

# IFPA ANNUAL REPORT 2010

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# access choice & advocacy



SEXUALITY, INFORMATION  
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH & RIGHTS

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# Introduction

SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1969, THE IRISH FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION (IFPA) HAS TIRELESSLY PROMOTED THE RIGHT OF ALL PEOPLE TO CONFIDENTIAL AND AFFORDABLE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE. 2010 WAS ANOTHER IMPORTANT YEAR FOR THE IFPA'S WORK OF PROMOTING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS.

In 2010, the Irish Family Planning Association provided sexual and reproductive health services to almost 23,000 clients at our two clinics in Dublin. The negative impact of the recession on women became very apparent during the year. Our clinics have experienced a fall-off in private clients attending for services. Women simply cannot afford to pay for sexual and reproductive health services. Meanwhile, the IFPA has been unable to meet the increased demand for services from medical card clients as a result of cuts by the Health Service Executive (HSE).

While our clinics worked hard to ensure our services remained accessible to women whose financial resources were under significant pressure, this situation is unsustainable. The Government must act now and provide adequate resources for family planning services or risk a reversal of the many social and economic benefits women living in Ireland have enjoyed thanks to access to modern family planning methods.

In 2010, our pregnancy counselling services provided information and advice to almost 5,000 women, girls and couples. The IFPA's training department continued to expand and secured accreditation from the statutory awarding body for further education in Ireland, FETAC.

Some 1,230 young people received HIV and sexual health education through our dance4life hip hop programme. A further 140 parents, carers and health workers availed of sexual health education through our training programmes and over 100 doctors and nurses received accredited family planning training from the IFPA's medical team.

In 2010, we were extremely proud to receive international recognition for our work to raise awareness about cervical cancer prevention. The IFPA was honoured with a Pearl of Wisdom Award at the Fourth Cervical Cancer Summit in Brussels organised by the European Cervical Cancer Association. The award was presented within a week of the Government's announcement of a national HPV vaccination programme for girls. A national cervical screening service and a school-based vaccination programme have been policy priorities for the IFPA.

Another high point in 2010 was the delivery of the verdict in the A, B and C v Ireland case at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. The court held that Ireland's failure to implement legislation to clarify the circumstances in which abortion to save a woman's life can lawfully be carried out in Ireland constituted a violation of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. This decision reaffirmed the Supreme Court's judgment in the X Case of 1992 and sent a very strong message that the State can no longer ignore the imperative to legislate for abortion.

Looking forward to 2011, the IFPA will move its head office from Amiens Street to Pearse Street. In our policy and advocacy work we will continue to work to improve access to contraception services for women in Ireland and will carry on highlighting the unnecessary burden placed on women experiencing unplanned or crisis pregnancies by Ireland's restrictive abortion laws. We will also push for the implementation of the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the A, B and C v Ireland case.

As always, we would like to acknowledge the support and hard work of current and former staff, board members, funders, supporters, clients and volunteers. We look forward to working with you all in 2011.

Niall Behan  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Anthea McTeirnan  
IFPA CHAIRPERSON

# About the IFPA

THE IRISH FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION (IFPA) IS IRELAND'S LEADING SEXUAL HEALTH CHARITY. THE ORGANISATION PROMOTES THE RIGHT OF ALL PEOPLE TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH INFORMATION AND DEDICATED, CONFIDENTIAL AND AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE SERVICES.

Motivated by the suffering caused by the State's blanket ban on contraception, the IFPA was established by seven volunteers in 1969. Since then the IFPA has been to the fore in setting the agenda for sexual and reproductive health and rights both nationally and internationally.

Today the IFPA offers a comprehensive range of services which promote sexual health and support reproductive choice on a not-for-profit basis.

The IFPA provides medical services from its clinics in Dublin city centre and Tallaght, as well as crisis pregnancy and counselling services at 11 centres nationwide.

The IFPA delivers family planning courses to doctors and nurses and also provides education and training on reproductive health issues to service providers, young people, parents and community groups.

With a strong track record in providing high-quality medical services, pregnancy counselling and education, the IFPA is a respected authority on sexuality and health and is regularly called upon to give expert opinion and advice.

The IFPA works with partner organisations and civil society to raise awareness of the importance of sexual and reproductive health at home and all over the world.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The IFPA, its Members, Affiliates & Supporters:

- ➔ Promote and protect individual basic human rights in reproductive and sexual health, relationships and sexuality.
- ➔ Promote and defend the right of all persons, including young people, to decide freely the number and spacing of their children (if any), so that every child is a wanted child.
- ➔ Are committed to obtaining equal rights for women and young people, and to their empowerment in obtaining full participation in, and benefit from, social, political and economic development.
- ➔ Are committed to working in alliance with all those who share our aims, and in co-operation with interested government and non-governmental bodies.

# Vision

At the IFPA we envisage an Irish society where all people can enjoy a fulfilling sex life and can make informed choices in their sexual and reproductive lives; where there is full access to high quality information, education and health services regarding sex, sexuality, conception, contraception, safe abortion and sexually transmitted infections.



## Medical Services

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The IFPA is Ireland's leading sexual health provider. In 2010 the IFPA provided 22,868 sexual and reproductive medical consultations at our clinics in Dublin city centre and Tallaght.

Founded in 1969 to challenge the state's ban on contraceptive services, today the IFPA offers a comprehensive range of sexual health services for women and men on a not-for-profit basis including contraceptive advice, vasectomy services, free cervical screening, STI screening and treatment, free post-abortion medical check-ups, women's health checks, fertility and menopause advice and pregnancy testing.

As a registered cervical screening service, the IFPA played a key role in the delivery of CervicalCheck – the National Cervical Screening Programme – with 4,973 women screened for cervical cancer at IFPA clinics in 2010. This represents an increase of 10% on figures in 2009.

2010 was the third year of operation of the programme. In September, CervicalCheck moved to system of direct programme entry for eligible women. Eliminating the need for a letter of invitation not only makes entry into the programme much more straightforward for women, it also allows registered smertakers to opportunistically recruit new women into the programme. This is the best strategy to target hard-to-reach groups.

2010 also saw the commencement of a cervical cancer vaccination programme in Ireland. The decision to develop this public health strategy as a school-based programme was warmly welcomed by the IFPA. School-based programmes are the best way to achieve the required level of coverage and minimise health inequalities. Ireland is now one of 14 countries in Europe with a nationwide screening programme for cervical cancer and one of nine countries to provide a free vaccination programme.

