



Want to
change
the world?
Here's how...

Young people as advocates

Your action for change toolkit



**"I asked:
Why doesn't
somebody do
something?"**

Then I realized I was somebody."

Youth advocate

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Calling all young advocates

Do you feel you want to bring about change but don't know where to start?



This toolkit is for young activists, volunteers, students and agents of change! It offers a step-by-step guide to help plan, implement or improve advocacy initiatives on young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights. This toolkit complements existing advocacy guides and provides an IPPF perspective on youth-led advocacy. It can be used by young advocates, programme designers, coordinators and others who work with young people, and will be helpful to build the capacity of young advocates to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Take a look around

Look around at your family, friends, community and country. Ask yourself:

- ❓ Do the young women I know have the right to choose and access safe and legal abortion?
- ❓ Can young people living with HIV access comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services?
- ❓ Can young people express their sexualities freely?
- ❓ Do all young people have access to accurate, non-judgmental, gender-sensitive and user-friendly information about sexuality, health and rights? Are messages about sexuality positive and empowering?
- ❓ Do all young people have access to comprehensive information, whether or not they are married or have reached a certain age?

- ❓ Do all young people have access to a full range of sexual and reproductive health services, regardless of their age, gender, marital status or HIV status?
- ❓ Do my government, community and the media promote the right of all young people to be free from sexual abuse and violence?
- ❓ Do I know of opportunities for young people to speak out and be heard? Are young people's voices respected and fully integrated into decision making?

NO If you answered 'no' to some or all of these questions, how does this make you feel? Frustrated? Impatient? Excited at the possibility of change? Full of ideas and energy, but maybe slightly scared and confused about what to do?

Do you feel you want to bring about change but don't know where to start? Then this toolkit is for you!

YES If you answered 'yes' to most or all of these questions, then congratulations. It probably means that you live in a society that respects and protects young people's sexual and reproductive rights. But are you certain that things will always remain this way?

Do you want to make sure that young people's rights are always respected, but are not exactly sure how to go about it? Then this toolkit is also for you!

Some background about this toolkit

IPPF welcomes and celebrates young people's diverse sexualities and meaningful participation. In pursuing our main aim of supporting young people to exercise and realize their sexual and reproductive health and rights, we promote a rights-based approach that prioritizes the empowerment of young people. This enables young people to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to make informed choices about their sexuality, health and well-being.

This toolkit is based on the outcomes of a meeting that took place in 2006 with young people from across IPPF's six Regions, along with staff from Central Office and Regional Offices. Participants at that meeting agreed that youth participation in advocacy initiatives is important and that young people should be supported to advocate for IPPF's key priorities, especially those related to adolescent sexual rights, choice, diversity, HIV and abortion. Since then, IPPF has drawn from experiences and feedback from young activists and advocates around the world to create this toolkit. The toolkit was revised in 2010 to reflect IPPF's advances in young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights since the original version was launched in 2007.

There is much to be done in the area of youth-led advocacy. We hope that this toolkit is a step in the right direction – and that it will inspire and equip young people to be advocates for sexual and reproductive rights for all.

We would like to thank Marie Wernham, Consultant, CREATE: Child Rights Evaluation, Advice & Training Exchange, not only for helping us to put this toolkit together but also for her enthusiasm for and commitment to youth-led advocacy initiatives on sexual and reproductive rights.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead, American anthropologist and writer



What is advocacy?

Advocacy means identifying and calling for change

Advocacy calls for changes in laws, policies, practices and structures in order to improve people's lives.

The term 'advocacy' means different things to different people. Basically, advocacy is about calling for change and guiding decision makers towards solutions. It refers to the different ways we can build political, financial or public support to bring about action for change. It involves influencing leaders and decision makers to address the root causes of problems and to generate long-term sustainable solutions.

Change can take place on several levels, such as:

- at local level (for example with local government, police, religious leaders, school system)
- at national level (for example with national governments, ministries)
- at international level (for example with UN agencies, the World Bank, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria)

Advocacy can have many different objectives. For example, we can advocate to increase support for a cause, to influence leaders and decision makers, to build an environment that enables young people to exercise their rights, or to change laws or legislation.

All forms of advocacy aim to influence decision makers in order to bring about change. Change usually happens in at least three different phases:

1. **Head (knowledge).** Firstly, your target audience needs to have accurate information and understand the change you are advocating for and why you are proposing it.
2. **Heart (attitude).** Secondly, even if your target audience has all the technical information, they might still need to be convinced about the benefits and value of your proposal, to know in their heart that what you are proposing is the right thing to do.
3. **Hands (practice/implementation).** Once you have allies for your cause, you may still need to support them to translate the proposed change into action. This involves monitoring how the change is being implemented to make sure that your strategies are working effectively towards change. Sometimes, it might be necessary to work with others to adjust your strategies to maximize effectiveness.

How is advocacy different?

It can be confusing to understand how advocacy is different from other related strategies, including information, education and communication, comprehensive sexuality education and public relations. The following table lists some of the main differences.

Advocacy is about calling for change.



Advocacy and related strategies				
Strategies	Messengers	Objectives	Target audiences	Methods and activities
Information, education and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service providers • Non-governmental organizations • Social workers • Public health agents • Peer educators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform, educate or communicate on a specific topic • To raise awareness and trigger interest in a particular topic • Can include behavioural change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals • Specific population groups (such as young people, people living with HIV etc) • General public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pamphlets or flyers • Posters or billboards • Websites • Social networking sites • Newspapers • Text messaging • Theatre
Comprehensive sexuality education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • Sex educators • Peer educators • Parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide comprehensive and in-depth information about sexuality and gender • To increase knowledge and understanding of diverse aspects of sexuality and gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Children and young people (both in and out of school) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal education curricula • Informal educational programmes
Public relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses • Commercial agencies • Manufacturers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote a product, service, company or organization • To increase sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large-scale advertising (TV, radio, print media, internet) • Public events
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-governmental organizations • Service providers • Research institutions • Universities • Advocates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To generate political, public or financial support for a particular issue • To change laws or policies • To influence the allocation of public resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy makers • Decision makers • Governments • Religious leaders • Community leaders • Donor agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaigns • Petitions or letter writing • High level meetings with decision makers, such as parliamentarians • Public debates • Factsheets, policy briefings or reports • Press conferences • E-advocacy



Why is advocacy important?

Advocacy leads to long-term sustainable benefits.

Advocacy is important because it addresses the root causes of problems, leading to long-term sustainable benefits for young people and their communities.

Sometimes, thinking about all the change you want to happen can seem overwhelming. It's a bit like coming home to find your house flooded from a leaky tap. Your initial reaction might be to grab a mop and start cleaning up the water as fast as you can. The problem is that no matter how quickly you mop, the tap will continue to drip. What you need to do is find a way to repair the leaky tap. Once the water stops leaking, it will be much easier to mop up the floor.

Ask yourself:

"Am I so busy responding to problems that I have lost sight of why they happen in the first place?"

Advocacy is important, because it can:

- **Influence changes in policies and mindsets.** Generating commitment and buy-in from leaders and decision makers is vital to ensure sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. Advocacy can help generate this commitment. It can influence the creation, implementation and improvement of laws and policies.
- **Secure funds and resources.** For change to come about, commitments to sexual and reproductive health and rights must be backed by financial, human and technical resources. Advocacy can ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for programme implementation and service delivery.
- **Mainstream sexual and reproductive health and rights.** Sexual and reproductive health and rights are closely linked to many other aspects of life and development, including education, economics, the environment and human rights. It's therefore important to take a comprehensive approach. The problem is that sexual and reproductive health and rights are often treated as a health issue in isolation from other sectors. Advocacy can be used to generate awareness and an understanding about the importance of mainstreaming these rights into all aspects of development.



- **Build a movement.** The most powerful social movements are those that unite commitment and activism from all levels: local, national, regional and international. Advocacy plays a key role in generating support on each level, creating a stronger movement.
- **Safeguard and protect previous achievements.** A lot of progress has already been made towards ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights around the world. However, political, economic and cultural landscapes are constantly changing so it's important for us to protect the gains we have already won. Advocacy allows us to do this by acting as a watchdog to make sure that governments and leaders uphold their commitments to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Advocacy can act as a watchdog to make sure that governments and leaders uphold their commitments.



Who can be an advocate?

Anyone with a passion for an issue or cause can be an advocate. Young people can be some of the best advocates for youth sexual and reproductive health and rights, because they have the best understanding of their own needs, realities, desires and capacities.

In fact, it is a human right for young people to participate in decision making that affects their lives and to have their voices heard by decision makers. This right is enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been ratified by almost every country in the world. So, young people of every age and from every region around the world can all be sexual and reproductive health and rights advocates.

But, what does it take to be an **effective** advocate?

The recipe is quite simple. You need:

- passion and dedication to an issue or cause
- a clear vision of what change needs to happen
- the ability to collaborate with others
- time and commitment to prepare and follow up with advocacy interventions
- strong communication skills
- the persistence to keep going

You can lead change in your immediate surroundings or the world at large

Being an agent for change in your immediate surroundings can be very powerful. Never underestimate the 'ripple effect': you inspire someone who inspires someone else who inspires someone else, and so on, until the ripples from a drop of rain transform into ocean waves.

