



Review of IPPF's Governance Reform Full Report

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1 Introduction

Following IPPF's governance reform in 2019/2020, a review of the reform process was conducted, which provided important insights for the new Board of Trustees and the Secretariat to support the changes. Now, five years on, IPPF has commissioned a second review to assess the impact of the governance reform on the Federation, its Member Associations (MAs) and the communities it serves.

The objective of the review is to examine whether the reform and resulting changes in global governance are having an impact on how MAs function, donor trust, IPPF operations, on reaching the most excluded communities and, importantly, to establish whether the reform is helping to save lives.

This review will benefit the General Assembly by providing insights into the impact governance reform has brought and the scale of change possible and necessary to remain relevant in a very challenging environment.

Additionally, as IPPF prepares for the succession of the Director-General in early 2026 and the Chair of the Board of Trustees (Chair) in mid-2026, the review will help the Board understand what the new Director-General and Chair can build on and anchor feminist leadership on the Board.

The scope of the review did not include assessing or evaluating the performance of the Board of Trustees or any governance committees. Nor did it include assessing or evaluating the performance of the Secretariat, which is dealt with by the Secretariat Accountability Mechanism.

2 Purpose of the Report

This report aims to identify the greatest impacts of the governance reform on the Federation and its work, enabling factors and barriers to reform, opportunities to build on and key lessons learned.

The scope of the review was not to provide a mandate for the new Director-General or Chair of the Board of Trustees, but rather to share insights from the reform. Therefore, the report provides lessons learned but does not put forward specific recommendations.

3 Methodology

The global governance review was led by an independent review team commissioned by IPPF in September 2024. The methodology agreed for the review included:

The purpose of the theory of change was to create alignment on a shared understanding of what initiatives and short and medium-term outcomes were expected to contribute to achieving the ultimate goal of the reform. The theory of change provided the framing of questions to be explored through the survey and subsequent interviews.



The survey aimed to understand whether governance reform is helping the Federation be more agile, adaptable and visible, engage better and stand more unified. It also explored what contribution, if any, governance reform has had on IPPF's performance and standing. In addition, the survey sought to understand whether IPPF has done what it said it would do in terms of changes to governance structure and systems to address the concerns that led IPPF to choose to reform.

The purpose of the interviews was to identify specific impacts of the reform and provide evidence (anecdotes, stories and examples) to illustrate those impacts. The interviews also provided the opportunity to delve into areas from the survey that needed deeper understanding or validation, such as unexpected trends, contradictory responses, rich or poor qualitative input and gaps to identify barriers and enabling factors to achieving the aims of the reform. Interview questions were developed in line with the draft theory of change.

The theory of change was then reviewed to validate and update the assumptions and pathway through the theory of change in light of the research findings, check the line of sight between key findings and lessons learned and identify any missing lessons learned.

The survey was anonymous. All data collected during the global governance review research was treated in confidence by the review team. Quotes and examples used in the report have been anonymized and only used if anonymity could be preserved.

3.1 Limitations

During the survey, only one respondent self-identified as 'youth' in addition to their main group (Board of Trustees, MA or Secretariat). Other young people may have decided not to self-identify as youth and only by their main group. The review team was therefore unable to say how many 'youth' completed the survey and a data cut of 'youth' responses was not possible. To ensure youth representation, during the interview stage, young people were interviewed and asked to provide insights based on their experience as 'youth' in governance roles.

Invitees to the survey included the previous Board of Trustees, committee members and independents. The review team categorized this group as 'others'. No respondents self-identified as 'others' in the survey and some may have self-identified in other groups denoting previous or current roles (that is, Board of Trustees or MAs). This has a particular bearing on the Board of Trustees' responses, as the review team is unable to say whether their responses included all current members or a mix of current and former members.

It is important to note that the review team expects that newer members of the Board of Trustees and the Directors' Leadership Team (DLT) may have felt unable to answer questions about the impact or contribution of reform. This may have increased the percentage of 'do not know' or 'skipped' responses for these groups in the survey.

3.2 Review Participants

Representatives of key stakeholder groups were invited to participate in the review in various ways:

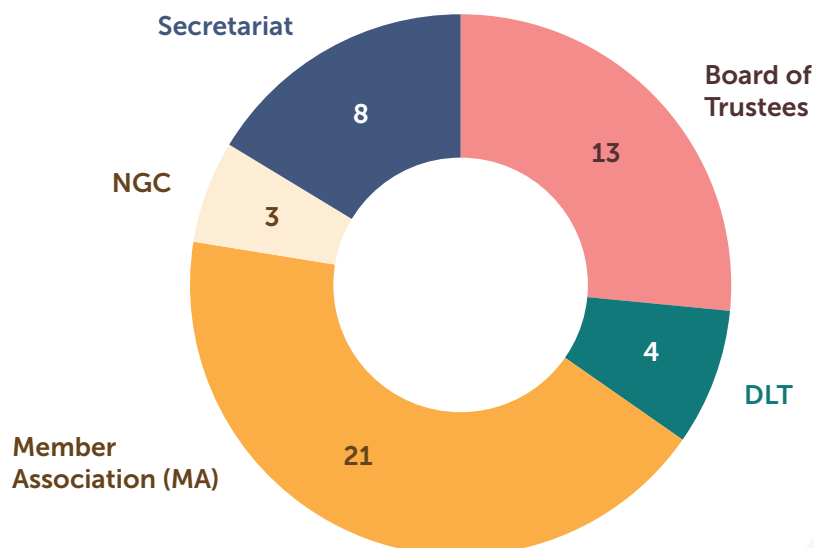
1. Developing a theory of change to create a framework that illustrates the intent of the governance reform and visualizes the expected outcomes and impact.
2. Answering a survey that posed questions informed by the theory of change.
3. Participating in an interview that explored key themes and gaps from the survey and generated examples and mini-case studies.

Participants were selected either because they had involvement in or experience of the journey of reform (with a preference for those who understood the before and after) or because they were part of a target group. For example, all members of the Board of Trustees and Directors' Leadership Team were invited to participate in the survey. A subset of these groups and representatives of other stakeholder groups were invited to participate in interviews.

Those participants involved in developing the theory of change and reviewing it in light of the research findings included representatives from MAs, the Board of Trustees, the Reform Commission, the Reform Transition Committee, the Nominations and Governance Committee (NGC), the Secretariat (including the Directors' Leadership Team) and youth.

There was a 66 per cent response rate to the survey (49 out of 74 invitees responded). The profile of respondents is shown below in Diagram 1. Young people were invited to participate, as were multiple MAs from each region.

Diagram 1: Profile of Survey Respondents

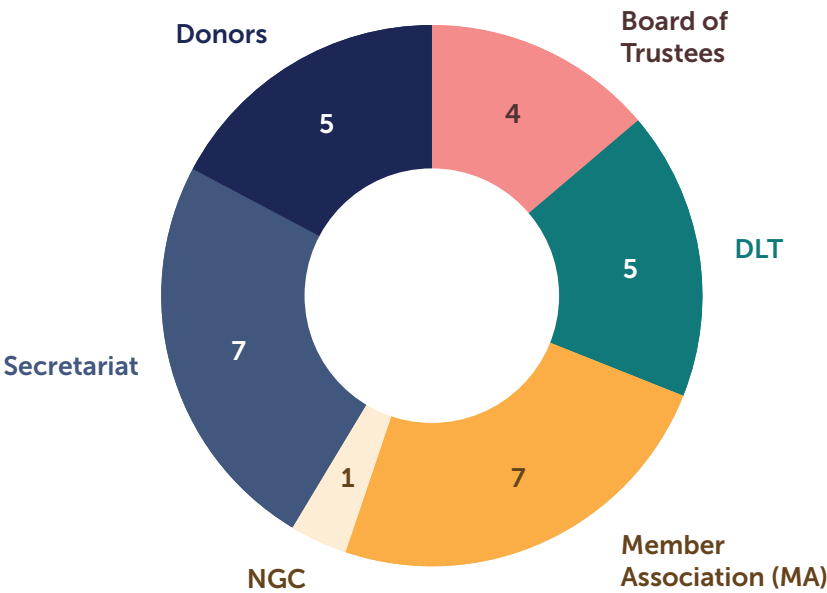


There was an 86 per cent response rate from those in the Federation invited to interviews (24 out of 28 invitees participated). Youth were invited to participate and at least one MA from each region. Most MA representatives who were invited to participate held the position of Executive Director.

Five of the Federation’s largest donors were also invited to participate and all responded (four through interviews and one in writing).

The profile of all 29 respondents from the Federation and Donors is shown in Diagram 2.

Diagram 2: Profile of Interview Respondents

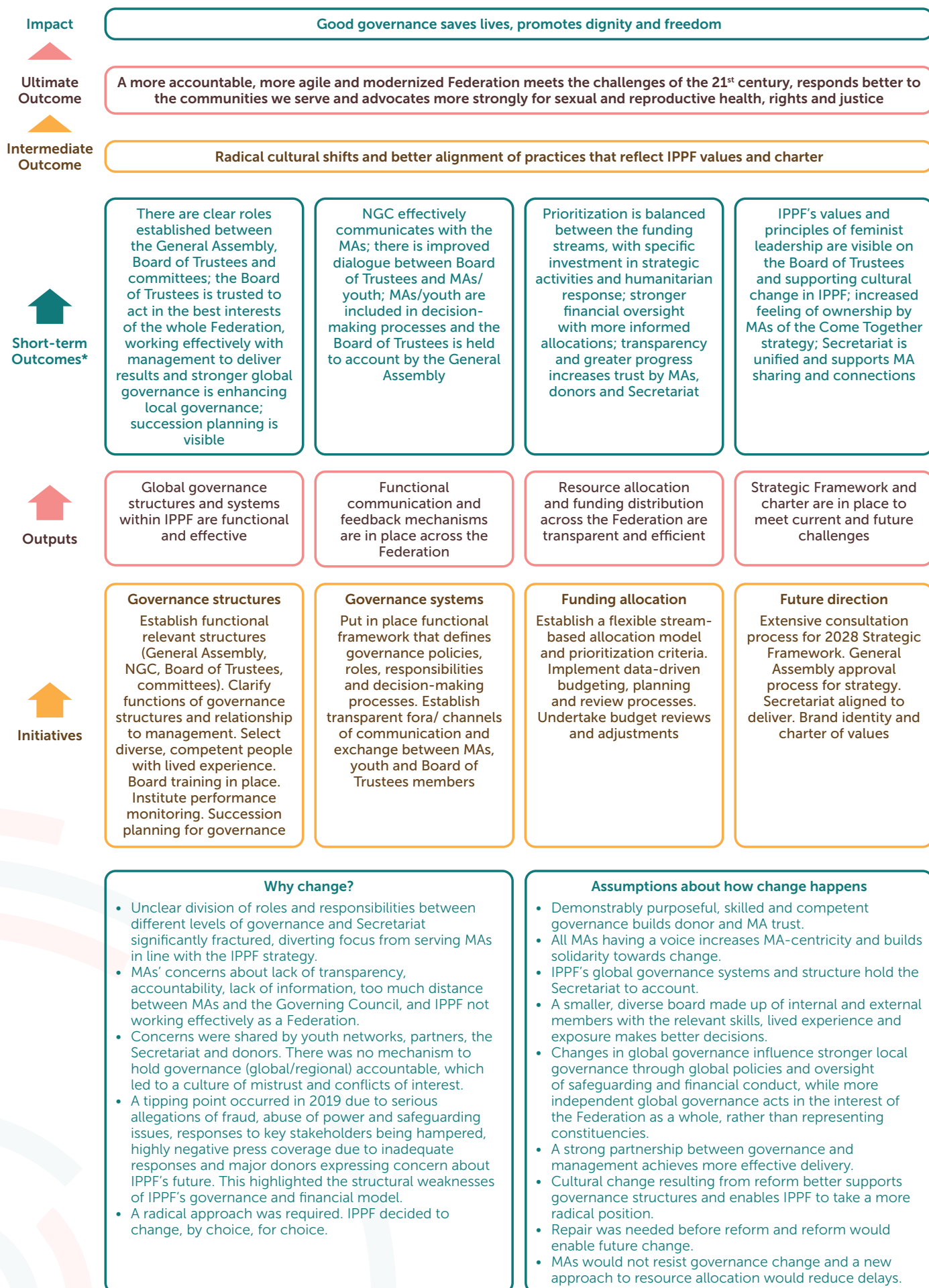


4 Theory of Change

A theory of change was developed (see Diagram 3, next page), setting out the reasons for reform, the planned initiatives and expectations for what the reform would deliver in outcomes and, ultimately, impact. In light of the research findings, the theory of change was reviewed and adjusted to clarify the focus of succession planning for governance as an essential initiative and the assumption about the role of global governance in influencing stronger MA governance.



