international commitments. This strategy will guide RFSU's international programming in low- and middle-income countries; our global policy advocacy programmes; and our domestic public support programme geared towards the Swedish public. It also gives direction for resource mobilisation, including individual fundraising, institutional funding and other sources.

This document puts into operation the international commitments made in RFSU's Vision 2020 and takes into account The RFSU Narrative. The strategy was commissioned by the International Committee to the RFSU board. It has been developed with the active participation of the RFSU international team, staff members from the domestic programme, the communications department and the senior management team. The International Planned Parenthood Foundation (IPPF) central office provided input, and a validation process took place, which included some of the IPPF regional offices, key partners and allies. An external consultant was used to lead the process and to assist RFSU to consolidate the strategy, as well as to provide a global and outsider perspective. The RFSU board approved the strategy on 24 April 2015.

Though it covers the period 2015-2020, the strategy will be revisited, assessed and if necessary adapted in 2017 to reflect internal and/or external changes. Possible reasons for changes could be a major shift in the donor or policy landscape, or decisions made by the RFSU general assembly or senior management.

The strategy outlines a Theory of Change that explains how RFSU envisions society's way forward to a goal where sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are promoted, protected and fulfilled. It further outlines the overall goal for the international programme: RFSU's role and perspectives, three thematic priorities and four strategic directions that will help RFSU realise its international goal.

This strategy builds on and strengthens RFSU's international programme rather than redirecting it. It reaffirms RFSU's commitment to strengthening civil society organisations (CSOs), clarifying that support will mainly focus on CSOs as actors in their own right, and on their role to empower, mobilise, raise awareness and drive policy change for SRHR for all. It also reiterates RFSU's thematic focus on SRHR, as opposed to widening the scope to other areas.

The main change that the strategy aims to achieve is a stronger accountability programme, by linking partners' policy advocacy with RFSU's global policy advocacy. This will give the added value of being present at national, regional and global levels. Further, RFSU aims to take on a more proactive role in facilitating learning between partners including RFSU and advancing SRHR knowledge and expertise internationally. Finally the strategy aims to contribute to a comprehensive programme across the organisation in order to enhance Swedish public support for SRHR for all.

RFSU was founded in 1933. Our work is based on the conviction that sexuality has a central role in individuals' lives and in society, and aims towards an open and evidence-informed view of sexuality and relationships. We believe that everyone is of equal value, and should have equal rights and freedoms, including the freedom to be, the freedom to choose and the freedom to enjoy. RFSU aims to facilitate engagement, increase knowledge, create opinion, advocate politicians and decision makers, and demand accountability of sexual and reproductive rights at local and national level in Sweden, as well as at the international level.

Sexual and reproductive rights are human rights defined in international commitments. RFSU has been working at the global level for over 50 years. It was one of the founders of IPPF in 1956, and is still an active Associate Member. For RFSU, IPPF is a valuable partner for networking, advocacy and exchange of information. IPPF brings together 152 Member Associations, working in 172 countries. As part of the global movement for SRHR, RFSU has partnered with organisations in low- and middle-income countries since the 1980s to change norms and improve policy and legislation that will strengthen the conditions for, and access to, SRHR. RFSU's advocacy has been focused on contributing to a stronger global normative framework for SRHR.

In Sweden, RFSU runs a sexual and reproductive health clinic, providing both treatment and counselling. The clinic also has a mandate to promote evidence-based knowledge and best practice. RFSU has a presence in Swedish schools where it teaches comprehensive sexuality education. Our domestic advocacy is focused on improving SRHR policies at national and municipality level.

RFSU owns the company RFSU Ltd that sells products in the field of sexuality. The profits from this go to RFSU.

### **RFSU envisions a world where everyone has the freedom to be, the freedom to choose and the freedom to enjoy.**

- ▶ The “freedom to be” means freedom to express oneself and one's sexuality, and to make independent decisions about one's own life. One person's freedom should never result in another's oppression.
- ▶ The “freedom to choose” encompasses the freedom to choose whether and with whom one's sexuality will be shared. One person's choice must never be realised through coercion over another.
- ▶ The “freedom to enjoy” means freedom to enjoy as one desires, and to be able to realise those desires. One person's pleasure should never be acted upon against the consent of another.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Idéprogrammet 2015 (overall guiding document for RFSU adopted by RFSU General Assembly, 12th June 2015).