We can also be agents of change at a higher level, such as at national, regional or international levels. Advocacy at these levels has the potential to affect an even larger group of people, but change might happen at a slower pace than local level advocacy.

What do advocates do?

As an advocate you can play many different roles. For example, you can:

- raise awareness about sexual and reproductive health and rights or related issues among leaders and decision makers to make specific changes to legislation, policies and/or their implementation
- collaborate with other young people and advocates in campaigns to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights
- ensure that leaders (your government, religious leaders, school etc) respect, protect and fulfil young people's sexual and reproductive rights

You can be an agent for change.



- write and distribute factsheets, reports or other materials to provide evidence about the importance of prioritizing young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights

But, remember, you don't have to do this alone. Other organizations and people may have different skills, and access to different knowledge or target audiences that can be useful for your advocacy goals. Collaborative advocacy can often generate stronger voices that reach wider audiences and lead to lasting change.

Change is possible! There is always something you can do, no matter how large or small.

**Being an agent
for change in
your immediate
surroundings can
be very powerful.**



Setting the foundations: sexual and reproductive rights

Every young person is entitled to sexual and reproductive rights.



Before we dive into advocacy, here are a few basics to set the foundations for a rights-based approach.

Human rights are basic entitlements that are fundamental for people's dignity and well-being around the world. Everyone is entitled to human rights, regardless of their age, gender, race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation or any other factor.

Human rights are recognized in a number of international agreements that are signed by most governments around the world. By signing and ratifying these agreements, governments have an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil human rights for all people. So, we can think of human rights as a contract between a person who is entitled to a right – the 'rights-holder' – and a person or institution that has an obligation to ensure the realization of that right – the 'duty-bearer'. To turn rights into a reality, duty-bearers must follow through on their commitment to ensure that all people can access what they are entitled to.

Sexual and reproductive rights are human rights that relate to people's sexuality and reproductive health. Every young person is entitled to sexual and reproductive rights. It's important to recognize that young people's sexual and reproductive rights can be quite different from those of adults. Young people are constantly developing new skills and abilities and they become more able to make decisions

on their own. At the same time, they may not always have a lot of experience or information, especially about issues relating to sexuality. This means that young people may still need some guidance and protection. Ensuring sexual and reproductive rights for young people means recognizing their progressive ability to exercise rights on their own behalf, while also guaranteeing guidance and protection with their best interests in mind.

Sexual and reproductive rights include:

1. The right to equality
2. The right to participation
3. The right to life and to be free from harm
4. The right to privacy
5. The right to personal autonomy and to be recognized as an individual before the law
6. The right to think and express yourself freely
7. The right to health
8. The right to know and learn
9. The right to choose whether or not to marry or have children
10. The right to have your rights upheld

More details about young people's sexual and reproductive rights can be found in the IPPF publication *EXCLAIM! IPPF's Guide to Young People's Sexual Rights*.

How do we do advocacy?

Seven key steps

STEP 1

What needs to change?

STEP 2

Who can make that change happen?

STEP 3

How can I influence my advocacy targets to make that change?

STEP 5

Who can I work with?

STEP 4

How can I ensure meaningful participation of young people?

STEP 6

What obstacles might I face? How can I overcome obstacles and risks?

STEP 7

How will I monitor and evaluate my advocacy to prove it is working?

STEP 1

What needs to change?

Advocacy is about identifying and calling for change.



Advocacy is about identifying and calling for change, so we need to be very clear about exactly what it is that we are trying to change. Before starting out on an advocacy initiative, make sure you **identify accurately what it is that you are trying to change**. It is best to do this with input from as many stakeholders as possible, especially young people themselves. It's really important to identify clearly what needs to change to make sure your advocacy efforts don't go off in too many different directions.

Actions

- ⊕ **Identify the key problems or concerns** related to young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights in your region, community or country.
- ⊕ **Gather information** to investigate the causes of these problems or concerns. Be sure to seek the perspectives of as many young people as possible who are most affected by these issues. Find out how people are affected by the problem, what the most serious consequences are, what factors contribute to the problem, and which of these factors is easiest or most important to address.
- ⊕ Once you have identified the causes of the problems, **work out exactly what needs to change** in terms of public policy or laws in order to solve these problems.

Be as specific as possible. For example:

Problem	Causes	What needs to change?
Young girls are taken out of school	High rates of teenage pregnancy	Legislation to ensure better access to sexual and reproductive health and rights information, education and services for girls
	Family poverty	Improved income generation options for girls and their families

- ⊕ A useful exercise to refine the focus of your advocacy work is to analyze the public policies and laws that are relevant to the issue you have identified. Try to classify them in four categories:
 1. Acceptable laws and policies – both in wording and content – that work, respond to the population's needs, and are in agreement with your views on the advocacy issue.
 2. Existing laws where content must be modified somewhat to address the challenges faced by young people related to your advocacy issue.
 3. Existing laws that support your position, but are not implemented adequately.
 4. Laws that should be created in order to supplement, promote or support action in relation to your advocacy issue.

- ⊕ Focus on one or a few specific change(s) that must take place to address the problem you have identified. Next, define a clear **goal**, a set of **objectives** and a main **advocacy expected result** based on the change(s) you wish to see.

When identifying the problem, ask yourself:

- ❓ Am I targeting the most relevant or important changes?
- ❓ Is this change realistic?
- ❓ Whose perspective am I basing my work on (young men, young women, non-governmental organizations, governments, media, donors etc)?
- ❓ What would the people who will be most affected by this change say about my plan? Am I basing my work on **their** experiences? Am I working **with** them (at

all stages: research, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation)?

- ❓ Am I comfortable working on this topic? If not, try to find out more about it. (It is good to constantly challenge ourselves and our own attitudes. If you are still uncomfortable, then move onto the next biggest problem and so on until you come to something you **do** feel comfortable with.)
- ❓ Have I prioritized the changes (if more than one)?
- ❓ Do I have enough data to support my advocacy? Sources can include reports, academic studies, publications from non-governmental organizations, government statistics etc.
- ❓ Do I know when important decisions will be made and can I ensure that my initiatives are timed to affect that decision?

	Definition
Goal	A goal is a long-term general aim that will be achieved if the change you advocate for takes place. Goals are 'big picture' statements designed to resolve problems. It is usually best to define only one or two goals.
Objective	An objective is a specific element or action that is required to achieve your goal. Objectives should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART) .
Expected result	This is the specific result that you expect your advocacy to lead to. It is important to define an advocacy expected result as early as possible, since it will guide your entire advocacy strategy. Be specific and realistic when developing the advocacy expected result. Consider the timeframe it will take to achieve your advocacy expected result, the basic principles or components that should be included in the result, the geographic scope, the specific population(s) and the resources necessary to achieve your expected result.

Be very clear about what it is that you're trying to change.



STEP 2

Who can make that change happen?

Think about who is most able to influence these changes.

Once we have correctly identified what needs to change, we must look at who can make this change happen – in other words, who are we targeting?

There are a lot of people you may want or need to convince: your peers, family, school, community leaders or parliamentarians. Keep in mind that the goal of advocacy is to influence policies, laws or structural change. When deciding who to target, think about who is most able to influence these changes.

Targets can be primary or secondary:

- **Primary targets** are decision makers with the power to directly influence the change you are seeking and your advocacy expected result.
- **Secondary targets** are individuals or groups that can influence the primary decision makers.

Primary targets may include community leaders, religious leaders, parliamentarians or other elected officials, legislators, international agencies, influential civil society organizations and legal professionals.

Secondary targets may include schools, women's groups, youth organizations, health and social services professionals, celebrities, public figures, media representatives and non-governmental organizations.

Remember that some people will support you, others won't know a lot about the things you want to fight for, others may be undecided how they feel about the issues and some may have very strong opinions against your ideas.

Actions

- ⊕ **Identify your target audience.** Based on the change(s) you identified in step 1, brainstorm a list of individuals and institutions that can influence those changes. Try to think as broadly as possible.
- ⊕ **Analyze and map your target audience.** Looking at the list of target audiences you developed, identify who is:
 - supportive of your position and helpful for your cause (potential allies)
 - obstructive of your position (potential opponents)
 - neutral or undecided on your position
- ⊕ **Prioritize your targets.** Which targets should you approach first? Remember you have limited time and resources. Choose wisely and have specific goals in mind. Ask yourself: Who can have the greatest impact (either positive or negative)? Who is easy to work with? Who is closest to this issue? Is there anyone that I absolutely can't ignore? Is their position too high, too low or too temporary to have any effect? Can I approach them one after another, or will the change only happen if I target them all at the same time?



- ⊕ **Know when to switch targets.** Keep reassessing the situation in light of your overall goal and objectives. If you are not making much progress, be prepared to switch targets. Being flexible is vital for a successful advocacy strategy.
- ⊕ **Monitor target audiences.** A person or institution's influence, position or level of interest in your advocacy goal can change over time. It is important to monitor potential target audiences regularly. You might find new allies or opponents at different phases of your advocacy efforts.

Being flexible is vital for a successful advocacy strategy.



STEP 3

How can I influence my advocacy targets to make that change?

How much noise do you have to make for your message to be heard?