In 2010, 1,659 screenings for sexually transmitted diseases (STIs) were carried out in IFPA clinics. A growing concern for the IFPA is the lack of access to STI screening services for young people and those on low incomes. Despite much public debate about the incidence of STIs in Ireland, there has been a failure to develop accessible screening services in Ireland. STI screening is not covered under the medical card scheme and screening services for young people, the group with the highest incidence of STIs, are inadequate and inequitable.

STI screening costs an average of €120. Anyone wishing to avail of free STI screening has to spend a day queuing for

screening at St James's Guide Clinic in Dublin or other similar free services around the country. Young people attending college, however, can get tested for free or for as little as €20 through many college health services.

Given the advent of highly accurate and inexpensive screening methods and the relative simplicity and effectiveness of STI treatment, STI screening is an extremely cost-effective public health measure. The IFPA proposes that the Government gives every young person a free chlamydia and gonorrhoea test and includes screening for these two infections in the standard STI screening protocol for pregnant women, which already tests for hepatitis B & C, HIV and syphilis.

Gonorrhoea and chlamydia are usually asymptomatic and, if left untreated in both sexes, can result in infertility or other serious medical conditions. These infections, however, can be picked up by a simple urine test and can usually be treated with a one-day antibiotic course.

These two simple and inexpensive screening initiatives would not only identify and enable treatment of two STIs of particular concern; it would also increase awareness of STIs among the population.

The onset of the recession is having a direct impact on people's ability to access sexual and reproductive health services. IFPA clinics have seen a 10% drop in private client attendance since 2009. Women are simply not able to afford to pay for sexual and reproductive health services.

The recession is also impacting on women's contraceptive choices. At our clinics we regularly see women who are using less reliable and more expensive forms of contraception such as the oral contraceptive pill, because they can't afford the initial outlay for more effective long-term contraception such as the implant or coil (€300).

Meanwhile, the IFPA has been unable to meet increased demand for services from medical card clients as a result of cuts from the Health Service Executive (HSE). This lack of funding means that women with medical cards who sought out our services could not be accommodated. Other medical card clients experienced significant delays.

**“The IFPA proposes that the Government gives every young person a free chlamydia and gonorrhoea test and includes screening for these two infections in the standard STI screening protocol for pregnant women.”**

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**DR CAITRIONA HENCHION, IFPA MEDICAL DIRECTOR**

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### MEDICAL TRAINING

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In 2010, 109 doctors and nurses availed of the IFPA's popular Certificate in Contraception Theory, which is designed to give family doctors, nurses and other medical practitioners the knowledge and skills necessary to provide a family planning service of high medical standard to their patients.

The post-graduate course comprises two days of theoretical training and six sessions of practical training. The programme is certified by the Reproductive & Sexual Health Committee of the ICGP and has An Bord Altranais Category 1 approval.

# IFPA Survey of Clients aged under 18

Inappropriate laws and lack of guidelines for medical professionals combine to create a great uncertainty among service providers and young people about access to contraception and sexual health services in Ireland.

The legal status of prescribing contraception to young people under the age of 16 is very unclear. This poses a major dilemma for doctors who are ethically required to provide a confidential service which is in the best interest of their client. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the age of sexual consent in Ireland is 17.

The ambiguity in the current law can give rise to the following scenarios: medical professionals refusing to provide sexual health services including emergency contraception to young people; doctors violating principles of confidentiality by contacting the parents of the young person against their express wishes and doctors reporting consensual sexual relationships between young people under 17 to the Gardaí as a potential criminal act.

It is the IFPA's experience that many young people are acutely conscious of these scenarios. The IFPA is aware of cases where young people are refused sexual health treatment by medical professionals. We are also aware that other young people choose to avoid sexual health services altogether, and risk unplanned pregnancies and STIs, rather than consult with their parents on contraception and sexual health services.

Those young people who do avail of sexual health services do so under threat of being reported to their parents or the Gardaí. Doctors who provide sexual health services do so in a legal vacuum risking legal action by parents or guardians.

To shed light on the sexual health service needs of young people, the IFPA has carried out a client profile of young people aged 17 and under attending for sexual health services and advice at our Dublin city centre clinic between 2006 and 2011.

The survey of 251 consultations with young people aged between 13 and 17 paints an interesting picture of the profile, family supports and service requirements of young people.

Almost half (48%) of young people who attended IFPA's Cathal Brugha Clinic sought ongoing contraception services. A further 32% attended for emergency contraception services and 9% for pregnancy services. The survey found very little age-related variation in the services young people sought; however, there was a slight increase in demand for ongoing contraception services in the over 15s.

Young people who did attend with a guardian or older family member were most likely to be accompanied by their mother (80% of accompanied clients). 7% of clients who were accompanied attended with a social or care worker and 6% of clients who attended with someone were accompanied by their father.

A total of 65% of young people who attended our services attended on their own. In the under 16 age group 54% of clients were unaccompanied. In these cases the doctor had to decide to provide services based on the young person's maturity despite risk of legal repercussions.

The IFPA strongly believes that young people should be entitled to avail of sexual health services without fear of betrayal of confidentiality and without threat of refusal of care. In addition medical professionals deserve the protection of the law when they supply services in a way that seeks to serve the best interests of the young person.

The IFPA believes that sexual health services should always be provided on the basis of what is in the best interest of the young person and that doctors have an ethical obligation to provide care to young people that reflects their evolving capacities to make informed decisions about their own health and wellbeing. This requires legislation and medical guidelines.

In July 2011, the Law Reform Commission published a report entitled *Children and the Law: Medical Treatment*, which recommends legislative reforms that would allow for the views of mature teenagers to be taken into account in the context of consenting to medical treatment, including surgery and contraception, over-the-counter medicine and mental health services.

The commission's proposed legislative changes would allow 16- and 17-year-olds to consent to and refuse medical treatment.

The report proposes that young people aged under 16 may be able to give their consent or refusal to medical treatment, based on an assessment of their maturity, and a presumption that their parents or guardians will usually be involved.

\* McMahon et al, "The Prescribing of Contraception and Emergency Contraception to Girls Aged Less than 16 – What are the Views and Beliefs of GPs and of Parents?" (2010) 16, 2 MLJ 91.

