

The IPPF newsletter by and for young people

X-press

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Hello, this issue of **X-press** is all about **RIGHTS**. Young people all over the world are born with fundamental human rights irrespective of their gender, race, religion, culture, sexual orientation or health status.

Rights are enshrined in many international human rights instruments such as the

- **Universal Declaration on Human Rights,**
- **International Convention on Civil and Political Rights,**
- **International Convention on Economic and Social Cultural Rights,**
- **Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women,**
- **Convention on the Rights of the Child.**

The IPPF Charter clearly highlights the links between human rights and sexual and reproductive health rights. You can see this on our website at www.ippf.org/charter/index.htm

In addition to many other rights IPPF believes young people have **specific sexual and reproductive health rights** which include

- the right to be yourself –free to make your own decisions, to express yourself, to enjoy sex, to be safe, to choose to marry (or not to marry) and plan a family
- the right to know - about sex, contraceptives, STDs/HIV and about your rights
- the right to protect yourself and be protected – from unplanned pregnancies, STDs/HIV and sexual abuse
- the right to have health care- which is confidential, affordable, of good quality and given with due respect.
- The right to be involved – in planning programmes with and for youth, attending meetings/seminars etc, at all levels and trying to influence governments through appropriate means.

In this edition of **X-press**, you will read about the experiences and views of young people from across the world on what rights mean to them, how these rights are violated and what they are doing to promote, protect and preserve their rights.

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What do rights mean to me?

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To me the word rights and freedom go hand in hand. Rights refer to the freedoms that everyone should be entitled to regardless of sex, age, race or class. There are various instances where basic rights have been abused or denied. The right to participate in planning programs has been denied in both developing and developed countries. How do the policy makers expect to come up with excellent ideas for young people when they fail to get our views?

Some of these rights have been denied due to existing government policies or laws, for example, homosexuality is illegal in my country but this does not mean that there are no homosexuals. Just that they cannot come out and express

their sexuality due to political, cultural and religious restrictions.

Abortion is also illegal in my country. Some girls don't have adequate information about contraceptives due to the lack of youth friendly services and parental support. This is a violation of their right to information and services and their right to choose. As a result they depend on sexual myths and misconceptions, which often lead to unsafe sex and unplanned pregnancies. Most resort to abortion for fear of being disowned by parents and expelled from school.

As young people we should endeavour to know and claim our rights and society must realise the importance of

recognising and respecting these rights and the consequences of denying some of these rights such as teenage pregnancies, STD's and HIV, which endanger our generation.



Alan Anne Sizomu
19 years
Naguru Teenage Centre
Uganda

Human Trafficking:

A Grave Violation of Human Rights



Human trafficking includes a wide variety of crimes and human rights abuses associated with the recruitment, movement and sale of people into a range of "exploitative" or "slave-like circumstances". Trafficking is a form of

modern slavery. It is estimated that 300,000 Bangladeshi children work in the brothels of India.

The underlying dynamics of trafficking include poverty, the inferior status of women and children; escape from conservative/traditional values and customs; the sexual abuse of girls, often by family members; and the willingness of poor parents and guardians to let their children go to urban centres and neighbouring countries for economic benefits of the whole family, sometimes not knowing the grave consequences.

The size and complexity of the problem and the severity of its consequences are all causes for serious concern and demand national action as well as international cooperation. The reality is that trafficking in women and children is now considered the 3rd largest form of organised crime, preceded by narcotics and guns.

Priyanka Debnath
18 years
Youth Member, Family Planning
Association of Bangladesh (FPAB)

Sexuality and human rights Indonesia

We all have the same rights as citizens of this world irrespective of our sexual orientation. The issue of sexuality is important to human life and yet discussing sex and sexuality is still a taboo and access to sexual health information and services for gay people is still very difficult.

Lentera is a Youth Service Project of the Indonesian Planned Parenthood Association Yogyakarta, Indonesia, established in 1993 to provide sexual and reproductive health information and services for young gay people. We are committed to educating and empowering gay people to protect themselves from STDs and HIV infection.

Lentera's comprehensive sexual health education program aims to give clear and complete information on sexual health, support gay people to



and referrals for medical services.

As an outreach worker for the gay and transvestite division, I have supported 5 young volunteers who help provide information and support services for almost 100 young gay people.



understand sexual behaviour and train them in negotiation skills needed for safe sex.

The project also provides sexual health services such as STD treatment and HIV testing. We provide monthly support meetings for gay people, risk reduction training, a monthly bulletin and most importantly an outreach program during which, workers meet young people at their hangout spots, offer information, condoms

Due to continuous homophobic attacks by the public, gay people no longer come to their hangout spots. We're now trying to reach them through Internet chat rooms.