We have correctly identified the essential change, and identified who can make the change happen. The next step is to look at **how we can influence these people to make the change happen. For this, we need to develop the right approach and the right tools to reach the identified targets effectively.**

Approach

There are several different approaches to advocacy. For example, you can approach advocacy targets as an ally, you can name and shame, or you can incite competition between two targets to bring about change.

When deciding what approach to use, we can apply the 'door test' to our list of targets. See the table on the opposite page. Imagine that the path towards change is a door. Is the door wide open, half open or closed? Is the door glass? Can it be opened by just one person or will it require a team effort? The 'door test' will help to determine timing, targets and strategy for advocacy.

See Annex 4 which shows a useful framework to help you decide what approach to use for different audiences.

Actions

- ⊕ **Decide whether you need to 'shout' or 'whisper'.**
How friendly can your approach be? (It is usually better to start off friendly.) How much noise do you have to make for your message to be heard? (This will depend a lot on how close you are to your targets.)
- ⊕ **Find out where the common ground is.** Focus initially on things that you and your targets agree on. Emphasize the things you have in common before highlighting differences.
- ⊕ **Anticipate and prepare for the arguments.** How will you deal with the opposition? For every good thing that you advocate, be reminded of your opponent's opposition to it. (See Annex 3 for more information.)

Type of door	How do you approach it?
Open door (welcoming)	Go ahead, feel free to express your concerns and ideas openly! These are the people you should engage in your advocacy work.
Half open door (willing to listen)	Use more persuasive techniques – try to keep a foot in the door. For those who are interested in your issue, but not fully aligned with your position, you should try to convince them by increasing their knowledge on the issue and demonstrating that your advocacy expected result is the best way to address it. For those who only have a medium level of interest in your issue, but are favourable to your position, you should try to persuade them that your issue is a priority that aligns with your common position.
Closed door (not willing to listen)	These are the people who are interested in your advocacy issue, but fully against your proposed solution (advocacy expected result). You will need to try to counteract their arguments and neutralize their influence. This is a highly delicate task. You must avoid using unethical practices or victimizing your opponents at all cost. Even though neutralization strategies are important, they should not become the focus of the advocacy project because they will promote actions that are reactive rather than proactive. Find different ways to reach the target (slip flyers under the door, find someone on the inside to open the door, etc), continue for a while, but know when to give up. You might also find it useful to see who is supporting you from behind closed doors before you try to get through a difficult door.
Glass door (seems open, but you accidentally bump into it – the unwillingness is not obvious)	Be prepared for unexpected opposition! The level of interest in issues and the groups that support or oppose a particular solution change over time. It is important to monitor as many stakeholders as possible and to be prepared if their position changes.

Avoid unethical practices at all cost.



It is important to select tools that are most appropriate to reach your particular target.



Tools

Tools are essential components of any advocacy strategy. They help to communicate your messages and influence decision making. A vast array of tools can be used in advocacy efforts. These include factsheets, detailed reports, the media, demonstrations, meetings, petitions, public events and electronic social media, among others. Each tool has a different impact, so it is important to select tools that are most appropriate to reach your particular target(s).

Actions

- ⊕ **Make a list of all the 'tools' you can use to reach your targets.** Think about what tools or tactics have been used successfully in the past (by you or others). Why were these methods successful? How have you been persuaded in the past?
- ⊕ **Make a list of the pros and cons of each tool you have identified.** Draw on your own experience and get advice from those who have used different tools.
- ⊕ **Match tools with the targets you identified in step 2.** There is no such thing as the 'best tool' by itself – only 'the best tool in relation to the target, the aim of the advocacy, resources available and the cultural context'. Many tools will be suitable for many different targets. Ask yourself: What tools are most

appropriate to reach my specific targets? What tools are more effective for use in the specific circumstances under which I am advocating? What tools are within budget?

- ⊕ **Decide which tool(s) will be most effective for your specific advocacy goal and objectives.** Don't get so carried away with the tool that you forget the purpose of it. A tool is a means to an end, not an end in itself.
- ⊕ **Plan when to use your tools.**
 - Think about the 'door test'. If the opposition at a particular point in time is too great, think carefully and consider leaving the issue temporarily and coming back to it later. In the meantime, you can continue doing simple activities to 'keep a foot in the door'.
 - Map out special dates and public events that you can capitalize or 'piggyback' on (for example World AIDS Day, Human Rights Day, International Women's Day etc).
 - Be flexible: be prepared to take advantage of unexpected opportunities that arise.

Working with the media

Working with the media has many advantages. The media can reach the masses and it has the power to change the attitudes of large numbers of people. It can legitimize action on other levels too, such as creating public support or interest for your advocacy issue. It can raise public consciousness about issues and it can correct misinformation.

However, there are also some limitations. Mass media is not ideal to convey complex information. In addition, mass media may have a limited ability to reach marginalized groups. When working with the media for advocacy, make sure that you choose media partners who are best suited and most able to help you reach your specific targets.

Actions

- ⊕ **Build a list of contacts and relationships with reporters and other media representatives.** Find out who works on issues related to your advocacy.
- ⊕ **Prepare press releases about your planned events and activities.**
- ⊕ **Find opportunities to write articles, comment pieces or letters to the editor.**
- ⊕ **Create your own media – using posters, internet and so on.**

Working with policy makers

Policy makers may be willing to take up your cause, especially if it contributes to their political goals.

Policy makers, such as parliamentarians, can help you achieve your advocacy goals in a number of ways, including:

- voting to pass or block a new law related to your advocacy issue
- raising your issue by tabling questions in parliament
- lobbying other parliamentarians and policy makers to support or become involved in your advocacy issue
- giving your issue greater visibility in parliament, their party, their constituency and/or the media
- acting as a figurehead, spokesperson or supporter of your campaign

However, one challenge of working with elected officials is their relatively short time in office. Most elected officials hold their positions for a few years at most. This means there is an ongoing need to build relationships and inform parliamentarians about your issues. It also means that building relationships with bureaucrats and civil servants (and other non-elected government representatives) is helpful to establish trustworthy rapport in the longer term.

Policy makers can help you achieve your advocacy goals.



Be prepared with solid facts and figures.



Actions

- ⊕ **Establish a rapport.** It is important to establish a rapport with politicians and their staff and be seen by them to be a provider of accurate and reliable information. Remaining in contact with policy makers in-between key advocacy events can be a good way to keep in touch.
- ⊕ **Find out what they want.** The best kind of negotiation is when both sides win. Find out what issues are important to the policy maker you speak with and tailor your pitch to match their interests. Talking in terms of another person's interests is the best way to keep their attention. Also, think about what you can offer policy makers in return for their support of your issue. Ideas include providing information, free technically sound advice, publicity, acknowledgement etc.
- ⊕ **Present solid evidence and get it right.** Come prepared with solid facts and figures. Be aware of data that might contradict your evidence and prepare counter-arguments to address them. Don't over-exaggerate evidence – policy decisions should be based on facts, not exaggerations. If you exaggerate, you also run the risk of policy makers discovering that you are over-embellishing your data, which might reduce your credibility.
- ⊕ **Speak clearly and concisely.** Avoid jargon, but don't be afraid to use some technical terms once you have stated what you want in clear language.
- ⊕ **Always leave an aide-memoire.** Prepare a one-page document that summarizes your key points, main asks, some relevant facts and your contact details. You can also include links to more in-depth reports or resources that support your position. Leave this one-page summary with every policy maker you speak to. Remember that policy makers are constantly approached by different advocates and lobbyists. They don't have time to read a novel, so keep your aide-memoire short and attractive.
- ⊕ **Present a solution for every problem.** Policy makers are not interested in problems. They are interested in solutions and they need solutions that are technically feasible, achievable in reasonable timeframes, backed by solid evidence and will win favour with the public or their constituencies.
- ⊕ **Be friendly.** People are generally more open to listening when they are approached in a friendly way. Show respect for the opinions of policy makers – never say "you're wrong". Give praise where praise is due – everyone likes to feel acknowledged and appreciated. Always thank policy makers for taking the time to speak to you.

Messaging

What you advocate on is the next most important area to think about. (See the chapter 'What can we advocate on?', starting on page 31, for more information and ideas about messages.)

Tips

Here are a few points to remember about effective messages:

- ① Accurate, simple, positive messages are vital for successful advocacy.
- ① Effective messages have five important components: content that is relevant and accurate; language that is clear and appropriate for your audience; messaging that is credible and motivating; format and channels of communication that are appropriate for your audience; and delivery at an appropriate time and place.
- ① Make sure that you take into account what the opposition might say.
- ① Most importantly, as advocates, we need to feel comfortable and confident with our messages.

**Accurate,
simple,
positive
messages
are vital for
successful
advocacy.**



STEP 4

How can I ensure meaningful participation of young people?

Involve young people throughout the process.



Young people's meaningful participation in decision making that affects their lives is a human right. When advocating for young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights, it's important that they are involved as equal partners throughout the entire process. For example, it is critical to involve young people in identifying key problems relating to their sexual and reproductive health and rights, devising solutions to address these problems, developing advocacy messages, and speaking in their own right to decision makers and other advocacy targets. It is also vital for young people to be involved in monitoring and evaluating advocacy efforts.

Meaningful youth participation doesn't just happen organically. It should be planned and formalized in advocacy strategies. This means including young people in designing advocacy strategies.