The assessment of whether a person under 16 is sufficiently mature to consent to or refuse medical treatment would have to take account of the following factors: (a) whether she/he has the capacity to understand the nature and consequences of the treatment; (b) whether his or her views are stable and reflect his or her values and beliefs; (c) the nature, purpose and utility of the treatment; (d) the risks and benefits involved in the treatment; and (e) any other specific welfare, protection or public health considerations. These guidelines are broadly in line with the Fraser Guidelines, which have been adopted into Canadian, Australian and UK law.

However, the proposed legislation states that it is only in "exceptional circumstances" that a young person under 16 will be able to consent to such treatment without the involvement of their parents. This is problematic and raises a number of serious concerns. Is it considered "exceptional" for a young person to be sexually active and not want to inform their parents? It is the IFPA's view that a young person taking responsibility for their own sexual health is a relatively frequent occurrence and could not be considered as "exceptional". Lack of clarity on this point could result in unnecessary barriers to young people accessing sexual health services.

We know that more than half of GPs feel legally exposed when dealing with requests for contraception from young people and that over 80% of GPs have prescribed contraception to

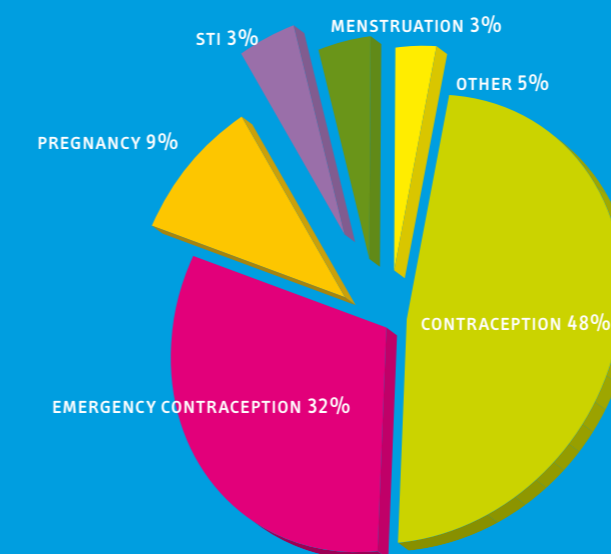
girls aged under 16\*. We also know that some GPs rely on the Fraser Guidelines, even though these guidelines have no legal validity in Ireland.

The IFPA also has concerns in relation to the lack of sufficient provision in the proposed legislation for the protection of young people's right to confidentiality in the context of access to necessary healthcare. The IFPA is also unhappy that health care providers acting in good faith and with due diligence could refuse to treat a young person under 18 without incurring any civil liability for so doing. It is important that new legislation also contains safeguards for young people who find themselves refused healthcare treatment, including a duty on the professional to refer appropriately.

It is worth noting the experience of the United States, where adolescents are legally entitled to some level of confidentiality. A study undertaken by the Guttmacher Institute found that one in five young people would choose to have unsafe sex rather than have their parents notified before they could receive a prescription for contraception. Only one percent said they would stop having sexual intercourse rather than have their parents notified, according to the same study.

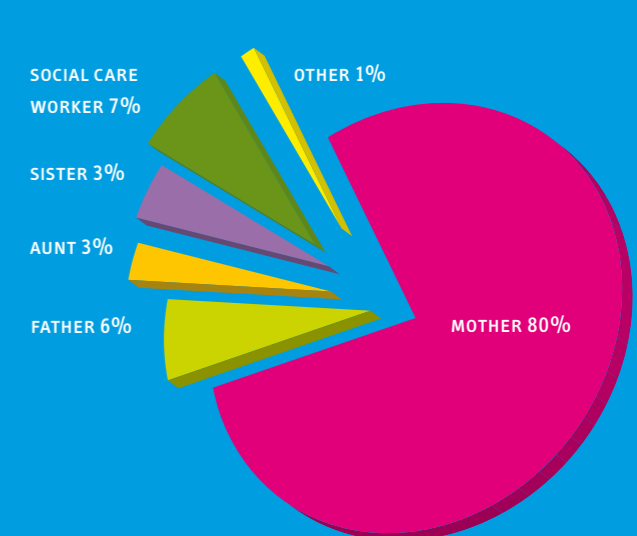
Barriers to sexual health services are dangerous to the health and welfare of young people because they increase their risk of unplanned pregnancies and STIs. Giving young people the ability to consent to their own medical care would be a major step towards keeping young people safe and healthy.

## SERVICES AVAILED OF:



Other = infections, bloods, HPV vaccine, general consultation, breast problems

## WHO ACCOMPANIED?



# Counselling Services

In 2010, the IFPA provided confidential and non-judgmental counselling and advice to 4,740 clients through our pregnancy counselling network and national pregnancy helpline. IFPA counselling services are offered to women and girls for free and are provided by professional accredited psychotherapists and counsellors. IFPA counselling service delivered face-to-face counselling to 1,146 clients in 2010. This represents an increase of 6% on the previous year.

2010 saw continued expansion of IFPA's post-abortion services with women attending for post-termination counselling accounting for 17% of the service's client base. The number of women presenting for post-abortion counselling grew by 42% in 2010. This follows on from a 66% increase in 2009.

This increase in demand for post-abortion counselling is due to improved awareness of the availability of IFPA post-abortion counselling services, increasing acceptability of abortion and growing recognition of the holistic benefits of counselling.

It is also interesting to note that more than a third of face-to-face counselling clients (37% of client base) attended for pregnancy counselling with a support person (partner, friend, family member or health care professional).

This growth in both post-abortion and overall counselling figures coupled with the presence of partners/family members at counselling sessions indicates an increased openness about crisis pregnancy in Ireland. It is clear that women are much more willing to speak about their experiences of crisis pregnancy, are more open with their support network and are more likely to avail of services on offer.

In 2010, 32% of women had their first counselling session before the ninth week of gestation. A further 23% of clients had their initial counselling session between the ninth and 13th week of gestation.

The majority (42%) of clients presenting for face-to-face pregnancy counselling in 2010 were aged between 25 and 34. Just over one third (36%) of clients were aged between 17 and 24. Women aged between 35 and 44 accounted for 15% of our client base.