## 2. OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

The Theory of Change shows how people who are subject to discrimination and poverty can undergo a societal process to attain positive change. Through increased voice, participation and civil society agency a future can be achieved in which SRHR are respected, protected and fulfilled by the government.



**Detailed explanation.** The figures on the ground represent people who live in poverty and discrimination. These people can gain a voice and participate through civil society or other avenues for engagement or they can remain with limited influence over their lives and society.

The first picture shows people who lack means to achieve change and areas in which changes need to take place in order to achieve SRHR for all. The illustration in the middle is the forum where people come together to organise and mobilise themselves, to claim their rights, and to influence society by gaining a voice and participating. Their capacity to do this is built through a strengthened, democratic civil society. Civil society builds people's collective capacities to claim democratic ownership as actors in their communities and nations, as well as each individual's ability to claim their own rights. Other avenues of engagement apart from civil society may also exist. The third picture shows a society where people have come together and changed norms, legal policy and rights framework and have accessed service education and information and therefore Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for all are respected, protected and fulfilled.

The content in the first illustration is the main societal sphere where change can be realised through increased civil society voice and participation. In order for the goal to be realised, the following requirements must be met for all members of society:

1. Accessible, high quality sexual and reproductive health services; and comprehensive sexuality education and information, which empowers people to claim their right to a healthy sexual and reproductive life. All health services, education and information should be non-discriminatory and non-judgemental.
2. Non-discriminatory societal norms. It is essential to address the root causes of discriminatory practices and prejudices on the basis of sexual orientation or identity, gender, age, socio-economic status, marital status, disability or other grounds. Critical approaches to address gender norms, including masculinity norms are also needed.
3. Legal, policy and rights frameworks that make positive contributions towards realising SRHR (for example, by adopting appropriate legislation, policies or budgetary measures).

The goal entails a government that is being held to account to respect, protect and fulfill the SRHR of its citizens.

The people are acting in a context of support and resistance. The context of resistance includes anything that blocks progress towards the goal. This might include, for example, religious or political opposition. The same actors might also be included in a context of support. Both context of resistance and support include different actors such as other CSOs, the media, faith-based organisations and the government. These players and their support (or lack of it) will vary according to the setting and it will affect how change is achieved.

This theory of change explains what needs to happen to ensure that SRHR are respected, protected and fulfilled. This is an end goal in itself but will also contribute to reducing poverty. By ensuring that people live mentally and physically healthier lives and are able to give birth to as many children as they want, people are able to educate themselves, get decent jobs and earn their own income. If they choose to have children, their children will survive and they will be able to provide for all of them. Thus, by removing barriers for people to access sexual and reproductive health, the process also contributes to reducing poverty.

### 3. RFSU'S INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME GOAL AND THEMATIC AREAS

**Goal: Sexual and reproductive health and rights for all are respected, protected and fulfilled.**

RFSU's work is guided by the following approaches. RFSU has a holistic approach to sexuality, because sexuality and the norms around it influence many parts of life, including societal status, economic status, relationships and parenthood. For this reason, we believe that sex is a political issue.

Society's view of who is allowed to express their sexuality is dictated by norms. Norms are not negative per se – on the contrary, positive norms ensure an open, knowledge-based and respectful approach to sexuality and relationships. However, norms can also be limiting. Sexual expressions differ between people, and while some sexual practices are generally considered healthy, others are stigmatised or seen as taboo. Restrictive norms about sex and desire do not centre solely on relationships and sexual practices; society's view of what kind of person is allowed to express sexuality is also norm-driven. Norms are dynamic, and through analysis, education and advocacy we believe they can change and contribute to better health and lives.

It is important to identify and analyse who is in power, has a voice and defines norms. In order to question and change norms, power-holders, their opinions and the consequences of their opinions need to be visible. Norms are closely linked to the distribution of power. Power is unequally distributed between different groups in society. Unequal distribution of power results in unequal distribution of wealth, education, access to health care, political power and power to decide over one's body. It also limits the way different groups, including women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people are allowed to express their sexuality. RFSU applies intersectional and feminist perspectives to our work by analysing and questioning existing power structures. This includes addressing masculinity norms and gender stereotypes; and advocating for the legal protection of discriminated groups.

RFSU's work is based on the fact that human rights are universal and indivisible. The protection and fulfilment of human rights should be seen both as an end in itself as well as a process. The responsibility of duty-bearers to respect, promote and fulfil the rights of rights-holders, without any exceptions, is part of our vision. Implementing a rights-based approach, RFSU sees civil society, including ourselves, as a vehicle for citizens to be empowered to stand up for their rights, not just as a gap-filler to provide services.