Diagram 3: IPPF Governance Reform Review Theory of Change



5 Pre- and Post-Reform Governance Structure

During the review, participants emphasized the importance of reminding the Federation of the structural changes that have taken place to ensure everyone had the same understanding of the governance reform and why it occurred.

Why Change?

Leading up to the reform, the division of roles and responsibilities between different levels of governance was unclear. The Secretariat was significantly fractured, diverting focus away from serving MAs in line with IPPF's strategy (2016-2022). MAs had concerns about lack of transparency, accountability, limited information, too much distance between MAs and the Governing Council (the lead authority at the time) and believed IPPF was not working effectively as a federation.

These concerns were shared by youth networks, partners, the Secretariat and donors. No mechanism existed to hold global or regional governance accountable, resulting in a culture of mistrust and conflicts of interest.

A tipping point occurred in 2019 due to serious allegations of fraud, abuse of power and safeguarding issues, with responses to key stakeholders being hampered. There was highly negative press coverage following inadequate responses from the Federation and major donors expressed concerns about IPPF's future. This highlighted the structural weaknesses of IPPF's governance and financial model.

A radical approach was required. IPPF decided to change, by choice, for choice.

What Changed?

This section shows the previous (Diagram 4) and current governance structure (Diagram 5), with the main changes implemented.

The governance reform introduced significant structural changes:

- The pre-reform Governing Council, made up of representatives from 18 IPPF MAs and six non-voting external advisors, was replaced by a General Assembly of MAs – the Federation's highest authority – and a newly established Board of Trustees. The new Board included nine IPPF internal members and six external members, each with equal voting power.
- In the post-reform structure, the Nominations and Governance Committee was created to oversee the appointment of Board members and to review and report on the performance of governance. This shifted emphasis from representation to skills-based selection.
- The reform eliminated the six Regional Executive Committees and six Regional Councils, each overseeing one of the six Regional Directors. This streamlined governance and consolidated leadership under a Secretariat composed of the Directors' Leadership Team, including six Regional Directors.
- Several committees were restructured or added:
 - The Finance and Audit Committee became the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.
 - New committees such as the Policy, Strategy and Investment Committee and the Resource Allocation Technical Committee were introduced.
 - The Membership Committee was retained.
 - Regional and Youth Forums were established as advisory bodies with no formal governance role.

Diagram 4: Pre-reform governance structure

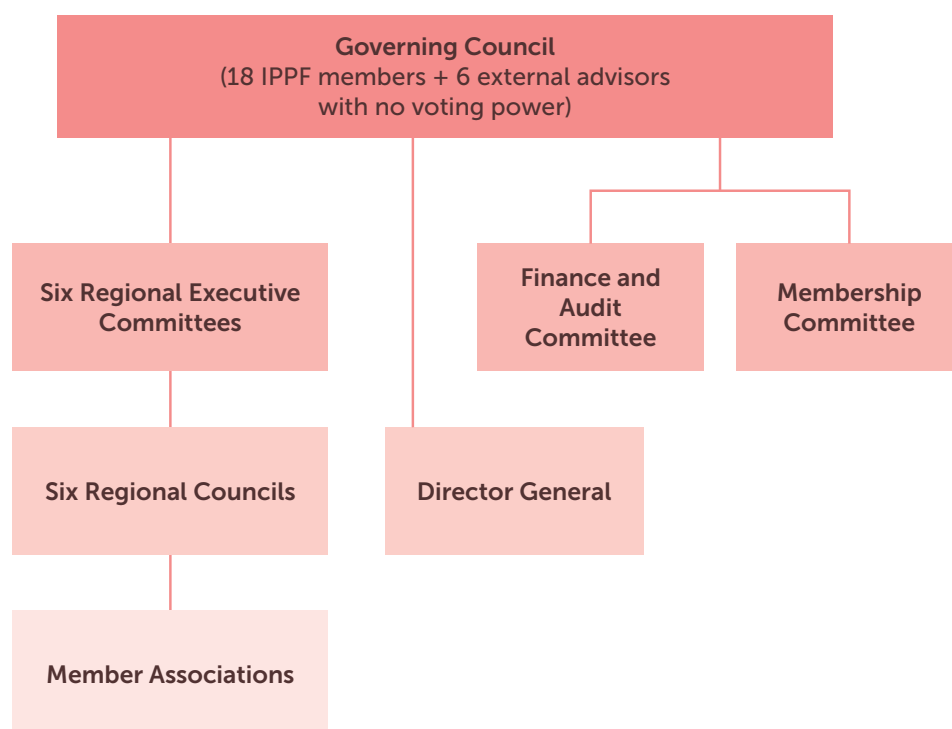
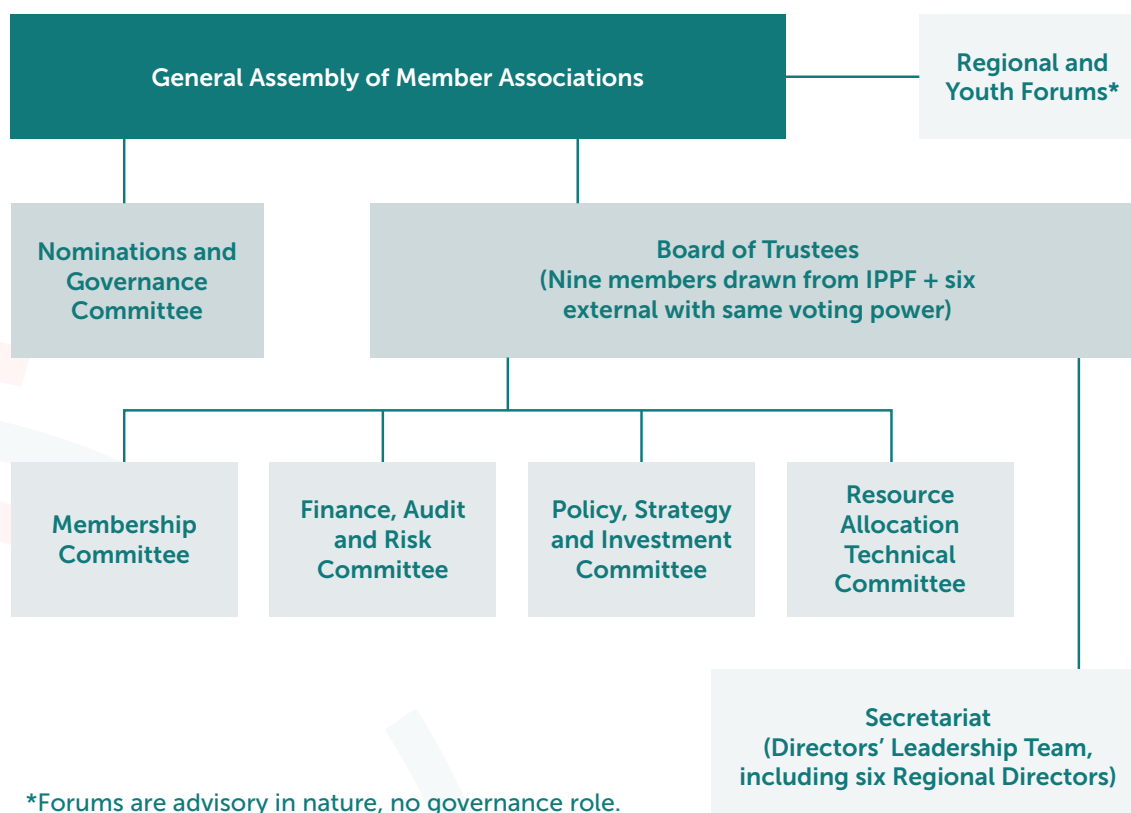


Diagram 5: Post-reform governance structure



6 Key Findings

The findings from the research are structured to follow the theory of change. They start with how the reform has contributed to saving lives, promoting dignity and freedom; how it has made the Federation more accountable, agile and modernized to meet the challenges of the 21st century; and how it has enabled the Federation to respond better to the communities it serves and advocate more strongly for sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice. Then the findings explore how reform has brought about radical cultural shifts and better alignment of practices that reflect IPPF values.

The scale and pace of the reform changes have been huge. The reform has had a profound impact on IPPF's efficiency, culture and reputation, which has been felt at every level of the Federation.

The findings validate the theory of change overall. Most participants in the review agreed that initiatives taken to reform the systems, structure and processes have enabled IPPF to make significant, radical shifts, that the Federation is far better equipped to face external challenges and that governance reform has opened the door to further opportunities to evolve and progress.

The review team identified two modifications to the assumptions in the theory of change:

1. As part of the changes to governance structures, it was assumed that succession planning would take place. However, this was identified as a gap.
2. There was an assumption that changes to global governance would influence stronger MA governance. Although the implementation of global policies and Board oversight of safeguarding and financial conduct validated this in part, there remains resistance to governance change at MA level. The research shows that this needs to be overcome to complete IPPF's reform.

The findings are reported in detail to make sure that the richness of feedback and key insights are shared in full. Each finding first refers to the relevant survey responses. Following this, using a combination of survey responses, data gathered through interviews and secondary data provided by the Secretariat, the review team identified the following:

- Key enabling factors that have supported reform
- Challenges or barriers to reform
- Opportunities that might continue to support the reform journey.

Findings are illustrated with examples: mini-case studies shared by participants to bring feedback to life or secondary data provided by the Secretariat, where possible.

