

YOUTH IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

How we work with young people in humanitarian settings



Access to sexual and reproductive healthcare is a basic human right for all people. This also includes people living in humanitarian settings. About 60 percent of the 1.4 billion people who live in countries affected by crisis and fragility are young people. Humanitarian crises expose weaknesses in health systems when education and services are lacking or suspended. This has serious impact on the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people, especially young women. In humanitarian crises, young women have significantly increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence, forced marriage, unplanned pregnancy, unsafe abortion, maternal death and sexually transmitted infections. Young men are also at risk of sexual violence, especially those on the move. Advocating for and responding to the sexual and reproductive needs of young people in humanitarian settings are key priorities for IPPF. This document outlines IPPF's commitment to apply a youth centred approach throughout the disaster management cycle; mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

IPPF: A global humanitarian organisation

In 2016, the International Planned Parenthood Federation launched its seven-year Strategic Framework: *Locally Owned, Globally Connected*. This framework includes a core focus on delivering a model for sexual and reproductive health in crises that connects humanitarian action with long term, equitable sustainable development goals.

The youth centered approach in IPPF's humanitarian work is reflected in the four outcome areas of the Strategic Framework. The youth centred approach is also closely linked to IPPF's principle of "leaving no one behind" and commitment to human rights.



Why focus on young people?

As IPPF expands its role as a SRHR actor in the humanitarian field, and expands its reach to crisis-affected populations, we must ensure that we place young people at the centre of not only our development work, but our humanitarian work.

A youth centered approach keeps us accountable to ensure our responses reach all people equally and avoid putting young people at further risk. Ensuring that young people can engage and participate in our humanitarian work in a meaningful way is a goal in itself but also a way of making sure that our interventions meet the needs of young people.

We believe that young people have the capacity to engage in our humanitarian work and we value the input and contribution of young people. It is also a priority for IPPF to meet the SRH needs of the most marginalised and underserved groups, which includes young persons living with a disability, and young people with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities.

What does a youth centred approach mean for our humanitarian work?

IPPF has committed to meaningfully engage young people in our governance, leadership and planning. To understand and meet the needs of young people in humanitarian settings it is important to:

- Meaningfully involve young people - especially those experiencing intersecting inequalities - throughout the project cycle,
- Adjust response programming to respond to the SRH needs of youth
- Systematically collect sex, age and disability-disaggregated data and use this to inform response planning and advocacy efforts
- Engage youth as first-line humanitarian responders and during post emergency reviews.

“Young people, including those in humanitarian settings, are free to make choices about their sexuality and well-being in a world without discrimination.”

(IPPF Humanitarian Strategy 2018-2022)



Chathurika from Sri Lanka

In May 2017, flash flooding in Sri Lanka triggered landslides resulting in many people losing their homes, forcing them to seek shelter in camps. IPPF's Member Association, the Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka (FPASL), assisted those affected through a series of sexual and reproductive health camps.

Shortly after the floods began, Chathurika, 24, received a message from FPASL calling for youth volunteers to take part in the response.

During the response Chathurika volunteered in the health camps. She assisted the medical staff with things such as mobilising target populations, making sure they queued up when seeking healthcare, and packing medicine.

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



Louria from the Philippines

One of the deadliest typhoons to ever hit the Philippines, Typhoon Haiyan, struck in November 2013. IPPF's Member Association in the Philippines, the Family Planning Organisation of the Philippines (FPOP), initiated an emergency response in the aftermath of the typhoon.

Besides engaging medical staff in the response team, FPOP also engaged youth volunteers in the response. Louria, a youth representative of FPOP's National Youth Committee in Iloilo, took part in the emergency response.

Louria interviewed young people about their sexual and reproductive health concern. She also ran awareness sessions about reproductive health, with a particular focus on teenage pregnancy and HIV prevention. Louria also helped the medical staff to register attendance, handing out hygiene kits and supporting pregnant women who were accessing the services.

"Volunteering for FPOP has made me grow. I have gained knowledge, experience and friends. To include young people is important. We want to be involved. We want to help our communities".

Guidelines and tools for working with and for young people in humanitarian settings

Launched at the World Humanitarian Summit, the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action is a collective commitment of over 50 humanitarian actors to ensure that the priorities of young people are addressed, and that they are informed, consulted, and meaningfully engaged throughout all stages of humanitarian action. The 'Inter-agency Guidelines for Working with and for Young People in Humanitarian Settings' was developed to address the gap in humanitarian tools that tend to overlook young people, a specific but broad demographic with interlinked needs across multiple sectors.

The Inter-agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises (IAWG) has also developed the 'Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Toolkit for Humanitarian Settings: A Companion to the Inter-Agency Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings', which is currently undergoing revision. This toolkit is intended to guide humanitarian programme managers and healthcare providers to ensure that sexual and reproductive health interventions put into place both during and after a crisis are responsive to the unique needs of adolescents. It provides user-friendly tools for assessing the impact of a crisis on adolescents and implementing an adolescent-friendly Minimum Initial Service Package.

These resources are not just about mainstreaming young people's needs, but about reinforcing the contributions they make to humanitarian programming.

Sapana from Nepal

On 25 April 2015, Nepal was hit by a devastating earthquake. It killed over 9,000 people and injured 22,000 people. The staff and volunteers of the Family Planning Association of Nepal (FPAN) provided mobile reproductive health camps.

Sapana Yalanash, 25, was injured during the earthquake. After recovering from her injury, she engaged as a youth volunteer with FPAN.

Sapana volunteered in one of the camp's female friendly spaces. There she identified pregnant women, distributed dignity kits and informed women about contraceptive options. Young people were also welcomed into the female friendly space.

With other youth volunteers, Sapana arranged activities for young people. They conducted awareness sessions on sexuality and reproductive health and arranged a musical drama through which young people could act out their experiences.

"Through volunteering in the humanitarian response, I met survivors who just like me needed help after the earthquake. By helping others, I learned new things, gained respect in my community".



Indri from Indonesia

On 28 September 2018, strong earthquakes rocked the Indonesian island of Sulawesi, causing severe damage to infrastructure and over 2,000 confirmed casualties. The earthquakes also triggered a tsunami that struck Palu City and surrounding beaches.

Indri Walean, 20, a youth volunteer for IPPF's Member Association, the Indonesian Planned Parenthood Association (IPPA), was an integral part of the IPPF humanitarian outreach, having received a call from IPPA to take part in the response shortly after the disaster.

During the humanitarian response, Indri volunteered by planning, organising and running sexual and reproductive health awareness sessions for youth living in displacement camps. She provided advice around reproductive health, HIV and STIs. Indri also received training from IPPA on the needs of people in humanitarian settings.

"When the earthquake struck, I was one of the victims. I saw a lot of people in distress. I immediately thought, what kind of person am I? I still have hands, have legs, I still have everything, why not help others? I am the same human as you. You and me, are the same. That's why I'm a youth volunteer".