Actions

- ⊕ **Reach out to diverse young people.** Focus especially on those who are most affected by the issue you are advocating for.
- ⊕ **Ensure meaningful youth participation in designing your advocacy strategy.** This might require scheduling meetings at times that are convenient for young people (such as after school hours or at weekends).
- ⊕ **Participate in advocacy trainings when possible.** Find out if any non-governmental organizations or associations in your area offer capacity building opportunities to develop young people's advocacy skills. Regular capacity building will help strengthen your ability to be an effective advocate and will also allow you to meet other young advocates.

Who can I work with?

Successful advocacy generally relies on the support of a number of individuals and organizations. To create support for your issue, it is important to be able to network, participate in coalitions, and influence as many individuals and organizations as possible to join in. In essence, a coalition is a group of like-minded people or organizations working together to achieve common goals. The good thing about coalitions is that by working together with like-minded groups, you will have combined intelligence and resources. It also avoids duplication of work. In addition, different groups often have access to different audiences and this can help you reach out and establish contacts where they didn't exist previously.

But remember that it is not always easy to find like-minded people to work with. Mapping can help identify potential allies and partners. It is also an important exercise to undertake to ensure that you are not duplicating the efforts of other groups.

Actions

- ⊕ **Think about what kind of support you need.** Ask yourself: What is my sphere of influence? What is the most that I can do? Can somebody else help me or do more? It is useful to know who to go to for support and advice, and who can help you voice your views so you can reach as wide an audience as possible.
- ⊕ **Map out potential partners, allies and opponents.** Think about who else might be working on your issue or related issues. Who has access to your advocacy targets? Who else stands to gain something if your advocacy goals and objectives are achieved? Who has technical expertise or information that would be helpful for your advocacy?
- ⊕ **Reach out to potential partners.** Present the goals, objectives and rationale of your advocacy to potential partners. Leave room for flexibility in your proposed strategy to accommodate the goals and objectives of potential partners.
- ⊕ **Don't compromise your core values.** As mentioned earlier, it is not always easy to find like-minded partners. So, while flexibility is important, do not change your main ideals to suit someone else.

STEP 5

Who else stands to gain something if your goals are achieved?



STEP 6

What obstacles might I face? How can I overcome obstacles and risks?

Imagine you are going on a journey towards your advocacy goal.

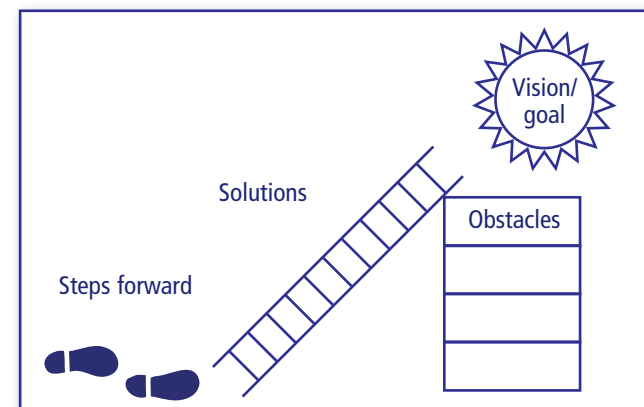


Next we need to identify potential **obstacles** or **risk factors** we might face. Not only will this help us to be prepared in case something goes wrong, but it might also stop us from wasting valuable time on something that is too risky to attempt in the first place. Of course, once we have identified these **obstacles**, we also need to come up with **solutions** to overcome them so that we can move forward on our journey to changing the world!¹

Actions

- ⊕ **Imagine you are going on a journey towards your advocacy goal.** This is represented by the sun. Draw this on a piece of paper and write your vision inside the sun – in other words, what are you aiming for?
- ⊕ **Identify the steps you are already taking forward towards this goal.** This includes all the good things you are doing so far, such as planning your advocacy campaign, identifying targets and so on. Draw in some footsteps on your picture and write down your steps forward.

- ⊕ **Identify the obstacles that might block your path on your journey towards your advocacy goal.** Write these in the form of a brick wall between your footsteps and the sun.
- ⊕ **Identify how you will overcome each of these obstacles.** Write in your answers in the form of a ladder to help you climb over the wall. If some obstacles are too difficult to overcome, and if they represent risk factors that are so dangerous that they could ruin your project, is there a way you can change your plans? Can you take a different route to the same goal?



1. See 'Dealing with barriers' exercise, CREATE: Child Rights Evaluation, Advice & Training Exchange, www.createsolutions.org

Dealing with opposition

An important obstacle you may face is dealing with those who do not agree with your ideas on young people's sexual and reproductive health rights. Being aware of who your opposition is, what their main goals are, what their main messages are, what tactics they use and who their allies are will help you prepare a more effective advocacy strategy. It's important to map out who your possible opponents are so that you can prepare for any attempts they might make to block your advocacy.

What are some examples of opposition?

Here are some examples; you can collect more.

- Sexual and reproductive health and rights issues do not concern young people.
- Focusing on sexual and reproductive health and rights means trying to wipe out traditional values and religious beliefs.
- Making things too easy (access to contraception, abortion etc) removes the natural 'penalties' (sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy) against bad decisions.

Tip

- ① Identify supportive members of the community, including the faith-based community, to work with you and promote your messages. Don't allow the extremists to take over what is 'morally right', leaving you to appear 'morally wrong'.

Remember that some opposition groups resort to personal attacks and violence. Even though this could be rare, make sure you are prepared and that you are safe (get support from the authorities if necessary). Draw strength from the fact that you are working for a worthy cause. Do not resort to similar tactics.

(See Annexes 3 and 4 for more information on how to respond to the opposition.)

**Be aware
of who your
opposition is.**



Before you can talk about an issue you must know how you feel about it yourself.

Prepare! Prepare! Prepare!

- ⊙ **Know yourself.** Before you can talk about an issue you must know how you feel about it yourself. If you are unsure or confused it will show.
- ⊙ **Don't be afraid.** The most sensitive issues are often those that need change most urgently.
- ⊙ Know what you are willing to **compromise** on and what is **non-negotiable**.
- ⊙ **Create allies** to make your voice stronger. Get support from those who agree with your position. The more people who speak out on an issue, the louder, stronger and more convincing the voices of change will be.
- ⊙ Have up to **three main points** you want to convey – keep the language simple, and use accurate and positive statements.
- ⊙ If you're demanding change, **show** clearly what it looks like and how it works so much better. Back up all your arguments with **solid evidence**.
- ⊙ Listen to, and take account of **voices of opposition**. Read opposition materials, sign up for their email bulletins and know what they are saying so you don't get caught off guard.
- ⊙ Counter **myths** with facts.²
- ⊙ You can ask **difficult questions** too. For example, you could ask: "If you are against young people having abortions, why are you not actively promoting contraception?"
- ⊙ **Choose your battles.** Don't spend all your time responding to the opposition but, at the same time, try not to give them a platform to air their views.

2. For examples, see Annex 3 and the websites listed in Annex 6.

How will I monitor and evaluate my advocacy to prove it is working?

Congratulations – you are nearly ready to start changing the world! Although we are now eager to get on with putting all of this into practice, there is one last step that we need to consider but which often gets left out of advocacy: we need to think about monitoring and evaluating our advocacy work.

Monitoring is an ongoing and systematic activity used to track whether activities are carried out according to plan. Monitoring provides project managers with important information on progress, or lack of progress, in relation to project objectives. Monitoring helps to answer questions such as:

- ❓ How well are we doing?
- ❓ Are we doing the activities we planned to do?
- ❓ Are we following the designated timeline?
- ❓ Are we over-spending or under-spending?
- ❓ What are the strengths and weaknesses in the project?

Evaluation is an assessment of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, performance and sustainability of a project. Evaluation requires an in-depth review at specific points in the life of the project, usually at the mid-point or end of a project. Evaluation verifies whether project objectives have been achieved or not. It is a management tool that can assist in evidence-based decision making, and that provides valuable lessons for implementing organizations and their partners. Evaluation helps to answer questions such as:

- ❓ How relevant was our work in relation to the primary stakeholders and beneficiaries?
- ❓ To what extent were the advocacy objectives achieved?
- ❓ What contributed to and/or hindered these achievements?
- ❓ Were the available resources (human, financial) utilized as planned and used in an effective way?
- ❓ What are the key results, including intended and unintended results?
- ❓ What evidence is there that the advocacy has changed the lives of individuals and communities?

STEP 7

You are nearly ready to start changing the world!



Reviewing each step of the process is a useful way to track progress and assess gradual impact.



It is not always easy to evaluate the effectiveness of an advocacy campaign, particularly because it is not easy to attribute a change in national policy, for example, to one campaign. However, reviewing each step of the advocacy process is a useful way to track progress and assess gradual impact.

Actions

- ⊕ **Make an action plan.** Based on the steps you have gone through so far, work out exactly what you need to do in order to move forward. For each action point, ask yourself: Who will do this? Who should they consult with? When? How? What materials and methods are needed? (See Annex 1 for a table that you can use.) **Keep your actions simple!**
- ⊕ **Add monitoring and evaluation into your action plan.** Refer to IPPF's monitoring and evaluation handbook (*Putting the IPPF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy into Practice: A Handbook on Collecting, Analyzing and Utilizing Data for Improved Performance*). You can use the following questions to guide your monitoring and evaluation plan:
 - Who will check that the planned actions have been done?
 - How will they check? (What indicators or evidence will show this?)

