



Youth in Humanitarian Action

Inspiring young people like Chathurika play a crucial role in crisis response

Overview

In May 2017, flash flooding in Sri Lanka triggered landslides resulting in many people losing their homes, forcing them to seek shelter in camps. IPPF's member association the Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka (FPASL) assisted those affected and provided health camps with the support of IPPF Humanitarian. Chathurika Jayalath, a youth volunteer for FPASL, took part in the response.

Putting Young People First

Young people are at the heart of IPPF's work: not only as clients but also as advocates, peer educators, volunteers and service providers. They identify problems and find solutions, taking an active role in decision making and programme delivery. IPPF is also increasing its capacity to respond to emergencies around the world, and with that the engagement of our youth volunteers in these contexts.

Ongoing SRHR needs, even in a crisis

Chathurika is a 24-year-old student from Kegalle, a large town about 80 km from Colombo, and has been working with FPASL for the last three years. She started as a youth volunteer and recently became a member of the Youth Technical Advisory Committee.

Through FPASL, Chathurika has learned about sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender issues and has



organised workshops on similar topics in her own community. She runs a youth club at her university to inform her peers about SRHR.

Chathurika also received training with

FPASL on the needs of people in humanitarian settings. "This made me realise that people's SRHR needs don't disappear just because there is a crisis."

Youth Mobilisation

Shortly after the floods began, Chathurika received a message from FPASL calling for youth volunteers to take part in the response.

During the IPPF humanitarian response to the floods, Chathurika volunteered in the health camps. She assisted the medical staff with basic things such as mobilizing affected people, making sure they queued up when seeking health care and packed medicine.

"I wanted to volunteer during the response. As a university student I didn't have money to donate so I figured I could contribute with my strength instead."