

The IPPF newsletter by and for young people

X-press

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Contents:

- **Participation and getting involved:**
Victoria Daskalova
- **Gender and HIV/AIDS highlighted by young women at the United Nations:**
Marina Braga
- **Differently Abled Adolescents:**
Ricky Clores
- **IPPF ESEAOR Regional forum:** *Roellya Ardhyaning Tyas*
- **A Classic Example of Participation:**
Kofi Boakye Dankwa
- **YES! in Peru:** *Ricardo Villaverde Castillo and Fiorella Luna*
- **Performing to inform, Family planning association of Nepal youth group**
- **News News News**
- **IPPF Africa Regional Youth Forum**
- **Manifesto Corner**
- **So what is participation?: Your views**

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The theme of this edition of X-press is young people's participation.

So what is participation? Because participation can mean so many different things X-press wanted to find out from young people themselves what participation means to them. Lots of people wrote in with their opinions about what participation is and some tips for how to support young people to successfully participate. You will also find packed into these pages lots of examples of young people participating, through drama in Nepal; peer education in Peru; the creation of a youth network in Africa and much much more.

Participation and getting involved

What is participation? Some people define it as going out in the streets, shouting "We don't want a world with AIDS"; others believe it is preaching new morality and a new type of behaviour. To me participation is far more general; it is all about supporting an idea either as an individual or a group.

Getting people involved is not that easy! The most common problems we face are lack of interest, lack of trust, lack of seriousness and motivation. So, where are the roots of the problem? If my audience are not interested in the problem and aren't serious about it, then, it is because I don't know how to approach them. If they don't trust me, it is because of the ways I act (my communicative skills), and if they doubt my competence on these matters, maybe I don't have enough information. But when my audience begin to show interest, come to me for counselling or just say after the

talk "Can you provide us with more information?" then I know the core of the problem is that often we, peer volunteers, lack practical training, what we need so badly is the know-how.

We need theory, but we need the practical knowledge as well. We need to get into the situation – feel it; face the problem – deal with it! This is what we try to do when educating peers – involve them so that they understand.

As a peer educator, I have experienced the difficulties of working in a group, when you have to motivate the reluctant, inform the ignorant, encourage the shy, and find the resources. But I have also made it through alone, with no one to help me, give me advice, and keep me enthusiastic. So, working in a group is a better and more supportive way of getting involved. But what about the problems I mentioned? How can we overcome them? I believe it is motivation we need. If the educator is motivated then they make use of all of their skills.

So, to me:

**Education + Motivation =
Perfect Combination**

Then, having received these, the person should make up their mind whether they want to participate, and how they want to do it.

**Victoria Daskalova, 16,
Family Planning
Association, Bulgaria**



A group of participants on their way to entertain peers, 1999. Victoria is the one in front in the yellow top.



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Gender and HIV/AIDS highlighted by young women at the United Nations.

The Commission on the Status of Women reviews progress on women's rights. The 45th Session of the commission met from 6th -16th March 2001 at the United Nations in New York. As well as reviewing countries progress on putting women's rights into practice the commission also looked at 2 specific issues: Racism and HIV/AIDS. Young women from different parts of the world took part in a panel discussion on HIV/AIDS organised by young

people who formed a youth caucus (group) at the meeting. Marina Braga from the Ukraine Family Planning Association took part in the discussion panel.

"I work in one of the branches of the Ukrainian Family Planning Association. I am one of the members of their Youth Section. Before the Conference I was worried a little, because it was my first International Meeting and I didn't know how to behave. Everything was easier than I thought. The situation was friendly and I

had support from members of the Youth Caucus.

This was my first International Conference and it was useful and interesting to meet young women from different countries and find out about their activities. The situations of women in every part of the earth are different, and I tried to acquaint people with the situation in Ukraine where the education system does not provide quality information on reproductive health and rights and this is not helped by the economic crisis."

Differently Abled Adolescents

Do adolescents with disabilities have Sexual and Reproductive Health needs? If so, should they be free to fulfil these needs? Can we all support adolescents with disabilities to express these needs?