- How will I know if they've been done well or effectively? (What is the impact? Have I managed to change the thing I wanted to change? If not, why not?)
- Has there been a negative, rather than a positive impact?
- How can I improve the work? What would I do differently next time?
- Who else needs to know my 'lessons learned'? Colleagues? Other organizations?
- ⊕ **Take a regular look at how your action plan is going.** At regular intervals, sit with your team and discuss the activities you have done and talk through what went well, what didn't, what you have learned and what needs to be improved.
- ⊕ **Document everything.** This means not just successes, but challenges too. No event is too small to be written up.

Congratulations!

You have now completed the seven steps for effective advocacy!

Read on for more information on what to advocate for in relation to sexual and reproductive health and rights...

What can we advocate on?

You can advocate on any issue you feel strongly about. Your passion can have a huge impact on the success of your campaign.

Look back at step 1 of ‘How do we do advocacy?’ (see page 14). Ask yourself: What issues are the most urgent or affect young people the most? Now, learn as much as you can about these issues so that you feel comfortable advocating for them. Here is a bit of background to some key sexual and reproductive health and rights issues, including services, education and violence. However, there are many more issues out there that you can advocate for. Whatever you choose to advocate on, remember the following **core principles** about young people’s sexual and reproductive health and rights.

1. Sexuality is an integral part of being human for ALL young people

All young people are sexual beings – whether or not they are sexually active. Young people are very diverse and experience their sexualities in very different ways. Many factors influence young people’s sexual behaviours, relationships, feelings, identity, desires and attitudes. Therefore, each young person’s experiences and expressions of sexuality are unique. A truly responsive advocacy campaign should reflect these diversities.

Despite these differences, every young person is entitled to personal fulfilment and to freedom from coercion, discrimination and violence, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, marital status, HIV status, sexual orientation, health status etc. As sexual and reproductive health and rights advocates, we must emphasize the principles of non-discrimination, integrity and choice. It is important to make a strong case for recognizing young people’s sexuality from a human rights-based approach.

2. Sexuality and sexual pleasure are important for all young people, irrespective of reproductive desires

Sexuality refers to the way young people experience and express themselves as sexual beings. It refers to each young person’s growing awareness, experience and expression of eroticism, sexual pleasure, intimacy, sexual orientation and gender identity. Sexuality can include reproductive desires, but many expressions of sexuality are not directly aimed at reproduction. All young people are entitled to sexual well-being and pleasure, whether or not they want to have children. Therefore, it is important to recognize sexual rights as distinct and equally important to reproductive rights.

You can advocate on any issue you feel strongly about.



It is important to recognize that sexual rights are distinct – and equally important to reproductive rights.



3. The evolving capacities of children and young people must be recognized

Childhood and youth are periods of transition and change. In general, young children need more protection and help to make decisions than older youth and adults. The importance and relevance of some rights change as someone makes the transition through the different phases of their life. This means that the rights of children and young people must be approached in a progressive and dynamic way.

Approaching young people's sexual rights in this progressive way puts the onus on us, as advocates, to respect their diversities and ensure they are empowered both to exercise rights on their own behalf, while also being protected and guided with their best interests in mind.

A couple of other things to bear in mind

i While changing the laws or policies in your country may be your ultimate goal, it is also useful to use existing legislation to promote and protect young people. For example, use laws that support education to promote comprehensive sexuality education; use regulations on access to services to push for youth friendly sexual health services; use anti-discrimination legislation

to support decriminalization of homosexuality; and highlight laws against sexual abuse to promote your work on sexual violence and the trafficking of minors.

i Whatever you promote, try to ensure that young people's rights and freedoms relating to sexual and reproductive health remain at the heart of your campaign. For example, if you want contraceptive services to be available and affordable for young people, remember that it is because they have a right to be healthy and therefore have a right to those services.

Services

When advocating for services, think about the service, the client, the quality and the method of delivery, including the involvement of young people.

1. Access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services for all young people, particularly the unmarried

This is about ensuring that all young people have access to a full range of youth friendly sexual and reproductive health services. This means a wide range of affordable contraceptives, including emergency contraception; testing and care for sexually transmitted infections and

HIV; pregnancy tests; pre-, ante- and post-natal care; safe abortion care and related services; support for young people living with HIV; and support for young people who experience sexual violence.

Making services youth friendly means just that – providers are approachable, non-judgmental, non-discriminatory and trained in providing services to young people. It also means ensuring confidentiality and privacy while always respecting the dignity and rights of all young people. Young people themselves should participate in every aspect of planning, delivering and evaluating services.

Your advocacy efforts can highlight the importance of providing youth friendly services and could also highlight the consequences of denying young people access to the services they need. These include ill health, mortality, lack of development opportunities for individuals and communities, and poverty.

2. Access to condoms

All young people should have access to free or affordable high quality condoms, regardless of age, sex and other socio-economic circumstances. If we're serious about combating sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancies then easy access to condoms is a must. We need to ensure that male and female condoms are

available, together with information on how to use them correctly, and how they contribute to safer sex and sexual pleasure.

3. Increasing access to emergency contraception for all young women

Emergency contraception prevents pregnancy. It does not cause an abortion. Women sometimes need emergency contraception for many reasons, even though they use contraceptives regularly: the condom broke; they might have forgotten to take the contraceptive pill; sex might have been forced or unplanned. In all these circumstances, the **responsible** course of action is to use emergency contraception to prevent an unplanned pregnancy.

Access to emergency contraception doesn't increase sexual activity among young people, but denying them access to it may increase unintended teenage pregnancy.³

What is clear is that the need for emergency contraception often brings sexually active young people into family planning clinics, where they can receive other services and counselling, including help in learning how to say 'no' to sex if they choose to. In other words, emergency contraception provides an opportunity to give important messages on effective family planning and infection prevention. (For more information on this, visit www.cecinfo.org)

**Your
advocacy
efforts can
highlight the
importance
of providing
youth
friendly
services.**



3. SIECUS, www.communityactionkit.org/pdfs/Getting_Ready_To_Advocate/Debunking_Condoms.html

You may face a lot of opposition when discussing abortion and young people.



4. Access to safe and legal abortion services

As advocates for young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights, access to safe and legal abortion, especially in countries where the laws are very restrictive, should be high on your agenda.⁴ There are 2.5 million unsafe abortions annually among women younger than 20 years in developing countries, accounting for 14 per cent of all unsafe abortions in developing countries.⁵ Faced with the stigma of an unplanned teenage pregnancy, some young women turn to abortion whether or not it is legal in their country. As many young people do not have access to comprehensive youth friendly services, they delay seeking advice and resort to clandestine abortions performed by unskilled practitioners under hazardous conditions. This can have disastrous consequences such as infections, severe bleeding and even death. Despite this reality, you may face a lot of opposition and aggression when discussing abortion and young people.

A common argument is that abortion is murder. In order to call abortion murder, you would have to believe that prenatal life in the early stages of pregnancy is a human person and that there were no reasons that justify the taking of that life. But no one knows when a fetus becomes a person. Distinguished scientists have asserted that science cannot define the essential attributes of

human life any more than science can define concepts such as love, faith or trust. No matter what value you place on fetal life, you cannot ignore the consequences of an unsafe abortion on the quality of young women's lives.

When young women are deprived of information and the ability to decide to have or not have a legal safe abortion they suffer, and their families suffer. Remember that those who hold anti-choice beliefs are often not easy to talk to and you have to decide whether it is the best use of your time and energy to respond to them. However, here are some key points worth considering:

- no one should be made ill or should die as the result of an unsafe abortion or the denial of safe abortion services
- no one should be forced to be a mother against her will
- a young woman's decision about her own body should always be the main priority, since all young women have the right to bodily integrity

5. Parental or spousal consent for sexual and reproductive health services should not be mandatory

This is not an easy one. Parents should ideally be involved in and supportive of their children's sexual and reproductive health. But we have to admit that in some circumstances, such as in the case of incest, this is not feasible or

4. For the abortion laws in your country, visit www.un.org/esa/population/publications/abortion/profiles.htm

5. Bearinger LH, Sieving RE, Ferguson J and Sharma V (2007) Global perspectives on the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents: patterns, prevention and potential. *The Lancet*. 369(9568): pp.1220–31.

appropriate. What is important, however, is that when a young person needs a service they should not be denied it due to lack of parental consent.

While this issue depends very much on the laws and regulations of your country, it also has to do with rights and the question: Do parents have rights over their children? The short answer to this is 'no'. Parents have a special duty to protect and promote their children's rights. As a child grows and evolves, the parents' role makes the transition progressively towards supporting their child to exercise rights on their own behalf.

The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development⁶ noted that parents have a responsibility to **guide** young people's decision making, not to make decisions **for** them. This responsibility should always be balanced with young people's own sexual and reproductive rights, respecting their evolving capacity to make decisions for themselves.

Unfortunately, many service providers are not fully aware of the laws and policies in their country and let their own moral judgments override the rights of young people. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, parents and adults should always make decisions in the best interests of a child or young person. Three principles must be taken into account. These are:

- all children have the right to be treated without discrimination
- all children have the right to survival and development
- all children have the right to participate in decision making

6. Sexual and reproductive health services for young people living with HIV

Being young and HIV-positive shouldn't prevent someone from expressing their sexuality. Young people living with HIV have sexual and reproductive health needs and have the right to express and enjoy their sexuality like all other young people. Unfortunately, stigma, discrimination and taboos about sexuality often prevent young people living with HIV from accessing the sexual and reproductive health services and information they need.