#### Thematic areas

The approaches described above will inform and guide our work. To be more focused and effective, RFSU has selected three thematic priorities that will direct us in terms of programme interventions, partner choice, focus for global advocacy, and communication.

Our thematic priorities are:

- ▶ sexuality and non-discrimination
- ▶ abortion rights
- ▶ the right to comprehensive sexuality education

These priorities are based on RFSU's knowledge and expertise, our historical background in the field, and in line with our overall objectives. They are also areas in which individual rights are often profoundly violated. RFSU recognises that there is a gap to fill in both a Swedish and a global context. However, in order to effectively implement this strategy we need to understand the complexity of many issues linked to sexuality, reproduction and health, as well as the context of development, human rights and global politics.

## Sexuality and non-discrimination

RFSU will contribute to the fulfilment of:

- ▶ Everyone's right to have control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, free from coercion, discrimination and violence.
- ▶ Sexual rights include, among others, the right to security, the right to privacy, the right to health and the right to life.
- ▶ International human rights law expressly proscribes discrimination on the basis of; inter alia, sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, disability, and economic status. Treaty monitoring bodies have recognised additional grounds of discrimination on the basis of age<sup>i</sup>, actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity<sup>ii</sup>, marital status<sup>iii</sup>, health status (including HIV status)<sup>iv</sup>, and pregnancy<sup>v</sup>.
- ▶ Sexuality, which does not encroach on other people's integrity and rights, can give affirmation, self-esteem, spiritual peace and closer ties with other people. It has the potential to bring well-being and health in the short and long term. However, an individual's right to decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their own sexuality is often violated. This results in less personal autonomy, and also hinders physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- ▶ Early and forced marriage, sexual and gender based violence, rape (both within and outside marriage) and the social control of young people and women and their life choices, continue to be ubiquitous infringements of human rights, resulting in limited power, life threatening unwanted pregnancies and poverty. Young people's expression of sexuality should not be met with condemnation, but with respect and openness.
- ▶ Same-sex sexual relations are criminalised in 76 countries worldwide. Convictions can lead to long-term imprisonment, flogging or even death. The ability to express one's own sexuality is a prerequisite for the right to sexual health. Due to discrimination, LGBTQ people lack access to health care and counselling in many parts of the world.

<sup>i</sup>ESCR Committee, General Comment No. 20: Non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights, para. 29, U.N. Doc. E/C.12/GC/20 (2009) [hereinafter ESCR Committee, Gen. Comment No. 20]

<sup>ii</sup>ibid para. 32. <sup>iii</sup>ibid para. 31. <sup>iv</sup>ibid para. 33.

<sup>v</sup>See, e.g., C158 Termination of Employment Convention, 1982 (No. 158), adopted June 22nd 1982, art. 5, Geneva, 68th ILC Sess. (entered into force Nov. 23rd 1985); C183 Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), adopted June 15th 2000, Geneva, 88th ILC Sess. (entered into force Feb. 7th 2002); R191 Maternity Protection Recommendation, 2000 (No. 191), adopted June 15th 2000, Geneva, 88th ILC Sess.

<sup>iv</sup>[http://old.ilga.org/Statehomophobia/ILGA\\_State\\_Sponsored\\_Homophobia\\_2013.pdf](http://old.ilga.org/Statehomophobia/ILGA_State_Sponsored_Homophobia_2013.pdf)

## Abortion rights

RFSU will contribute to the fulfilment of:

- ▶ Everyone's right to safe and legal abortion. Abortion should not be restricted, prohibited or criminalised.
- ▶ The right to safe and legal abortion is supported by numerous binding international treaties, grounded in the rights to life; health; liberty and security of person; privacy; equality and non-discrimination; information; freedom from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; and the enjoyment of the benefits of scientific progress. Official UN human rights bodies and independent human rights experts have recognised on numerous occasions that governments violate these rights when they make abortion services inaccessible. They have repeatedly and consistently called on governments to improve access to safe and legal abortion services, and to change legislation criminalising and prohibiting abortion<sup>i</sup>.
- ▶ 47,000 women die every year due to unsafe abortions. Almost all these deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, and the vast majority of deaths are avoidable. Abortions are safe when performed with legally available, modern medical practices. Making abortion illegal does not reduce the number of abortions; it merely increases the risk of unsafe abortions. Almost 21.1 million women have an unsafe abortion every year and 50 per cent of these women are 15-24 years old.
- ▶ Almost 40 per cent of the world's population lives in countries with highly restrictive abortion laws<sup>ii</sup>. Despite a positive trend toward liberalised abortion laws globally, gaps in the implementation of these laws, and procedural barriers, are still major impediments for women to access safe abortion<sup>iii</sup>.