Yes. And this is absolute.

But I'm talking ideal here. The prospect of adolescents with disabilities expressing their sexual and reproductive health needs seems revolting to many people ("What-if-she-gets-pregnant!", "He-can't-handle-himself-it's-so-dirty!"). We focus more on disabilities than abilities.

Even the discussion of these Sexual and Reproductive Health needs is seen as unnecessary, or at best limited. The reasons, mostly tangled up with misconceptions and convenience, range from a belief that adolescents with

disabilities should learn first and foremost "survival skills" to excuses of "no funds" for programmes.

But the winds of change sometimes come and we all get to breathe fresh air!

With the strong support from the Asian Women's Welfare Association (AWWA)- Teach Me Services, the Singapore Planned Parenthood Association (SPPA) conducted a six-hour workshop for the differently abled

adolescents in May and June 2000. The young people who attended the workshop were aged 14 to 20. The programme covered a range of issues, including self-esteem, boy-girl relationship, building relationship(s), masturbation, sexual intercourse, contraception and sexual exploitation.

By Ricky A. Clores, IEO, Singapore Planned Parenthood Association
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Participants at the workshop From left to right: Lee Yuan Ping; Zulfauzi Zainal; Jonathan Low; Ricky Clores (Standing); Pou Wei Jie; Chan Yu Leong; Lim Guisheng; Lai Weng Chong; Yeo Jie Wee; Jovin Tan; Kathy Lee; Vicky; Vignesh Thamby; Anthony Tan.

IPPF's ESEAOR Regional Forum

IPPF's East and South East Asia and Oceania Region (ESEAOR) held a youth forum from 19th – 23rd March 2001. It took place in Penang, Malaysia. One youth volunteer under age 25 and one adult attended from each of the 23 FPAs participating.

Discussion focused around key themes, of youth friendly services; communication/information for young people; sustainability; and advocacy. We also discussed the ippf/youth manifesto and how it can work in our region.

The last 2 days were spent discussing youth participation. We looked at how youth people can be involved in IPPF. We learn from FFPAM (The IPPF member in Malaysia) about how young people are involved in their work. After that, we discussed how young people can use media for participation, looking at the website www.youthshakers.org run by IPPF and Advocates for Youth. Then we made plans of action for each country. From this forum, I have learnt so much.



Young people proved that they are able to stand on their own. They had support from adults, but were not controlled by them. We do respect any help or assistance, but we are young people with abilities. This forum has given us chance to prove it, and to improve it. So guys... prepare yourself for bigger work!

Dedicated for all ESEAOR regional youth forum – I really miss you guys...

Roelya Ardhyaning Tyas, Youth volunteer, The Indonesian Planned Parenthood Association

GLOBAL YOUTH CONNECT

Global Youth Connect is a global organisation, led by and for young people, which supports and encourages youth activism for human rights and social transformation. "Our mission is to build and support a community of front-line activists from around the world, and to inspire a new generation of young people to work for human rights and social transformation." See their website www.globalyouthconnect.org for more information.

YOUNG PEOPLE OF NICARAGUA DEVELOP AN EDUCATIONAL MANUAL: FRIENDS FOR GROWING UP!

Profamilia Nicaragua youth clubs have developed an Educational Manual, based on the activities carried out over the last three years. "In this Manual we included all the experiences and lessons learnt in our clubs. Our easy to use Manual, full of subjects of interest, deals with issues of personal development and sexual and reproductive health, using simple language, and practical dynamic exercises for youth-to-youth activities." YOUTH CLUB, PROFAMILIA, Nicaragua E-mail: adolescentes@profamilia.org.ni



And What makes participation happen... or not?

"One thing I have realised is that it is not the amount of people who make something a success – it is the amount of good will and energy that helps to achieve your goals. A few people can do really a lot. Isn't it great?!"

