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Development

sexuality and development

Volume 52 • Number 1 • March 2009

Sex and sexuality - a taboo subject for development?

Sexuality is part of our every day lives, but in strong contrast to its importance for our wellbeing and pleasure, sex is rarely addressed in international development. As the first issue of Volume 52 on culture and identity, *Development* takes the bold move to look at sexuality. The issue seeks to uncover the impacts of development on sexuality and to move towards a more constructive engagement.

The articles originate from a workshop held in 2008 at the Institute of Development Studies in Brighton, UK entitled 'Sexuality and the Development Industry'. The articles feature the major trends in sexual rights and the political advocacy work of 'SexPolitics'. Under the umbrella of human rights, sexual rights the articles discuss the right of all persons to sexual fulfilment and to freedom from coercion, discrimination and violence around sexuality, whatever their sexual orientation or sexual identity. Articles from authors around the world take up issues such as heteronormativity, lesbian gay bisexual and trans (LGBT) rights, sex work, male vulnerability, funding and sexual rights.

In examining sexuality, the issue argues for a greater awareness of the way in which highly conservative and restrictive social norms work around sexuality, depriving some people of fundamental rights and freedoms, and all of us from the possibility of a humane society. The issue makes visible the many different forms of sexual identity and cultural practices around sexuality, presenting sex as a source of positive expression of self and community rather than as a dangerous and taboo topic for development.



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