

The IPPF newsletter by and for young people

# X-press

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## VIOLENCE

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**It is a sad reality that a huge proportion of the world's young people suffer violations of their sexual and reproductive health and rights. As the articles in this edition of X-Press show, violence** whether it is based on gender, sexuality or cultural norms is wide spread and can take place in the home, school or community. The contributions also highlight the importance of recognizing that violence does not necessarily mean physical violence but also includes emotional and psychological trauma suffered as a result of bullying or verbal harassment.

**Being silent on this issue can be fatal. If we are to protect and promote the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people we need to make every effort to emphasize the importance of individual integrity and respect for each other. This should be done as a matter of urgency!**

## Harassment at work

**"As young people, we must fight for our right to be respected by our families and our country"**

*Young people in Nicaragua begin contributing to the economic development of their families from an early age. However, labour law does not differentiate between an adult and a young worker, and this is a barrier that affects the youth's development. "As young workers we have the right to our physical and psychological integrity within our work", said Lesbia Torrez, who suffered sexual harassment from her boss. This unfair situation of abuse and harassment that young people are suffering is due to the lack of values within the society, we must ensure that young employees are treated with respect.*



**Claudi Padilla Díaz -Masaya, Nicaragua**

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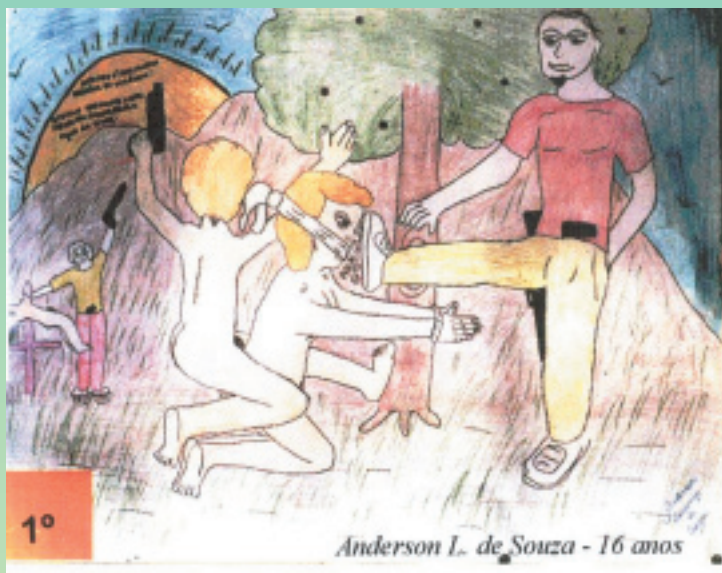
### ORIGIN

This project will assist African and African-Caribbean young men (13-18 years) to broaden their horizons and make a positive contribution to the communities in which they live whilst working with their families and community.

For more information, contact  
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As part of a project, titled '**Adolescents and Gender Violence, Preparing young women for the Future**' BEMFAM organised a youth contest in Rio de Janeiro. The participants were asked to present writings, illustrations or poems related to situations of violence. The illustration below by a 16 year old was the winner.



BEMFAM – Brazilian Family Planning Association

# Manifesto Corner

## IPPF/YOUTH Manifesto Goal 2

young people must be able to be active citizens in their society.

### The Youth Advocacy Movement in Trinidad and Tobago works towards giving young people a voice and raising awareness about sexuality and diversity.

Through my participation with the Youth Advocacy Movement (YAM), I interviewed a group of youth in my neighbourhood on the sexual abuse of young people based on gender and sexual orientation.

They talked about boys bullying and teasing girls as a form of gender related abuse. This may be related to the fact that in some parts of Trinidad and Tobago, men are taught to believe that they are superior to women. Sexual abuse in dating relationships and violence related to sexual orientation were also highlighted. Some of the older youths, said they would prefer if Trinidad had no homosexuals!

In our country, young people have not had the opportunity to speak for ourselves. YAM hopes that our work will give young people a voice and reflect their needs. No young person deserves to be abused based on his/her sexual lifestyle.

