

International Youth Day 2020

IPA is committing to protecting adolescent sexual and reproductive health during the pandemic

The current pandemic will profoundly affect today's children and adolescents. Losing a host of protective factors within schools and communities, there are growing concerns that the pandemic will wind back many of the gains that have been made around adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights. UNFPA projections suggest that six months of COVID-19 related disruptions and lockdowns will result in an additional 7 million unintended pregnancies and 31 million cases of gender based violence. Disruptions in programs to prevent child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), as well as the negative effects on family economies is likely to result in an additional 13 million child marriages and two million cases of FGM.

IPA is delighted to support a new policy statement [check link here](#) by the International Association for Adolescent Health (IAAH) and Family Planning 2020 that calls for continued commitment to adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights - notwithstanding the challenges of the pandemic.

Before the pandemic, too many countries were slow to scale up adolescent responsive services and in too many instances, ineffective approaches around sexual and reproductive health (SRH) continued to be implemented. The current pandemic means that quality SRH services for adolescents are even less likely to be available. At its simplest, for too many young people, no school means no sexuality education.

Adolescent health providers and professional associations are important allies in ensuring that even in the pandemic, adolescents are centered in the full range of responses that protect and improve adolescents' health including their sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.

The statement calls for efforts to:

- Ensure COVID-19 guidance is informed by research evidence about adolescent health and development and SRH and rights
- Facilitate meaningful engagement of young people in the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of COVID-19 guidance
- Promote adolescents' access to quality information, products, and services that address sexuality and reproductive health
- Educate parents and community stakeholders about how best to support adolescent SRHR as the pandemic continues to evolve.

In addition to IPA, the IAAH and FP2020 statement is supported by the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM), the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO), the International Federation of Medical Students Associations (IFMSA), the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), the International Federation of Pediatric Obstetrics and Gynecology (FIGIJ) and the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA). UNFPA and the World Health Organization (Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research) contributed to the technical content and review of the statement.

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