



The rights of people with disabilities.



Sexual and reproductive health and rights for girls and young women with disabilities



EasyRead version of:
Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Sexual and reproductive health and rights of girls and young women with disabilities.
July 2017



1. About this report **1**



2. Rights of girls and young women with disabilities **4**



3. Things that stop girls and young women with disabilities getting these rights **7**



4. How to help girls and young women with disabilities get these rights **17**



5. The most important things to think about **23**



6. What happens next? **25**



7. What the words mean

28



Sometimes we need to use new or difficult words



These words are in **bold** and there is a list of what they mean at the end of this report.



1. About this report



Every year the **Special Rapporteur** writes reports to tell the **United Nations** about **human rights** and people with disabilities.



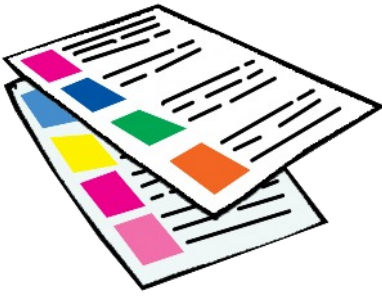
The **Special Rapporteur** is Catalina Devadas-Aguilar. She helps countries understand how to make sure people with disabilities can get their **rights**.



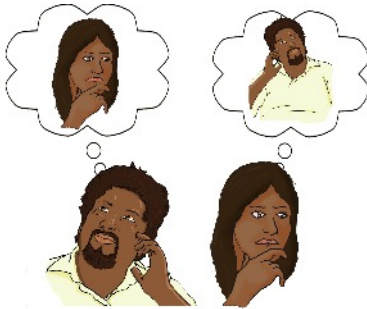
The **United Nations** is a group of 193 countries that work together to make the world a safer place for everyone.



The **Disability Convention** is an agreement that different countries signed. It says what countries have to do to make sure that people with disabilities have the same **rights** as everyone else.



This is an EasyRead version of Catalina's report about the **rights** of girls and young women with disabilities to:



- enjoy safe **sexuality** and keep well and healthy



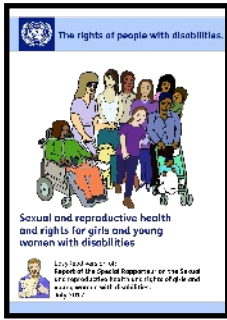
- not to be sexually abused



- decide whether or not to have children and get support to have healthy children.



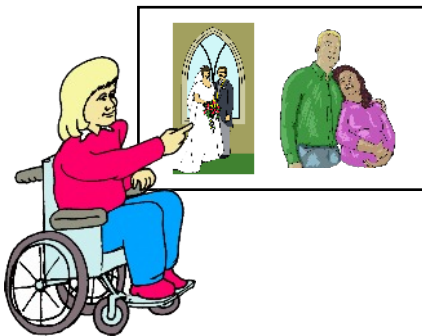
This is known as **sexual and reproductive health and rights**.



The report talks about:



- how to keep girls and young women with disabilities safe.



- how to give them more choice and control about what happens with their bodies and lives.



2. Rights and girls and young women with disabilities



About 15 out of every 100 people in the world today have a disability.



People with a disability are often **discriminated** against. This means they are treated unfairly or do not have the same chances in life as other people.



Girls and young women with disabilities are often treated worse than boys and young men with disabilities.



The **Disability Convention** says all people with disabilities, including children, should be involved in decisions about their lives.



Sexual and reproductive health and rights mean girls and young women make choices about:



- their own bodies



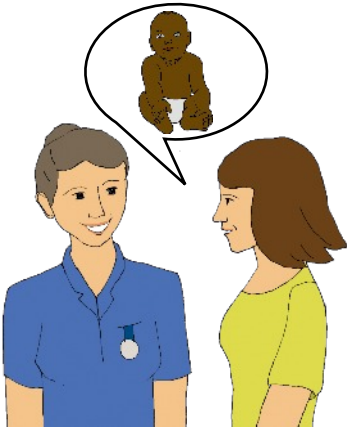
- having safe sex that they enjoy



- having healthy relationships



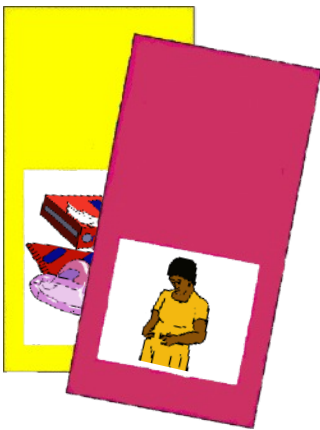
- not being hurt or made to do anything they do not want to do