**Jude Lewis**  
20 years  
The Youth Advocacy Movement of Trinidad and Tobago

# WHY USE ACID AS A WEAPON?

**Women in Bangladesh have always been oppressed by religious fanaticism, superstition and various forms of discrimination.**

*Farida and her six year old son Mithun had acid thrown on them by Farida's husband in the midst of the night. He was a gambler and a drug addict. He never worked but demanded money from Farida. She worked hard to meet his demands but was still attacked and victimized. She lost the spark in her eyes. She wants justice. There are many acid victims like Farida and her son who have survived, but are*

*they really alive? They are corpses with blistered limbs, faces with eyes full of tears. No aspirations and no means of success .....*

*The Acid Survivors Foundation, Naripokkho and the Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB) have been supporting many survivors and raising awareness about these issues. But we need to do more. How long can we continue to simply stand and watch this fiasco? I know we can bring about change and we must do it now.*



**Fahima Mallick**  
**Youth Member**  
**FPA Bangladesh**

## **Sexual Violence ..... what a vile practice!**

Sexual relations should be achieved in a climate of understanding and partnership. It astonishes me that some people still do not know this.

Sexual violence has become common currency and takes place on the streets, schools and even churches. But though everyone knows, nobody complains.

ELDORADO has just started a large campaign to popularise the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We plan to put pressure on the political authorities to respect these laws and fight against sexual violence.



**Trésor KASIA,**  
**President ELDORADO/ACCESS**  
*Association for Change of Behaviour in  
the fight against AIDS and SRH for  
young people.*  
*Kinshasa - Democratic Republic  
of Congo*

## **SURVIVING THEIR ATTACKS**

ACID THROWING is a vicious form of violence against women and is a grave violation of human rights. Rejection of marriage proposals, love affairs and not being able to pay dowry seem to trigger men to throw acid on the women they claim they love.

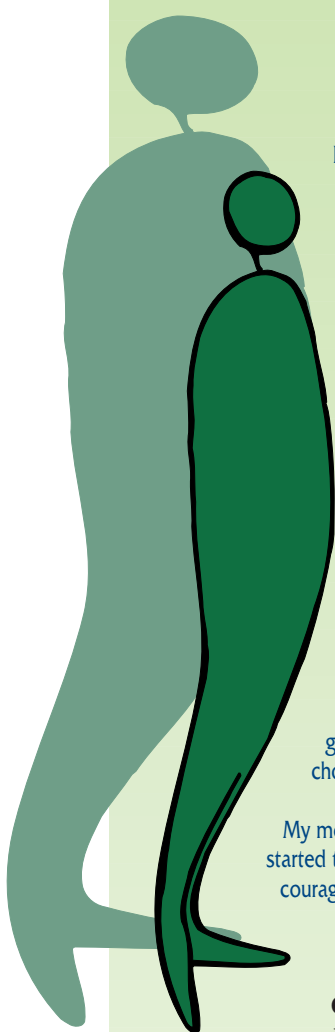
The consequences of acid attacks are horrifying. The victim is not only physically injured, but also psychologically and socially traumatized. Most survivors are compelled to give up their education, their occupation, and even give up their homes and families for fear of further attack on their family members.

We cannot escape the collective responsibility for the current state of our society. The shattered security of the victims' lives could still be pieced together if we join hands to fight against this most brutal violation of human rights.

**Lopa Mudra Chowdhury**  
**20 years Bangladesh**

# Violence...

## ...A wound that lasts



**I am a thirteen-year old student living in Thailand. I now have a happier family life, yet I remember clearly old memories of the gloomy atmosphere we used to live in.**

My parents used to fight all the time. Mom was a full-time mother and Dad worked outside the house. I was little, could not understand what went wrong, and was feeling frustrated and upset. Can you imagine always hearing your parents arguing, seeing your mom crying almost every time you come home? Our house turned to be a battlefield. Although I have not been hurt physically, this situation definitely left me with mental and emotional problems that will perhaps last forever. Mom always used to say to me: "Hard work will help you achieve your desired goals in life. Then you will be the one who chooses not the one who is chosen".

