

MODULE 4



The roles of young volunteers/youth group in the MA

This module is for EDs, board members, staff, managers, adult volunteers, young volunteers and anyone who is involved in (the coordination of) YCA in the organization

Introduction

Each organization is different, its structure, management, strategies and activities. To meaningfully place young people at the centre of an organisation and recognize them as diverse and autonomous rights-holders requires not only commitment to meaningful internal change but also an understanding how best young people can play an active role. However, placing young people at the centre as key agents of change does not mean that we just delegate roles and responsibilities to young volunteers to cover the needs of the MA; we work with them, exploring together what interests them. We make ourselves aware of their skills, experience, motivations etc. Young people can have many different roles as members/volunteers of the youth group/MA. In this module, you will find an overview of the different kind of activities young volunteers of your youth group can be involved in.

To get a better understanding of the role of young people in the organization, you can look at these videos:

[Missing the obvious in employee recognition | Claire McCarty | TEDxUWRiverFalls](#)

[How to Create Your Dream Community For Your Life or Organization | Radha Agrawal](#)

[I'm 17 | Kate Simonds | TEDxBoise](#)

[Simon Sinek on Intensity vs Consistency](#)

This module has 6 sections

- Young volunteers in governance
- Young volunteers and decision making
- Young volunteers as peer educators
- Young volunteers as peer providers
- Young volunteers as advocates
- Young volunteers as researchers



1. Young volunteers in governance



Since Governing Council adopted the youth participation in governance policy (see Policy Handbook 1.7, Terms of reference for the Governing Council Youth Representatives), IPPF at all levels needs to achieve the recommended 20 percent youth representation on governing boards (see IPPF Act and Regulations 8 (4)). The institutional policy, and the monitoring of our progress against this target as part of the global indicators, has had an immensely positive effect on both prioritisation of young people's SRHR within the Federation and on our perception as a champion of young people's rights in the sector

Challenges in having young people in governance:

- **Adding youth members or replacing adult governing council members**

The IPPF Secretariat argues that youth members should replace adult members because it sees this as an important part of mainstreaming youth participation. When IPPF included gender equality in their policy, female governance members replaced existing male members. By mainstreaming young people into IPPF structures in a similar way, we could work to eliminate age-based discrimination and the separation of youth work. By replacing adult governing council members, the role of a young person as member of the board expands. He or she will not only be included only in "youth matters," but will also advise and make decisions on all aspects of the work of the MA. Involving young people in the board of the MA will strengthen the culture, structure and programming for young people in the organisation

The young volunteer who is on the board can lose contact or become much less involved in the youth group of the MA. It is the responsibility of the young volunteer, the youth group and the MA to ensure that this does not happen.

Providing support to all governing board members in their roles

While some MAs welcome and support young board members, some fail to do so. MAs need assistance to help build the capacity of young people and to help them remain connected with the youth networks in their countries and regions. This support is needed for both the youth members and the adult members. Part of this structural support must also be focused on technical assistance and capacity building for the youth representatives themselves.

Young volunteers may need support in speaking up in public and adults may need to learn to listen and respect the opinions of young people. Shared learning can also be extremely helpful for both young and adult board members to create more cohesion and support between all board members





Case study: Young people in Governance in Kyrgyzstan

The Reproductive Health Alliance of Kyrgyzstan (RHAK) has 395 members from which 60% are young people.

According to their statutes, policies and program documents, the young members of RHAK have the right to be elected to the governing bodies on regional and national levels. In the elections to the governing bodies (National Board and Boards of branches) of the RHAK at least 30% of the total number of nominees must be young people.

With the establishment of RHAK, in order to achieve the set strategic goals for ensuring awareness of young people of their SRHR, it was decided to create a body in the Alliance structure that unites young volunteers and gives them the opportunity to declare, present and act in defence and the promotion of their SRHR openly and on a level playing field with adult members. In this regard, in 2003, young delegates of Youth Forum (a national meeting of young members of the Alliance) developed the Regulation on the Youth Committee of RHAK, which was then approved by the General Assembly of RHAK in November 2003.

Young people in RHAK have decision-making power and are able to elect their representatives.