- having the freedom, support and healthcare to choose when and how often to have children safely



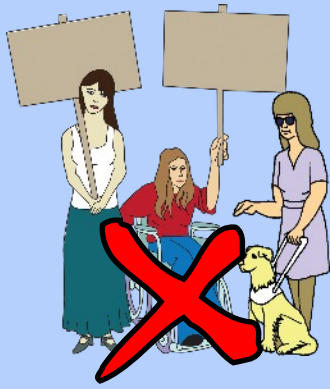
- having information and treatment for diseases that are passed on through sex



- having information about safe ways to not get pregnant. This is called **contraception**.



This report is about **girls** under 18 years old and **young women** up to 24 years old.

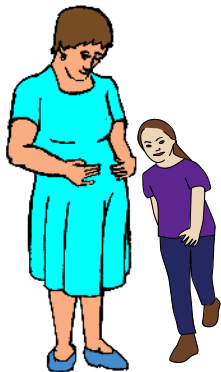


3. Things that stop girls and young women with disabilities getting these rights

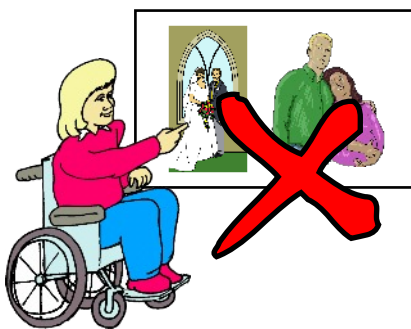


The way other people think about girls and young women with disabilities

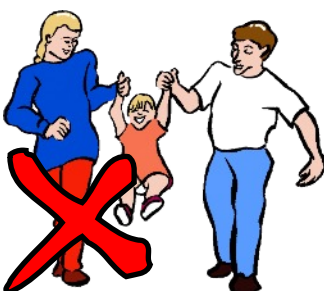
Other people often think girls and young women with disabilities:



- should not be interested in their bodies, relationships or **sexuality**



- cannot make decisions for themselves or do all the things other people can do



- should not be wives and mothers. Their families might be ashamed of them

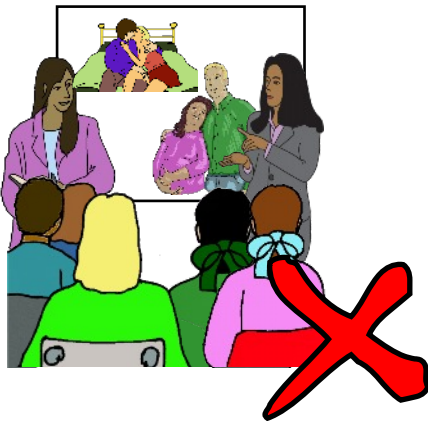


- do not need to learn about **sexuality** and what is good or safe.



This can mean they do not feel good about themselves or know how to stay safe. This can mean they are at risk of abuse. Sometimes they get married to a person who can hurt them because they do not feel confident or able to speak up.

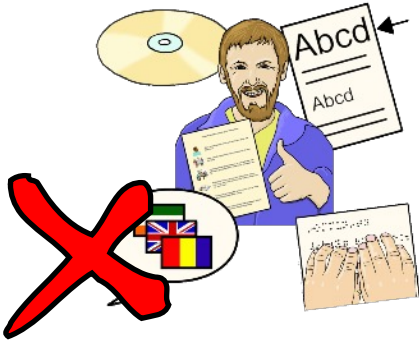
Not getting information and health services



Many girls and young women with disabilities do not learn about **rights**, **sexuality** and having children at home or in school.



This might be because people do not know how to explain things to them. Or because many of them go to different schools from other children, or do not go to school at all.



Often there is no EasyRead or other **accessible** information on these things. Sometimes they stay at home and their family do not tell them.