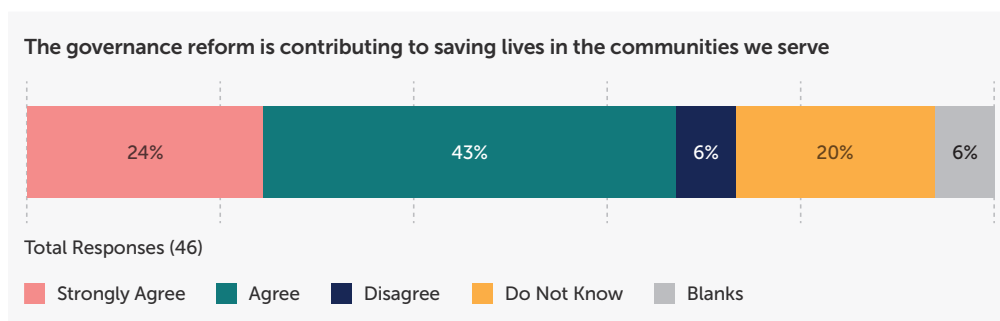
Overall, survey responses are very positive, with high percentages of respondents in agreement. Where there were lower levels of agreement (in the 60th or low 70th percentile) and higher levels of disagreement, the barriers, challenges and opportunities identify the reasons for this and offer improvements that could be made.

Please note that survey response ratings have been disaggregated where the consolidated rating hides the nuance of responses from specific groups.

6.1 The theory of change proposes that the impact of the reform is that good governance saves lives, promotes dignity and freedom

Most respondents agree that governance reform is contributing to saving lives in the communities IPPF serves, which is backed up by performance data. This was enabled by quicker, mission-focused decision-making by the Board of Trustees and responsiveness of the Secretariat working together. Examples were provided to illustrate support for those groups previously left behind, demonstrating a desire to promote dignity and freedom.

Sixty-seven per cent of all survey respondents (including 72 per cent of MA respondents) strongly agree or agree that the reform is contributing to saving lives in the communities IPPF serves. Twenty per cent responded 'do not know' (mainly from the Board of Trustees and Directors' Leadership Team, with a very small proportion from MAs and the Secretariat). Six per cent of all survey respondents disagree.



Despite a significant proportion of 'do not know' responses in the survey, during interviews, participants emphasized enabling factors which were attributed to directly or indirectly saving lives because of the reform.

Five key enabling factors to reform were identified

- A governance system that allows significantly quicker decision-making by the Board of Trustees. This was put down to "the Board being adaptable and agile to crisis and emergency situations; coming together outside formal meetings when needed to make decisions that allow lives to be saved. Before reform, the Governing Council met every six months and decisions had to wait." (Secretariat)
- Responsiveness of the Secretariat, who worked together to provide the information needed to allow fast decision-making. "During COVID, the Secretariat put together information and the Board made a decision in a week. MAs could take action that was relevant for them straightaway." (Secretariat)
- Creation of Stream 3 funding for emergency support, which did not exist before the reform.
- IPPF becoming more courageous and bolder in standing up for human rights.
- The Board of Trustees' focus on IPPF's mission rather than vested interests or politics, which were evident before the reform. "At the time of Global Gag Rule (2016), the Governing Council did not release funds to MAs for 18 months. They could not make a decision and were caught up with the politics, global and regional." (Secretariat)

Performance data provided by the Secretariat shines a light on the reach of Stream 3 emergency funding, showing that 833,000 people were reached across all six regions since it was introduced as part of the reform (2022/2023/2024). The number of clients reached in humanitarian settings totals 42.6 million for the years 2021–2024.

"There are two changes because of the reform that are saving lives: Stream 3 is 100 per cent saving lives and IPPF has become braver and more courageous standing for human rights; solidarity with those most in need saves lives."

Member Association

"Stream 3 response to crisis saves lives. The governance reforms were able to help staff through Ebola."

Member Association

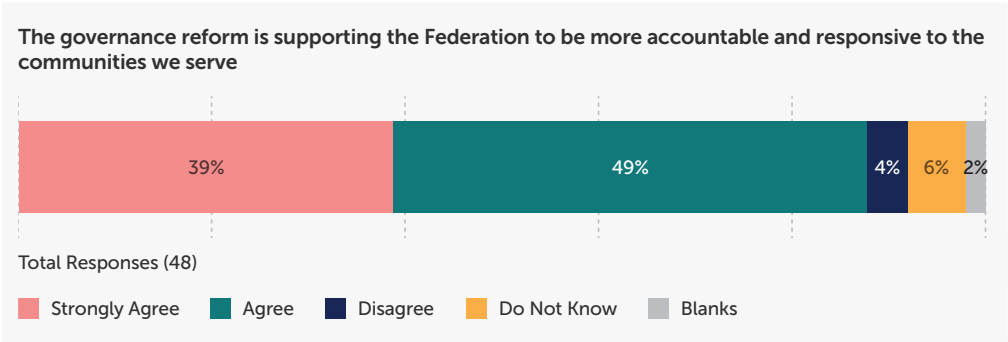
Promoting dignity and freedom was illustrated by the enhanced inclusion and representation of marginalized communities in decision-making. An example was provided of a decision made to support marginalized groups in two crisis situations, who respondents believed would previously have not been included.

6.2 The theory of change proposes that the ultimate outcome of the reform is a more accountable, more agile and modernized Federation that meets the challenges of the 21st century, responds better to the communities we serve and advocates more strongly for sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice.

This section looks first at whether the Federation is more accountable, more agile and modernized to meet the challenges of the 21st century. It then considers whether IPPF is responding better to the communities it serves and advocating more strongly for sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice.

Most respondents agree that the Federation is more accountable, more agile and modernized to meet the challenges of the 21st century. A direct link was made between the belief that IPPF’s reputation in the sector has improved and that MAs and the Secretariat have more confidence in IPPF’s future because of the reform. However, respondents from every group say that the reform needs to be accelerated at MA level to bring about the changes required to ensure sustainability.

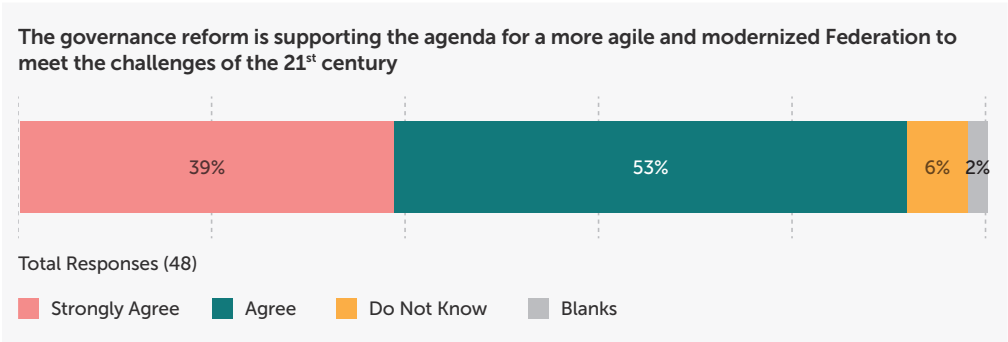
Eighty-eight per cent of all survey respondents (including 81 per cent of MA respondents) say that governance reform is supporting the Federation to be more accountable and more responsive to the communities it serves. Ten per cent of MA respondents disagree.



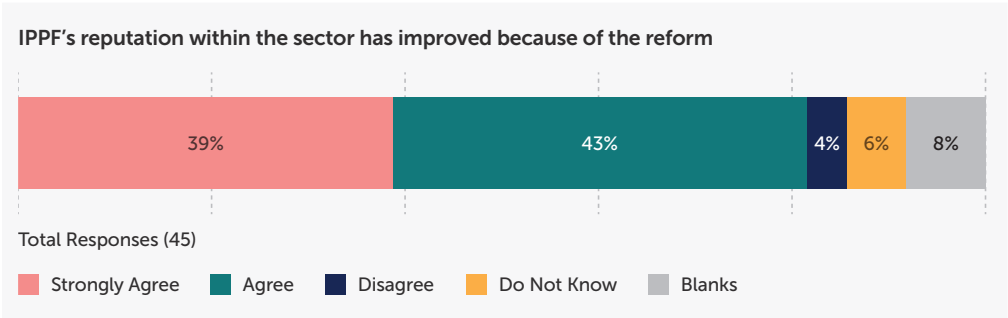
“The most positive change I have observed because of IPPF’s governance reform is the enhanced inclusion and representation of marginalized communities, especially young people and key populations such as LGBTQIA+ individuals, in decision-making processes.”

Board of Trustees

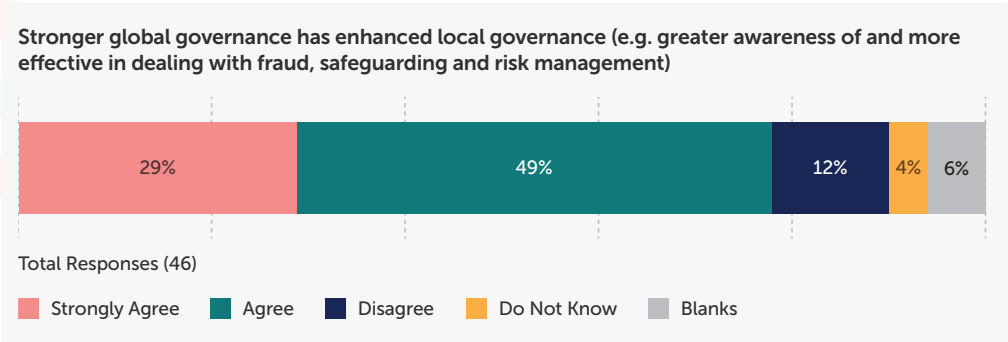
Ninety-two per cent of all survey respondents (including 95 per cent of MA respondents) say that governance reform is supporting the agenda for a more agile and modernized Federation to meet the challenges of the 21st century.



Eighty-six per cent of MAs, 76 per cent of the Board and 83 per cent of Secretariat/ Directors’ Leadership Team believe that IPPF’s reputation within the sector has improved because of the reform. When asked if they have more confidence in the future of IPPF because of the reform, 81 per cent of MAs agree and 10 per cent disagree. The Secretariat was asked the same question, with 84 per cent agreeing and eight per cent disagreeing.



Seventy-six per cent of MAs, 92 per cent of Secretariat/Directors’ Leadership Team and 69 per cent of the Board agree that global governance reform has enhanced local governance, although some MAs and Board members disagree.



Six key enabling factors to reform were identified

- A blend of external expertise and volunteers to create a skills-based, diverse and effective Board with new thinking that allows the Federation to progress and adapt to new challenges.
- Involving MAs in setting the direction through the strategy (2023-2028), providing a common direction and empowering MAs to apply the strategic framework to their own contexts and priorities.

“Before, there was the Regional Council and the Governing Board, it was like a ladder. It took a lot of time and red tape. Regional Council had its own priorities ... no longer representing MAs and MAs did not feel part of decision-making.”

Member Association

“IPPF has been completely rebranded, there is a commitment to gender equity, to anti-racism. Safeguarding issues are dealt with and there is zero tolerance for mismanagement of finances including expulsion.”

Board of Trustees

“Governance reform has boosted IPPF’s accountability, transparency, efficiency, global credibility and advocacy, ensuring better resource use, crisis response, and regional unity.”