- The National Youth Committee consists of the Chairpersons of the Youth Committees of the branches. At the meeting of the National Youth Committee, the Chair of the National Youth Committee is elected from among them and approved by the General Assembly.
- The youth committees of the branches (consisting of 5-7 people) are elected by the general meeting of members with the right to vote between the ages of 14 to 25 years.
- The Chair of the Branch Youth Committee, upon approval by the Board of the Branch, is automatically included in the Management Board of the branch.
- The decisions of the Youth Committee regarding the youth policy of the Alliance for Reproductive Health are coordinated with the Alliance's National Board.
- The Youth Committee has the right to set up various commissions in the framework of its activities.

The Youth Committee's goal is to provide comprehensive support to young people in the field of reproductive health and rights, namely:

- ensuring the wide access of young people to high-quality information and services for family planning, sexual education and services on the basis of voluntary consent and informed choice;
- combining the efforts of all interested organisations and individuals in informing and providing youth services in the field of reproductive and sexual health through their wide involvement in the activities of the Alliance;
- preservation and maintenance of the reproductive and sexual health of youth;
- promoting, protecting and protecting the basic rights of young people to free and informed choices about their reproductive and sexual health;
- providing young people with the full range of information on sexual and reproductive health, including family planning and related services.

The main activities of the Youth Committee are:

- training and preparation of youth in the field of reproductive health, organisation of training courses, conferences, scientific symposia;
- providing and disseminating high-quality information to young people on family planning and reproductive and sexual rights;
- provision of information, contraceptives and friendly services in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- development of projects and programs within the framework of ARZ activities;
- communication and cooperation with other youth organisations
- organising activities for young people and adolescents to promote healthy lifestyles;
- protection of the interests of the Alliance at all levels.



Case study: Young people in Governance in Cyprus

The Association has a “Youth for Youth” Group established in 1996 by a group of active young volunteers whose main objective at the time was to provide young people with information and training on issues related to SRHR. CFPA has been and is a youth-oriented organisation. Its programs and services are tailored to address the needs of young people with a focus on providing information on SRHR issues, and empowering them to make informed decisions related to their sexual health. In addition to that, one of the Association’s priorities has been active youth participation at all levels of decision-making, and youth involvement in the design, implementation and evaluation of programs.

The “Youth for Youth” group is one of the governing bodies of CFPA and welcomes members from 16-29 years of age. Its actions are guided by an ‘Internal Regulations’ document. A Coordinating Committee of 5 young people between the ages of 18-25 years old is elected by the members of the group. Members between 25-29 years of age are members of the group, but they do not have a voting right when it comes to electing the Committee which consists of: the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Member(s).

The main objectives of the “Youth for Youth” Group are the following:

- To educate and provide training to young people on SRHR issues
- To actively involve young people in decision-making bodies within and outside the organisation at local and European level
- To advocate for Sexual and Reproductive Rights
- To provide information and support to youth on SRHR
- To empower young people and encourage their participation at all levels of CFPA’s work
- To involve young people at all stages of the Association’s programs and activities (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation)

Members of the group are actively involved in the decision-making processes of the organisation, and are represented on the Board of Directors. Two members of the existing Board are young people. Young volunteers are trained to be peer educators and to provide support through the Help Line. They are also involved at all stages of project design and implementation; they represent CFPA in conferences, meetings and workshops at national and European level, organise awareness campaigns, represent the Association in the media and participate in advocacy activities. Furthermore, young people represent the Association in youth networks at European level such as YouAct, YSAFE and Astra Youth, as well as at the local level. The Youth for Youth Group is a full member of the Cyprus Youth Council (CYC), the official platform of youth organisations in Cyprus, involving political and non-political organisations and it is a full member of the European Youth Forum (EYF).

Young Board Members have the same rights and responsibilities as any other member. The Board of Directors is a “safe space” where young people’s voices and suggestions can be expressed and heard. A space where they are well informed about the Association’s activities and current challenges. Young people’s involvement often gives the organisation a new perspective and new ideas. The MA is well informed and up to date on the current and changing needs of young people through their representatives.