A key focus in 2010 for the IFPA's counselling service was an expansion of our referral networks. 10,000 new counselling service leaflet were distributed to sexual health centres, GP clinics, colleges, hospitals and social service units. The IFPA's pregnancy counselling service is funded by the Crisis Pregnancy Programme.

## KEY SERVICES

- ➔ 1,146 women, girls and couples received face-to-face pregnancy counselling, an increase of 6% on last year.
- ➔ 304 women and girls received telephone pregnancy counselling.
- ➔ 3,290 callers to the IFPA national pregnancy helpline received advice and appointments.
- ➔ 44% increase in post-abortion counselling clients.
- ➔ 37% of clients attend with partner/friend/family member or health care professional.
- ➔ Average wait for appointment was two working days.

## GESTATION

	2010	PERCENTAGE
Under 8 weeks	367	32%
9–12 weeks	262	23%
13–16 weeks	236	21%
17–20 weeks	88	8%
Over 20 weeks	27	2%
Unknown	166	14%

## AGE

	2010	PERCENTAGE
Under 17	63	5.5%
17–24	410	36%
25–34	482	42%
35–44	174	15%
44+	17	1.5%

“The women, girls and couples who attend IFPA’s counselling service do so for a wide variety of reasons. They come from all walks of life and all stages of life. Crisis pregnancies have always been and always will be a fact of women’s lives; our service is here to support and respect women’s choices in all cases.”

EVELYN GERAGHTY, IFPA COUNSELLING DIRECTOR

## IFPA COUNSELLING LOCATIONS NATIONWIDE

- 01 LETTERKENNY
- 02 SLIGO
- 03 MONAGHAN
- 04 DUNDALK
- 05 DUBLIN
- 06 TALLAGHT
- 07 GOREY
- 08 WATERFORD
- 09 CORK
- 10 LIMERICK
- 11 GALWAY



# Education & Training Department

Training and education are key elements of the IFPA's mission to ensure all people have access to accurate and relevant information about their own reproductive and sexual health. The IFPA's Training Department offers a range of training and education programmes on reproductive and sexual health. In 2010 the IFPA delivered sexual health training to a total of 515 people including students, carers, parents, health workers and individuals from community groups.

A major landmark in 2010 was the attainment of accreditation from FETAC, the statutory awarding body for further education and training in Ireland. This means that the IFPA is now registered to offer training programmes leading to FETAC awards (see Key Events for more).

In 2010, the IFPA's popular Speakeasy programme was delivered to 96 participants from 10 different community groups. Speakeasy is an eight-week course designed to provide parents and carers with the information, skills and confidence needed to talk to children about relationships and sexuality. It is supported by the Crisis Pregnancy Programme.

2010 saw the first delivery of the Speakeasy programme to parents who had a child or children with an intellectual disability. This programme was delivered in collaboration with Irish Autism Action. Another first for Speakeasy in 2010 was the delivery of the programme to a group of fathers from Soile, HSE Rehabilitation & Training Centre.

The IFPA offers a Sexual Health Training programme that covers the basics of HIV/AIDS and STI prevention as well as factual and up-to-date advice on contraception. This course is suitable for anyone who wants to know more about sexual health, such as teachers, carers & youth workers. In 2010, this course was delivered to 30 participants – predominantly HSE staff, teachers, youth workers and students. This programme was also delivered to 13 student welfare officers from around the country.

In 2010, the Training & Education Department delivered skills4life workshops to 376 young people in schools and youth groups as part of the dance4life programme (see dance4life for more). skills4life is a four-hour comprehensive HIV and sexual health session which can be delivered as part of the relationships and sexuality education curriculum at Irish second-level schools. The workshops are designed to equip young people with the skills and knowledge to protect themselves against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

2010 also saw the initiation of the IFPA's Men Engage project, which seeks to engage men in their own sexual health. At the IFPA we recognise that men are supportive partners, men are service users and men are the best advocates for their own sexual and reproductive health rights. As part of the project the IFPA will strengthen and expand its sexual health services. In addition, a team of male advocates are developing an awareness campaign to encourage men to take the lead on their own sexual health. Men Engage is supported by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).

The IFPA's comprehensive range of sexual health resources continued to be in demand in 2010. Among the most popular was the IFPA's Sex Education Teaching Kit for teachers, trainers and health professionals.

The kit contains a user manual with information on Irish law, tips for providing sexuality education classes and activities to use with groups. It also includes a range of IFPA leaflets along with samples of 10 contraceptive methods and a condom demonstrator.

## 2010 TRAINING OUTCOMES:

- ➔ 90% of young people who participated in skills4life workshops said they were motivated to pursue further thinking, further action and further study about the issues of HIV and sexual health.
- ➔ All participants in the IFPA's Sexual Health Training reported that the course was very informative and very useful.

“Upon completion of the training I had the confidence to pass on the knowledge I learned. In the six months since the training I have written a new sexual health policy for my place of work and advocated for condoms to be made available to the young people in our care. I would encourage any professional who works with young people in any capacity at all to take this training as it really does help to break down barriers and make discussions around sexual health more natural and manageable.”

STACIE HALLIGAN, SOCIAL CARE WORKER, DRUMCONDRA – PARTICIPANT IN IFPA'S SEXUAL HEALTH TRAINING



## Youth Initiatives

The IFPA promotes the right of all young people to sexuality education, information and dedicated, confidential and affordable sexual healthcare services. The IFPA also promotes the right of young people to make informed choices and decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive health.

Through our clinical, educational and advocacy services, the IFPA provides straightforward information, advice and support to young people about sexual health and sexual relationships.

2010 saw significant work undertaken by ASK, the IFPA's youth-led advocacy group. Formed in 2009, the aim of the group is to empower young people in Ireland to stand up for their own sexual health and rights and to advocate for increased availability of unbiased, accessible information on sexual health and rights.

In 2010, the group launched its Keep Your Promise campaign, which focused on raising awareness among young people in Ireland about the importance of achieving Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 5b – Universal Access to Reproductive Health (see Key Events for more).

Funded through the International Planned Parenthood (IPPF) Flexi Fund, key elements of the campaign were the use of social media to engage young people and enlisting Irish youth organisations to sign up to the Copenhagen Declaration, which identifies fundamental areas requiring political support if the rights of young people to health are to be realised.