Anna Przybylowicz, youth group leader Polish Family Development Association

"It is very important that young people talk to young people. This is more effective as teenagers accept younger people and are more open to asking questions about sex etc. Our future plans are quite big. We want to find new volunteers, so there are more younger people in our project, as we "old ones" say, "fresh blood".

Agnes Alvela, Pille Kuusvere, Pille Teder, Irje Vihur, Leaders of youth project, Family Planning Association of Estonia

"Society does not always offer us enough options so we young people can see life from

a different point of view."

José Miguel Renville, Youth Volunteer, Profamilia Dominican Republic (An IPPF Member)

"We young people want to participate actively in taking the decisions and in events that determine our lives... To be a promoter of adolescent sexual and reproductive health means a commitment to change what until now our society considers is sexuality. We can achieve this in the belief that we, young people, have much to give to society and that there are people who believe in us."

Manuel Alejandro Mireles, 22 years old, Sexual and Reproductive Health Promoter, Venezuela

"No restrictions should be placed on young people's participation in dealing with the problems that concern them. Important decisions are often taken solely by parents and political decision makers and this explains the

failure of a good many programmes. The initiative must come from young people themselves; "You can't shave a head without its owner"! We hope to change the inequalities that prevent young people participating, firstly, by encouraging young people to participate, and helping them to be aware of their role and place in solving their own problems."

Youth focal point group AMPPF, Mali (An IPPF Member)

Being young is being active, being the first to take the initiative. Our coming together is our strength, so lets make X-press a means to bridge our differences. A young volunteer has duties towards the society and the association they belong to. They must be available and ready to serve without racial or religious discrimination, but with the joy of giving and offering services, joy or information.

Ali Ammar, Youth Committee member, Family Planning Association of Lebanon



In Peru

YES! (Youth Empowerment System) is a project run by INPPARES the IPPF member in Peru. YES! aims to improve sexual and reproductive health of young people, in four marginalized districts of Lima, Peru and to increase their use of counselling and health services. The project uses youth educational stations or huts, which offer counselling, interactive computer education, and a group activity area. Two young YES! educators working in the stations tell us their experiences.

Ricardo Villaverde Castillo writes:

"I am 19 years old and I'm studying Mathematics at University. So "What is a young man who is reading Mathematics doing teaching about Sexual and Reproductive Health?" To tell the truth, that was also the first question I asked myself. I think the fact that I am a maths teacher stood in my favour and made it easy for me to work with boys and girls, and so I thought I would be able to cope... Well, that's what I thought.

When I joined YES! I was full of prejudices and negative ideas, for instance about machismo, homophobia and a terribly strict and rigid way of seeing life. In a word, I was a guy plagued with prejudices and my fellow workers, whom now I can call my friends, made me see this and helped me to change.

YES! also gave me the opportunity to get to know a different reality I had not seen before: poverty, cases of violence and the many doubts, myths and beliefs young people have, particularly about their sexual and reproductive health. Knowing that I have the chance to help them sort out their dilemmas or support them in some way is one of the greatest benefits I have received from the Project.

YES! is probably one of the most important experiences in my life, it has made me grow as an individual. Knowing that what I am doing is helping other young people confirms something I had only sensed in the past – that it

is us, ourselves, who can achieve the changes, that we are part of the solution, not part of the problem."



10 to 12 year old students participate in an interactive workshop at the Comas YES station.

Fiorella Luna writes:

When I came to INPPARES looking for work I already had a big responsibility; I have a little girl, she's 2 years old, and it was because of her I needed to better myself so that she wouldn't want for anything and I could continue my studies at the University. The day of my interview arrived, all went well and without being asked I told them I had a child. Several weeks went by and they called to confirm that I had the job; what joy.

The day fixed for my training arrived; when they told me what the work consisted of I thought: "What am I doing, I know so little about sexual and reproductive health?" But the instructors showed so much faith in me I decided to accept the challenge as best I could. I met many kind people who offered me support and helped me increase my knowledge.