- **Clarity on roles and responsibilities**

Some confusion still remains within governing boards about the role of young representatives in governance, and specifically their responsibilities for connecting IPPF's work to the broader youth network(s) in their region. Since one rationale for youth participation on governing council is to bring together IPPF's governance with the young people that IPPF seeks to serve, more effort will need to be made to provide concrete opportunities for them to interact with the clients, volunteers and youth networks, both formally and informally. The lack of communication between the youth members and the youth group members remains a challenge. It is vital that there is a system in place so that all young people can be represented at board level and get regular feedback. This is even more important when young board members travel abroad for the regional council or other meetings. It should also not be a given that youth board members will always represent the MA in the country or internationally.

- **Increasing diversity in youth representation**

Diversity is a challenge in youth participation work, particularly in decision-making processes. The Regional Council may want to promote representation from different groups of young people, including the younger ones, young LGBTI people, young people living with HIV, young people with disabilities or young people from marginalised groups.

- **Fostering aspirational goals, not just minimum compliance**

The quality of youth participation and changes in power dynamics are difficult to measure. While some MAs go far beyond IPPF policies, there are still MAs that don't comply with the minimum requirements prescribed in youth policies. IPPF should promote, nurture and reinforce the cultural shifts that the Federation needs to make in order to truly embrace youth participation and go beyond the 20 percent requirement for youth representation in governance.



Tips as an MA:

- Recommit to and ensure compliance with the 20% youth representation target in governance.
- Invest in internal capacity-building for existing board members of all ages for meaningful youth-adult partnerships
- Invest in opportunities for youth representatives to build skills in governance
- Improve connections and communications, both formal and informal, between board representatives, youth networks and young volunteers
- Ensure that people with different backgrounds have equal representation in the MA's governing structures
- Ensure equal decision-making power between young people and adults on all boards by creating a safe and supportive environment in meetings and providing additional support to the youth board member with a 'buddying' scheme.





Lene Stavngaard's story

Lene was first introduced to the world of SRHR through a peer education programme on sexuality at her high school. Finding the experience enlightening, she decided to get involved in teaching the programme. After the funding ran out, she continued on her own initiative. It was from there that she came into contact with the Danish MA. There were no young people involved at that point but she learnt from a staff member that there was a lot happening at IPPF around youth involvement. She attended her first Regional Council in 2005 when she was elected as a youth representative.

Lene's election as a youth representative paved the way for young people's involvement in governance for years to come. She fought to get young people voting rights at IPPF, instead of simply attending as observers, and made sure they were not seen as simply fulfilling a quota but were fully involved in IPPF decision-making. Then, despite being 24 and eligible to run again as a youth representative, she chose to run for the REC as an ordinary member, to allow a young person from the newly-created Youth Sexual Awareness for Europe (YSAFE) network to join the board. This move was met with resistance by some who felt that young people had their dedicated space on the board and that was enough. However, Lene managed to convince others that she could offer something to the board, beyond fitting an age bracket and she encouraged delegates to practice what they preached with regard to youth participation. She won support and was elected. From there, she was elected Regional Vice President and then Regional President, the youngest person to ever hold this position.

As Regional President she attended board meetings and Regional Councils across the region, determined to excel and to show that leadership is not a function of age. Through her role as Regional President, Lene also became a member of the IPPF Governing Council and was an active member of the Governance Taskforce that was tasked with proposing new reforms to IPPF's governance structure. In 2017, she was elected as EN Governing Council representative.

2. Young people as decision makers



Young people don't need to be on the board to contribute to the decision-making of the MA. At all levels - programme development, implementation and monitoring - young people should be equal partners with adult staff and volunteers in making what can sometimes be tough decisions. Over the past decade, a broad body of empirical evidence demonstrating that participation of young people in decision-making promotes the social and academic development of young people. Studies show that young people gain a stronger sense of self, increased critical thinking, teamwork skills, an enhanced sense of group belonging and commitment to service when they are actively involved in collaborative decision making. Research also highlights the key role of adults in helping young people to make the most of these opportunities.