We need to ensure that youth friendly clinics welcome young people living with HIV and allow them to participate in the same way as other young people. We also need to ensure that young people living with HIV and the communities around them are aware of their sexual and reproductive rights, including:

- the right to decide if, when and how to disclose one's HIV status

Young people living with HIV have sexual and reproductive rights.



6. ICPD Programme of Action, 7.45; *Key Actions for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development*, 73(e)-73(f).

To be human is to be sexual.



- the right to information on how to have safer sex
- the right to experience sexual pleasure and take care of their sexual health
- the right to choose if, when, how many and with whom to have children
- the right to support and services that respect their dignity, autonomy and well-being

(For more information, see IPPF's publication *Healthy, Happy and Hot*.)

7. Promote female condoms

While male condoms are often cheaper and more easily available, the female condom is still a mystery to many young people. Pharmacies and clinics rarely offer them and, when they are available, they often cost much more than male condoms. Unfortunately, negative messages about their size, the sound they make, their appearance, lubrication and other physical concerns have overshadowed the promotion of female condoms.

In reality, many women have positive experiences using female condoms: these include reclaiming responsibility for contraception and a greater sense of pleasure in and ownership of their own bodies. We therefore need to increase the availability of female condoms and spread

more positive messages about them to young women. We need our governments and other policy makers to address the reasons that prevent young people accessing female condoms, including lack of information about them, poor availability, slow production and import processes, and lack of financial investment from donors.

8. Young people with a disability should have access to sexual and reproductive health services so that they can have a safe and satisfying sex life⁷

To be human is to be sexual. Societies sometimes view young people living with disabilities as 'defective' and as asexual. They are denied basic human rights, particularly rights relating to sexuality and reproduction. When sex and disability are discussed, it is mostly about fertility or pregnancy, but almost never about broader aspects of sexuality such as pleasure. Yet sexual expression is a natural and important part of every human life; to deny that a young person with a disability is sexual is to deny them the basic right of expression. Additionally, because of a lack of understanding about their sexuality, they are often victims of sexual abuse and violence. We must remember that young people's abilities and disabilities are varied and therefore their needs and wants are varied too. We need to make our services accessible. This is

7. See the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable

not just about having a wheelchair ramp or information, education and communication materials in Braille; what is needed are comprehensive and appropriate services that cater specifically for their sexual health needs. Working in partnership with young people with disabilities is crucial if we are to uphold their rights to participation.

Education

1. Promoting comprehensive, gender-sensitive and rights-based sexuality education

The right to information and education is unarguable. Comprehensive, gender-sensitive and rights-based sexuality education is essential to help young people prepare for healthy and fulfilling lives. High quality information and comprehensive sexuality education can equip young people with the knowledge and skills they need to make informed choices now and in the future. It also helps to enhance their independence and self-esteem and to experience sexuality and relationships in a positive and pleasurable way.

A large and growing body of research shows that high quality, comprehensive and rights-based sexuality education programmes can delay the initiation of sexual activity and unprotected intercourse, decrease the number of sexual partners, increase contraceptive use, and therefore decrease

unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections among young people.

Comprehensive sexuality education addresses a full range of issues related to sexuality, including a range of ways to practice safer sex (not just abstinence), gender, sexual and reproductive health, sexual and reproductive rights, pleasure, violence and diversity.

We need to highlight the role of pleasure and positive sexuality more prominently in sexuality education. This positive approach can increase condom use and safer sex. Pleasure and desire for intimacy are forces for good. The discovery and development of sexual pleasure can lead to greater overall self-confidence and, in turn, an ability to make empowered decisions about safer sex.

(For more information, see IPPF's publication *From Evidence to Action: Advocating for Comprehensive Sexuality Education*.)

2. Saying 'no' to abstinence-only messages

It has been argued that abstinence-only messages are the most successful at making young people delay sexual activity, because abstinence is the only contraceptive method that is 100 per cent effective. However, an expanding body of research demonstrates that these claims are not true.

The right to information and education is unarguable.



Providing comprehensive information on safer sex empowers young people to make informed decisions.



There is currently no strong evidence that proves that abstinence-only programmes delay sex or reduce teenage pregnancy. Some studies also show that abstinence-only programmes can promote other sexual practices that can put young people at greater risk of sexually transmitted infections. A common belief is that the only practice to abstain from is vaginal intercourse, leaving young people unaware of the risks of other types of sexual activity such as oral and anal sex.

There are many reasons to say 'no' to abstinence-only messages:

- Abstinence is only truly effective if practiced 100 per cent of the time. However, in reality, young people around the world are sexual beings and engage in sexual activity. Sometimes they choose to be sexually active, but sometimes they are forced into it. Abstinence is often defined in vague terms, leaving young people confused about what it really means. Promoting an abstinence-only approach does not respond to the realities of young people's lives.
- Abstinence-only messages leave young people ignorant about sexual health. This makes it harder for them to make informed decisions about safer sex when they start to become sexually active, whether in marriage or not.

- Providing comprehensive information on safer sex encourages young people to be sexually responsible and empowers them to make informed decisions.
- Moral or religious values (which are often variable) should never override someone's right to accurate information and education.

3. Young mothers should be allowed to continue their education

When a girl becomes pregnant she is often forced to leave school and, after having her child, it is often impossible to return. This is unjust. What about the young man involved? Does he have to leave school as well? No, he doesn't. Ideally they should both be supported in their education and in their parenthood.

Becoming a mother as an unmarried teenager has a major impact on a young woman's life. In addition to her own worries about the possible lack of further education, employment and about being a parent, she could also be stigmatized by her community.

Policies that prevent pregnant girls or young mothers from continuing their education often exist in countries with restrictive access to safe abortion services. Think about the dilemma that a young woman faces – limited information on safer sex, limited access to contraceptives,

no access to safe abortion services, no support to continue her education and now she is pregnant. Something needs to change!

We know that educating girls is vital for development and a way of breaking the cycle of poverty. This is why we need to advocate for an education system that helps girls complete their education and supports young parents with child care while in school.

Violence

1. Promoting the right to be free from sexual violence⁸

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, all young people have the right to be protected from harmful practices, and have the right to be free from abuse and exploitation.⁹ Special attention must be given to all forms of sexual violence, including rape, incest, physical and verbal harassment, trafficking and female genital mutilation. Violence can happen anywhere: within the family, within marriage, when dating or in a relationship, in the street, in school or at the workplace. The information we have on sexual violence is the tip of the iceberg – nearly 75 per cent of sexual assaults go unreported. One of the reasons is because sexual violence is associated with stigma and shame, and the victim often gets the blame. So what can we do?

- We must change attitudes surrounding sexual violence that promote feelings of shame and guilt in its victims and encourage victims to come forward. Changing public perceptions of rape and sexual violence is an essential first step.
- We must support those who have been affected by sexual violence and help them heal through effective and compassionate services that respect their dignity and privacy.
- Too often, victims of sexual assault feel re-victimized by the criminal justice system. We need to fight for responsive, sensitive criminal justice practices.
- Prevention of sexual assault is essential and education is a key component.
- We must engage men and boys as partners in promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights.

2. Young men and sexual violence

While the majority of sexual assault victims are women, men too face rape and other forms of sexual violence; often the shame, guilt and stigma they face when reporting such violence is greater because of false assumptions about masculinity. When changing public perceptions about rape, we must also include male survivors.

All young people have the right to be free from abuse and exploitation.

8. The 51st session of the Commission on the Status of Women (2007) considered “The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child.” For documents and more information, visit www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/51sess.htm

9. Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Articles 19, 24 (3), 34.



All young people are entitled to sexual rights.



Involving men and boys in sexual assault prevention is not only common sense, but it gives greater strength and credibility to our purpose. Effective sexual violence awareness programmes should be developed in collaboration with young men and should be aimed at both young men and women. Programmes should also work with young sex offenders to prevent re-offending. Above all, we should adopt and promote a zero tolerance approach to all forms of violence.

3. Homophobic practice is unacceptable

Homophobia is a fear, hatred and discrimination of homosexuals. Such fear, hatred and discrimination often manifest themselves in different forms of violence. Research suggests that the seeds of such violence are sown during childhood, often at school.

Creating a supportive environment is an essential step to eliminating homophobia. It is not just about tolerating different sexual orientations, but also about celebrating diversity and providing information and services to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender young people. Service providers need to be given specific training to help them to work with people of all sexual orientations. In addition, creating a supportive environment involves challenging discriminatory laws, policies and practices.

Sexual rights

Young people are sexual beings. They have sexual needs, desires, fantasies and dreams. It is important for all young people around the world to be able to explore, experience and express their sexualities in healthy, positive, pleasurable and safe ways. This can only happen when young people's sexual rights are guaranteed.

Sexual rights are human rights related to people's sexuality. Like everyone else, all young people are entitled to them and they are necessary for the development and well-being of all people and societies in which they live. However, discrimination, stigma, violence, fear, ignorance, and some cultural and traditional beliefs threaten people's sexual rights around the world, making young people especially vulnerable to sexual rights violations. In addition, sexual rights are often overshadowed by reproductive rights, since the latter tend to be less sensitive and less controversial.