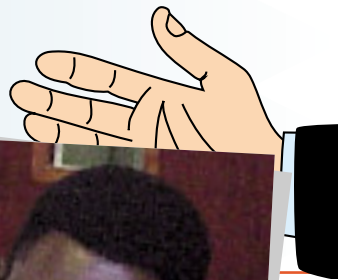
We opened my Station, in Los Olivos; I felt great joy and nervousness at the same time, but there was always someone supporting me, telling me: "Fiorella, I know you are going to do well!" and for me that was a great help.

I started my work at the Station. I had my first counselling session and I was very nervous, but little by little I was able to steady my nerves, and now I can teach, conduct workshops and provide counselling with no problem at all.

With YES! I learned and continue learning many things; it helped me a lot in talking to people, to understand them without judging them and to accept people as they are, with their faults and their virtues. This Project brings much to my life, as a person, as an adolescent and as a mother. It teaches me to seek information about subjects I knew nothing about. I know that the young people who keep coming to the YES! Youth Educational Station are better informed than I was at their age.



CLAUDIA MONTALVO speaks with a young client outside the Los Olivos YES station.



A classic example of Participation

One day, I took a good look at my hand and observed that all the fingers were different, in shape, size and length but yet each one was very important and one could not do without the other.

I can think of nine important elements of participation:

- 1. Good communication;**
When speaking, speak slowly, clearly and use simple language that everyone understands. If you feel somebody is speaking too fast, just politely and respectfully ask them to slow down a bit.
- 2. Be assertive and don't be afraid to give your opinion on any issue.**
- 3. Respect the rights of other people and recognise the right of other people to their personal opinions.**
- 4. There should be no discrimination.** People are born to be different but it is important to remember that in our diversity we are united.

5. Always work together as a team Working in small groups gives me the opportunity to be creative and think very hard. Working in small groups lets everyone talk.

6. There should be time to just have fun. Having fun lets everyone loosen up, it removes shyness, enables us to know our likes and dislikes and helps us relax.

7. Make sure that everybody is given a well-defined role to play. This makes each member feel important, raises self esteem and increases commitment.

8. Ensure that everybody has direct and free access to information.

9. We should be willing to learn from others

We are not equal so far as our abilities are concerned; some are born to be great musicians, surgeons, artists, some administrators. In our diversity we are united because we complement each other.

**KOFI BOAKYE DANKWA
GHANA**

UNICEF CALLS FOR END TO CHILD MARRIAGES

A new UNICEF report, released on 7th March 2001, highlights the physical and emotional toll of early marriage and motherhood. UNICEF said early marriage constitutes a violation of a girl's human rights - primarily because it can deprive her of the right to give full and free consent to marry. Young brides tend to be pulled out of school prematurely and pregnancy-related deaths are the leading cause of mortality for girls aged 15-19 worldwide. Child marriages are most common in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where poverty, traditional taboos about pre-marital sex and fears of AIDS are widespread. UNICEF called for governments and grassroots groups to discourage child marriages by educating parents and young people. Raising the legal age of marriage and to register all marriages can be a step in the right direction, the report said. SOURCE: International Herald Tribune, 8th March 2001.

WORLD LEADERS HEAR WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY

Mandate the Future, a Worldview International Foundation project, is a network of websites for young people including a central project website at www.mandatethefuture.org, a web magazine with in-depth articles at www.mandatemagazine.org and a community website with shorter articles and comments from readers, www.ctrlaltesc.org. Mandate for the Future are organising an Event, which will last from 5 to 11 June 2001 at www.ctrlaltesc.org. The event will give you the opportunity to have your questions answered by people like heads of state across Asia, Africa, the Americas and Europe, as well as world leaders like UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan; people with power, position or influence. The Event will also give you the opportunity to vote on many of the topics that are discussed; the results of these votes will be brought before world leaders and the United Nations as an expression of youth opinion from across the globe. If you represent an organisation that would like to take part as an affiliate member, please fill in the form at www.mandatethefuture.org.



So what IS participation?

Your Views

"Participation to me means sharing in some activity in society that is, listening, asking questions, giving and discussing information."