Positive influences on young people's role in making decisions about programmes, policies, strategies and activities of the MA's work include good relationships between young people and adults in the organisation. Other ways of promoting young people's decision-making role include:

- creating a transparent structure and clear procedures for decision making about important issues of the MA
- training, informing and coaching young people on the issues, so they are in a position to contribute to the decision. It doesn't work if they have less knowledge on the issue than the adults. They need time to prepare themselves and convene with staff at a time that is convenient for them.
- preparing adults to accept young people as equal partners. The role of adults as support is crucial but not if it is done in a patronising way.
- finding a time and place that is convenient for all parties.

3. Young volunteers as peer educators



Peer education is a term widely used to describe a range of strategies to encourage people from a similar age group, background, culture and/or social status to educate and inform each other about a wide variety of issues. The rationale behind peer education is that peers can be a trusted and credible source of information. They share similar experiences and social norms, and are therefore better placed to provide relevant, meaningful and honest information. As part of peer education strategies, young people are trained to offer information and help accessing services. Training includes relevant issues of sexual and reproductive health and is based on the premise that most young people feel more comfortable receiving information from people of the same age group rather than from adults.

Research has shown that peer educators are particularly relevant when they discuss issues that are not being addressed (adequately) during lessons; e.g. emotional, relational aspects of CSE and promoting skills like communication and negotiating skills. Peer education is less effective when peer educators only focus on delivering evidence-based information and more complex scientific issues.



Tips to establish a peer education group:

- Have clear and achievable expectations from peer educators.
- Ensure that peer educators receive capacity building training
- Make sure enough educational materials and condoms are available.
- Consider the diverse needs of male and female educators. For example, there may be different social expectations about how girls should behave and what they should talk about in public. Some girls may be harassed when openly talking about sexuality. Help them to be assertive. Try to support their involvement and aim to keep a gender balance among the educators.
- Consider incentives for peer educators to attract and maintain their participation. For example, recognise their contribution publicly; award certificates; t-shirts with text and logos related to their work or food and/or drinks; support in career and future education.
- Ensure that a trained adult or teacher facilitates and supports the peer educators.
- Ensure that a quality control process is in place.
- Regularly monitor the process and evaluate with the peer educators what the results have been and how the process is going.

Lately, peer education has also been a topic of international discussion about whether it is effective. It is important to understand that peer education by itself cannot completely replace formal/informal CSE, and it needs to be part of a comprehensive approach of access to accurate, evidence-based information, access to youth-friendly services and conducive policies and laws supporting young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights.





More information

IPPF (2007) has its own handbook/framework: Included, Involved, Inspired.

Advocates for Youth (2003). Peer Education: Promoting Healthy Behaviors.

UNICEF (2012). Peer Education.

https://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_12078.html

<https://www.peelregion.ca/health/commhlth/bodyimg/changes-in-me/lessons/pdf/LessonOne-d.pdf>

Choice: Meaningful youth participation



Zambia, Nepal and Albania

A comparison of youth peer education programs in Zambia found that more than half of the 10,000 young people attending clinics in the study areas reported that they had been referred by a peer educator, indicating the success of youth peer educators in encouraging attendance at clinics.

An Ipas donor report described the recruitment and training of 1,520 youth peer educators in Nepal, including the use of referral cards. Over the course of the project, peer educators reported referring 163 women for abortion services (and 3,066 individuals for other reproductive health services). However, referral completion could not be verified from clinic records and there was no observed increase in the number of young women accessing safe abortion services during the project period.

In Albania, through non-formal sexuality education, the IPPF MA ACPD and its partners successfully equipped 785 young people with crucial life skills, building their knowledge about sexuality, relationships and safe sex, and strengthening their ability to make decisions, communicate, negotiate and plan for the future. As a result of this work, 500 young people were cared for through ACPD clinics and/or other care providers in their communities. They started to visit clinics, for example to get condoms, access counselling and ask to be tested for HIV. They talked about how they had changed their behaviour as a result of sexuality education programmes, and, as a result, felt empowered to build healthier and safer relationships, based on equality and respect.

4. Young volunteers as peer providers



IPPF is always looking for new and innovative approaches that put young people at the centre of decision-making and programming, and use available evidence and technology. For this reason, IPPF started to explore the potential of more consistently involving young people in the delivery of sexual and reproductive health services. Experience and research have already highlighted the opportunity to link educational activities with service provision, and peer educators are now increasingly providing contraceptives, including injectables and counselling.