Secretariat

- Eradicating bureaucracy and regional barriers to progressing the mission, with consistent application and adoption of global IPPF policies.
- Enhanced clarity in roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes, making the Federation more agile, “adaptable” and “prompt”.
- The role of the Board in championing and ensuring accountability for resolving fraud and safeguarding issues and mismanagement.
- Involving young people at all levels to keep looking forward with vibrancy.

Holding accountability for Fraud and Safeguarding is seen as a major improvement

As an example of the change in ensuring accountability for fraud and safeguarding issues, the Chair of the Board of Trustees leads safeguarding for the Federation. Secretariat performance data shows that since the reform, the total number of concerns raised varies from year to year, as would be expected. However, the number of cases investigated (substantiated or not) and closed has increased significantly, demonstrating the organization’s ability to now address and manage difficult issues openly and consistently.

“If you reform at the global level, and fail to reform at Member Association level, it is setting us to fail.”

Member Association

Challenges and barriers identified

- There is a view that the momentum for MA governance reform has dropped off, as MAs do not feel the pressure for change.
- Most respondents, including MAs, said that MA governance reform is needed to complete modernization, meet future challenges and professionalize skills. One MA said, “Governance cannot stay static, it needs to evolve to modern challenges.” Challenges included:
 - Since large MAs need skilled, professional boards, questions were raised about whether this can be achieved purely with a volunteer body and whether the number of board roles, including youth, can provide the MA with an adequate breadth of expertise.
 - Small MAs in small countries struggle to manage terms of appointment because of a lack of qualified resources available.
 - The voice of Executive Directors needs to be strengthened. But it should be noted that most MA interviewees feeding into this report were Executive Directors.
 - A better balance is needed between male and female presidents.

“MA governance reform has not seen as much progress in the third round, it is harder when there is no sense of urgency. We need vibrant governance bodies to be relevant in society. If an MA has very traditional governance, they may not be looking at baby dumping and teenage pregnancy where girls can go to jail, and the undocumented community.”

Secretariat

Having looked at governance reform at MA level, the review team found that there was a dip in Round 2 and a recent focus on MA governance reform with the launch of a fourth round. It is expected that a total of 35 MAs will have completed the reform process by the end of 2025. Four MAs have already voluntarily taken on reform for themselves.

Number of MAs completing governance reform by round			
Round 1: 2020	Round 2: 2021/2022	Round 3: 2022/2023	Round 4: 2024/2025
9	6	8	12

Opportunities identified

- Secretariat and MA respondents suggested that better performance data to track progress would help the Board know what to ask for in the course of their work.
- MAs suggested that the Board develop a greater understanding of MA contexts through the regional fora.

- MAs could learn from each other: benchmark with those that have already undergone reform to understand how governance reform works and how it can be implemented to strengthen MA performance and sustainability as well as overcome resistance to change.
- Linked to this is a request for support to help MAs improve the recruitment and selection processes for their volunteer governance roles to make sure that appointments are of the quality required and that appointees align with IPPF's values and principles.

MAs were keen to share their experience of national governance reform as mini-case studies

MA preparing for vote to implement reform:

"Our governance structure reflects the old IPPF structure, which results in conflict of interest, we find it difficult to address misconduct and we need to act in a more united way to [manage external challenges and opportunities]. We introduced the new governance structure as part of our Come Together strategy, holding long consultations for a united MA. The Regional Office arranged for a benchmarking trip to another MA who has already taken on reform with one national board. We are looking to move to a national, united board in 2025."

MA who has already taken on governance reform at a national level:

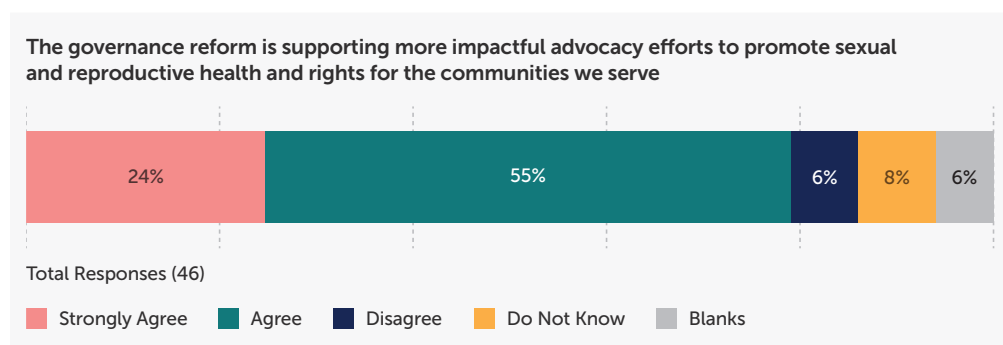
"The introduction of external Board members and people who are expert and skilled strengthen our boards at global and local levels has had a very strong impact [here]. We have brought in people from organizations with skills that has connected us to places we could not reach [before], it provides expertise that helps us navigate external challenges and advocates on our behalf."

Associate Member working towards full membership:

"Before reform, the governance structure was very rigid and would not allow us to join because of the way we are founded. We reach out to the most excluded populations and operate differently, working with community-based volunteer systems to some areas that can only be reached by foot; we work with women, girls, LGBTQI [communities] and on social enterprise. IPPF's leadership have seen this, and we have come up with our own working board and chair which incorporates all IPPF's policies. Rules and regulations are very important but to be a little flexible to incorporate and include MAs that are a bit different, to accept and reflect different needs and concerns makes the Federation very progressive and gives a platform to MAs that are smaller."

Most respondents agree that governance reform is contributing to the Federation being more inclusive, reaching marginalized communities and advocating more strongly for sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice. There is considerable support for bolder advocacy of LGBTQI+ rights and activism as well as a need to more clearly articulate IPPF's stance on this. Some MA respondents emphasized the importance of keeping a balance between this and advocacy for sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and girls, while supporting how this extends to marginalized communities.

Seventy-nine per cent of all survey respondents (including 81 per cent of MAs) agree that governance reform is supporting more impactful advocacy. Six per cent of all survey respondents (including Secretariat, Board of Trustees and MA respondents) disagree.



All respondents very closely linked advocating more strongly for sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice to being more inclusive and reaching marginalized communities.

Four key enabling factors to reform were identified

- A greater focus on marginalized communities through the strategy (2023-2028), with more targeted interventions that respond to the needs of diverse populations. "We are now having dialogue about sex work, undocumented refugees and migrants, more on the incarcerated and imprisoned." (Secretariat)
- Creating platforms and increased efforts to include collaborative partners and activists from marginalized groups. In addition, marginalized groups being represented in MA and Secretariat roles.
- Changes to election processes have made it possible to appoint Board members with lived experience of marginalized communities who offer specialized knowledge and understanding.
- The Board has been bold and taken courageous stances. This, in turn, has enabled the Secretariat: "I can talk more at regional and international levels about LGBTQI+ now. We are supporting people who have been left behind for many years and now they are not ignored."

Challenges and barriers identified

- The need to articulate what the global Federation stands for more clearly in terms of rights and how to maintain a strong platform that generates the traction required to support delivery of core services. One MA said, "There is a perception that we are part of transforming children to transgender. We need to make clear [our stance so it does not undermine our core work]."

"The US position has implications, but now IPPF new community [partners] are taking the work forward. MAs themselves have nominated LGBTQI participants to be part of ILGA, creating platforms and regional networks for MAs."

Secretariat

"IPPF has become bolder, more visible. We need to make our vision and mission clear and find resources to stand by our principles. We need more collaboration; no-one can stand in isolation for advocacy at least."

Board of Trustees

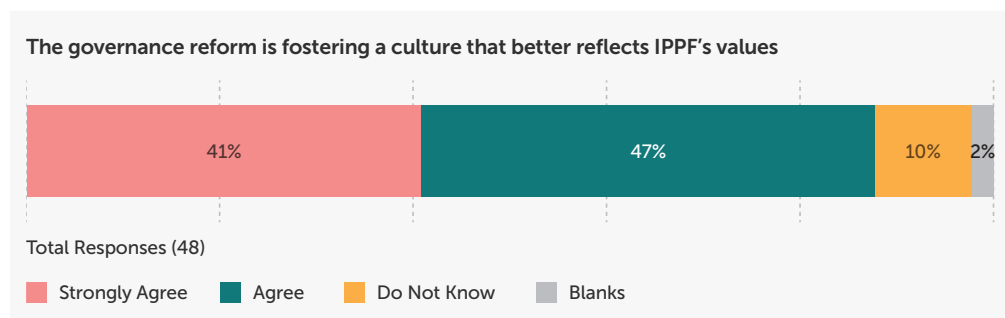
Opportunities identified

- Two Secretariat-based respondents talked about community partners who now see IPPF in a different way because of the Federation's bolder advocacy, leading to funding for discrete restricted programmes.
- Engaging with MAs' volunteer boards promptly and frequently to maintain alignment with advocacy messages in a challenging environment, given the rise of the right and more volatile reactions in some contexts.

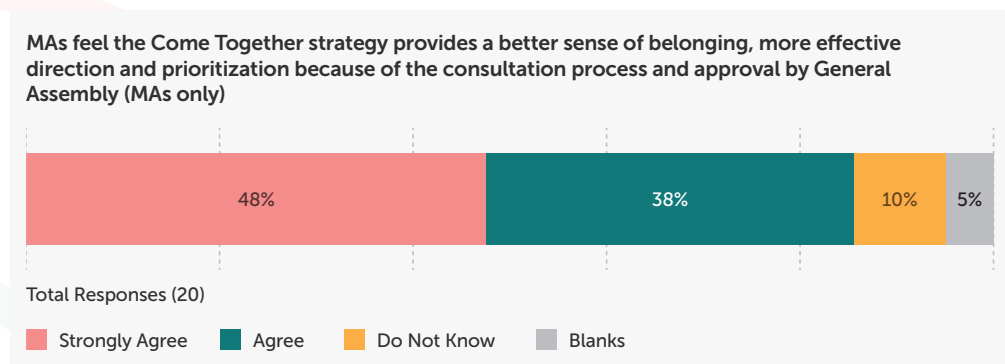
6.3 The theory of change intermediate outcome proposes radical cultural shifts and better alignment of practices that reflect IPPF values and charter because of the reform

Most respondents agree that there have been radical cultural shifts and better alignment of practices that reflect IPPF's values because of the reform. Most MAs feel a better sense of belonging and greater involvement in decision-making through the General Assembly. Opportunities to improve how the Federation can act in a more unified way were identified through greater engagement between MAs as well as MAs understanding how to hold the Board of Trustees accountable.

Eighty-eight per cent of all survey respondents (including 91 per cent of MA respondents) agree that governance reform is fostering a culture that better reflects IPPF's values.