Enabling young gay people to recognise their rights as well as helping to build their confidence and self esteem are the core of our activities. Gay people have the same rights as heterosexual people to live a secure and healthy life. Any discrimination based on sexuality is unfair and I am and will continue to do something about it!

Ayifarida Nawawi
Female 24
Yogyakarta, Indonesia.



Sex Education Website for 10-12 Year Olds

"The Hormone Factory" is a new website for children aged 10 to 12 years explaining sexual and reproductive development and the physical, emotional and social changes associated with puberty in a clear, straightforward and light-hearted way.

This was developed by educators and researchers for the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health, and Society at the La Trobe University in Australia and is available at: www.thehormonefactory.com

SOURCE - La Trobe University Release 17 July 2002

Manifesto Corner

Goal 1 of the IPPF Youth Manifesto is:

Young people must have information and education on sexuality and best possible sexual and reproductive health services (including contraceptives)

The Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (FGAE) puts goal 1 of the youth manifesto into action by giving young people contraceptive choices in a non-judgemental environment

“Staff does not press or burden clients but gives them choices”

At the FGAE youth clinics, young people are made to feel really welcomed and are given the

services they need. They get to choose from a whole range of services and because the centre is at a different place to the adult clinic it's not too intimidating to go there. Some of the services offered include menstrual regulation, sexually transmitted infection diagnosis and treatment, pregnancy tests and contraceptives. Service providers make sure they counsel each young person and give them full information on the contraceptive so the young

people can decide what would suit them best. “Condoms are given out freely and they get services without judgement and fear”.

As well as giving condoms out in the clinics, youth volunteers and peer educators distribute condoms and refer young people to the clinics.

Berhanu Nuru, Leulseged Wondimu, Aberra Tessema, Abreham Abera

Don't forget to sign up on the internet to show your support to the [ippf/youth manifesto](http://ippf.org/youth/manifesto) at: www.ippf.org/youth/manifesto Or alternatively write with your name to manifesto@ippf.org

YOUTH ADVOCATE FOR LEGAL ABORTION IN MAURITIUS

Abortion in Mauritius is illegal under any circumstance, even to save the life of a mother. The Mauritius Family Planning Association set up a Parliamentary type session for 500 in-school youths to debate on the issue. The Youth Parliament was divided into Government and Opposition, and a “Termination of Pregnancy Bill” was discussed. The local TV relayed the debate. The Youth Parliament succeeded in:

1. Galvanising public opinion on the issue of abortion
2. Urging leading Ministers and Parliamentarians to voice their opinion on abortion
3. Rekindling the debate in the media.

Youth Parliamentarians gave press interviews, expressing their opinion on the issue. The local TV station released interviews of the Youth Parliamentarians at peak times and in the news bulletin of the same day. Out of the 72 Youth Parliamentarians, 56 voted in favour of the Termination of Pregnancy Bill.

Rajudu Parmahuns, 18 years old, Prime Minister of the Youth Parliament

Protecting Rights in Uganda

The right to be yourself and the freedom to make your own choices, decisions, to express yourself, enjoy sex, be safe, to choose to marry (or not to marry) and plan your family is often suppressed by all organs of society ranging from parents to religious and political leaders. This they base on the idea that we are incapable of executing informed decisions, and life choices.

My work as a Peer Educator has exposed me to many young people with whom I interact with on a daily basis at the Naguru Teenage Centre. I hold discussions, conduct out-reach programs in schools and communities, distribute condoms and IEC materials to the young people.

What needs to be done?

- Greater emphasis needs to be directed at rural communities to create more awareness and equip young people to assert their rights.
- Parents, opinion leaders and religious leaders should be sensitized.
- Introduction of these rights in schools as part of the curriculum.
- More young people need to participate in programmes designed for/by them and their peers.
- More centres providing youth friendly services need to be opened in rural areas and providers of these services need to be trained on how best to handle young people and their concerns.
- Young people should also be able to access free Voluntary Counselling and testing for STDs/HIV/AIDS.

By Omal Kidega Midikyf,
Peer Educator
Naguru Teenage Center

OUR RIGHT IS OUR SOUL

Youth Dignity International (YDI) is a group of young people with strong support for the sexual and reproductive rights of young people worldwide. We strongly believe that our right is our soul and our dignity. For the past six years, we have been involved in different programs to promote the sexual and reproductive rights of young people in Nigeria. We are more concerned and focused on the less privileged, illiterate and people living in rural communities.



Since it takes two to tango, YDI strongly believe that the duty of condom usage should not be one sided. Thus it is our belief that if the two partners make it a point to always introduce condoms to one another before sexual intercourse it would go a long way in consolidating and inculcating this good habit.



We have been able to make use of the available resources to raise awareness among our peers and have recently organised a seminar emphasising the fact that "rights" are for all young people regardless of race, colour, sex and religion or mental and physical ability. We also distributed one of our recent publications titled: Rights and Youth, a booklet in which some of these rights are further explained.