As advocates, we must push for the recognition, respect, protection and promotion of young people's sexual rights around the world. (For more information, see IPPF's publication *EXCLAIM! IPPF's Guide to Young People's Sexual Rights*.)

Meaningful youth participation

The meaningful participation of young people in decision making is an essential component of ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights worldwide. Young people should be involved in a meaningful way in all aspects of sexual and reproductive health programmes and policy making for several reasons: (1) to ensure that interventions respond to the realities of young people; (2) to inspire ownership and commitment by young people over sexual and reproductive health interventions; and (3) to empower young people with greater confidence and leadership abilities.

Most governments are legally bound to promote youth participation in decision making, as signatories of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, young people still experience a great deal of exclusion, tokenism and patronizing attitudes.

As sexual and reproductive health and rights advocates, it is important to promote meaningful youth participation in all aspects of our programmes and policies. (For more guidance, see IPPF's publication *Participate: The Voice of Young People in Programmes and Policies*.)

When promoting some of the issues highlighted earlier, it may be useful to refer to various international treaties and agreements. (See Annex 5.)

"I asked: 'Why doesn't somebody do something?' Then I realized I was somebody."

You are somebody and you can do something to change the world, whether you are one person, a hundred people or a thousand people. If you have the passion, the rest is simple!

Most governments are legally bound to promote youth participation in decision making.







Annexes

Annex 1

Advocacy planning checklist

Complete this checklist to make sure you address all the components in the seven steps to advocacy.

Step 1: What needs to change?

- Identify key problem or concerns.
- Identify root causes of the problem.
- Determine what needs to change to address these causes.
- Define a specific and realistic advocacy expected result.
- Find ways to work with people who are most affected by this issue.
- Collect as much data as possible to support your position.

Step 2: Who can make that change happen?

- Identify primary targets.
- Identify secondary targets.
- Identify potential allies.
- Identify potential opposition.

Step 3: How can I influence my advocacy targets to make that change?

- Decide on an appropriate approach (door test).
- Develop a set of clear, concise messages.
- Prepare appropriate tools.
- Develop a plan on when and how to use each tool.

Step 4: How can I ensure meaningful participation of young people?

- Ensure youth participation to design, implement and evaluate the advocacy initiative.
- Conduct a youth participation self-evaluation.¹⁰

Step 5: Who can I work with?

- Produce a map of potential partners.
- Reach out to possible partners/allies.

Step 6: What obstacles might I face? How can I overcome obstacles and risks?

- Brainstorm possible obstacles and risk factors.
- Develop strategies to overcome possible obstacles and reduce risk factors.
- Prepare strategies to deal with the opposition.

Step 7: How will I monitor and evaluate my advocacy to prove it is working?

- Decide who will check that all planned actions were undertaken and completed.
- Develop indicators to monitor/evaluate outputs, outcomes, impact and the process.
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan to analyze the indicators and build on lessons learned.

10. See International Planned Parenthood Federation (2008) *Participate: The Voice of Young People in Programmes and Policies*. London: IPPF.

Advocacy planning tool

Annex 2

Use this table to help plan your advocacy strategy. Start by brainstorming all possible answers for each step. List your answers in the 'strategy' column. After the initial brainstorm, review your answers and decide what points from each step to focus on.

Step	Strategy
1. What needs to change?	
2. Who can make that change happen?	
3. How can I influence my advocacy targets to make that change?	
4. How can I ensure meaningful participation of young people?	
5. Who can I work with?	
6. What obstacles might I face? How can I overcome obstacles and risks?	
7. How will I monitor and evaluate my advocacy to prove it is working?	



Annex 3

Myths and facts about sexual and reproductive health and rights

Myth: Giving young people information on sexual and reproductive health and rights will just confuse them. They are too young to make decisions about what is best for them.

Fact: Evidence shows that giving young people complete and accurate information on their sexual and reproductive health, including both abstinence and contraception, does not lead to confusion.¹¹ Comprehensive sexuality education also equips young people with the skills and critical thinking necessary to understand the information given to them and to incorporate it into their lives in relevant ways. Young people who know themselves and their sexuality will be able to make informed decisions about what is best for them.

Myth: Comprehensive sexuality education encourages young people to have sex.

Fact: Comprehensive sexuality education presents young people with the full range of options and enables them to choose what is best for them, whether that is abstinence or engaging in safer sex. Evidence from an increasing number of studies clearly shows that comprehensive sexuality education does not lead to earlier sexual initiation or an increase in sexual activity.¹¹

Myth: Comprehensive sexuality education attempts to do away with traditional values.

Fact: Comprehensive sexuality education does not discourage values. However, instead of imposing certain values on young people, it helps them to identify their own values and empowers them to lead their lives according to these values. Comprehensive sexuality education is effective. Research shows that students who receive such education tend to delay engaging in sexual activity and, when they are sexually active, they have fewer sexual partners and use contraceptives more often.

IPPF believes that comprehensive sexuality education not only promotes young people's sexual and reproductive rights, but that it is a human right for all young people. This approach to sexuality education protects and fulfils young people's right to information and education, and empowers them to make decisions about their own health.

Myth: Abstinence is the only contraceptive method that is 100 per cent effective.

Fact: Abstinence is only truly effective if practiced 100 per cent of the time. However, abstinence is often defined in vague terms, leaving young people confused about what it includes. A common belief is that only vaginal intercourse

11. Ingham R (2005) 'We didn't cover that at school': education *against* pleasure or education *for* pleasure? *Sex Education*. 5(4): pp.375–88.
Kirby D (2001) *Emerging Answers: Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy*. Washington, DC: National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.
Collins C, Alagiri P and Summers T (2002) *Abstinence Only vs. Comprehensive Sex Education: What are the Arguments? What is the Evidence?* San Francisco: AIDS Research Institute, University of California.
Santelli J, Ott M, Lyon M, Rogers J and Summers D (2006) Abstinence-only education policies and programs: A position paper of the Society for Adolescent Medicine. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 38: pp.83-87.



should be abstained from, leaving young people unaware of the risks of other types of sexual activity such as oral and anal sex. Because abstinence requires a strong commitment from both partners, because many young people are coerced into sex and because young people may sometimes engage in forms of sexual activity other than vaginal intercourse, abstinence in reality is clearly not 100 per cent effective.

Myth: Abstinence is the only appropriate course of action for young people.

Fact: Abstinence is one possible course of action, but not the only course. The reality is that more than half of the world's adolescent population is sexually active – sometimes by choice and sometimes by coercion. Developing one's sexuality is part of the process of becoming an adult. Ignoring or denying this fact can make young people feel abnormal or isolated. Abstinence-only messaging leaves a large proportion of young people who are already sexually active uninformed, making it more difficult for them to make healthy choices about their sexuality. It also wrongly links abstinence with morality, labelling those who are sexually active as 'immoral'. This type of education also ignores young people who are victims of rape and abuse, increasing the stigma and shame they may feel.

In addition, young people's sexual rights must also be considered. From a rights-based point of view, abstinence-only education is clearly problematic. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children and young people have the right to enjoy the highest attainable health, access to health facilities (Article 24), and access to information which will allow them to make decisions about their health (Article 17) including family planning (Article 24). They have the right to education which will help them learn, develop and reach their full potential and prepare them to be understanding and tolerant to others (Article 29). Additionally, young people have the right not to be discriminated against (Article 2). Limiting young people's access to information on their own sexuality and health discriminates against them and undermines their rights.

Myth: Don't condoms fail? Won't telling teenagers they should use condoms give them a false sense of protection?

Fact: When used consistently and correctly, latex condoms are extremely effective (98 per cent). Most condom failure happens not because condoms break or leak, but because they are used incorrectly. Having information about condoms and about how to use them increases the chances of young people using condoms correctly and



consistently. Accurate information helps young people to make responsible decisions about whether to have sex and about the most appropriate way to avoid sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy.

Myth: Minors should have their parents' consent before having an abortion.

Fact: Parents should ideally be involved in their daughter's pregnancy and should support her in her choices, keeping her best interest in mind. But we must recognize that in some circumstances (for example incest or when children don't live with their parents) this is not feasible or appropriate. Parental or spousal consent requirements also infringe young women's right to bodily autonomy and privacy.

Requirements for parental or spousal consent often make it harder for young women to access abortion services quickly. Sometimes, this results in young women trying to access second or third trimester abortions, which present more risks for the young woman.

Myth: Promoting abortion is irresponsible, because abortion endangers young women's health.

Fact: IPPF does not promote any specific option in pregnancy. Rather, we promote choice, respect young women's sexual and reproductive rights, and recognize young women's evolving ability to make their own

decisions about pregnancy. It should also be noted that we advocate for access to safe abortion services.

Myth: There should be a law that requires the man's permission before a young woman can get an abortion.

Fact: Ideally, young women should feel supported by her sexual partner in their decisions about pregnancy and abortion. But she shouldn't need permission from the man to make decisions about her body and pregnancy. Why is it that young women need to respect men's wishes in regard to abortion but a man should not respect a young woman's rights and wishes? After all, she is the one who bears the risks and responsibility of pregnancy, and giving birth to a baby and, in most cases, does the child-rearing as well. Consider the opposite, whether a man should be able to demand a young woman should have an abortion even if she doesn't want one?