Princess Ukage: Youth Action Network, Nigeria.

Participation is the commitment that young people have in achieving their hearts desires and making a positive change in their communities. Working together with a common vision and the same

goals and aims that they want to achieve.

Lonwabo Jabavu, Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa

How do you all participate? Here are a few things X-press learned about:

"We have been involved in lots of things – projects, seminars, workshops, media launches as well as producing posters and a newsletter. We have helped the FPA create other Youth Groups in the region and share our experience and knowledge with them."

Members of the youth group, Family Planning Association of Georgia

"I go to the youth centre in Tirana called "Po". The image of the centre is decided by the youth group. All of us have been working hard for a long time to give to the youth centre a new more attractive look. We organised a Painting Party and decided on colours and the image of the centre."

Dorina, youth volunteer, Family Planning Association of Albania

"I was invited to travel to Japan from 13-21 November 2000 and speak in the Youth Forum on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Learning about an issue is the first step to realising the responsibility we have as young people, but knowing is simply not enough. We must also actively work to achieve the secure and peaceful world we envision. We must constantly remind our governments of their responsibility to

us their citizens as well as their obligation to citizens around the



world. As youth, we have the greatest challenge, but also the greatest potential to create a world that is just and secure for all."

Carah Lynn Ong is 22 and the International Co-ordinator for Abolition 2000 Global Network to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons.

For more information e-mail: abolition2000@napf.org or visit the website at [Http://www.abolition2000.org](http://www.abolition2000.org)

During our school holidays we decided to set up an information and exhibition booth in one of the shopping malls where most teenagers love to loiter around for fun and relaxation at the weekends. As this was our first outreach activity I was very shy and nervous when it came to approaching

strangers. I didn't know what to say. I felt awkward standing around and distributing leaflets to the passer-by. Fortunately we had Fadzul who is a "smooth operator" when talking to total strangers. I really learnt a lot from him- the art of public speaking!

Kelvin Woo, Youth Chairman: Sabah Family Planning Association of

FFPAM, Malaysia

We have produced plays which give information about sexual and reproductive health as well as entertain young people and the community.

Jerusalem Dagne, Youth Volunteer, Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (An IPPF Member)



Youth Forum workshop Jimma, Ethiopia

IPPF Youth Manifesto **C**

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Thoughts on the IPPF Youth Manifesto

For young people to be involved they need to have determination and love to do what they want because if you want something badly enough, you can achieve it. The manifesto can be developed by giving more autonomy to young people in carrying out their projects.

Audrey DUPLEXIS, ACBEF, Congo, (An IPPF member)

"The manifesto is a very interesting document that will permit me to expand the definition of participation to young people in decision making. Especially after it is adapted to the contexts of different countries."

Safiatou Diallo, Youth focal point, AGUIBEF, Guinea Bissau (An IPPF member)

Don't forget to sign up to the [ippf/youth manifesto at: www.ippf.org/youth/manifesto](http://www.ippf.org/youth/manifesto)

In this section we follow the different ways the IPPF manifesto is being used. This time we go to the Congo where young people are participating in

developing a comic strip, a information bulletin and drama sketches to educate young people about sexual and reproductive health issues.

"We have a news bulletin called 'Bien-Etre Jeune'. The bulletin covers issues seen as important for young people including information on methods of contraceptives; illegal abortions; STI and HIV/AIDS; teenage mothers and finally, advice on how to successfully negotiate adolescence. Young people were on the editorial team for the bulletin. At the first meeting, we met together to discuss the format, the paste-up the bulletin. During the second meeting, we decided on the themes to be developed. We visited schools and the university to get young people's points of view. The bulletins help us to inform and educate a large number of young people. They can be sent to the

branches of the FPA and can reach young people in isolated areas. 'Bien-Etre Jeune' is sold at an affordable price in places frequented by young people – schools, universities and libraries. The demand for the bulletin has been great. Some young people would like the bulletin to appear every two or three months instead of every six months as planned. Many parents buy the bulletin for their children."