My mom has changed a lot since then. She started to work and is successful. She is very courageous and determined. I learn a lot from her, and appreciate life more, making me stronger and confident.

**Chonticha Chaising,  
13 years old  
Thailand**

**In April 2002, Chad adopted a law promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and prohibiting harmful traditional practices like female genital mutilation (FGM).**

However, FGM still exist even giving rise to jubilation ceremonies under the noses of the authorities. Can it be acceptable in the present day, that one group of people celebrate the pain of others? It is truly barbaric. The justifications given in favour of these harmful practices are no longer defensible. As an Egyptian feminist pointed out, it is by education that one preserves chastity, not by cutting out the clitoris. Is God less intelligent when His creation is modified by Man?

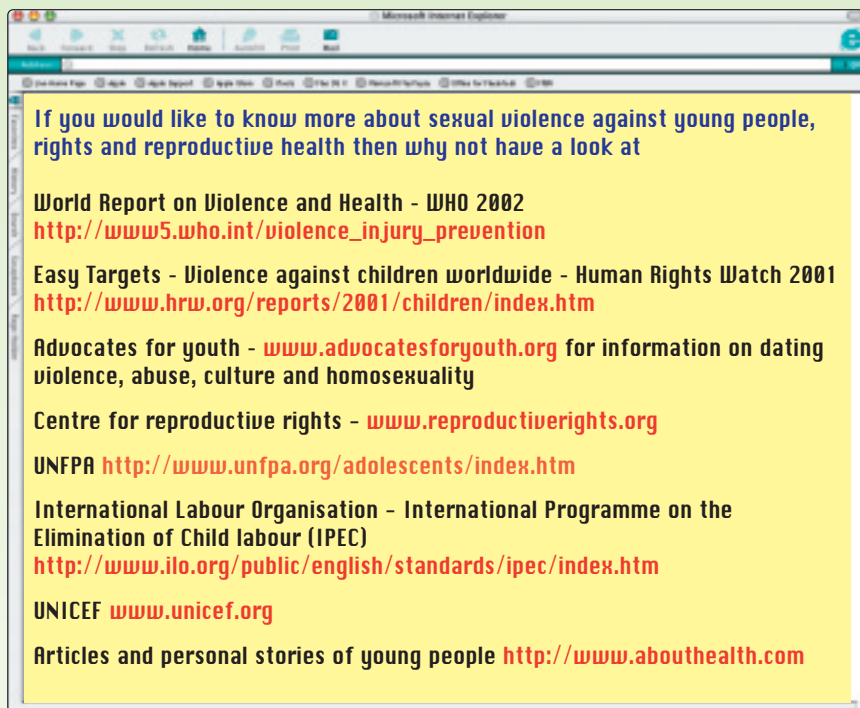
**Yacoub Tchorama Kadi, 24  
Youth Focal Point ASTEBEF/Tchad**

**In Bulgaria, although young people have access to a variety of information and services, sexual violence is taking place in many spheres of our lives.**

In addition to physical forms of violence, there are others, not so brutal but not less dangerous. I have a classmate we refer to as a homosexual. None of us really thought he was gay, in fact everything started just as a joke. After two years, when we had almost forgotten his real name, we realized what had happened. He stopped talking to people, became unsociable and depressed.

Although nobody had acted with bad intentions, when people are laughed at and made fun of, it can result in very cruel forms of violence and life long consequences. As young people, we are all potential victims and should do our best to prevent violence in our communities.