Depending on the in-country needs and legal/policy frameworks, there are several different types of youth service providers. Experience from existing peer provision models gives an indication of the several overlapping types of youth peer providers that may operate in the context of IPPF.

a) Those who assume existing tasks in a young client's service pathway:

Based on an individual's health needs, a young client may be required to go through different stages or stops (e.g. pre-counselling, procedure, post-counselling, a follow-up visit, referral to other services) in order to receive comprehensive care. Youth peer providers may be responsible for delivering a single or multiple interventions within that path.

b) Those who participate in a specific level of the continuum of care:

While some youth peer provision models are meant to involve a young person in the provision of care in a fixed primary level facility. Others aim for peer provision to explore alternative settings (e.g. at community level; home-care; and, more recently, through online/mobile platforms).

c) Those who provide services through a specific mechanism/tool:

Youth peer providers can be responsible for delivering services using a specific methodology (e.g. support groups) or tool/device (e.g. internet, mobile applications, hotlines, etc.).

**More information**

IPPF (2016) Involved, included, inspired+: a framework for youth involvement in the provision of sexual and reproductive health services

IPPF IMAP statement on youth peer provision models to deliver sexual and reproductive health services to young people.

**Case studies: Mexico**

Fondo María was created by Balance - a youth-led organisation – in partnership with other organisations, back in 2009, with the aim of mobilising local resources to increase women's access (particularly young women) to safe and legal abortion; and accompany women from Mexican states where abortion is not legal or available through the process of getting an abortion in Mexico city (where abortion is legal up to the 12 week of pregnancy). This service includes: provision of counselling and information, financial support, logistical support, escorting to the services and follow-up. From 2009 to 2010 the fund supported a total of 209 young women (aged between 11 and 19 years).

When a woman accompanies a peer in the process of getting an abortion, we move towards the elimination of stigma and to social depenalisation of abortion. These service provision models are founded on the values of solidarity. When a woman decides to accompany a peer, she is empowered, ready to join the fight for the depenalisation of abortion.

Las Libres, an organisation based in the state of Guanajuato, Mexico, has developed a model whereby women or couples who have gone through an abortion in the past accompany other women or couples in their decision to induce an abortion using misoprostol. They provide information and counselling; accompany women/couples in buying the pills (or share left-over pills from their own abortion) and using them; and provide support during the post abortion period (via phone calls; text messages; etc.).

5. Young volunteers as advocates and change makers



Young volunteers in your organisation can be powerful and effective advocates for change. In this way they can be prepared to be critical and active citizens of their community and society.

Young volunteers can help raise awareness about SRHR issues that affect young people and help to connect with NGOs which are active in SRHR. For example, to effectively carry out and sustain successful CSE, it is important to build awareness and involve local NGOs in their communities.



More information

IPPF (2011). Want to change the world? Here is how. Young people as advocates.

You will find more about how a young group can organise Advocacy activity in We demand more The Pact/ IPPF publication from 2017 and the entire ACT!2030 resource pack



Case study Latin America

Ampliando El Acceso ("Expanding Access") is a youth-led project in Latin America that seeks to expand access to contraceptive information and services for young people in Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Mexico.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs predicts that, by 2020, the adolescent fertility rate in the Latin America and Caribbean region will be the highest in the world. Currently, one in three women is a mother before her 20th birthday and 20 percent of all adolescent pregnancies occur among girls younger than 15. In May 2016, the Secretary of Health in the municipality of Rionegro, Colombia formally adopted recommendations to implement youth-friendly services in its Development and Health Plan (2016-2020). Inclusion of adolescents in the plan is crucial—programs will not be implemented if they are not laid out in the municipal development plan. The recommendations are a result of collaboration between a multi-sectoral technical commission, the Secretary of Health and local Ampliando El Acceso advocacy partner PROFAMILIA COLOMBIA.

Young advocates of PROFAMILIA monitor the development plan to ensure that the health sector implements the recommendations. They will also monitor the municipal budget to ensure that the program has adequate resources for implementation.