It can also be difficult for girls and women with disabilities to use services to help them:

- feel good about themselves



- learn about relationships



- understand sexuality



- enjoy safe sex



- choose when and how often to have children safely.



They might miss out because they do not know about services. But often services do not know how to support them properly.



Girls and young women are more likely to be sexually abused or treated badly if they:

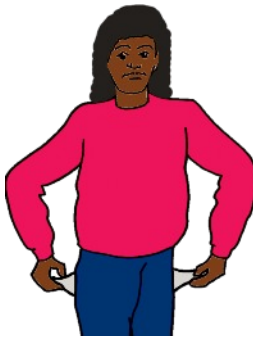
- live in hospitals



- in prison



- are refugees



- are poor



- have many disabilities

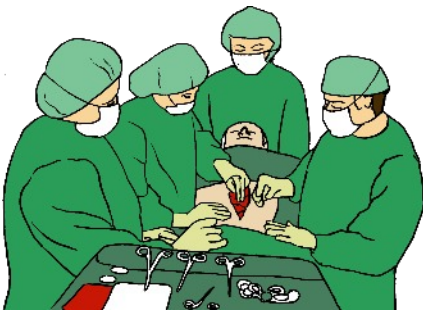


- go to special schools or do not go to school at all.

Doing things against their will



Girls and young women with disabilities often do not give permission for treatment or understand what will happen if they have it. This is against their **human rights** and the **United Nations** says it could even be torture.



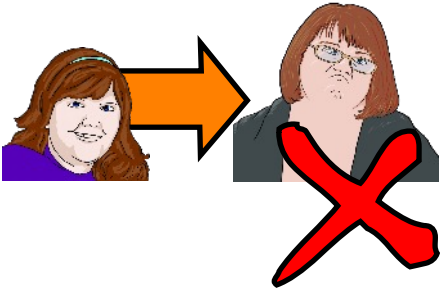
Many girls and young women with disabilities are **sterilized** because other people think this is the right thing to do. This means they have an operation to stop them having babies.



Other people make the decision to give them injections to stop them getting pregnant, or an **abortion** (an operation to stop them being pregnant).



Some families or carers worry about how girls with disabilities will cope with **periods** so they make them take drugs or have operations to stop the periods. They do this without their agreement.



Sometimes carers give girls with disabilities drugs to stop them growing into women and make them easier to care for.



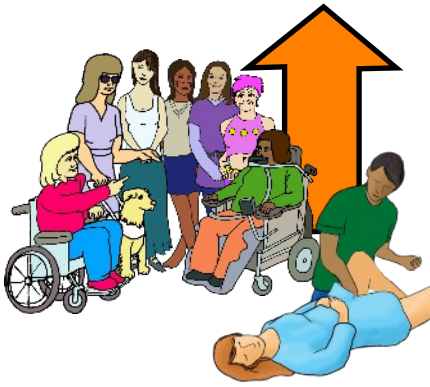
All these things are very bad. They take away their **human rights**.



In some countries, some families find a man to marry their daughter with disabilities when she is still a child. They think this means she will be looked after in the future.



In other countries, families believe it is important to cut a girl's private parts. The **United Nations** says this is cruel and must be stopped.



Violence against girls and young women with disabilities

Girls and young women are more likely to be abused if they have a disability.



This happens in different places and different ways, often by people they know and trust.



They are even more at risk if they are poor, refugees or living in a country where there is a war.



When people abuse them it is difficult for girls and young women to go to the police or courts because:

- they are not **accessible**



- people working there do not know how to give them support or communicate with them.



also worry that they:

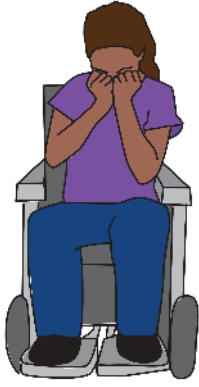
- will be taken away from home and put in a hospital or other institution



- lose their children



- lose their support



- will be abused even more.



The police and courts often do not understand or believe what they say.



4. How to help girls and young women with disabilities get these rights

Countries must think about 9 things:

1. Laws



Make sure their laws support girls and young women with disabilities to get the services and information they need. This includes support and information to help them decide about operations or drugs.