**Diliana Sokolova  
18 yrs, Youth Volunteer,  
Bulgarian FPA**



**If you would like to know more about sexual violence against young people, rights and reproductive health then why not have a look at**

- World Report on Violence and Health - WHO 2002**  
[http://www5.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention](http://www5.who.int/violence_injury_prevention)
- Easy Targets - Violence against children worldwide - Human Rights Watch 2001**  
<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/children/index.htm>
- Advocates for youth - [www.advocatesforyouth.org](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org) for information on dating violence, abuse, culture and homosexuality**
- Centre for reproductive rights - [www.reproductiverights.org](http://www.reproductiverights.org)**
- UNFPA <http://www.unfpa.org/adolescents/index.htm>**
- International Labour Organisation - International Programme on the Elimination of Child labour (IPEC)**  
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/index.htm>
- UNICEF [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)**
- Articles and personal stories of young people <http://www.abouthhealth.com>**

# End the violence not the culture!

## “HONOUR CRIMES” a Look from the Inside

**Honour crimes are acts in which a woman is killed by her husband or a close relative for her ‘actual’ or perceived immoral sexual behaviour. These so called “honour crimes” are a product of cultural and tribal customs where the honour of the family is linked only to the girl’s virginity and killing her is considered a means to bestow the honour of the family. Even in the case of rape, the girl is blamed and killed often by the abuser who usually is the father or the brother.**

The roots of this practice are pre-Islamic and can be found in communities of both Christian and Islamic origins. Both Christianity and Islam condemn killing of the innocent and regard it a punishable act. Although adultery is considered a sin, punishing it in such a brutal way is baseless. As mentioned in the bible; Jesus passed near a crowd ready to stone a

woman for committing adultery and said “If any one of you is without a sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her”. In Islam also, the cases of adultery are handled with great caution to prevent the phenomenon of honour killing and save many that are sanctioned over mere speculations based on a total gender bias.



Sadly, both ignorance that results in ill interpretations of religious sanctions and gender biased laws continue to sustain the practice of honour killing. Shelters for victims of violence and sexual abuse are an important step to take, however, this is only a remedy but not a solution that would put an end to this horrifying phenomenon.

**Rana Abu Gazalleh  
Youth Volunteer  
Palestinian FPA**

**In the Somali Regional State of Ethiopia grave violations of sexual and reproductive health and rights occur because of the harmful traditional practices like early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation. The Federal and Regional governments, traditional leaders, religious leaders, together with local non-governmental organisations are working together to put an end to these practices.**

Young girls living on the streets are often victims of sexual abuse in the form of casual or organised prostitution. In addition to the abuse and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and STIs, they also suffer physical and psychological ill health because of the harsh living conditions on the streets.

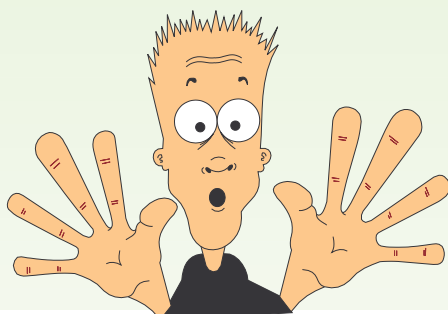
Something needs to be done urgently!

**RUN NGO – JIGJIGA (SRS) ETHIOPIA**

**The entire world is a victim of violence. Fear of death is present everywhere. A certain level of violence is also a fruit of traditional practices; such as female excision and forced early marriages**

Democracy should be the real basis for human relations, and we must remember that “Where my freedom stops it starts for another.”

**Gisele Kouame-Mida  
AIBEF - Cote d’Ivoire**



## IPPF/GTZ COURSE ON YOUTH

A two week residential training course focusing on the sexual and reproductive health needs and rights of young people is to be held in August 2003. The course is for health professionals and young people working specifically on programmes and activities for adolescent sexual and reproductive health

For further details and an application form for August 2003 please write to [youthcourse@ippf.org](mailto:youthcourse@ippf.org) or see [www.ippf.org](http://www.ippf.org)

## World Health Day- April 7th 2003

Message from Kofi Annan  
“A child’s world is centred around the home, the school and the local community. These should be places where children can play, thrive and develop, and where they are protected from disease. But in reality, these are often places where children -- particularly children in poverty -- face multiple threats to their health”.

Please see [www.who.int](http://www.who.int) for more information

# IS IT NOT MY RIGHT?

You promised yourself that you would never find your self being molested by man

You assured yourself that a woman would never rob you of your manhood  
He said she was just a friend, she said he was just a friend.