In 2010 the IFPA was a lead partner in the SAFE II project, which is funded by the European Commission and co-ordinated by IPPF's European Network. IFPA's involvement in this three-year project centred on the improvement of sexual health policies for young people in four countries – Ireland, Cyprus, Slovakia and Portugal.

A key outcome of the project in 2010 was the development by the IFPA of a pan-European policy assessment tool for young people's sexual health policies, which aims to facilitate cross-country comparison and tracking of policy changes in-country.

This tool was subsequently used by IPPF member associations to assess sexual health policies for young people in 18 countries providing a snapshot of the current status of young people's sexual health policies across Europe. Overall, this assessment found that there was a lack of cohesive and comprehensive national policies on young people's sexual health across Europe. The survey also found that youth participation in the development of policies that affect them was non-existent in most countries. Significantly, the

assessment found that, with respect to sexuality education, religious groups are consulted more often than young people.

On a positive note, all countries, with the exception of Cyprus, reported that condoms are readily available in a variety of settings. Most countries also provide emergency contraception without prescription to young people.

In 2010 strong links between the IFPA and the Union of Students Ireland continued, with the IFPA producing posters for the annual SHAG Week (Sexual Health Awareness & Guidance Week). In addition the IFPA's Training & Education Department delivered sexual health training to student welfare officers (see Training & Education for more).

In 2010, the IFPA initiated a partnership with the youth clinic in St James's Hospital GUIDE Clinic to improve the accessibility of reproductive and sexual health services to socially excluded young people.

New referral pathways between the youth clinic at St James's and the IFPA offer at-risk young people contraception services, STI testing, access to social workers and crisis pregnancy counselling in a youth-friendly and accessible manner.

### OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:

- ➔ ASK representative delivered a presentation on IFPA's Bolivia Photography Exhibition at YSAFE Annual Meeting, Belgium.
- ➔ ASK representative participated in workshop for medical professionals on service delivery to young people at Congress of the European Society of Contraception, Netherlands.
- ➔ ASK representatives participated in advocacy training at International AIDS Conference, Austria.
- ➔ ASK representative worked with other IPPF member organisations to ensure sexual health was included in NGO declaration at the World Youth Conference, Mexico.

“By signing the declaration, youth organisations are making a bold statement of solidarity with their peers in the Global South. The Keep Your Promise Campaign has received positive support from youth wings of political parties and formal youth groups from across Ireland. Together we are achieving a strong consensus among youth leaders that the role of young people is central to achieving MDG5b.”

### ASK LETTER TO IRISH POLITICIANS



Delegates at the Restless Development advocacy training taking part in Rights Here Right Now march, Vienna 2010



2010 saw significant expansion of the IFPA's dance4life programme. The HIV and sexual health programme was delivered to a total of 1,230 young people in 23 schools and youth groups across Ireland. 16 of these groups were new to the programme.

dance4life is an international initiative which uses dance and workshops to help young people engage in the issue of HIV and their own sexual health. The programme is active in 27 countries around the world and is offered in Ireland free of charge by the IFPA, funded by the European Commission.

At the heart of the programme is the dance4life drill, a hip hop dance that is taught to young people in all of the participating countries, which is delivered by a team of volunteers. Young people also participate in a skills4life workshop which equips them with the skills and knowledge to protect themselves against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. These workshops also focus on how HIV affects the lives of their peers in the developing world. This is delivered by the IFPA's Training & Education Department (see Training & Education for more).

Finally, an outreach advocacy programme, act4life, helps young people share the knowledge they have gained with their peers (see Advocacy Highlights for more).

The programme was delivered to students in 13 secondary schools across the country, from Cork to Monaghan. Delivery was predominantly to transition year students, but in some schools the programme was also given to fifth year and third year students.

During 2010, particular emphasis was placed on bringing dance4life to marginalised and hard-to-reach groups. The programme was delivered to young people from hostels for separated children seeking asylum, at-risk young people at the Equine Centre, Cherry Orchard and students in Youthreach Centres in counties Kildare and Louth.

In an effort to reach early school leavers the programme was delivered in the evening to youth groups in the greater Dublin area and in Clonmellon, Co. Meath. The programme was also delivered to a group from BeLonGTo – an organisation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people.

In May, the dance4life team took part in the highly successful Africa Day event in Dublin's Iveagh Gardens organised by Irish Aid, which was attended by 12,000 people. The dance team mobilised the audience with its hip hop dance drill and passed on messages about HIV prevention.

July 2010 saw a new departure for dance4life Ireland with the delivery of the first summer project. The programme was delivered to over 110 young people in venues in Balbriggan and Killinarden, Dublin. This summer programme was a first for the dance4life programme worldwide.

The highlight in the dance4life diary in 2010 was the World AIDS Day event in November, which saw 230 young people in Ireland connect with almost 50,000 young people worldwide via satellite to perform a hip hop dance drill and deliver a message to world leaders about HIV and AIDS (see Key Events for more).

The dance4life programme was the subject of a seven-minute documentary produced by media students at NUI, Maynooth. This documentary is now being used as promotional tool for youth leaders and teachers. The programme was also featured in the I Witness documentary series on RTÉ.

Volunteers are essential to the delivery of the dance4life programme and in 2010, the programme initiated a training-the-trainer pilot initiative, to help maintain a solid volunteer core.

#### ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ➔ Young people from Killinarden, Tallaght organised a HIV Awareness Treasure Hunt in Glendalough, Co Wicklow, with 60 participants, and also hosted a talent show, which was attended by 400 people.
- ➔ Third-level students in Blanchardstown IT operated a sexual health stand on campus from where they distributed condoms and presented condom demonstrations. This stand formed part of the institute's Humanities Week, which was attended by 1,200 students.
- ➔ Students from border-school Largy College, Clones, devised a drama entitled The Virus that Knows No Borders.
- ➔ Young people in the Finglas area mounted a campaign for the installation of a condom vending machine in Finglas Youth Centre. In addition, youth workers hosted regular condom demonstrations in the centre and distributed condoms.

“The dance4life experience has been simply wonderful for this school... Discussion regarding sexual health and relationships has become more frank and honest, less taboo... which builds both self-esteem and assertiveness in students but also arms them with the knowledge necessary to keep them safe ... They revelled in the music, which is the language of their generation and which helped tattoo the ‘be safe message’ indelibly into their brains.”