Get rid of laws right away that allow people to **sterilize** girls and young women with disabilities and do other operations without asking what they think.



2. Policies and plans

Make sure all their plans about **sexual and reproductive health** and **rights** include girls and young women with disabilities.



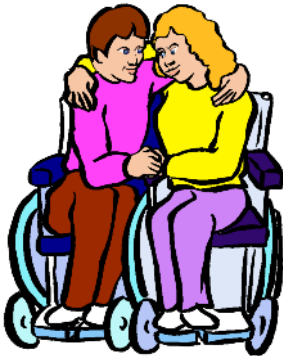
Make sure that girls and young women with disabilities get good information and services close to their homes. These services should be free or very cheap.

3. Education

Teach girls and young women with disabilities about:



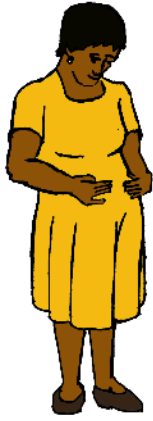
- their **rights**



- **sexuality** and healthy relationships



- feeling good about themselves



- choosing when and how often to have children safely



- diseases that are passed on through having sex



- staying safe from abuse and violence.



Make sure schools teach girls and young women with disabilities about **sexuality** with EasyRead information.



Train health workers, teachers and families to keep girls and young women safe without taking away their **rights**.



4. Justice

Get rid of rules that stop girls and young women using the courts. For example because of their age or disability.



Train the police and courts to understand how to support them to:



- stay safe



- tell the police about violence and abuse



- give evidence (say what happened to them)

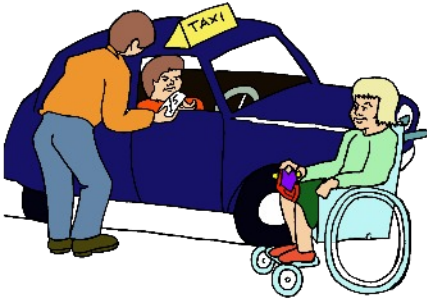


- speak up in court.

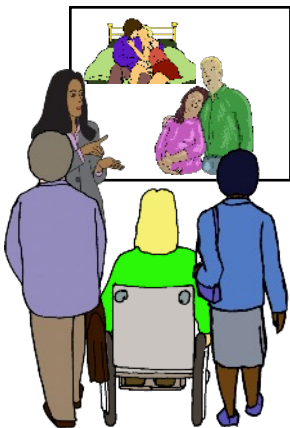
5. Services everyone can use



Make sure girls and young women with disabilities have information and can use the same services and support as other women.

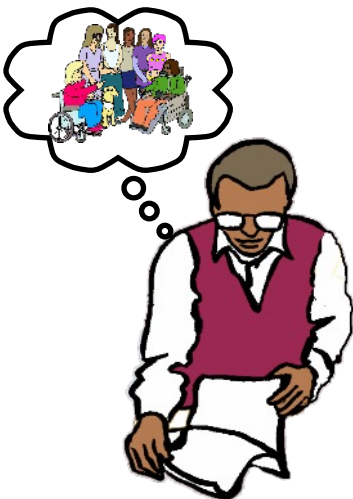


This includes having transport they can use to get to these services.



6. Treating everyone fairly

Make sure services treat girls and young women with disabilities equally and fairly so they can get good, safe support in their local community.



7. Involving people

Involve girls and young women with disabilities and their organisations in plans about their **rights**. They might want different things from their families or carers and it is important to listen to what they say.



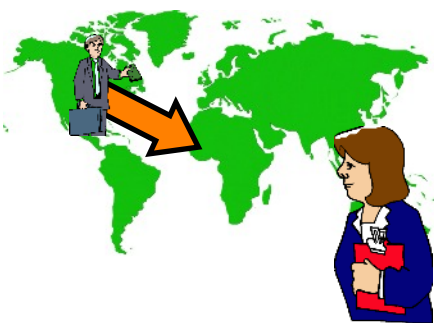
8. Collecting good information

Understand what is happening to girls and young women with disabilities. Get better information to help countries plan how to make sure they get their **rights**.