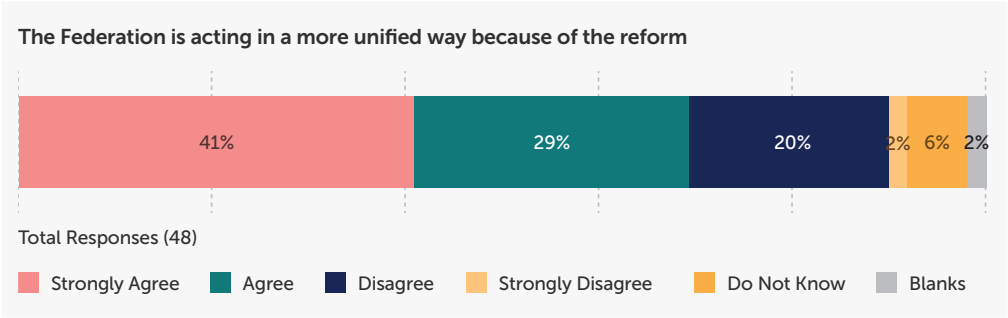
Eighty-six per cent of MA survey respondents agree that the strategy, Come Together, provides a better sense of belonging, more effective direction and prioritization because of the consultation process and approval by the General Assembly.



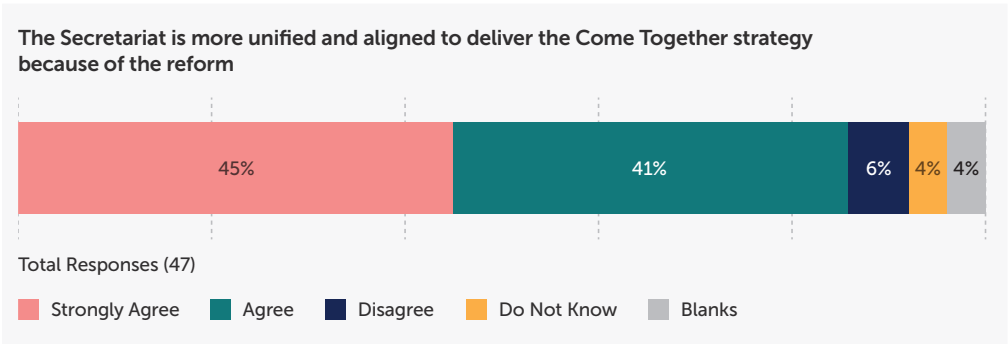
"We recognize IPPF should be bolder as a global voice, how it is adapted locally depends on legal constraints. Take abortion, it is [criminalized] here but we are campaigning to decriminalize it. Sex work is talked about differently here to Europe. Our role is to provide access for sex workers and treat them humanely."

Member Association

Seventy per cent of all survey respondents agree that the Federation is acting in a more unified way because of the reform. However, 22 per cent of respondents (from the Board, MAs and the Secretariat) disagree.

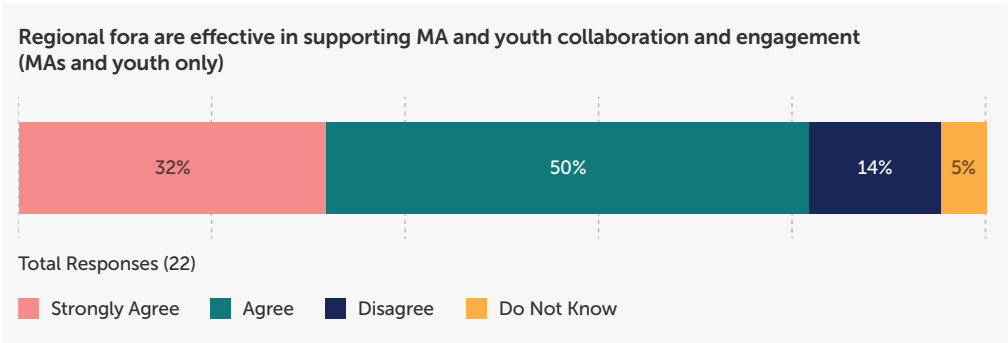


Eighty-six per cent of all survey respondents (including 92 per cent of Directors' Leadership Team/Secretariat respondents) agree that the Secretariat is more unified and aligned to deliver the strategy, Come Together, because of the reform. Six per cent of respondents disagree – this represents a very small number from the Board/ MAs.

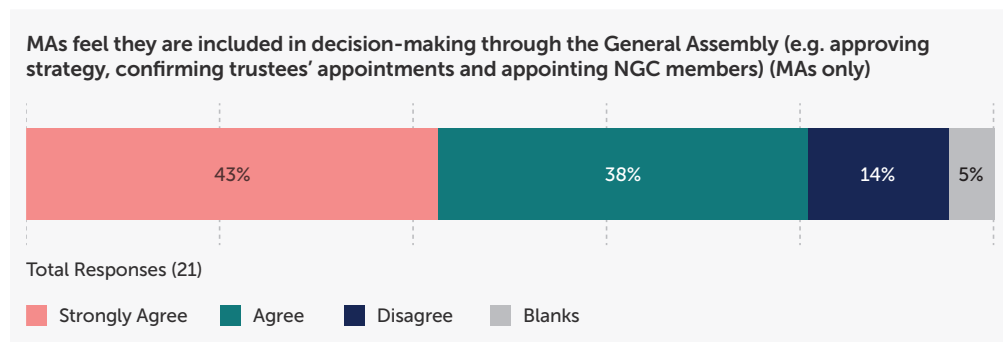


Respondents drew a clear link between acting in a more unified way and the effectiveness of governance systems.

Eighty-two per cent of MA survey respondents agree that regional fora are effective in supporting MA and youth collaboration and engagement. Fourteen per cent disagree.



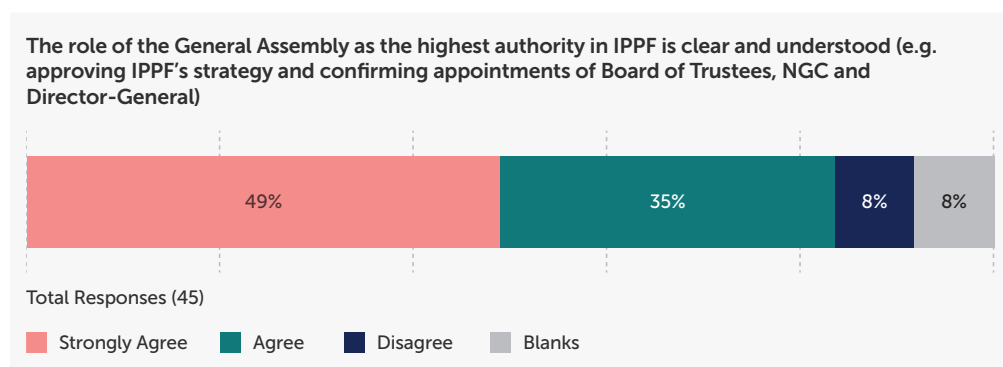
Eighty-one per cent of MA survey respondents agree that they feel included in decision-making through the General Assembly. Fourteen per cent disagree.



"It is hard to capture the scale of change. Values ahead of bureaucracy or political aspiration has set a new culture we should feel proud of."

Secretariat

Eighty-four per cent of all survey respondents agree that the role of the General Assembly as the highest authority in IPPF is clear and understood. Eight per cent disagree – this is made up of a very small proportion of Board, MA and Secretariat respondents.



"We do not think 'what is this person going to say?', 'are there repercussions if I say anything?'... No! We can focus on the work, on the mission."

Member Association

Seven key enabling factors to reform were identified

- Eliminating political toxicity, personal interest and conflict at regional and global levels.
- MAs feel closer to each other without the Regional Councils in place. As one MA said, "Before the reform we did not talk to other MAs." Other MAs talked about the regional fora: "We have the chance to see Executive Directors and Board members", "it is inspirational".
- Enabling direct access by MAs to Regional Offices at all levels and other parts of the Secretariat, including London, "without fear".
- Involving MAs in the process of developing common directions (strategies, policies and communities) with the opportunity to discuss and debate different viewpoints and being involved in decision-making at the General Assembly.
- Empowering MAs to adapt their business plans to the strategic pillars in a way that works for their context rather than being directed on what to do.
- Leadership action taken when senior people or MAs do not uphold IPPF's standards or values.
- A strong focus on maintaining core values such as respect, non-discrimination, gender equity and anti-racism.

Challenges and barriers identified

The higher level of disagreement in response to some questions in this section was largely driven by the following challenges and barriers:

- Lack of alignment with language and acting as allies. Some MAs highlighted a struggle with the language used in value statements, specifically, a perceived shift away from referring to women and girls. One MA talked about the need to have legitimacy to be able to talk as allies with partners from marginalized communities on sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice priorities even if they do not have lived experience. It was felt that there was work to do with community partners to achieve this.
- Disconnect between global governance and MAs, as MAs do not know how to hold the Board to account through the General Assembly. One MA respondent said, "We are not oriented that way." MAs also talked about the need to improve their understanding of the people behind the Board.
- Consensus rather than voting at the General Assembly. A number of respondents explained the importance of voting rather than attempting consensus through clapping or shouting. A vote was expressed as the "voice of the MA" and the way "MAs stand up to take accountability". This was particularly important in a multi-cultural environment "where some places are louder and some are quiet" (MAs).
- Keeping the reform journey in mind, a number of respondents explained that not everybody has been on the same journey of change and people forget or do not know the impacts of before/after the reform. There was concern about the possibility of "sliding back to old ways of doing things" and momentum being lost, particularly when leadership changes.
- The volume of work for MAs to take on "can feel overwhelming". A small number of MAs asked what MA-centric means to make sure there is common understanding.

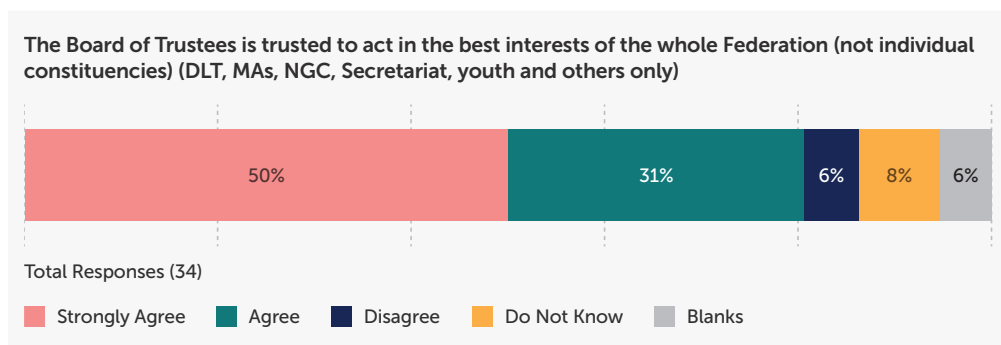
Opportunities identified

- A number of respondents emphasized that MAs should play a more active, central role in setting the agendas for both regional fora and the General Assembly to ensure meaningful MA and youth participation. It was suggested that:
 - Regional fora allocate more time to MAs sharing best practice, working on practical issues together with the Regional Office and celebrating MAs' successes.
 - The General Assembly provides more space for Executive Directors to have a voice leading conversations and reflections, with more diverse MA voices heard, "not just giving space to those who articulate the best".
 - MA volunteers would benefit from attending the General Assembly better prepared, having read the papers beforehand.
- A number of respondents suggested opening up a channel between the Board/Directors' Leadership Team and MAs through, for example, an annual (virtual) meeting where Board members and the Directors' Leadership Team set the tone for the coming year as a unified Federation. This would provide MAs with the opportunity to see the people on the Board and get to know them better. As one Board member said, "The Board of Trustees is trying ways to improve connectivity with MAs, MAs need to have an understanding that they are heard by the Board."
- Strengthening the way the Board of Trustees is held accountable at the General Assembly and between General Assemblies.
- There was a strong emphasis on the need to induct new Board of Trustees members, new volunteers at MA level, Executive Directors and key staff into the background of the reform to remind people how it shapes the Federation's direction, decisions and ways of working. It was suggested an overall workplan for the remainder of the reform could be developed to make visible how actions are being organized and monitored to ensure delivery.

