

# REGIONAL YOUTH NETWORKS AS A RESPONSE TO MULTIPLE CRISES IN LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

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IPPF is a **global federation and movement** of 100+ locally led Member Associations in 150+ countries, dedicated to your sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice.



# YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT LIVING ONE CRISIS AT A TIME, WE ARE NAVIGATING ALL OF THEM, AT ONCE.

Young people in Latin America and the Caribbean are navigating the compounded effects of multiple, intersecting crises:

- Migration → increased GBV & SRHR gaps
- Political instability → weakened health systems
- Anti-rights movements → rollback of SRHR & CSE

When systems collapse, young women and girls lose their rights first.



# ADOLESCENTS ARE OFTEN THE FIRST GROUP AFFECTED WHEN CRISES COLLIDE.

Climate emergencies, forced migration, political instability, and anti-rights movements disrupt education, health services, and protection systems, placing adolescents, especially girls and gender-diverse adolescents, at heightened risk of violence, early pregnancy, and loss of bodily autonomy.

At IPPF, we recognize that **adolescents cannot be treated only as beneficiaries**. Their realities, knowledge, and lived experiences are essential to designing effective responses to complex crises.



# OUR COMMITMENT AT IPPF



- Expand adolescent participation in decision-making and advocacy spaces at national, regional, and global levels.
- Strengthen adolescent-centered leadership pathways, ensuring safe, ethical, and meaningful engagement.
- Invest in capacity-building, so adolescents have the skills, information, and confidence to speak for themselves.
- Create enabling environments where adolescent voices are protected, valued, and taken seriously.

# ARGENTINA: PUBLIC POLICY ROLLBACK & YOUTH-LED DIGITAL RESPONSE

- The National Plan for the Prevention of Unintended Pregnancy in Adolescence (**Plan ENIA**) in Argentina was a rights-based public policy that significantly reduced adolescent fertility rates and expanded access to sexual and reproductive health services for young people. Between 2018 and 2022, the plan helped cut the adolescent fertility rate roughly in half and supported adolescents with education, counseling, and services.
- However, recent policy shifts have *effectively dismantled ENIA*, removing key funding, technical teams, and budget for essential services at the territorial level, leaving thousands of adolescents without critical SRHR access and slowing progress on prevention.



# FUNDHEG: YOUTH RESPONSE, DIGITAL INNOVATION TO FILL THE GAP

To respond to SRHR service gaps and rights erosion, our collaborative partner Fundación de Derechos Humanos, Equidad y Género (FunDheg) and its youth network implemented “EsiChat” an inclusive, evidence-based chatbot providing youth with reliable information on sexuality, rights, and health via WhatsApp and other digital platforms

Key features of EsiChat:

- Accessible 24/7 and designed with youth input.
- Offers verified information on sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Reaches young people where formal services have retracted due to policy rollback.

This matters because demonstrates how youth networks innovate in response to political regression on SRHR, shows digital tools as strategic assets when institutional protections are weakened and highlights the role of youth leadership in building resilience and maintaining access to essential health information in crisis contexts.



THE QUESTION IS NOT *IF* YOUTH ARE LEADING, BUT HOW WE SUSTAIN, CONNECT, AND SCALE THAT LEADERSHIP.

The Youth Networks turn participation into power.

# IPPF: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Youth engagement has been at the core of IPPF and since the 1990s, even recognized as a fundamental element of governance. Our commitments to youths can be seen through:

A **youth manifesto** was created by youth in 1998 and updated in 2008 as a call to action to improve SRHR services, education and leadership.

Our 2023-2028 strategy called **Come Together: IPPF Strategy 2028** was written by a young person and has been **inspired by the needs of Generation Z**.

Significant efforts have been made to our Results Framework to assess our impact on youth and include elements of youth centred action. For example, **Indicator 7: Quality, reach and impact of CSE, youth-centred care, and progress in youth engagement in the Federation**

20% of **governance boards** should consist of young people

5% of our **core funding** should be for youth activities

A regional youth network in every region led by a **youth networker** who sits at the secretariat level



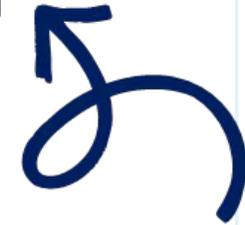
# YOUTH NETWORKER ROLE

After our 2022 General Assembly, IPPF created a formula to make youth participation truly possible: the establishment of regional youth networks around the world, each supported by a young person serving as a Youth Networker.

This role is designed to promote youth-centred action in the region and to connect a global community committed to strengthening youth participation across the Federation.

- Youth under 25 embedded at regional level
- Bridge between secretariat & youth movements
- Convene, organize & mobilize regional networks

Leading the Way:  
IPPF's Youth  
Networkers



# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU INVEST IN YOUNG PEOPLE?



## From Participation to Power: Youth-Led Impact in Latin America & the Caribbean

### Key Results from IPPF ACRO Youth Networks:

- Regional youth leadership strengthened across LAC and the Caribbean, with active participation from youth in more than 20 countries, including young women, LGBTQ+ youth, sex workers, and marginalized communities.
- Youth influencing policy and global agendas, with sustained participation in regional and global spaces such as CSW68, ICPD-related processes, ECLAC forums, education ministerial meetings, and FP2030 strategic dialogues.
- Youth-led advocacy amplified, positioning young people as recognized SRHR experts and contributors to policy recommendations, declarations, and accountability mechanisms.
- Digital innovation and counter-narratives scaled, using social media, advocacy bootcamps, and digital tools to respond to anti-rights discourses and reach peers where institutions fall short.
- Stronger intergenerational governance, with youth holding decision-making roles, leading accountability processes, and managing dedicated budgets for youth action.
- Sustainable leadership pipelines built, ensuring continuity, collective care, and long-term regional coordination beyond individual projects.

# BUT WE CAN'T DO THIS ALONE

## Defending Bodily Autonomy & SRHR in the Face of Growing Resistance

Across the Americas and the Caribbean, the rapid advance of organized anti-rights movements is actively rolling back sexual and reproductive rights and undermining bodily autonomy —particularly for young people, women, LGBTQ+ communities, migrants, and other marginalized groups. Youth leadership is essential, but it cannot stand alone. Sustained, coordinated support is urgently needed.

### **Governments: Fund & Protect Youth Leadership**

Increase **public funding** for youth-led SRHR initiatives and community-based services.

Protect evidence-based policies, CSE, and health services from political and ideological attacks.

Recognize young people as **legitimate policy actors**, not just beneficiaries.



## Civil Society: Co-Create, Don't Tokenize

- Build **strategic alliances** with youth and grassroots organizations rooted in local realities.
- Share power, resources, and decision-making spaces.
- Support youth-led innovation responding to service gaps, misinformation, and rights erosion.

## International Organizations: Institutionalize Youth Power

- Move beyond ad-hoc participation toward **structural, long-term investment** in youth networks.
- Ensure dedicated, flexible **financing for youth and marginalized communities**.
- Embed youth leadership in governance, accountability frameworks, and regional strategies.

Without increased government support, stronger strategic partnerships, and sustainable financing, young people and marginalized communities will continue to face barriers to **information, services, and the full exercise of their sexual and reproductive rights**.

**Investing in youth leadership is not optional, it is a frontline defense for democracy, autonomy, and health in our region.**

In times of backlash, **solidarity** is our strongest strategy and youth must be resourced, protected, and **empowered to lead**





WE  
ARE

THE  
FIRE