9. Using their money, staff and services well

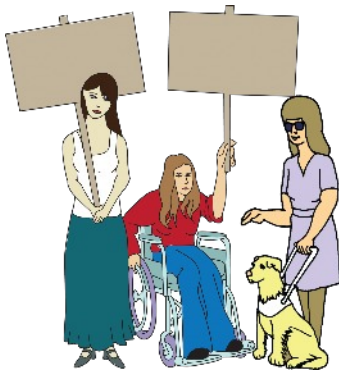
Check whether they use their money, staff and services well to help girls and young women with disabilities get their **sexual and reproductive rights**.



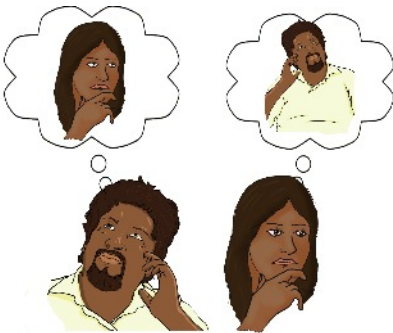
If a country gives money to help a poorer country they must make sure they use it help everyone.



5. The most important things to think about



Girls and young women with disabilities have the same **rights** as other girls and young women to:



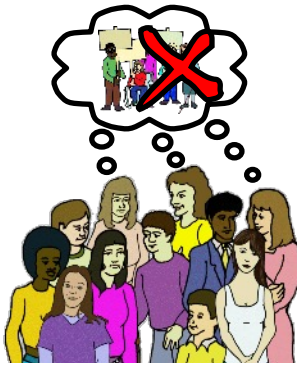
- enjoy safe **sexuality** and keep well and healthy



- not to be sexually abused



- decide whether or not to have children and support to have healthy children.

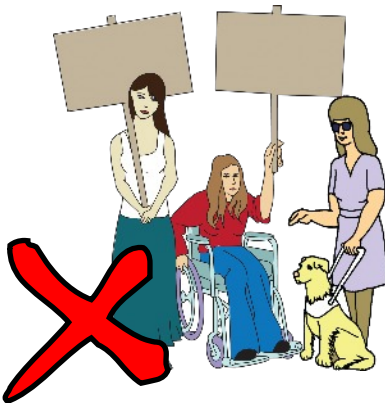


Many do not have these **rights** because:

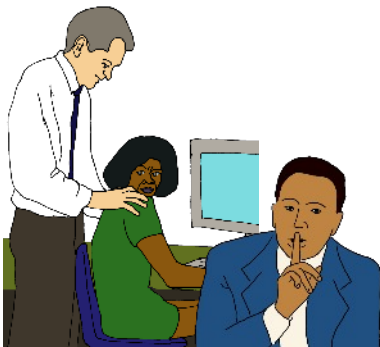
- people do not think they need them



- laws do not protect them



- they do not know about their **rights** or services to support them



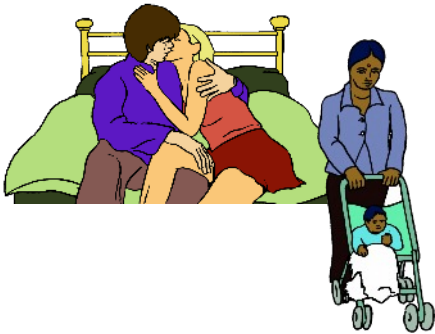
- a lot of violence and abuse is secret and people do not know about it.



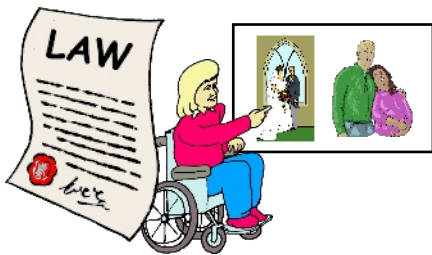
6. What happens next?



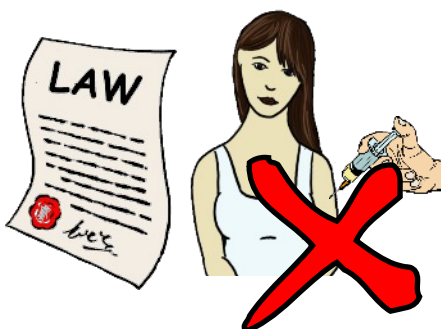
The **Disability Convention** says countries that sign it must have laws and policies to give all people with disabilities their **human rights**.