In our recent research we discovered that in most rural communities where the level of literacy is very low, most young people are completely unaware of their rights, and are thus unable to exercise them. Also in most of the health centres, the costs are so high making it inaccessible for the majority. Therefore, their right to adequate health services is also trampled upon.



FEMI AINA FASINU
Youth Activist and International Co-ordinator
Youth Dignity International,
Harmony Club Recreational Centre
56, Marina Street,
P.O. Box 44, Badagry
Lagos, Nigeria



HIV/AIDS AND HUMAN RIGHTS KIT

UNESCO and UNAIDS have developed a kit entitled "HIV/AIDS AND HUMAN RIGHTS - Young people in Action" - for young people and youth organizations. The kit is available on-line in English in PDF format on the website at http://www.unesco.org/human_rights/index.htm

Should you need more information about the kit, please contact Ms.L. Haxthausen at l.haxthausen@unesco.org

SOURCE - Global Human Rights Education, 29th November 2001

NEW IPPF/GTZ COURSE ON YOUTH

A new course focusing on the sexual and reproductive health needs and rights of young people was held in September 2002. The two-week residential course is for health professionals working specifically on programmes and activities for adolescents - including young people themselves.

Further details and an application form for September 2003 are available at youthcourse@ippf.org



A PAUSE is a multi-agency programme of sex education that is operating in 150+ schools across England and Wales. It enables schools to develop teaching and learning styles that promote social inclusion and school improvement.

For more details visit the website:

www.ex.ac.uk/sshs/apause
or by e-mailing
apause@ex.ac.uk

The following was written by **Claire Campbell**, one of the peer educators in London.

My experiences of A PAUSE are good ones. The idea was to train Peer Educators for two days in assertiveness techniques & classroom management skills to enable them to go into 13 year old classes to educate the youngsters to think about sex and relationships.

At first I thought about doing it for a laugh, and the idea of teaching other students seemed a really good confidence booster. I never thought I would enjoy it as much as I did!

In schools, we do role-plays with students, talk about STIs, and myths about sex. We teach them how to cope with peer pressure. The response from the students was excellent. We have the same street slang and much more credibility. This gave them the opportunity to talk to us and ask questions they wouldn't necessarily ask their parents or teachers. Becoming a Peer Educator also helps build your confidence and self-esteem. It has given me a sense of self worth as I feel I'm really trying to make a difference in young people's lives.

Rights training in Peru

A group of 14 young people and six youth program coordinators from Ecuador, Nicaragua and Brazil visited Lima, Peru to learn about intervention strategies for youth implemented by INPPARES, IPPF's Peruvian affiliate, as well as other organizations. During the visit we got to know the work that organizations do with parents and street children; and we also learned about the IEC strategies they have and we talked about young people's sexual and reproductive rights. We were organized in groups to discuss about the subject of rights and we followed a game developed by INPPARES entitled "Know Your Rights". Through the game the participants had the opportunity to discuss rights issues. The participants indicated that this is a very funny and interactive way to analyze the topic of rights.



From left to right Alba Jalon, youth coordinator of APROFE (IPPF affiliate in Ecuador); Daysiane Correia Alves, youth promoter, BEMFAM (IPPF affiliate in Brazil); Geovania Rodriguez, youth promoter, Nicaragua and Rosa Alvarado, youth educator, Nicaragua

Alejandra Meglioli
Senior Program Officer, MA
IPPF/WHR

Working on rights with native young people from the Peruvian forest

In Peru there are more than 65 ethnic groups. Often groups of 30 youngsters are brought from the Amazonian communities to an institute where they engage in one-year courses in languages (German and English), computing and tourism.

The communities have very different culture and customs, this can make them vulnerable to certain risky situations and to possible violation of their rights.

We the youth promoters from the Future Center of INPPARES, the IPPF member in Peru, decided to implement different educational activities to promote the knowledge of their rights—with an emphasis on sexual and reproductive rights—and how they can practice them, among the different ethnic groups. We aim to show them the use of condoms (most of them might have sexual intercourse during their stay in Lima), how to prevent sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies. We also work on topics such as self-esteem, identity (to promote ethnic pride and empowerment) and gender equity. We also offer them medical services.

We want to help these young people during their adaptation process while they are in the Peruvian capital. We want them to feel happy with themselves, empowered with their rights, and, above all, protected.

Patricia Espinoza Castellares
Counseling, Future Youth Center

United Nations Special Session On Children

This year, 70 Heads of State and Governments and almost 1500 NGO representatives came together at the UN Special Session on Children to declare their commitment to children's rights and wellbeing. Most importantly it was the first time under 18 year olds had participated in deliberations at a major UN conference. A document "A World fit for Children" was agreed upon.