Tips

- Explain that we can all engage in self-reflection and critical thinking about our private opinions, values and ideas. Critical thinking starts with asking yourself questions; how young volunteers feel about issues of gender, power etc. There are some difficult but important questions to consider in reflecting about community standards and fairness in the areas of gender and sexuality, HIV etc.
- Explain that to stand up to discrimination, young volunteers must first be able to recognise discrimination both within themselves and in the world around them. Recognising discrimination is not always easy. In some cases it can be obvious (for example, in a highly derogatory remark or in instances of domestic violence). In other cases it may be more subtle and harder to notice (for example, ignoring someone's opinion because of their sex).

- There are international standards of human rights, which can and should be applied to the human rights of young people. Showing solidarity for those whose rights are being neglected is an important part of being an active citizen in your community/society

Take a look at the Human rights in two minutes of Amnesty Switzerland at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ew993Wdc0zo>

For extra information see: IPPF (2011). Exclaim!: young people guide to sexual rights.

- Working for justice can be difficult and dangerous. When questioning or challenging a specific violation of rights is not possible, advise young volunteers to look for a safer way to respond. It is, however, important to remember that what is safe in one setting is not always safe in another setting.
- Explain that whether we work for fairness in our daily lives or in organised social campaigns, promoting justice and human rights can give meaning to a person's life and can be personally empowering.

You can work with young volunteers or the youth group on an action project for change. See an example below.

Example of an Action project with young volunteers

Objectives:

- For young people to learn skills for changing the world around them.
- For young people to understand fairness and learn how to promote justice in their community and their personal lives

Instruction:

STEP 1: Identify an issue with the youth group/young volunteers that they care about. Help them to think about a problem that affects them personally or other young people (e.g. discrimination against LGBTI people or young people living with a disability or HIV, lack of access to contraceptives etc.)

STEP 2: Help the youth group/young volunteers to gather and analyse information about the problem and who has already taken steps to address it. Find a local organisation that is also involved. Join an organisation or find partners. There is power in numbers!

STEP 3: Identify with the youth group/young volunteers the key audience they want to reach. Help them to develop the message they want to present about the changes they want to see.

STEP 4: Brainstorm about possible actions that might make the changes happen.

- set up a meeting with local community leaders;
- host a concert, dance or rally;
- provide educational sessions in the community or in other classrooms;
- create and perform a street play.

STEP 5: Be sure that young volunteers' actions do not cause harm to you or to others. Some potential risks include:

- Social stigma or discipline at home, at school or in the community.
- Hostility or even physical harm from someone who is opposed to their actions.
- Financial or legal consequences.



For more information

See Pop Council (2009), *Its All Once curriculum*, page 236 240

IPPF (2011). *Want to change the world? Here is how. Young people as advocates.*



Case study on Young people in advocacy in Macedonia

The youth group from MA Macedonia decided to launch an initiative for CSE with other youth NGOs. They invited all the Youth NGOs and some informal groups to join a Youth CSE Platform. Eight youth groups and organisations joined the platform. Some of them like YPEER or Youth Education Forum were already touching on the issue, but the others like Student magazine, The National Youth Forum or non-formal theatre group had never worked on CSE before. However, they shared the belief that CSE should be introduced in schools. In the first year, the Platform developed a strategy and organised events such a Public CSE class. In the second year, the group worked with political parties and all its member were involved in developing of the National Youth Strategy. They also sent a shadow report to the UN Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Geneva. In its concluding observation, the Committee clearly recommended improving access to age-appropriate sexuality education in Macedonian schools. As a result of the advocacy of the Youth CSE Platform, CSE was set as one of the objectives in the New Youth Strategy 2016-2025 adopted by the Government and two political parties added CSE to their electoral programmes.

6. Young volunteers as researchers



Young volunteers can participate in researching youth sexuality issues. By doing this, they become more aware of the common values, injustices and violations of sexual and reproductive rights of youth in their communities. This awareness can lead to individual and group actions such as discussing issues relating to sexual and reproductive health and rights with family, friends and other social contacts (directly and through social media).