<sup>i</sup>[http://reproductiverights.org/sites/crr.civicaactions.net/files/documents/WAM\\_GlobalView\\_2014%20EN\\_0.pdf](http://reproductiverights.org/sites/crr.civicaactions.net/files/documents/WAM_GlobalView_2014%20EN_0.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup>Those that prohibit abortion altogether, or allow the procedure only to save a woman's life, or to preserve her health.

<sup>iii</sup>[http://reproductiverights.org/sites/crr.civicaactions.net/files/documents/WAM\\_GlobalView\\_2014%20EN\\_0.pdf](http://reproductiverights.org/sites/crr.civicaactions.net/files/documents/WAM_GlobalView_2014%20EN_0.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup>Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Vernor Muñoz 2010

## Right to Comprehensive Sexuality Education

RFSU will contribute to the fulfilment of:

- ▶ Everyone's right to information about sexuality, the human body, gender and relationships.
- ▶ Access to information about safer sex, without discrimination on the basis of age, is a human right and a global political commitment adopted by UN member states. The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education has analysed this right as fundamental and necessary for the well-being of young people<sup>iv</sup>. Additionally, the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children and young people have the right to information that supports them to make decisions about their own health (Article 17), including family planning (Article 24). Young people also have the right to be heard, to express themselves, and for their views to be given due weight in accordance to the age and maturity. (Article 12).
- ▶ Comprehensive sexuality education helps young people to better understand their own bodies, feelings and personal integrity. It enables them to make informed choices about sex and relationships, and counters myths and misconceptions about different forms of sexuality. It helps prevent sexual harassment, sexual violence and discrimination against LGBTQ people, and people living with HIV. It also helps to counteract gender stereotypes and address masculinity norms. Hence, comprehensive sexuality education supports young people to reach their full potential and respect others when it comes to intimacy and sex. It also contributes to changing societal norms and practices.
- ▶ Comprehensive sexuality education increases the demand for contraceptives and quality sexual and reproductive health care. Access to contraceptives is a means for young people, women and men to make empowering decisions about their own life course, such as education, work and, importantly, sexual enjoyment. Currently more than 200 million women lack access to modern contraceptives.

## 4. RFSU'S PURPOSE AND INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

These strategic directions follow the Theory of Change (see pages 3-4) and address the areas that need to alter in order to fulfil RFSU's goal. All the strategic directions are linked with one another, work as a comprehensive whole and are guided by the following purpose statement:

**RFSU's purpose: To drive and mobilise for change towards sexual and reproductive health and rights, choice and pleasure.**

RFSU'S strategic directions:

**CIVIL SOCIETY AGENCY:** To contribute to civil society agency on SRHR, by partnering with other civil society actors and supporting progressive civil society voices.

**GLOBAL POLICY:** To strengthen international legal, political and financial support for SRHR.

**EXPERTISE:** To advance SRHR knowledge and expertise.

**PUBLIC SUPPORT:** To enhance Swedish public support for SRHR for all.

## How the strategic directions are linked to each other:



The four areas on the bottom of the illustration support the linked strategic directions to help RFSU drive change, and thus achieve the goal Sexual and reproductive health and rights for all are respected, protected and fulfilled. For example, RFSU expertise is applied to support civil society partners, and its advocacy work builds networks that are then shared with national partners as needed. Swedish public backing will ideally continue to support or grow funding for RFSU to build civil society agency.

In more detail the directions will be as follows:

**Direction 1: CIVIL SOCIETY AGENCY:** To contribute to civil society agency on SRHR, by partnering with other civil society actors and supporting progressive civil society voices.