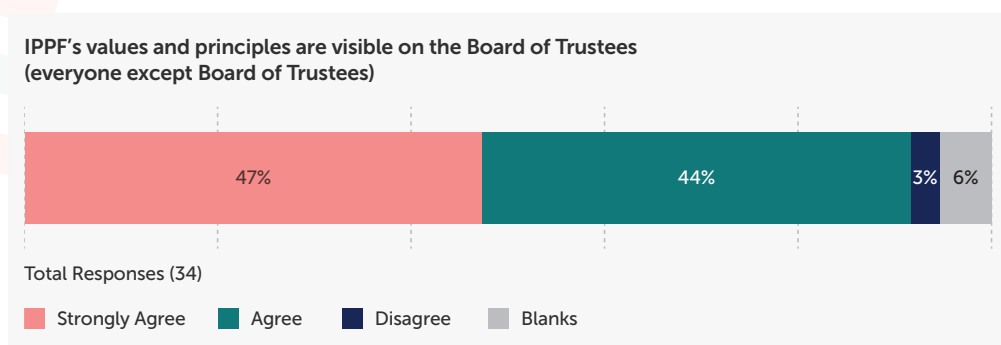
6.4 The theory of change short-term outcomes propose that the Board of Trustees is trusted to act in the best interests of the Federation, working effectively with management to deliver results because of the reform.

Most respondents agree that the Board of Trustees is trusted to act in the best interests of the Federation because of their skills, demonstration of IPPF's values and focus on the mission. Most also agree that the Board works effectively with management to deliver results, holding the Secretariat to account. Putting professional support, systems and processes in place to build a pipeline for governance and getting the recruitment of governance roles right were identified as priorities, as was establishing an external mechanism to evaluate governance performance.

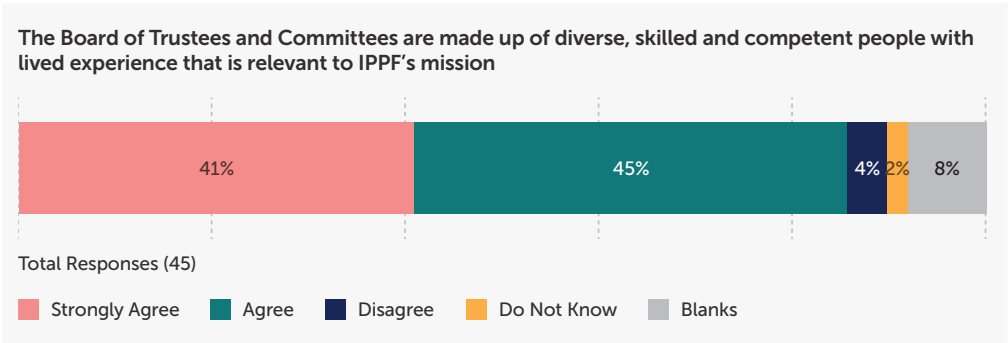
Eighty-one per cent of MA, Nominations and Governance Committee, Directors' Leadership Team and Secretariat survey respondents agree that the Board is trusted to act in the best interests of the Federation. This includes 76 per cent of MAs (52 per cent of whom strongly agree). Ten per cent of MA respondents do not agree.



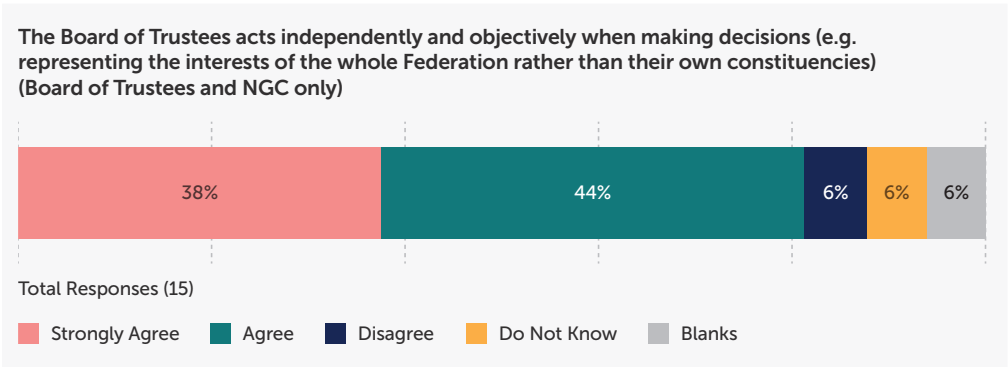
Ninety-one per cent of MA, Secretariat, Directors' Leadership Team and Nominations and Governance Committee respondents agree that IPPF's values and principles are visible on the Board. Three per cent disagree. When the Board was asked whether IPPF's values and feminist leadership principles are visible on the Board, 86 per cent agreed (the rest do not know/skipped the question).



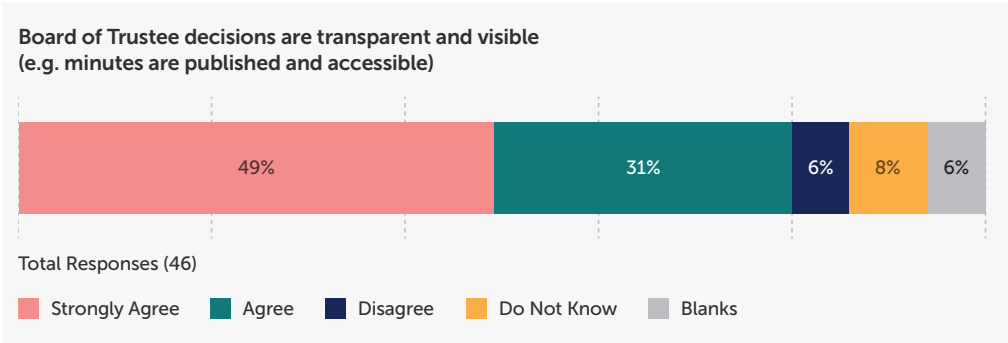
Eighty-six per cent of all survey respondents agree that the Board of Trustees and Committees are made up of diverse, skilled and competent people with lived experience that is relevant to IPPF’s mission. Four per cent disagree.



From inside governance, 82 per cent of Board and Nominations and Governance Committee respondents agree that the Board acts independently and objectively when making decisions. Six per cent disagree.

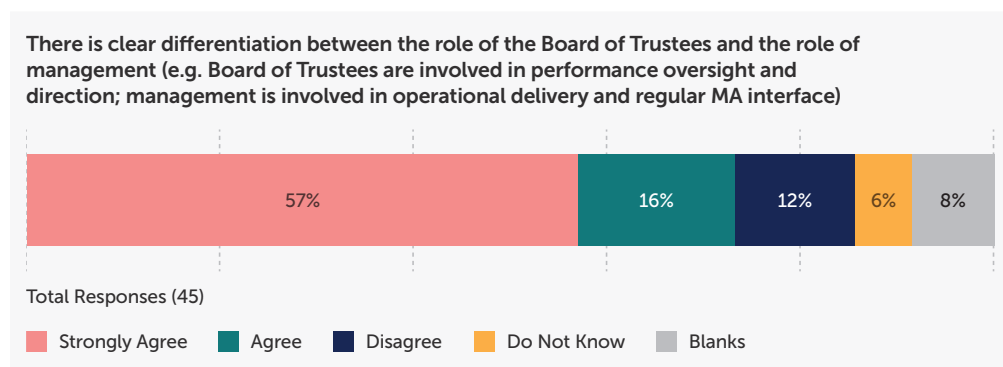


80 per cent of all survey respondents (including 81 per cent of MAs) agree that the Board of Trustees’ decisions are transparent and visible. Six per cent disagree.

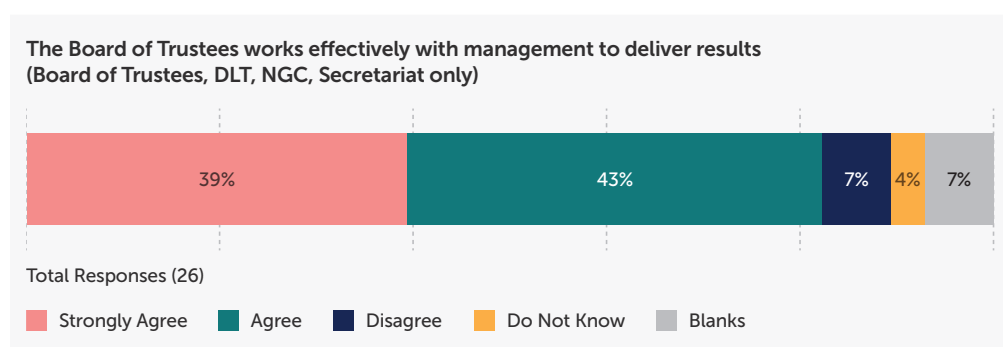


Turning to the Board's relationship with management

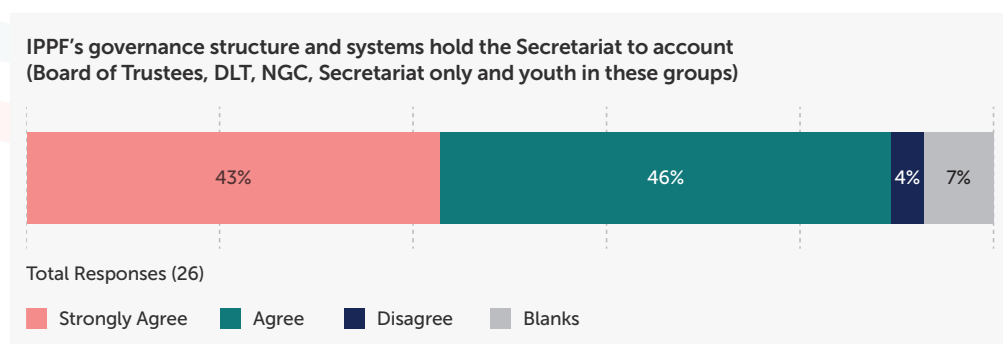
Seventy-three per cent of all survey respondents agree that there is clear differentiation between the role of the Board and the role of management. Twelve per cent of Board, MA and Secretariat survey respondents disagree.



Eighty-two per cent of Board, Nominations and Governance Committee, Directors' Leadership Team and Secretariat survey respondents agree that the Board works effectively with management to deliver results. Seven per cent disagree.



Eighty-nine per cent of Board, Nominations and Governance Committee, Directors' Leadership Team and Secretariat survey respondents agree that IPPF's governance structure and systems hold the Secretariat to account. Four per cent disagree.