Myth: Emergency contraception is the same as abortion, therefore you shouldn't promote it.

Fact: Emergency contraceptive pills work by preventing pregnancy, **not** by causing an abortion. It delays or inhibits ovulation and does not affect an established pregnancy. IPPF promotes the right to comprehensive services, that's why we promote access to a full range of contraceptives, including emergency contraception.

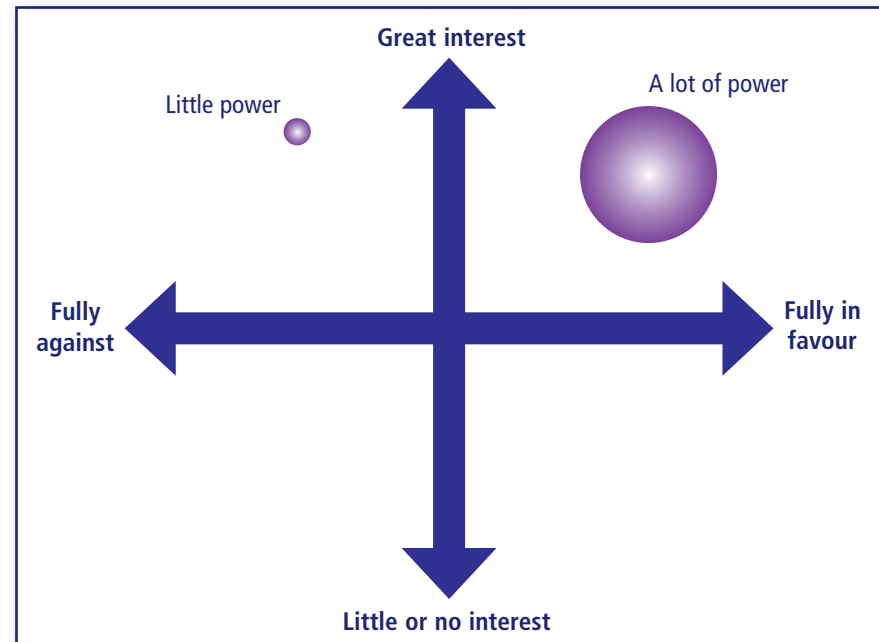


How to approach different audiences

Annex 4

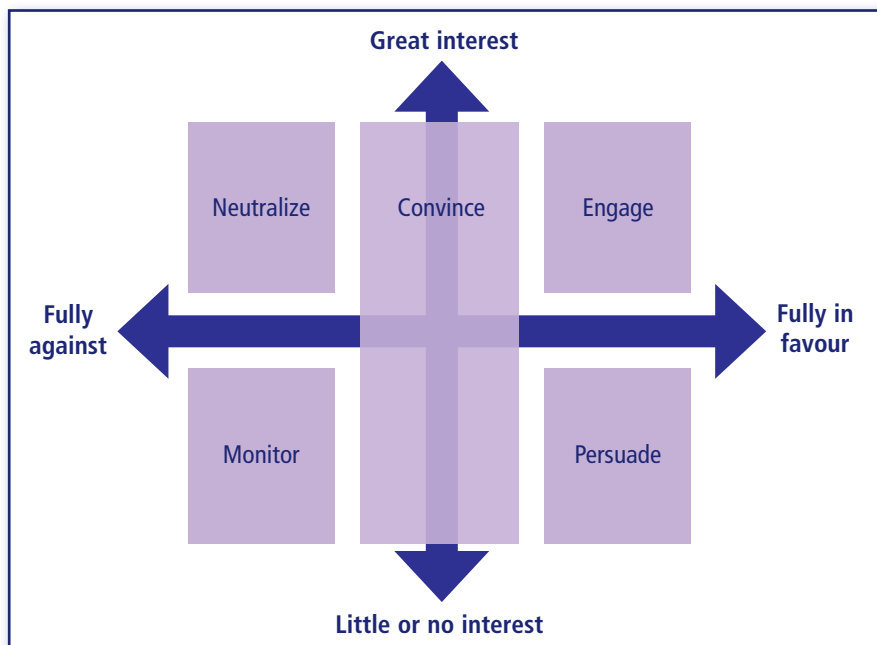
IPPF's Western Hemisphere Region has developed a useful framework to help plan out how to approach different advocacy targets.¹² The first step is to map out the various audiences for your advocacy based on:

- **Their level of power or influence.** The person's authority to make decisions that will have an impact on your advocacy goal and objectives.
- **Their position on your advocacy goal.** Whether the person is in favour, against or neutral to your advocacy goal or objectives.
- **Their level of interest in your advocacy issue.** The person's willingness to commit to the success or failure of your advocacy efforts.



12. IPPF Western Hemisphere Region (2010) *Handbook for Advocacy Planning*, www.ippfwhr.org/en/advocacy_planning_manual





Once you have mapped out your various advocacy targets, you can start to think about what approach will be most effective to reach them:

- **Convince.** If your target is very interested, but only agrees slightly with your position, you should try to convince them by increasing their knowledge and showing them that your advocacy objective is the appropriate solution.
- **Persuade.** If your target is in favour of your advocacy goal, but only has medium to little interest, you should try to persuade them by showing that your cause is supported by people or institutions that are relevant to your target, including constituents, other decision makers, power groups or public opinion leaders.
- **Neutralize.** If your target is somewhat or fully against your position and has a great interest in your issue, you need to neutralize their influence. This can be highly delicate. You must avoid using unethical practices. Neutralization is important but should not be the main focus of advocacy since it is reactive (rather than proactive).
- **Monitor.** If your target is against your position, but has little interest in the issue, you should monitor them systematically in case they move towards other sections on the map.
- **Engage.** If your target is somewhat or fully in favour of your position, and has high interest in the issue, you should seek to include them in your advocacy work by building partnerships and networks with them.



Annex 5

Important international documents and conventions

Beijing Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women

www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat1.htm

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm

Convention on the Rights of the Child

www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm

Millennium Development Goals

www.un.org/millenniumgoals/

Take a close look at target 5B on universal access to sexual and reproductive health by 2015.

Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

www.un.org/popin/icpd/conference/offeng/poa.html

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/

For more information on how to use these conventions in advocacy initiatives, see the Youth Coalition's publication

A Youth Activist's Guide to Sexual and Reproductive Rights

www.youthcoalition.org/site08/html/index.php?id_art=223&id_cat=7



Annex 6

Resources

For IPPF publications

Materials on advocacy, sexual rights, sexual orientation, abortion, HIV, youth participation, youth friendly services and a host of other resources – www.ippf.org

On young people's sexual and reproductive health

Avert, an excellent youth friendly site with lots of information on all aspects of sexual and reproductive health – www.avert.org

Family Health International – www.fhi.org/youthnet

Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights – www.youthcoalition.org

On advocacy

Advocates for Youth – www.advocatesforyouth.org

IPPF advocacy guide on child marriage: *Ending Child Marriage: A Guide for Global Policy Action* – www.ippf.org/en/Resources/Guides-toolkits/Ending+Child+Marriage.htm

Taking it Global – www.takingitglobal.org

YPEER – www.youthpeer.org

Youth Activism – www.youthactivism.com/

Youth Advocate's Guide to Sexual and Reproductive Rights – www.youthcoalition.org/site08/html/index.php?id_art=223&id_cat=7

On abortion

Catholics for Choice – www.cath4choice.org

Center for Reproductive Rights – www.reproductiverights.org

IPAS – www.ipas.org

On emergency contraception

International Consortium for Emergency Contraception – www.cecinfo.org

On youth friendly services

Engender Health – www.engenderhealth.org

Pathfinder – www.path.org

On HIV

Avert – www.avert.org

GNP+ – www.gnpplus.net

Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS – <http://gyca.org/>

World AIDS Campaign – www.worldaidscampaign.org

Youth Rise – www.youthrise.org



On religion

Catholics for Choice – www.cath4choice.org

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice – www.rccr.org

On violence

On violence against women and HIV –
www.worldaidscampaign.org/en/Constituencies/Women/Factsheets

On violence and child abuse – www.advocatesforyouth.org/violenceabuse.htm

On violence and pregnancy – www.ipas.org/publications/en/violence_against_women/violence_womens_rights_en.pdf

On sexual orientation

IGLYO – www.iglyo.com

ARC international – www.arc-international.net/

Here are some youth organizations that you could work with on advocacy initiatives. Ask your friends or IPPF Member Association for more information on national or local organizations working on these issues.

Advocates for Youth – www.advocatesforyouth.org

Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS – <http://gyca.org/>

YouAct – www.youact.org

Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights –
www.youthcoalition.org

Y-PEER – www.youthpeer.org





Who we are

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) is a global service provider and a leading advocate of sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. We are a worldwide movement of national organizations working with and for communities and individuals.

IPPF works towards a world where women, men and young people everywhere have control over their own bodies, and therefore their destinies. A world where they are free to choose parenthood or not; free to decide how many children they will have and when; free to pursue healthy sexual lives without fear of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. A world where gender or sexuality are no longer a source of inequality or stigma. We will not retreat from doing everything we can to safeguard these important choices and rights for current and future generations.

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