By partnering with, and supporting, other progressive civil society voices and actors, RFSU aims to strengthen the influence of civil society and thereby contribute to realising SRHR for all. RFSU will collaborate with civil society actors on the basis of their potential to contribute to SRHR for all at local, national, regional and/or global level. RFSU support will be channelled to actors within civil society who engage in:

- ▶ Increasing awareness of norms and rights, to enable people to make informed choices regarding their sexuality and reproduction.
- ▶ Increasing opportunities for individuals and CSOs to mobilise, collaborate, participate in decision-making, make their voices heard, and claim their rights.
- ▶ Advocate for supportive SRHR policy development, including an enabling environment for civil society, and monitoring and holding governments to account for obligations and international agreements.
- ▶ Collecting and building evidence on SRHR for programme development and advocacy.

RFSU can support service delivery for a limited period and with a clear objective, for example a pilot project to develop or test methodologies, or build evidence for advocacy.

#### RFSU can cooperate, support and contribute by:

1. Strengthening networking and collaboration among like-minded civil society partners and actors, to create synergies for common causes at local, national, regional and international level. This will include support to platforms, coalitions and networks, and encouragement of new forms of collaboration. This strand is closely linked to the strategic direction of global policy.
2. Facilitating opportunities for knowledge-sharing and mutual learning between partners, including RFSU, integrating evidence from practice and results in order to encourage innovation, and improved performance. This will include exchanges between partner organisations, research, method development and provision of expertise among RFSU, partners and other actors. This strand is closely linked with the building block on expertise.
3. Providing funding for improving SRHR, and pursuing equitable partnerships by committing to transparent and equal relationships with civil society partners, based on shared goals and values, mutual respect, trust, organisational autonomy and local ownership, long-term accompaniment, and global citizenship. This includes being a donor and managing grants. RFSU aims to channel funds to core support, when appropriate.
4. Capacity strengthening to enable civil society agency and independent, democratic and sustainable organisations. This will include support for trainings, research and meetings on sexuality and non-discrimination and abortion rights; and awareness-raising about sexuality and norms. Building leadership, strengthening financial systems and strategic planning for new organisations could also be included. The capacity strengthening can be carried out by exchange of experiences between partner organisations (including RFSU) and through the development of long-term collaboration.

RFSU's guidelines on geographic presence, partnership criteria and partnership principles can be found in Annex 1.

## Direction 2: GLOBAL POLICY: To advocate international legal, political and financial support for SRHR.

Sexual and reproductive rights are human rights, and are therefore interpreted, analysed and followed up in human rights monitoring processes. The Global normative framework for these rights is also developed through inter-governmental negotiation processes at the UN. RFSU, as a CSO, will bring expertise and experience to these processes in order to contribute to a more inclusive and rights-based framework.

RFSU's international advocacy is often conducted in close collaboration with IPPF and other Swedish and international organisations and networks. By mobilising key players and strategizing with like-minded partners, RFSU will act as an adviser, advocate and watchdog.

The government of Sweden and Sida are actors in these global normative arenas, and also influence change in a bilateral donor government capacity, both from central level and from embassies. It is therefore important for RFSU to contribute to a strong SRHR focus in Swedish foreign policy dialogue, and overseas development aid (ODA) budgets. This includes promoting enabling environments for civil society actors, and protecting activists who are being persecuted. RFSU will therefore target both the international level and the Swedish government and its institutions (as they affect SRHR at the international level).

### Activities will be divided into the following groups:

#### 1. Influence and advise the Swedish government.

RFSU will support, influence and advise the Swedish government on its foreign policies and financial priorities. Often, Sweden's voice is channelled through the EU which means RFSU will also focus on the EU in the global arena. This includes Swedish/EU positions in international negotiations at the UN and in international multilateral organisations, as well as bilateral policy dialogue and Swedish policy papers.

RFSU will mobilise support in Sweden through collaboration with other CSOs, professionals, and political parties and their youth leagues. RFSU will support the Swedish All Party Group on SRHR in parliament, in order to secure a strong, broad base of political support for SRHR, and effectively act as a watchdog towards the government.

#### 2. Monitor and hold the Swedish government to account.

RFSU will work to hold the Swedish government accountable to policy commitments, to ensure Swedish SRHR policy priorities are followed up with financial commitments. RFSU will produce reports to track government spending on SRHR.

RFSU will also follow the government's adherence to human rights obligations through participating in the Universal Periodic Review and other relevant international human rights monitoring mechanisms.

#### 3. Influence international commitments and mechanisms.

RFSU will work towards the recognition of SRHR within international commitments. This will include follow up of ICPD Beyond 2014 at the Commission on Population and Development; follow up of the Beijing Platform of Action at the Commission on the Status of Women; and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, RFSU will follow up and provide input to multilateral institutions' policies and their implementation as well as the monitoring processes at the Human Rights Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the CEDAW committee.