Young volunteers can act as researchers who look critically at the content of CSE and support the adaptation of CSE to the local context as well as the services given by the MA:

- Young volunteers can find out about the needs and wants of young people in the community, and what they want to learn about sexuality and sexual and reproductive health and rights. You can help them to develop interview questions and explain how to do an interview or group discussion, and how to report their findings.
- As part of an assignment, they can collect and write stories around sexuality in the community.
- They can discover the positive and negative stories about sexuality and CSE in the community by talking to relevant stakeholders. You can help identify them.

You can use their findings in your CSE lessons and improvement of services, and discuss them together. Reward them by first letting them present the lessons they learned.



Guidance to develop learners into researchers: Rutgers/IPPF (2013) . Explore: [Toolkit for involving young people as researcher sin sexual and reproductive health programme.](#)

What is YSAFE?



YSAFE (Youth Sexual Awareness for Europe) is the youth network of the International Planned Parenthood Federation – European Network. The YSAFE network consists of 120 young volunteers of the IPPF EN Member Associations across 30 countries in Europe and Central Asia. YSAFE works to promote the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of young people. YSAFE offers opportunities for young volunteers to learn from each other and engage in the field of SRHR at a regional and global level.

YSAFers are peer educators. While most work as peer educators in their respective countries YSAFE offers a platform for the members to share their experiences and best practices. YSAFE also offers capacity buildings to support the member in delivering high-quality gender-sensitive and rights-based CSE.

YSAFers are advocates. YSAFE offers young SRHR advocate opportunities to attend regional and global meetings, where they work together with other youth representatives to ensure that young people can play a meaningful part in decision-making processes on policies and decisions that affect them and to ensure that the SRHR of young people are respected.

YSAFers are activists. YSAFE provides a platform where the members can share creative and effective campaign ideas. Through YSAFE, young activists can engage in regional and global campaigns in the field of SRHR. We want all young people to be able to make choices about their sexuality and well-being, in a world without discrimination! If you agree and want to learn more – follow YSAFE on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) or go to www.ysafe.net.

What YSAFE can offer young volunteers:

Next to being a youth network for activists, peer educators and activists, YSAFE can:

- Help you build and support an international youth network: YSAFE is active in 25 countries across Europe and Central Asia, but furthermore, we are part of the global network of IPPF, linking with individuals from every social, cultural and geographical background!
- Help you include and target vulnerable populations: as a youth network the main strength of YSAFE is to include and work with young people from a wide variety of backgrounds, just like yourself! Every individual is passionate about Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights!
- Develop and implement project ideas or campaigns you might have! Do you believe the LGBTQI+ community requires further attention? Are you unhappy about the current approach towards HIV? YSAFE can help you with exactly this!
- Ensure young people are heard within their organizations and abroad! We work to ensure you have a voice within your IPPF Member Association and throughout the globe by advocating for SRHR and Youth Participation. We cannot move forward if young people are not heard, let us know what you are doing and we will help!
- Create a network of like-minded people! If you ever feel like your struggles and fights solitary and you are unique - don't despair! We can join you with individuals with similar stories and backgrounds who can help you achieve your goals!
- Ensure you mainstream and incorporate the voice of your peers and / or young people in your country network! 20% of the world population today is under 25! We can help you reach them!

What YSAFE can offer MAs:

Concrete activities for young volunteers to join at MA level, and centralised support to run them.

YSAFE's international projects always include national actions, like the piloting of new CSE tools. These are designed to give you new and exciting ways to involve young people in the life of your organisation. When MAs opt in to a YSAFE project, their youth coordinators will be assisted in planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluating the national implementation of project activities by the YSAFE Steering Committee and the ENRO Youth Unit.

Capacity building for young people to boost their inclusion in a variety of functions of your organisation.

YSAFE runs training cycles to raise young people's skills in areas of work such as advocacy and campaigning. Participants learn from experts at international trainings and plan individual national youth-led activities that will contribute to the existing strategic goals of their MA. When they return home, they are expected to share their learning and put it to the test by leading their MA youth group in the delivery of their action plan.

Structured opportunities to boost national partnerships. YSAFE has run several international projects that bring in collaborating organisations from outside of the IPPF EN network and aims to make this a feature of all future projects wherever this will be of strategic value to the participating MAs.