Six key enabling factors to reform were identified

- The Chair's experience and skills, the Director-General's leadership and the collaborative relationship between the Board and Director-General.
- Skills-based appointments rather than appointments made by representation.
- The blend of internal and external Board members contributing diverse lived experience of IPPF's work and/or communities served, professional expertise and skills as well as international perspectives and connections.
- A collective, collaborative approach within the Board: internal and external members coming together as equals, with each making a contribution.
- A Board focused on substantive issues representing what is best for the Federation, with passion for the mission and the work rather than regional representation, personal politics and position.
- Improved governance, accountability, transparency and better communication flows sharing information to all MAs at the same time through the MA forum and publication of Board minutes.

Challenges and barriers identified

- Respondents made positive remarks about the important role of the Nominations and Governance Committee. However, concerns were raised about the scale of their role and the burden on volunteers to:
 - Ensure the right skills, mindset and expertise on the Board, particularly from MA volunteers. One respondent said, "This requires investment and support" (Board of Trustees).
 - Attract external global talent with the right level of connections required to maintain a strong, influential Board. One respondent said, "This needs professional recruiters" (Board of Trustees). "Nominations and Governance Committee need to be more exposed to MA work to better understand the environment and context to support selection of the right people to governance roles."

Opportunities identified

- Investing in formal Board reviews by a third-party expert to support Board development and feedback in order to understand the impact the Board has on the performance of the Federation and Secretariat.
- Instigating succession planning and training to prepare volunteers for governance and increase the likelihood of more people stepping forward. Strengthening MA governance with skills-based appointments was also seen as a mechanism to help fill the pipeline for global governance.
- Using professional recruiters to support the attraction and management of global talent through the selection process.

"The distinction between roles of governance and management is evident and clear as never before. We also see mutual respect and understanding of the two bodies i.e. governance and management working in harmony and tandem for the benefit of the Federation."

Secretariat

"The Board now has the skills to do the work needed. Before the reform, as an example, the Treasurer did not have financial expertise, skills or experience."

Secretariat

A new way of thinking and working for the Board of Trustees

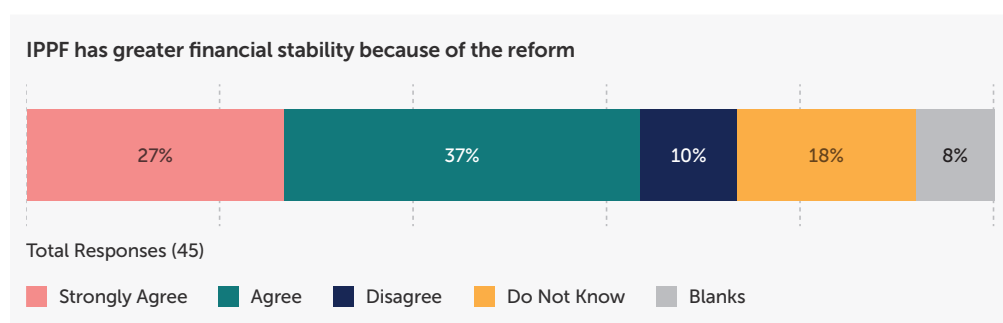
During the research, a picture emerged of how the Chair brings the Board together and the relationship with management, illustrating a radically different way of working from before the reform that is important to capture. This section presents a series of quotes to bring these changes to life.

The Chair creates an environment that promotes equality, collaboration and consensus	The Board acts collectively, aiming to respect all contributions and focused on the Federation's mission	The relationship between Board and management is clearly defined without politics
<p><i>"The Chair of Board brings huge experience from international organizations. She is cordial to everyone, knows how to listen, keep the Board focused and cut out the unnecessary."</i></p> <p><i>"I expected to see power dynamics on the Board, but no, the Chair sits with the Board. She sits amongst us, not in front of us."</i></p> <p><i>"The Chair allows us to discuss openly, freely and does not stifle dissent. She seeks consensus."</i></p> <p><i>"The Chair holds Board members to think about the Federation as a whole, not represent their own interests. When people raise their own interests, she addresses it."</i></p> <p><i>"The Chair has moral integrity."</i></p> <p>Quotes from Board of Trustees, Nominations and Governance Committee, Secretariat/Directors' Leadership Team</p>	<p><i>"Everyone on the Board has skills to contribute [whether they come from outside or inside the Federation]... 'outsiders' need to come with humility and listen to internals who may not have the same experience or confidence."</i></p> <p><i>"Board decision-making is not individual [it is consensus]. We are like a football team, we all move together to score the goal."</i></p> <p><i>"The aptitude of the Chair and others on the Board is striking the right balance between aspirations, courage, risk-taking and judgment. This allows us to weather the external environment."</i></p> <p><i>"We are united and thinking about global trends, we have a different level of strategic view."</i></p> <p>Quotes from Board of Trustees, Secretariat/Directors' Leadership Team</p>	<p><i>"The distinction between roles of governance and management is evident and clear as never before. We also see mutual respect and understanding of the two bodies i.e. governance and management working in harmony and tandem for the benefit of the Federation."</i></p> <p><i>"The DG [Director-General] is accountable to the Board, he is the only one."</i></p> <p><i>"The relationship between Board and management works, the regional offices are no longer independent: this has given us a unified Secretariat with better interaction."</i></p> <p><i>"The Chair does not undermine the DG. Always respects his position and role. Before reform, the President would go to Regional Councils and Regional Directors to gain power."</i></p> <p>Quotes from Board of Trustees, Nominations and Governance Committee, Secretariat/Directors' Leadership Team</p>

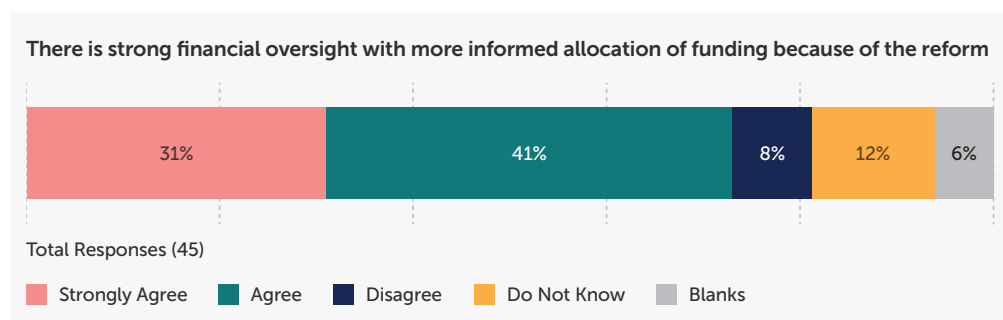
6.5 The theory of change short-term outcomes propose that prioritization is balanced between the funding streams and that there is stronger financial oversight with more informed, transparent allocations because of the reform

Financial stability is seen as a challenge because of the changes to the funding environment. Most respondents linked financial stability to the resource allocation process and financial oversight brought in as part of the governance reform, identifying it as a significant improvement. Opportunities to review the process and promote MAs' sustainability through greater MA to MA collaboration were identified as priorities.

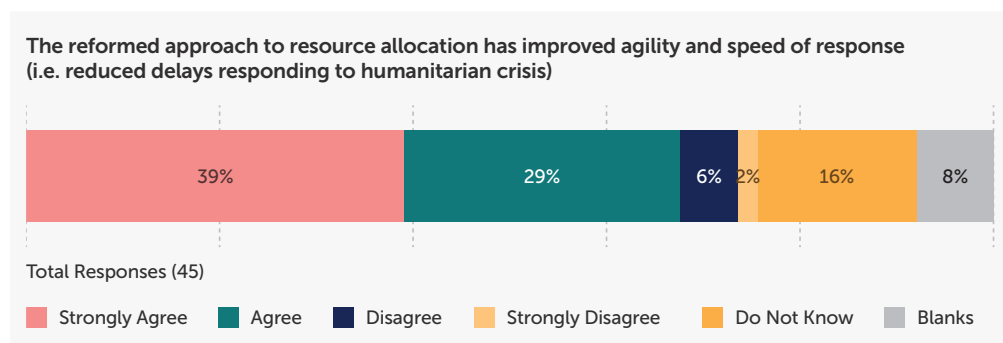
Sixty-four per cent of all survey respondents agree that IPPF has greater financial stability because of the reform. Twenty-six per cent of respondents do not know or skipped the question. Ten per cent disagree, coming from a very small proportion of Board, Directors' Leadership Team and MA respondents.



Seventy-two per cent of all survey respondents agree that there is strong financial oversight with more informed allocation of funding. Seventy-three per cent agree that resource allocation is transparent and visible. Fourteen per cent of MA respondents disagree with both statements and 20-22 per cent of respondents responded do not know or skipped the question.



Sixty-eight per cent of all respondents agree that the reformed approach to resource allocation has improved agility and speed of response (that is, reduced delays in responding to humanitarian crises). Eight per cent disagree, including five per cent of MA respondents. Twenty-four per cent responded do not know or skipped the question.



Feedback from interview participants identified highly positive views in relation to improved agility and speed of response to Stream 3 funding, including how the agility of the process and the Board have contributed to saving lives (see section 6.1).

During interviews, MA respondents (Executive Directors) demonstrated strong understanding of the resource allocation process, formulae and funding recipients for different streams.

Three key enabling factors to reform were identified

- Multi-year business planning providing MAs with certainty to support delivery that reflects realities on the ground.
- The creation of Stream 3 funding and responses to humanitarian crises have been very quick and effective.
- The visibility of the process and objective use of formulae to distribute money.

Challenges and barriers identified

- Reduced funding available for individual MAs through Stream 1 has implications for funding allocations and an impact on the provision of direct services on the ground, resulting in clinics closing in some countries.
- Limitations in the capacity of Stream 2 recipients, with fewer formal structures and systems to manage the size of funding awarded, coordinate resources and deliver results.

Opportunities identified

- A number of respondents strongly emphasized the need for connectivity and collaboration between MAs to become more sustainable by:
 - strengthening resource mobilization and sharing best practice
 - expanding social enterprise by learning from each other and collaborating
 - working together on ways to manage cost efficiencies.
- The need for deeper conversations across the Federation about where money flows and more visibility on what gets spent, the impacts delivered, the people reached, how it builds MAs' capacity, key lessons learned and adjustments.
- It was suggested that more support could be provided to MAs to strengthen their applications for funding and programme plans.

"I am now a big fan of social enterprise. I did not get it, now I truly believe in it and now I am an advocate."

Member Association

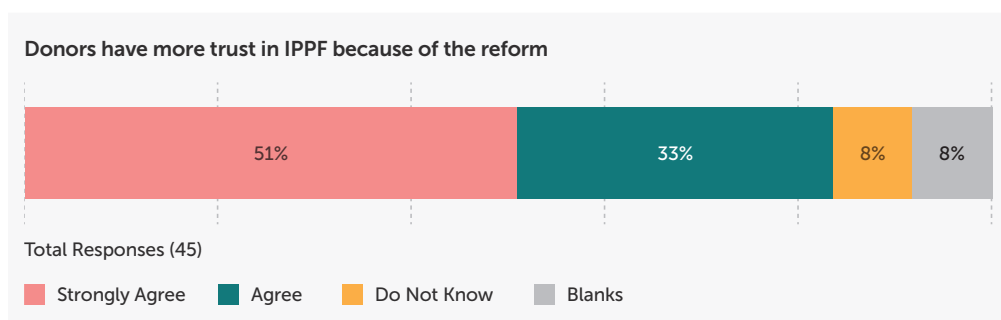
Role of the Resource Allocation Technical Committee

The Resource Allocation Technical Committee (RATC) is responsible for overseeing the allocation process, ensuring that formulae are correctly applied and that MA business planning is completed to the quality expected. The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee then review budgets and deliverables annually. The remit of the RATC has recently expanded to include oversight of sustainability. During the review, the review team identified what appears to be a disconnect between overseeing the front-end of the allocation of resources to different streams and assessing the outcomes and expenditure for each stream on an annual basis.