SASHA CUMISKEY, TEACHER LARGY COLLEGE, CLONES, CO MONAGHAN



Students from Largy College, Clones who performed a HIV awareness drama at dance4life's World AIDS Day event

# Communications, Campaigns & Publications

In 2010, IFPA campaigns, communications work and publications brought positive messages about sexual health to a very wide audience.

In January, the IFPA teamed up with CervicalCheck – the National Cervical Screening Programme to promote European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week. 20,000 campaign badges and information leaflets were distributed during the week (see Key Events for more).

In recognition of work done to raise awareness about cervical cancer and advocate for improved prevention programmes the IFPA was presented with a Pearl of Wisdom Award by the European Cervical Cancer Association at the European Cervical Cancer Summit in Brussels.

Later in the year, the IFPA published *Sexual Health & Asylum – A Handbook for People Working with Women Seeking Asylum in Ireland*. Designed to break down the barriers to sexual health services experienced by women seeking asylum, the handbook concentrated on five common areas of sexual health service delivery in Ireland – family planning/contraception, cervical screening, sexually transmitted infections including HIV, crisis pregnancy counselling and post-abortion care.

The handbook was designed with a wide audience in mind, including health care providers and non-medical staff, counsellors, social workers, organisations that provide support and assistance to women seeking asylum, staff and management of direct provision accommodation centres, policy makers and women seeking asylum. The publication was the culmination of the Majira Project, which sought to improve the sexual and reproductive health of women seeking asylum and women refugees.

In September, the IFPA launched the findings of a survey of vasectomy clients over a 20-year period. The survey revealed that vasectomy was most popular among couples in their thirties who are in a stable relationship with two or three children. Vasectomy is seen by many men as a way to share the contraceptive burden in their relationship, according to the research. The survey generated significant coverage in the national and regional press.

In December, the IFPA hosted a press conference to outline its response to the judgment on the A, B and C v Ireland case at the European Court of Human Rights. At the briefing, the IFPA welcomed the unanimous decision by the court that legislation must be introduced to give effect to the existing constitutional right to lawful abortion in Ireland where there is a real and substantial risk to the life of a pregnant woman.

The judgment was one of the lead stories throughout the day across national and international news broadcasters, including SKY News, BBC, Channel 4, Al Jazeera, CNN, RTÉ and TV3. The story was also covered by the printed press right across the globe. In addition the judgment was discussed in both the Dáil and Seanad.

Throughout 2010, the IFPA issued press statements on a range of issues relating to sexual health ranging from HIV and young people to HPV vaccination. During the year, the IFPA was also called upon by the media to comment on a variety of news stories on topics including abortion, crisis pregnancy, STIs, contraception, emergency contraception, sex education, cervical cancer, men's sexual health, rogue crisis pregnancy centres, menopause and young people and sex.

Key broadcast activities by IFPA representatives included interviews about sex education on 2 FM's Gerry Ryan Show, an interview about a Human Rights Watch report on abortion on TV3 and participation in a panel discussion about abortion on TV 3's Vincent Browne Show.

As a member of Dóchas (Irish Association of Non Governmental Development Organisations), the IFPA is a signatory of the Dóchas Code on Images and Messaging and is committed to publishing images and messages that avoid stereotypes or sensationalism and maintain full respect for human dignity.

## OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

- ➔ Publication of *IFPA report on UN Commission of Status of Women, 2010* – report on civil society participation in the Irish Government delegation to the UN.
- ➔ Participation in launch of Human Rights Watch report, *A State of Isolation: Access to Abortion for Women in Ireland*.
- ➔ Publication of factsheet *Young People Call For Action: Keep Your Promise* by ASK, IFPA's youth-led advocacy group.

“For decades the State has ignored its legal responsibility and has turned a blind eye to protecting the life and health of women in such dire circumstances. No other woman in a life-threatening situation should be forced to endure the uncertainty, humiliation and distress that Applicant C, in the European Court of Human Rights case, did when faced with a threat to her life and health.”

JULIE F. KAY, LEAD LEGAL COUNSEL FOR THE APPLICANTS IN A, B AND C V IRELAND AT IFPA JUDGMENT PRESS CONFERENCE

# International Advocacy

In 2010 the IFPA had significant success in its mission to increase awareness of the importance of sexual and reproductive health at an international level.

In February, the IFPA hosted an exhibition featuring a series of photographs taken during a visit of Irish politicians, journalists and IFPA representatives to Bolivia in March 2009 to learn about the sexual and reproductive health and rights needs of vulnerable young people. The photographs documented the lives of young people in Bolivia who benefit from an innovative outreach programme, run by Centro de Investigación, Educación y Servicios (CIES) which seeks to improve the lives of street youth and other marginalised young people in Bolivia. (See Key Events for more).

Later in the year, a joint application by the IFPA and CIES for an outreach programme to deliver sexual and reproductive health services to marginalised young people was approved by Irish Aid's Civil Society Fund.

During 2010, the IFPA continued to act as the secretariat for the Irish All-Party Interest Group on Sexual and Reproductive Rights, Health, Population and Development. This group is part of the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF) – a Brussels-based parliamentary network of 25 All Party Groups throughout Europe that focus on improving sexual and reproductive health and rights.

As chair of the All Party Group, Senator Fiona O'Malley participated in an EPF delegation to the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York for the fifteen-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. She also represented the group at the Women Deliver Conference in Washington and the G8 International Parliamentarians' summit on Balancing the Scales of Women's Lives in the Countdown to 2015 in Ottawa.

Throughout the year parliamentarians were briefed on maternal mortality, Millennium Development Goal 5b, female genital mutilation, universal access to reproductive health, the UN Commission on the Status of Women, UN Women, the UN Millennium Summit, cost-benefit analysis of investing in family planning, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and young people's needs and rights to sexual and reproductive health. These briefings informed parliamentary questions and debate.

The IFPA works with a range of international partner organisations to develop a stronger commitment to and support for sexual and reproductive health and rights including International Planned Parenthood

Federation (IPPF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the European Cervical Cancer Association and EuroNGOs, the coalition of European non-governmental organisations working in the field of sexual health.

As a collaborating partner with UNFPA, the IFPA organised the launch of the 2010 State of World Population Report (see Key Events for more).

At home the IFPA is an active member of Dóchas, the Irish association of non-governmental development organisations. In 2010 the IFPA worked with other Dóchas members to call on the Irish Government to deliver its aid commitments in the Act Now on 2015 campaign.