Legs, my hands, my body and my independence do not seem to be mine anymore

He stripped it from me,  
She stripped it from me  
They disguise themselves as escort services and meagre paying jobs  
Where they exchange my worth for barely minimum wage

Do I not have a right to express my disgust or my discomfort?

That stroke quickly transforms into a sensation of not love or mere lust but of infringement

That caress invokes a sudden stir of not satisfaction but anger

I turn to let out a shout or scream I get thumped across my face

The look in his eyes full of rage, eager to steal something he knows is not his

Is it not my right to strike him?

He has forcefully taken what I have been freely given

Is it not my right to ridicule her?

She uncovered my very being what makes me, me

Are we not different yet equal?

I stare into her eyes,

I stare into his,

Frightened by what I see

In his I see my little brother or my male companion

In hers I see my girlfriend or best friend's sister

**By Kimberly Stewart - 18 years**

**Youth Advocacy Movement of Trinidad and Tobago**

# What happened to the "safe places?"

## Pain of Trust

Is there no place to hide?  
I wished to be washed out with a tide  
The shadow around is frightening me  
I need to get away to be free

I know of a place I can go  
My family doesn't have to know  
It's not that far from my home  
It allows me to build up courage alone

The pain, the anger, the frustration and all these emotions could be my down fall  
I know of a way to get rid of it  
And I'm pretty sure it won't hurt a bit

I wonder if I'll go to heaven or hell  
If I stay back any longer I'll never be able to tell  
Before I could leave  
I must write what no one believed

"Goodbye,

I'm sorry I had to leave this way  
But the man you all trusted  
Used me again and again  
Bringing me shame and pain,  
But mother it hurt more  
To see that you didn't believe me before  
Now you will know and be wiser  
The abuser was your brother!"

**Charlotte AURELIEN, age: 20**  
**Youth Advocacy Movement - St. Lucia**

## Violations and sexual abuse of young people in schools

**In Zambia, a lot of girls in boarding schools are abused by their teachers. As a result many girls fall victim to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. Although it is a widely known problem, authorities do not seem to be doing anything about it.**

Today, many youths are in need of youth friendly services and information. Young people should get together and share ideas about protecting their rights as a means of preventing these violations of human rights.

*In our community two 15 year old girls were sexually abused by a police officer who was HIV positive. One of the girls disclosed the matter to her parents who then reported it to the police. Both girls later tested HIV positive. Such situations are escalating in Zambia because young peoples' sexual and reproductive health and rights are not respected and protected by society.*



**Zacheaus Silungwe**  
**Zambia**

To me the bottom line is that the complainant should be able to say 'NO' and the abuser should be able to 'TOLERATE' that fact.

All youth should be integrated into solving this problem of sexual violence among our youth today. By means of familiarising them not only with their human rights but also with the responsibilities that comes along with it. We should stand together to end sexual violence.

**Dawid Bonnie Gawaseb** (age 21)  
Youth club - Peer educator  
Namibia Planned Parenthood Association (NAPPA)

If a young person approaches you to report an abuse case, listen, be sensitive to the child's feelings and take him or her seriously. It is very difficult for a young person to report an abuse case, especially if the abuser is a family member or friend.

If someone close to you has been sexually abused, **do not** take the law into your own hands. You **must** contact the police and/or the local social services as soon as possible.

In order to build a better today and tomorrow for us please promote, and protect our right to grow in an environment free of all forms of abuse and exploitation.

**Peterson A. Yearwood**  
President, Barbados Youth Advocacy Movement.

I believe that the environment you live in has a great impact on the abuse you suffer. If a father beats his child and the mother accepts it saying, "your father loves you and cares about you", in future you might find this child who was beaten up almost everyday abusing someone else because he/she feel it's the right way to teach someone a lesson. I don't think anyone feels happy to be hurt and no one has the right to hurt someone. Let's respect humanity.

**Chris Apollus**  
Namibia Planned Parenthood Association (NAPPA)

# Talking about violence...

Sexuality is a basic part of being human and sexual rights are thus an inherent part of human rights. Human rights affirm the dignity, worth, respect, equality and autonomy of all people in all aspects of their lives. Sexual rights, particularly of young people are enhanced through access to information, education and services. In a situation where these avenues are absent, the exploitation and abuse of these rights becomes inevitable.