Catalina says these things will help girls and young women with disabilities get their **sexual** and **reproductive rights**:



- laws that protect these **rights** and help them get services and information and make decisions for themselves



- laws that stop other people giving girls and young women drugs, treatment or operations they have not agreed to



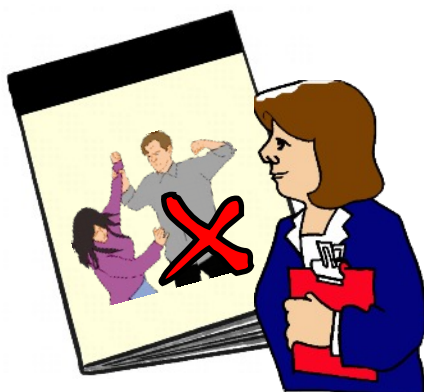
- plans, information and services for sexual and reproductive health that include girls and young women with disabilities



- good sexuality education for girls and young women with disabilities in schools and other places



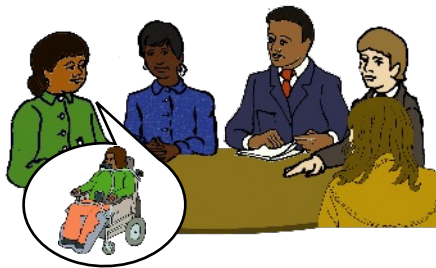
- training the police and other services to protect girls and young women with disabilities from violence



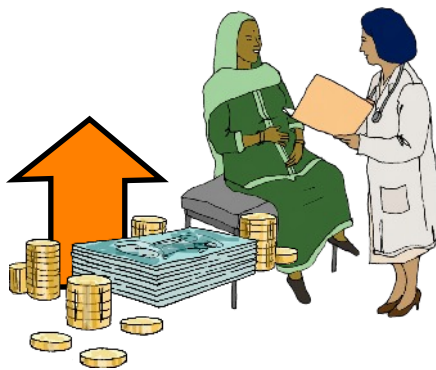
- if national and local organisations check places where people with disabilities get services, and say very clearly that violence and abuse are wrong.



- training families, carers and the public to understand that girls and young women with disabilities have **rights** and sexual violence against them is wrong



- safely including girls and young women in plans about **sexual health**, and plans to stop abuse and violence



- enough money to make sure services can give girls and young women with disabilities the right support.



Catalina says the **United Nations** should think about the **sexual** and **reproductive rights** of girls and young women with disabilities in everything it does.



7. What the words mean

Abortion – an operation to stop a pregnancy.

Accessible – a building or service that is easy use. Information that is easy to understand.

Contraception – things like a condom, pill or injection that can help stop a woman getting pregnant.

Disability Convention – a set of rules that countries have to follow to give people with disabilities the same human rights as everyone else.

Discrimination – treating someone worse than other people because of who you are or where you come from.

Human Rights – basic rights and freedoms that should happen for every person in the world.

Periods – the womb is where a baby grows in a woman's body. If she is not pregnant the lining of the womb comes out of her body as blood about once a month.

Reproductive health - the right to decide whether or not to have children and support to have healthy children.

Rights – things that should happen for every person.

Sexual health - the right to enjoy safe **sexuality** and keep well and healthy.

Sexuality – having sex or your choices or feelings about sex

Special Rapporteur – a person working for the UN who helps countries understand what they need to do to make sure people get their rights.

Sterilized - This means women and girls who have an operation to stop them having babies.

United Nations (UN) – a group of 193 different countries that work together to try to make the world a better and safer place for everyone.



Credits

This paper has been designed and produced for the United Nations by the EasyRead service at Inspired Services Publishing Ltd.

Ref ISL101 17. September 2017.

www.inspiredservices.org.uk

It meets the European EasyRead Standard.

The **Making it Easier Group** making EasyRead information with **Leading Lives**.

Artwork includes material from the Inspired EasyRead Collection and cannot be used anywhere else without written permission from Inspired Services.

www.inspired.pics