

<p>IPPF EUROPEAN NETWORK Policy Paper SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE</p>

*This paper has been developed by youth volunteers of the International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN) in accordance with recommendations from the IPPF International Youth Committee. It highlights the need for a **new**, more **realistic** and more **dynamic** approach to sexual and reproductive health (SRH), which is based upon the realisation that:*

- 1. Young people are all sexually active, although not all young people are having sexual intercourse.*
- 2. Young people have the same sexual and reproductive health rights, including information and access to services, as adults so that they are able to enjoy their sexuality safely and confidently.*

The IPPF European Network believes that sexual and reproductive health services should be available to young people for reasons of

- ❖ **HEALTH:** to safeguard their sexual health through access to comprehensive services;
- ❖ **CHOICE:** to have access to accurate information and education, to make free and responsible choices;
- ❖ **RIGHTS:** the right of young people to enjoy their sexuality and relationships.

IPPF EN further believes that:

- young people have a basic right to comprehensive sex and sexuality education regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, culture, age, disability, socio-economic circumstances, and marital status. This education should be available in a range of settings both in and outside of the school environment and through various channels including popular media, to convey messages, support and advice as a human right. This should also incorporate information about sexuality, including homosexuality, so that young people can feel secure and confident about their sexual identity, which could influence their interactions with others.
- young people have the right to high quality sexual and reproductive health services, which address their emotional and clinical needs and which are accessible to young people i.e. private, confidential, affordable, non-judgemental and 'youth friendly'. Suitable, easily available and affordable contraceptive methods should be provided to young people, including emergency contraception. These services should be designed, implemented and evaluated by young people in partnership with trained professionals.
- young people have the right to be responsible and make their own choices about their sexual and reproductive health, including pregnancy. Young women must be guaranteed the right to safe abortion without the consent of their parents or partner, and for support and counselling to be offered during and after pregnancy, whatever their decision regarding the pregnancy may be.
- young pregnant women have the right to continue education during and after pregnancy with support from education authorities.
- information and services should be available for all young people including those who can be marginalized from mainstream society – internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees, disabled young people, street children, children in sexual slavery, ethnic and linguistic minority groups.
- young people have the right to be free from all kinds of sexual abuse and violence. Both the abused and abuser have the right to counselling and services.
- parents have a need to access information and to learn skills with which they can speak to their children about sexual and reproductive health and rights.