

Fourth Annual Report Web Update

GTF328 International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)

Joining Forces for Voice and Accountability is an advocacy initiative led by the Western Hemisphere Regional (WHR) office and the European Network (EN) of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), also referred to as ROs. This project seeks to increase the capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) in 11 countries in Latin America and Europe to help citizens demand government transparency and to hold governments accountable for their commitments to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), specifically MDG 5, at different levels in the governmental system.

The fourth year of this five-year project was key in terms of increasing the accountability of governments to their commitments to gender equality and universal access to SRHR services in the 11 countries.

While the project specificities and political context of each country is unique, the project has created an important framework that has enabled IPPF Member Associations (MAs) and other CSOs to raise the importance of SRHR in their respective countries. The IPPF/WHR and EN regional offices have applied a systematic approach to understanding political processes and government structures, tailoring advocacy strategies to the countries' specific needs. The project's outputs fall under the following three categories:

- Creating favourable policy outcomes: these include both overall changes in SRHR policies as well as specific policy issues identified as critical in the MAs' advocacy plans.
- Strengthening advocacy skills and strategies: IPPF Regional Offices helped the MAs to develop their capacities in the areas of advocacy, budgets, and accountability.
- Developing robust civil society coalitions: this work focuses on building effective partnerships between IPPF MAs and civil society more broadly to implement effective and coordinated advocacy activities.

Joint trainings, workshops, on-going political analysis, and technical assistance improved the collaboration between IPPF MAs and other CSOs. Additionally, this year revealed an increase in the ability of CSO networks and coalitions centred on SRHR policy change to demand government accountability. The IPPF Regional Offices strengthened their expertise through trainings and pilot experiences assessing budget transparency on SRHR. This know-how combined with assessments of the specific capacities and needs of each participating MA allowed the ROs to provide each implementing MA with targeted tools and technical assistance to secure successful project implementation.

As a result of these activities the IPPF ROs and their MA partners trained 1737 people (85% youth, 58% women), 94 networks and partnerships were strengthened. In each of the eleven participating countries, the CSO advocacy networks are participating in key policy making processes. As a result, there were 32 favourable political decisions related to SRHR in which the CSO network played a role. .

Overall, the IPPF *Voices* project made important advances towards achieving the long-term outcomes of creating policies or plans, achieving budget allocations and implementing accountability mechanisms regarding SRHR. With one year of implementation remaining, the IPPF ROs and its MA partners are poised for continued success in the project's final year.

For the most up to date information, please visit: <http://www.ippfwhr.org/en/advocacy/voice>