



## PROMOTING SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSITY

Leaving no one behind

### IPPF safeguards the rights of people regardless of sexual orientation and gender

- ▶ IPPF is a leading advocate and global service provider of sexual and reproductive health and rights for all, inclusive of diverse sexual orientation, gender identities, and sex characteristics.
- ▶ IPPF's vision is for all people to be free to make choices about their sexuality, gender and well-being, in a world free of discrimination. Fighting for the most marginalized and under-served is at the heart of IPPF's strategy.

### What is sexual and gender diversity?

IPPF uses this term to broadly include all variations in sexual orientations, gender identities, expressions, behaviours, attraction, and sex characteristics that exist in people. It is inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex (LGBTI) people, as well as others who do not conform to the sexual and gender norms of society.

With sexual and gender diversity, a person can be attracted to any gender and express any gender, or no gender, and the person's body characteristics do not necessarily correspond to the sex assigned at birth. IPPF recognizes the right to bodily autonomy and self-determination.

### Why is this diversity important for IPPF?

Even though everyone has human rights, many societies differentiate people with sexual and gender diversities as outsiders, often resulting in greater marginalization and vulnerability. This can lead to an increased risk of violence, exclusion, discrimination and incitement to hatred, which impedes access to healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health, education, and employment. Stigma can prevent an individual from living a life free and to their full potential.

### IPPF's commitment

IPPF is committed to working in solidarity with organizations that address the negative sexual and gender norms, and promote and uphold the rights of sexual and gender diverse people at all levels of society.

At the Nairobi Summit to mark 25 years since the landmark International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in November 2019, IPPF recognized that IPPF and many of its Member Associations are fighting discriminatory laws based on sexual orientation, and committed to supporting each other and engaging with partners to ensure at least six countries change these laws by 2025.

### IPPF's work on sexual and gender diversity

In 2019, a total of 105 IPPF Member Associations reported that they have dedicated programmes that include sexual and gender diverse people. In addition, among the 141 policy and legislative changes in support or defence of sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender equality, IPPF contributed to seven specific changes related to promoting sexual and gender diversity.



Photo: IPPF/Julian Hibbad/Guatemala

### IPPF examples of work in cooperation and solidarity with the LGBTI movement:

- ▶ Promoting inter-governmental declarations that recognize the right to a life free of violence and discrimination for LGBTI people at the UN
- ▶ Supporting the fight for the decriminalization of same-sex acts in [Trinidad & Tobago](#)
- ▶ Providing SRH services including HIV prevention and treatment for men who have sex with men in [Botswana](#)
- ▶ Partnering with LGBTI organizations to prepare and respond to humanitarian crises in [Tonga](#)
- ▶ Implementing protocols for gender affirmation for trans people in [Colombia](#)
- ▶ Providing trans-specific dignity kits during humanitarian crises in [Sri Lanka](#)
- ▶ Supporting the successful block of the opposition in their attempt to introduce a constitutional ban on same sex marriage through a referendum in [Romania](#)
- ▶ Connecting Member Associations who are working to change discriminatory laws all over the [world](#)



### Voices from Morocco: Edwardia

“How can I be free to express myself when I am born a man but I feel like a woman?” This was Edwardia’s response during her first peer-to-peer training session for sexual and gender diversity people organized by Association Marocaine de Planification Familiale (AMPF), IPPF’s Member Association in Morocco. Edwardia, a refugee from sub Saharan Africa, thought that being trans was a crime.

Through the support of AMPF, Edwardia had undertaken counselling to help accept her identity. Today, she is a proud trans woman, an activist, and a leader in her refugee community. She is one of the main organizers of “Miss SOGIE”, a competition that enables and promotes freedom of expression. Despite the hostility she experiences, Edwardia is determined to live, work and express herself as a woman, and is committed to helping others find their identity.

**IPPF’s goal** is to ensure that sexual and gender diversity is mainstreamed across all our programmes. Our client-centred approach recognizes that people with sexual and gender diversity have unique social, emotional and developmental needs that require a welcoming and responsive health system, and policies that support their access to healthcare. In order to respond to sexual and gender diversity, IPPF’s approach is to:

- ▶ Cooperate, develop and build networks with LGBTI-led organizations and other like-minded organizations to strengthen our capacity on sexual and gender diversity
- ▶ Provide sensitivity training and value clarification for all staff to ensure knowledge and acceptance
- ▶ Foster an open, friendly and inclusive environment with our clients, volunteers, and staff
- ▶ Support educators in providing sexual and gender diverse education in their schools and communities
- ▶ Target the government, decision makers and the general public to advocate and create a lasting and supportive environment for sexual and gender diverse populations
- ▶ Tailor protocols to ensure the immediate needs of sexual and gender diverse people are met during a humanitarian crisis

### What can IPPF do to compliment work of organizations led by LGBTI people?

- ▶ In many countries, IPPF has a relationship with local authorities that makes it possible to advocate for change; this can be a challenge for LGBTI communities to do in isolation, in particular those where discriminatory laws exist
- ▶ IPPF has a wide reach into the general public; this facilitates advocacy work aiming to influence ‘the movable middle’
- ▶ Through our services we reach a broad range of populations, particularly young people, which can make it easier for LGBTI people to access needed sexual and reproductive healthcare

### What is IPPF?

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) delivers sexual and reproductive health services that let people make their own choices. We fight for everyone to exercise their right to make those choices. We are local, through our members and volunteers, and global, through our network. We meet need, wherever it is, whoever requires it, for as long as they want it.



Photo: IPPF/Ellena Ashley Williams/Sri Lanka

### Voices from Cambodia: Sathit & Sauv

Lab Sathit is a 19-year-old transgender woman, living at home in Cambodia. In high school Sathit experienced bullying and lack of support from her family made her situation more difficult. Her father in particular had a hard time accepting her gender identity.

When Sathit connected with Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia’s (RHAC) transgender counsellor, she exclaimed. “It changed my life.” Soon after Sathit became confident enough to discuss the issues and started working as a transgender activist herself. As part of RHAC’s outreach, she has led awareness raising sessions with other transgender individuals as well as local community meetings to discuss health and rights.

“We’re teaching people that being transgender or gay is not bad, it’s a good thing.” said Seat Sauv, a 19-year old volunteer with RHAC. Praising the grassroots work that RHAC’s volunteers are doing on behalf of the transgender community, she said “RHAC is leading queer people to help us facilitate and run these community meetings ourselves.”

Sauv also sees RHAC as a key ally to enact long-term sustainable change in attitudes toward transgender and other sexual minorities in Cambodia. But even with RHAC’s support, Sauv acknowledge that it was a difficult challenge.

Published 2020  
IPPF

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