RFSU will work closely together with IPPF and in multiple international and European networks that strengthen the knowledgebase and legitimacy of political demands

#### 4. RFSU and partner organisations join forces to influence international, regional and national mechanisms and hold national governments to account.

Through engagement in international political negotiations and international human rights mechanisms, RFSU will contribute to its partners' advocacy strategies at national level. RFSU can provide support through linking global and national levels, as well as UN mechanisms in Geneva and New York, and by sharing outputs from reviews and treaty bodies which could be used to further national advocacy. The main instruments used will be the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, international and regional human rights mechanisms, the sustainable development goals and, where applicable, regional ICPD review outcome documents and their follow-up. This strand is closely linked with strategic direction one – civil society agency.

#### Direction 3: EXPERTISE: To advance SRHR knowledge and expertise.

RFSU needs to be knowledgeable on SRHR in a broad sense, and have more in-depth expertise in our prioritised thematic areas (sexuality and non-discrimination, abortion rights, and the right to comprehensive sexuality education).

Continuous learning and development of knowledge is essential for RFSU, in order to be a relevant partner, to have a knowledge-base for our work on global policy, and to inform our communication to mobilise public support in Sweden for SRHR.

RFSU wants other actors – such as development aid organisations, public institutions and researchers – to see the value of incorporating SRHR in their operations, and can provide technical assistance to other actors as well as take on a technical assistance role to strengthen SRHR components in broader development programmes.

#### 1. Develop knowledge and expertise

Learning from the programmes implemented by partners and by RFSU is crucial, and collaborating with RFSU's partner organisations in data collection and assessing intervention models, strategies and approaches will be ways forward to learn and develop new methods. Learning and sharing experiences from RFSU national programme and our clinic is also essential.

In developing knowledge and expertise, RFSU needs to stay up-to-date with research on SRHR and related issues. We will therefore strive to deepen cooperation with research institutions. Other ways of developing knowledge and expertise will be to collect and analyse data, and make research easily accessible; as well as to develop and adapt new methods. Reviewing academic articles, positioning the organisation, as a sounding board to researchers, and/or initiating own studies on specific topics will also develop expertise.

#### 2. Provide and promote knowledge and expertise

RFSU wants to promote its knowledge and expertise in different forums in Sweden and internationally. This will be done by organising courses, providing seminars, taking part in expert and reference groups and networks, or through providing technical SRHR assistance as a component in broader development programmes. RFSU will provide knowledge and expertise on demand, and strategically promote this provision to increase its demand from specific actors. Target groups include researchers and academic institutions, public institutions and policy and decision-makers, the media, partner organisations and other civil society actors.

**Direction 4: PUBLIC SUPPORT: To enhance Swedish public support for SRHR for all.**

In Sweden, RFSU will raise awareness about the violations of SRHR to mobilise public support and stimulate activism and engagement. A critical mass of public support on the importance of fulfilling SRHR in the world will be key to successfully influence the Swedish Government to prioritise international SRHR in its policy and funding choices.

**1. Awareness and engagement.**

RFSU will communicate about RFSU's international programme to build awareness and engagement of global SRHR issues through our social media channels; by running campaigns; and through exploring new avenues of reaching out to the public. Attracting the interest of journalists and other key influencers in the public debate will help us reach a wider audience.

**2. Mobilisation.**

RFSU will mobilise a subset of the Swedish public to do something active to make a difference. This might include taking part in activities we organise, donating money, or becoming active members. RFSU will provide different options for the participation of potential activists who are interested in human rights, development and global SRHR. RFSU will support networks or groups of activists by providing information on RFSU supported programmes and our global policy work; by organising study groups; by linking and building alliances with other CSOs engaged in international human rights work; and by organising events and campaigns. Potential activities could also be mobilised by providing them with the option of participating in an international trainee programme. Target groups include: journalists, public opinion makers, engaged activists, students and the general public.

## 5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

The strategy puts into operation the international commitments made in RFSU's Vision 2020. It will guide our resource mobilisation, the content of our programming and grant applications, as well as our annual planning during 2015–2020. It will also guide us in the development of human resources – identify capacity building needs and assist us when recruiting new staff. The strategy will be rolled-out and presented internally in RFSU, to its partners, key allies and donors. The strategy will inform how the international programme is presented on our website and in all our printed material. A shorter version will be also available.