This and more on the Special Session can be seen at <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/>

Lee Yoke Lee is a youth volunteer of the Federation of Family Planning Association of Malaysia and attended the meeting. Here are her thoughts-

"The Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) of young people are still being denied by most people. They do not believe in recognizing and accepting it as part of the solutions. In Malaysia, we are still working on actual recognition of the SRHR of young people. The message has always been absolute abstinence until marriage. But, while abstinence is an ideal way, it is an unrealistic expectation for all young people because they live in a world full of conflicting sexual messages in homes, on TV, Radio, Magazines, Internet, Books etc.

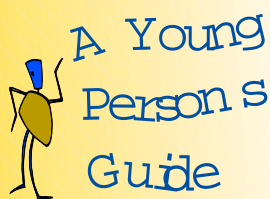
I love the idea of children addressing the UN General Assembly. As an IPPF delegate, it was an eye-opening experience to meet and mingle with other young delegates, and get a global picture of how the world is progressing on the issue of the rights of children. However, it was sad to know that some governments did not keep their promises and even want to "roll back", after all that was worked on (ICPD, Beijing). Political leaders need to see protecting children as an investment in the future of the county. They need to have a more pro-active approach to things especially SRHR of young people."



From left to right -
Dr. Pramilla Senanayake, Lee Yoke Lee,
Dr. Nina Puri, Roellya Ardhyang Tyas,
Naomi Imani, Priyanka Debnath, Kathryn
Faulkner, Saadia Anwar, Saman Asad,
Dr. Indira Kapoor, Carlos Aymerich

Lee Yoke Lee

THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD AND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS



All children are born with fundamental human rights. Rights define what you are free to do, as well as the information and services to which you are entitled.

What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)?

The CRC (1989) is a set of legal rules. The CRC has 54 different paragraphs (called articles) that cover the rights of children and young people. Some of these rights apply to your sexual and reproductive health.

191 Governments around the world have signed and approved the CRC. They have promised to make sure that all children and young people below the age of 18 years, survive, grow, are protected and participate as active members of society.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights -Young Persons Guide

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most powerful legal instrument available for the protection and enforcement of the human rights of those under 18 years old. IPPF and partner organisations have produced a youth-friendly leaflet showing how some of the articles in the Convention relate to sexual and reproductive health.

More details can be found at
<http://www.ippf.org/youth/young-person.htm>

What Do Sexual And Reproductive Health Rights Mean To You?

X-press

"Young people are sexual beings and this entitles them to sexual and reproductive health rights. It is important that young people know their rights so as to forestall denial, violation or abuse of their rights as sexual beings. Ignorance, misinformation, fear of intimidation and discrimination have hindered young people from claiming their rights. Advocacy by young people on behalf of young people is a good way to help young people claim their rights."

Ehigie Osasere
Nigeria

"Young people and girls in particular should have the right to choose whether or not to marry and the right to develop in to full adulthood before getting married to reduce the risks associated with early marriage and forced marriages."

Hamza s. Muhammed
Nigeria

"We understand that our rights give us the freedom to be who we want to be, as well as doing what is right without anyone interfering with us. In Namibia it is impossible for all youngsters to achieve their sexual and reproductive rights, and that is because our parents think that it is a taboo for young ones to have any knowledge concerning sexuality. We think that we can achieve our rights if trained members of the community go out, and provide information or knowledge to the people who are always left out when it comes to such issues. In this case we the NAPPA volunteers can explain such rights to our fellow learners at school."

Youth Volunteers
Namibia Planned Parenthood Federation

"I believe in the right to be you - to make decisions which are the right ones for you. An increasing number of youth in Norway find themselves being sexually active against their own wishes. Not because they are being forced directly, but because many feel that this is expected of them. Sex is often one of the main themes in magazines, this could have been a positive thing, but is often presented as a must. It is very important that information on contraception also includes training on how to gain self-esteem and self-respect. Everyone of us needs to feel confident enough to make decisions based on what You want and to know what feels right for You, instead of what is being expected by society, family and friends. You have the right to make your own decision, the right to say yes or no!"

Jennifer Thoresen
24 years, NORWAY

X-press yourself on VIOLENCE

Everyday, children and young people all over the world, become victims of many forms of violence.

In the next edition of X-press we will look at how abuse, exploitation and violence affect our lives and our sexual and reproductive health.

Tell us about your experiences or ideas about bullying or violence suffered because of your gender or sexual orientation. Where do you think these forms of abuse take place – at home, school or in your community? Do you think some forms of violence are a part of traditional practices or occur because of war? How do you think young people can protect themselves or be protected from exploitation and abuse? How should violence be prevented? X-press is about you and your experiences so please write in and share your thoughts on the links between violence and sexual and reproductive health of young people.

We would also love to receive any poems, jokes, pictures, photographs or cartoons from you. Please be sure that all these reach us by the 28th of March 2003.