The IFPA was nominated by Dóchas to represent civil society on the Irish Government delegation to the UN Commission on Status of Women. Subsequently, the IFPA hosted a joint workshop with the National Women's Council and Banúlacht on civil society participation at the event with members of the Women's Human Rights Alliance and Dóchas.

## OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- ➔ IFPA representative attended the EuroNGOs AGM and annual conference in London. Gender and Sexual & Reproductive Health and Rights was the theme of the conference.
- ➔ IFPA representative attended World Health Organisation technical consultation in Slovakia focusing on sexually transmitted infection prevention and control.
- ➔ IFPA representative attended Countdown 2015 European high level conference in Brussels which focused on the implementation of the EU's commitments to universal access to reproductive health (MGD 5b) by 2015.



IFPA Chief Executive Niall Behan & Senator Fiona O'Malley at Bolivia Photograph Exhibition, European Public Information Centre

“But even in the darkest corners of the unlit streets, there were glimmers of hope. The CIES charity has been quietly building a network of clinics, outreach services and educational programmes in Bolivia since 1987. Their focus is on sexual and reproductive health and they have had to build their presence gradually, respecting the traditional taboos surrounding contraception, unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections ...”

IN DIRE STRAITS, IRISH EXAMINER, MONDAY, 15TH FEBRUARY 2010



Sean Hand, UNFPA, Dr Nata Duvvury, NUIG and Niall Behan, CEO IFPA at the State of the World Population Report Launch



IFPA Policy & Advocacy Officer Meghan Doherty, Government Delegation at the UN's Commission on the Status of Women

## Policy Development, Submissions & Presentations

The IFPA is recognised as a respected source of expertise in sexual health thanks to its excellent track record in the provision of medical services, pregnancy counselling, education, training for healthcare professionals and policy development over the last four decades.

The IFPA is regularly called upon by statutory agencies, parliamentary committees, medical associations and service providers to give its expert opinion on a wide range of issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

In 2010, the IFPA co-hosted the first All Ireland Abortion & Clinical Practice Conference with the Family Planning Association of Northern Ireland (see Key Events for more). The conference featured eight speakers and focused on post-abortion care, best practice in abortion services and advances in medical and surgical abortion techniques. 60 delegates from the field of nursing, midwifery, gynaecology and sexual health services attended the conference.

In 2010, the IFPA made a submission to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the right to sexual and reproductive health. In that submission, the IFPA stated that the uncertainty and restrictions surrounding access to abortion services in Ireland marks a failure by the State to respect women's right to health and constitutes an interference with the right to the health.

The IFPA recommended that a new UN general comment on the right to sexual and reproductive health should recognise that the inaccessibility of safe abortion services jeopardises women's mental and physical health and has a disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups. It should also, the IFPA stated, emphasise the State's obligation to provide an accessible, affordable health system with adequate sexual and reproductive health services, including safe abortion services.

As chair of the Irish All-Party Interest Group on Sexual and Reproductive Rights, Health, Population and Development, Senator Fiona O'Malley, made a presentation at the Women Deliver conference in Washington on how modern contraception has been a catalyst for social change in Ireland.

In September, the IFPA submitted an amicus brief to the Supreme Court of Argentina in the case of *Fuentes, Aurora Luisa s/ Medida Autosatisfactiva*. The case related to a young girl pregnant as a result of rape and centred on the entitlement of rape victims to access abortions upon request in accordance with their rights to health and autonomy.

Throughout the year, presentations on the IFPA's Counselling Services were delivered to key organisations and groups including student medical centres, student welfare officers, women's resource centres, youth workers, doctors and nurses.

The IFPA's Training & Education Department was also called upon to make a number of presentations throughout the year, including a presentation to support workers for people with intellectual disabilities about friendship and close relationships through the RUA network and a presentation to a Pavee Point seminar on best practice in relationships and sexuality education provision. The department also delivered an interactive presentation to a group of advocates with intellectual disabilities from the Community Partnership Network. A lecture on family planning and women's health was delivered to students at the MA in Gender studies in Trinity College and a presentation on sexual health services in Ireland was delivered to health promotion students from East Carolina University.

The IFPA also provided a number of briefings to organisations relating to the A, B and C v Ireland case at the European Court of Human Rights, including Amnesty Ireland, National Women's Council of Ireland, Free Legal Advice Centres, Catholics for Choice, Guttmacher Institute and the Family Planning Association, Northern Ireland.

Throughout the year the IFPA also provided policy briefings to students, researchers and other organisations on a range of topics relating to sexual and reproductive health.

### PRESENTATIONS:

- ➔ International Federation of Professional Abortion and Contraception Associates Conference Achieving Excellence in Abortion-Care, Young People Advocating for Abortion Rights in Ireland, October 22-23 Seville Spain.
- ➔ Banúlacht Feminist Dialogue Series, Maternal Mortality as a Women's Human Rights Issue, April 28, Dublin.
- ➔ University College Dublin School of Social Justice, undergraduate module on Gender and Development, lecture on How to Not Talk about Sex on the Global Stage, October, Dublin.
- ➔ European Parliamentary Forum, Strategy Retreat, Parliamentary Advocacy on SRHR in Ireland, November, Dubrovnik, Croatia.
- ➔ Nara Pro-Choice America, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Ireland, March, New York.

The IFPA is committed to promoting the rights of every person to have access to accurate and non-judgmental sexual and reproductive health services and information. Becoming aware of these rights enables people to make healthy informed choices and necessitates addressing the barriers to sexual health experienced by people from a variety of life circumstances. We recognise that people with extra support needs constitute a part of the Irish population who experience a multitude of barriers to achieving optimum sexual health.

ANITA BUTT, IFPA EDUCATION & TRAINING CO-ORDINATOR, PRESENTATION TO RUA

# Key Events

## Photographic Exhibition

The role youth-friendly outreach services can play in alleviating poverty among at-risk adolescents was the focus of a photo exhibition hosted by the IFPA at the European Public Information Centre in Dublin in February.

The exhibition featured a series of photographs taken during a visit of Irish politicians, journalists and representatives of the IFPA to Bolivia in March 2009 to learn about the sexual and reproductive health and rights needs of vulnerable young people.