### Guiding geographic presence

When deciding on which OECD/DAC countries to focus our work, RFSU will take the following into consideration:

- ▶ The degree of SRHR violations in the country or region, focusing on access to legal and safe abortion; discrimination against same sex sexual behaviour; and access to comprehensive sexuality education. The level of knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and rights among young people is also of relevance to assess.
- ▶ The presence of civil society and its ability to create and partake in societal change, focusing on the country context and the ability of civil society to act in general, as well as specifically on SRHR.
- ▶ The ability of RFSU to contribute to change, which is itself dependent on factors such as: ability to raise funds; knowledge of the country/regional context; connections with relevant international and national actors in the country; the presence of a Swedish embassy; the security situation; the ability of RFSU to act through others, without having its own presence in the country.

The following criteria will guide decision-making:

- ▶ The relevance of RFSU presence in relation to the SRHR/CSO context and other INGO presence.
- ▶ The feasibility for RFSU to contribute to change and achieve tangible results.
- ▶ The efficiency of our support, taking into consideration the need to work through others, volume of grants etc.
- ▶ The geographic spread with the aim of having a presence in several regions. Further value will be added if a country or region has a specific role to play in global SRHR policy processes.

### Guiding partner choice

RFSU will identify and develop different kinds of relationships and partnerships with relevant actors to implement the strategic directions and to reach the overall goal. RFSU will engage in networks composed of civil society actors in order to build alliances, share intelligence and strategize for effective policy advocacy work at national and global level. RFSU will also identify civil society actors with whom a long-term relationship and partnership can be developed. Other relationships may be purely contractual, where identified partners will implement an RFSU managed programme. The following guiding principles will be used when assessing potential civil society partners:

- ▶ A sufficiently shared vision between RFSU and the partner in terms of 'SRHR are promoted, protected and fulfilled', and an agreement on the Theory of Change, i.e. how to achieve this goal.
- ▶ A shared agreement in terms of what guides the governance of the organisation; a commitment to democratic governance and leadership, transparency, multiple accountability and democratic ownership and participation of rights-holders.
- ▶ An interest and potential to develop as an organisation, to be progressive and cutting edge in relation to the context; and the capacity to implement programmes, contribute to change and achieve sustainable results in terms of SRHR.

### Guiding principles for relationship with partners

RFSU's partnership principles will guide our strategic, long-term partnerships.

**Transparency and mutual accountability.** Accountability rests on transparency of goals, achievements and intentions, including clear systems and policies. For RFSU, willingness to be held accountable is at the core of a good partnership. In order to obtain transparency and accountability, roles and relationships need to be defined. RFSU aims at open and clear communication with partner organisations, and feedback mechanisms for possible complaints should be in place.

**Mutual learning.** RFSU is committed to creating possibilities for mutual learning. Mutual learning is based on an environment of trust. Best practices and challenges should be included in the learning process, meetings, evaluations and debriefings. RFSU will be open to self-reflection and suggestions from partner organisations. Together with partner organisations, RFSU will define which areas of learning are to be prioritised, and how the learning process will be undertaken.

**Autonomy and independence.** A good partnership relies on the recognition and respect of each organisation's independence, integrity and dissimilarities. RFSU acknowledges power imbalances, which may limit autonomy and independence, especially in a funding cooperation. RFSU is willing to engage in dialogue in order to challenge power imbalance. All actors contribute to the partnership, but that does not mean they all have to contribute in the same way. In such cases, there will be an agreement between both organisations, and compliance with this agreement is expected.

**Long-term commitment.** Changes in society take time. RFSU opts for long-term commitment, ideally at least five years, as a way of creating predictability and stability within partnerships.

**Local ownership.** Local ownership implies that RFSU will support partner organisation priorities, through core or project support. However, RFSU's aim is to develop a relationship of trust, which enables dialogue and encourages creativity and the sharing of ideas.

## ACRONYMS

<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>ICPD</b>	International Conference on Population & Development
<b>INGO</b>	International Non Governmental Organisation
<b>IPPF</b>	International Planned Parenthood Foundation
<b>LGBTQ</b>	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender & Queer
<b>ODA</b>	Overseas Development Aid
<b>OECD/DAC</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development/Development Assistance Committee
<b>RFSU</b>	Swedish Association for Sexuality Education
<b>SRHR</b>	Sexual & Reproductive Health and Rights