Youth Dignity International (YDI) is based in Badagry, and sadly the community is prone to HIV/AIDS, human trafficking, prostitution, sexual abuse and exploitation on a daily basis. YDI is working to enlighten and provide services to the community and we seek your collaboration to enable us reach as many young people as possible through our programmes.

**Femi Aina Fasinu**  
Youth Dignity International, Nigeria  
Youthdignityinternational@yahoo.com

Violence against women and girls can take place anywhere and by anyone, even respectable people. In Ethiopia, the rights of women and girls are violated because of gender norms and due to young women's lack of awareness of their sexual and reproductive health rights. Violent attacks take the form of pushing, beating, biting, kicking and even burning with acid. What cruelty!

The only solution for eliminating these forms of violence is for every concerned body, Governments, NGOs and particularly young people to work together to ensure that we are properly informed and that laws are strictly monitored and implemented.

**Bizunesh Sintayhu**  
Eastern FGAE  
Youth Volunteer, Ethiopia

## Where do we go from here?

In recent years a number of surveys conducted in Pakistan on child sexual abuse have brought out shocking results. A 1992 survey in Karachi of 220 females in colleges and university sites showed that 82 % know victims of child sexual abuse.

- ★ More efforts are required to develop special legislation, to deal with young victims of abuse
- ★ More information on sexual abuse should be made available to children.
- ★ To ensure sensitive treatment of the victims, police, nurses, doctors and lawyers must be educated and trained.

**Family Planning Association  
Pakistan**

Teachers in some schools use their positions to inflict pain and torture by threatening young girls to either have sex with them or have low grades. A lot of girls continue to live in fear due to the fact that they cannot talk to parents about it. If they do, they are not simply trusted and talking to other teachers will just create more trouble. It takes a lot of courage to stand up and say "no" to these advances.

We must

- Revisit traditional gender roles and norms
- Remember that abuse, exploitation and violence have serious effects on the lives of young people among them lowered self-esteem and self hatred.
- Do something about girls being forced to drop out of school in cases of pregnancy even if they have been sexually abused.
- Be aware that young people who suffer such abuse can also abuse other people resulting in a vicious cycle of sexual abuse and violence.

**By Anne Alan Sizomu  
Naguru Teenage Information and Health Centre.  
Uganda**

### My Ordeal and Agony

I was bullied by senior students from day one of boarding school. They made me to do their laundry and collect food from the mess. They have put 'urine bombs' under my bed sheets and caned me. But I would be defiant because I was assured protection by the school authorities. I was wrong.

So what we need are:

- ✓ Government policies that protect and advocate for better lives for all young people.
- ✓ NGOs, Community, political, Religious and opinion leaders need to work hand in hand with young people to address violence
- ✓ Information materials with a strong message against violence and abuse
- ✓ Services established to help support those who suffer sexual violence and punish perpetrators.

**Kidega Omal  
Peer Counselor, Naguru Teenage Information and Health Centre.  
Uganda**

## X-press yourself on ABORTION

Every year millions of young women undergo unsafe abortions and for thousands of them it is fatal. Yet abortion remains one of the most controversial sexual and reproductive health issues.

The debates on the right to access safe legal abortion raise questions relating to cultural and religious beliefs, an individual's right to health and the right to choose.

What do you think about it?

What do you think the cultural, religious and legal obstacles are to accessing safe abortions?

How do human rights issues impact on these arguments?

Tell us about awareness raising projects that have been done in your community about reducing unsafe abortion.

How do you think the legal system should address this issue?

Do you think the health system or the community at large have a role to play?

It is a sensitive topic but unsafe abortions are affecting millions of young women all over the world and its disastrous consequences make it hard to ignore.

So spare a little time to think about it and share your ideas with us. You can send articles, poems or drawings. We would also like to receive photographs and cartoons.

Please be sure to send in your contributions by the 26th of September 2003.