6.6 The theory of change short-term outcomes propose that greater donor confidence and trust in IPPF will be built because of the reform

Most IPPF respondents believe that donor trust has grown because of the reform. Donor respondents strongly agree that reform has led to a significant increase in trust, resulting in continued funding and the Federation being seen as a leader and role model in the sector.

Eighty-four per cent of all survey respondents (including 90 per cent of MA respondents and excluding donors) agree that donors have more trust in IPPF because of the reform.



"Under Alvaro [Bermejo, the Director-General], IPPF is not hiding anything. His leadership approach has built confidence [and enabled] reform. He put everything on the line to do so and will leave an organization that is fit for purpose."

Donor

This section focuses on donor feedback to understand their valuable external perspective on IPPF's journey of change and the impact on the Federation's reputation, standing and funding. All donor respondents strongly agree that they either have more trust or have maintained trust in IPPF because of the reform.

Donors identified five key enabling factors to reform

- The Director-General's leadership.
- Strong systems and management that enabled the Federation to take action to address and resolve safeguarding issues and financial mismanagement. "We are quite confident and IPPF is one of the best partners, they can account for actions and what they do with the money." (Donor)
- Radically transparent communication.
- Removing politics and regional factions that not only stopped the Federation from progressing but also built significant distrust with donors.
- MAs have a direct say in the global direction, providing unique insights to represent people's needs on the ground, rather than initiatives being developed centrally and implemented globally. As one donor said, "We now see a more confident Federation, one built on a stronger base with legitimacy from the bottom up with that reflected on the central structure."

Challenge identified by donors

- Not all donors receive such transparency from all partners. A few recommended that IPPF should continue to explain the reform context and change journey to help new donors understand why transparent communication takes place. This would ensure that the Federation is not disadvantaged if, for example, the number of financial concerns raised becomes a criterion for funding cuts.

Opportunities were identified by donors, who strongly value IPPF's mission to lead a locally owned, globally connected civil society movement:

- Ensuring continual feedback mechanisms and strong links between MAs and the Secretariat, particularly at a global level, with transparent communication to ensure that MAs feel heard and involved in decision-making.
- Increasing flexibility to address regional challenges and needs.
- Continuing to reflect on and deconstruct colonial structures, while advocating for positive change. One donor pointed out that "Secretariat changes have not been about saving jobs in London". This 'walking the talk' was valued.
- The leadership is seen as a major asset, but there is concern about the strength of future governance without such leadership.
- Donors called for IPPF to remain bold and act in the best interests of the Federation, regardless of politics.

When asked if there is anything they think the sector can learn from IPPF's governance reform, donors responded

- The international development sector can learn from IPPF's engagement with local MAs, which maintains the movement's integrity and ensures that local voices shape global advocacy. This is seen as IPPF's core strength.
- IPPF's systems and management of safeguarding and financial issues is often used as an example to other international development organizations. "IPPF is pointed out as a role model."

6.7 The theory of change short-term outcomes propose improved dialogue with youth and that youth will feel included in decision-making processes because of the reform.

Youth involvement at every level was seen as notably positive within the Federation, with governance reform providing the opportunity for youth representation and inclusion in leadership and decision-making. However, young people and others (MAs, Board of Trustees and the Secretariat) identified some challenges to meaningful participation, which create barriers to navigating the formal structures.

Youth feedback came from interviews with youth representatives, all of whom have been part of the journey of reform, and from interviews with the Board, Nominations and Governance Committee and MA respondents.

Two key enabling factors to reform were identified

- The opportunity to participate in global governance formally.
- Youth involvement and inclusion at all levels came out strongly from the survey. This was highlighted by Board and Nominations and Governance Committee respondents, who emphasized "the vibrancy and future thinking" that young people generated in discussions.

"Before reform, we had little confidence in IPPF, there were personality-based conflicts and competing empires at regional board level, which meant IPPF could not drive work or the organization forward."

Donor

"Looking forward, it is now about how IPPF strengthen central policies without compromising MA autonomy. Keep learning, you have impressive decolonization and meaningful representation. IPPF is in a position to lead the rethink of what the sector looks like."

Donor

Barriers and challenges identified

- Limited skills and understanding. Young people feel unprepared for global governance roles because of a lack of structured support and training. One said, “It is not just trying to understand the role, but I need to understand how to read a budget to have meaningful participation.” Young people also explained that many are put off applying for governance roles because the criteria are daunting.
- Tokenism. Youth felt that they were sometimes included in global governance as a “checkbox requirement, rather than for meaningful engagement”. One young person mentioned that they “did not understand how to contribute, so kept quiet” and another comment was that “when I did come up with suggestions, they were not taken forward”. This included feedback about the need for training for all governance members, particularly those from within the Federation.
- Lack of integration into MA governance was highlighted by young people, who feel that MAs do not know how to use them in governance. This was backed up by two MAs who were pleased to have youth involvement but also expressed the need for deeper expertise on their Boards.
- MAs and young people have different understandings of how youth are involved or can participate. One MA said, “I would love them to be more practically involved, taking forward ideas themselves.”
- Social exclusion. Young people feel that getting involved in any form of governance takes more time than many can give because of study and work. This makes taking part in governance an exclusive activity reserved for particular social groups, rather than an inclusive action that promotes democracy.

Opportunities identified

- Providing structured training that includes how to participate and develop core ‘business’ skills, alongside an understanding of governance structures and systems and a glossary of terms.
- Strengthening understanding among young people, MAs and others of the role of youth in global and MA governance, including how they can best participate and contribute.
- Establishing a mentoring programme for those stepping into governance to provide a go-to person with governance experience to coach and support.
- Considering ways to expand social inclusion to allow more diversity in youth participating in governance within the Federation.

“Young people do trust the IPPF reforms, however, the work must be done so that the executive directors of the MAs put the reforms into practice, include them as young people and understand the importance of their participation not as a mandate but as a political commitment.”

Young person

“The youth do not know what their role is within the General Assembly, nor do they feel that they are taken into account when it comes to making decisions, the call has been: avoiding tokenism.”

Young person

7 Lessons Learned

During interviews, respondents were asked to comment on key lessons learned from the governance reform. The review team incorporated this feedback into the themes below:

Focus shifted from internal politics to bold action

- 7.1 Removing direct, internal representation from global governance and a shift to representing the Federation as a whole has eradicated harmful politics and vested interests, enabling a more collaborative Board to focus on IPPF's mission and be bolder and more courageous in its actions. This has prompted significant, radical cultural change throughout the Federation. It demonstrates that governance reform is more than structure, systems and administrative processes: it is a mindset, a way of thinking that is open to new ideas, listening and not getting in the way of good work.
-

A skilled, diverse Board has brought credibility and effectiveness

- 7.2 The Board has become more professional, with members selected for their expertise and skills. This has led to greater transparency, professionalism, accountability and strategic decision-making. Despite initial resistance, a skills-based Board with a blend of external and internal experience and the inclusion of diverse voices, especially from marginalized communities, has improved governance effectiveness, developed organizational capacity and enhanced IPPF's reputation in the sector.
-

Strengthening governance needs further investment

- 7.3 The Nominations and Governance Committee has played a vital role in shaping the Board's professionalism by ensuring diverse, skilled members. Support to maintain and develop a strong, effective Board would now benefit from investment in more in-depth induction, more structured succession planning and external professional expertise to support performance reviews and recruit talent of the right calibre. In addition, it would be helpful to establish formal content and skills training for internal governance and to build the pipeline for global governance roles.
-

Removing regional bureaucracy has enabled agility, unity and collaboration

- 7.4 Removing regional governance has significantly reduced bureaucracy and created a more united, agile Federation. It has allowed the Secretariat's focus to shift away from managing internal politics to working together to meet strategic goals. This has improved communication, collaboration and relationships between the Secretariat and Member Associations at every level and between MAs, who can now act without fear or repercussion.
-

MAs' role in holding the Board accountable needs enhancing

- 7.5 Connecting the Board of Trustees with MAs goes beyond written communication to strengthening how MAs hold the Board to account at the General Assembly and between General Assemblies. This could include an annual meeting to provide the opportunity for the Federation to 'regroup', review progress and unify around the path ahead.
-

Governance must evolve to stay relevant

- 7.6 Both global and MA governance must continue to evolve to meet future challenges and adapt to different contexts. Considering the principles of governance reform, strengthening governance at MA level is now seen as a priority. This could be guided by a visible plan, more facilitation of the process where it would add value, stronger leadership development to sustain focus and progress and an induction that reinforces the journey IPPF is on and why the system is the way it is.
-

MA ownership supports long-term success

- 7.7 The governance reform shifted power and resources more directly to MAs. Engaging MAs in the reform and shaping the strategy has fostered a sense of belonging, alignment and ownership. Deepening participation of MAs in shaping regional and global agendas and working together on priorities that will support greater MA sustainability, capacity development and advocacy will help ensure that MAs feel they have a real stake in the long-term success of the governance transformation.
-

Walking the talk deepens trust and sector leadership

- 7.8 Donor trust and confidence have been built and maintained through radically transparent communication; visible, active management of issues; global and regional governance reform; and organizational change to align with the mission and strategy. IPPF's ability to walk the talk on the journey of decolonization from the ground up and the Federation's unique structure that puts MAs' service delivery at the centre places IPPF in a position to help redefine the sector.
-

Youth bring energy but need clearer roles and support

- 7.9 Young people are seen to bring vitality, innovation and bold ideas to governance. Their presence fosters inclusivity and reflects the Federation's commitment to future generations. However, more clarity about their role, more support, training and adequate mentorship are required to help them navigate governance processes, accompanied by cultural change and engagement at MA level to align on how young people can meaningfully participate.
-

Feminist leadership is emerging

- 7.10 The characteristics of feminist leadership – variously defined as ‘power with, not over’, an intersectional approach, collaboration and collective decision-making, transparency and accountability, empowerment and support – have emerged in descriptions of how the Board works. This demonstrates how governance reform has opened the door to further evolution and creates the opportunity to start developing a shared understanding of feminist leadership and how it can work for the Federation.
-

Resource allocation helps save lives yet raises questions

- 7.11 The reformed approach to resource allocation is providing greater transparency. Creating Stream 3 funding is described as significantly contributing to saving lives. Yet there have been winners and losers from the new process, and the funding landscape is becoming more challenging, which will impact the delivery of services on the ground. Accelerating and enhancing MA collaboration on sustainability initiatives is seen as a priority. The Federation would benefit from more in-depth conversations about where the money flows, how impacts delivered from each funding stream are reviewed on an annual basis, how the funding is building MAs’ capacity to deliver services and how financial oversight and leadership are being developed at a local level.
-