Quotes by MBALLA, Arphé Joseph; BOUDIMBOU, Modeste Constant; DUPLEXIS, Audrey; TSIERE MABILA, Colette ; MIETE, Claude ; VINDOU, Lombi Julien. Young people from ACBEF, the IPPF member in Congo.

IPPF Africa Regional Youth Forum

Young people and youth programme officers from 13 FPAs in Africa came together in Nairobi to discuss ideas for youth participation. The meeting took place from 25th-31st March 2001. The participants worked with determination to draw up a regional plan of action to strengthen the participation of young people in the work of IPPF and the FPAs. Here is what some of the young participants had to say.

"Bringing young people together to learn from our experiences, share ideas and work together is a brilliant idea which will help our FPA's to move forward. Listening to the progress made by other FPAs has challenged me to wake up and effect a change in my FPA. I hope that

when the plan of action is put into effect there will be more participation of youth and more positive changes will be made."

Yunusa Hannatu Au, PPFN Nigeria

"The youth consultative meeting really was a great experience. I was relieved when I found that as youth from different countries we share similar problems, have the same priorities and also the challenges we face are similar."

Phetsile Shongwe, FLAS, Swaziland

"Today the IPPF has set us a challenge but our FPAs need to have the necessary resources before they can respond to our needs. To my friends from participating countries and the world we must always

continue our battle for our voices to be heard."

Jean Claude Tofio, ACABEF, Central African Republic



Young Participants at the meeting in Nairobi

Performing to inform

X-press yourself

Nothing beats entertainment when it comes to capturing human attention! Realising this the youth group of the Family Planning Association of Nepal (FPAN) took to street theatre. The Nepalese people are curious people by nature. Its easy to gather crowds- especially on the streets. People come running at the slightest hint of a commotion. And how they stare!

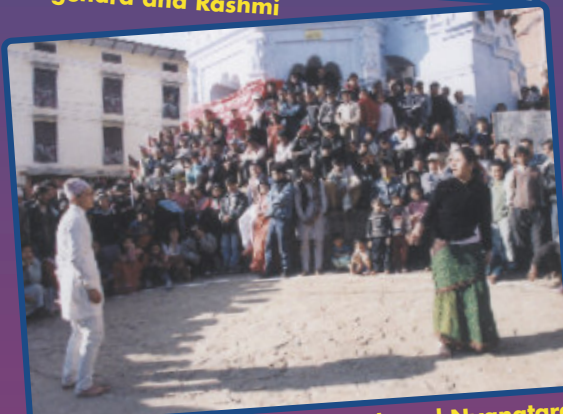
Every Saturday the street theatre team puts on a show for about 100-120 people in different communities. The artists thrive on audience reactions and the remarks and comments made fuel their energy. Even cat calls are encouraging! The scripts deals with

- sexual abuse/harassment
- early marriage
- early pregnancy and its consequences
- pre-marital sexual relationships
- gender discrimination and exploitation

Drama is not only entertaining, it deals with real life issues that



Yongendra and Rashmi



Subash and Nyanatara



Raghuraj, Mahalaxmi, Nyanatara

people can easily relate to and identify with.

Anish, Lochan, Salina, Rashmi, Shovna, Purnima, Subash A, Nayan Tara, Jagdish, Mahalaxmi, Radhika, Subash KC, Raghu, Indra, Yongendra

The theme of the next edition of X-press will be **sexuality**. But how do we define **sexuality**? Your **sexuality** is to do with how you express who you are and how you feel emotionally and physically about yourself and other people (of the same and opposite sex). This is just one idea about **sexuality**. What do you think it means? write in and let us know.

How do you express your **sexuality**? What makes you feel comfortable or uncomfortable? How do other people make you feel about your own **sexuality**? We would love to hear from you on any of these issues.

X-press is made up of your ideas, what you think about different issues and what projects you are involved. So keep your articles, poems, thoughts, ideas or photos coming. These need to reach us by the 24th September 2001.