The exhibition launch was attended by members of the delegation who travelled to Bolivia – Senator Fiona O'Malley, Senator Dominic Hannigan, Deputy John Deasy, Caroline O'Doherty from the Irish Examiner and photographer Crispin Rodwell. The event was also attended by Minister of State for Overseas Development Peter Power and Martin Territt, Director of the European Commission Representation in Ireland.

The photographs documented the lives of young people in Bolivia who benefit from an innovative outreach programme called Most at Risk Adolescents. Funded by the European Commission and implemented by the Centro de Investigación, Educación y Servicios (CIES), the programme seeks to improve the lives of street youth and other marginalised young people in Bolivia.

The exhibition launch coincided with the publication of a report entitled *Improving the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Most at Risk Adolescents*, which documented the study tour. In November 2010, Irish Aid announced multi-annual funding to CIES to deliver sexual and reproductive health services to marginalised young people.



IFPA Project Officer, Grace Wilentz, at Bolivia Photographic Exhibition

## State of the World Population Report Launch

As collaborating partner of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Ireland, the IFPA co-ordinated the Irish launch of the organisation's flagship State of the World Population Report in October. Entitled *From Conflict and Crisis to Renewal: Generations of Change*, the report explored how conflict and humanitarian emergencies affect women and girls and how women are often excluded from decision-making in relation to recovery and peacebuilding.

At the same time, the report highlights women's resilience and the ways that women frequently became the economic lifelines for their families during conflict or as displaced people. Women can lead reconstruction efforts when they have access to the same rights and opportunities as men, the report found. It also highlighted how recovery from conflict and disaster presents opportunities to rectify inequalities between women and men.

One of the report's authors, Dr Nata Duvvury, Co-Director of the Global Women's Studies Programme, NUI, Galway, spoke at the event. Also present was Sean Hand, Director of Human Resources with UNFPA, who paid a special tribute to the Irish Government and Irish Aid for their support of UNFPA.

The report's release coincided with the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council's landmark Resolution 1325, which aims to put a stop to sexual violence against women and girls in armed conflict and calls for the increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in the prevention, management and resolution of conflict and greater participation by women in peacebuilding initiatives.

The event was well attended. Guests included ambassadors, diplomatic staff, academics, civil servants, NGO representatives, members of the Defence Forces and politicians (including members of the All Party Group on Sexual and Reproductive Health, Rights, Population & Development). Dr Nata Duvvury and Sean Hand were interviewed on RTE's Today with Pat Kenny show about the report's findings.



Report co-author Dr Nata Duvvury at the UN launch

## European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week

As the lead member of the European Cervical Cancer Association, the IFPA partnered with CervicalCheck, the National Cervical Screening Programme, to promote European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week in January 2010.

Cervical cancer is one of the leading causes of early mortality among women in the under-44 age-group in Ireland. Each year over 200 new cases are diagnosed and 90 lives are lost to the disease, which is highly preventable with early detection of abnormal cells.

The awareness week took place between January 24 and 30 – one week after the announcement by Minister for Health Mary Harney that a cervical cancer vaccination programme for all girls in first year in secondary school would commence later in the year.

The aim of the campaign was to inform women about cervical cancer prevention and to encourage them to avail of a free smear test through CervicalCheck – the National Cervical Screening Programme.

The Pearl of Wisdom is the international emblem of cervical cancer prevention and 20,000 Pearl of Wisdom campaign badges and screening information leaflets were distributed through 30 partner organisations, including the Irish Hairdressers Federation (IHF), with all member salons presenting campaign and information leaflets to their female clients during the week.

Other key distribution partners included CervicalCheck, the National Women's Council of Ireland, the National Traveller Women's Forum, the Irish Country Women's Association, HSE Health Promotion Unit, LGBT groups and the Family Resource Centre Network.

Broadcaster Maura Derrane lent her support to the campaign and there was significant coverage of the awareness week in national and regional media outlets, including interviews on RTE's Four Live and the Ray D'Arcy Show on Today FM.



Broadcaster Maura Derrane with Sandra Fabian IHF and IFPA's Dr Caitriona Henchion

## dance4life World AIDS Day Event

230 young people from around the country gathered in Dublin to participate in the IFPA's dance4life World AIDS day event in November. The Irish element of this global event took place at Vanilla Nightclub, Hampton Hotel, Dublin and featured young people from schools and youth groups across the country who participated in the dance4life programme.

dance4life is an international initiative which uses dance, media and workshops to engage young people in the issue of HIV/AIDS and their own sexual health. The programme is offered to schools and youth organisations in Ireland free of charge by the IFPA.

Schools and youth groups at the event included Largy College, Clones, Breifne College, Cavan, youth groups from Balbriggan, Donnycarney and Edenmore in Dublin and Clonmellon Youth Group from Westmeath.

Students from Largy College, Clones wrote, scripted and performed their own drama entitled *The Virus that Knows no Border*. Students from Breifne College Cavan assisted comedian Fred Cooke, MC for the day, to launch the dance4life Ireland t-shirt, which was created by young designer Elias Spinn and inspired by the Tara brooch.

Other performances were by Stone, from Stone and Jezreel, and Ian O'Carroll who performed his newly composed dance4life Ireland anthem. Grace Wilentz and Linda Kelly from IFPA's youth-led advocacy group, ASK, delivered a sexual health advocacy workshop to participants and a representative from Open Heart House spoke to the group about positive living with HIV in Ireland.

The day rounded off with 21 countries from all over the globe connecting up by live satellite link and participants performing a simultaneous hip hop dance drill and demanding that world leaders remember the promises they made to young people under the Millennium Development Goals.



Young people at World AIDS Day event with camera man

## ASK Keep Your Promise Campaign

In 2010, the IFPA's youth-led advocacy group, ASK, launched the Keep Your Promise Campaign, which focused on raising awareness among young people in Ireland about the importance of achieving Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 5b – Universal Access to Reproductive Health.

A key aim of the campaign was to enlist the support of youth leaders from across Ireland in an effort to secure concrete political commitment to young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights. Irish policies on the MDGs primarily focus on children and adults, ignoring the rights and needs of adolescents and young people. ASK's campaign sought to draw attention to the importance of MDG 5b to the lives of young people worldwide.

In August, ASK hosted a briefing event for 15 youth leaders. Participants were briefed on young people's sexual and reproductive rights and the progress of MDG 5b.

Other activities included the production of a factsheet on young people's access to sexual health services and enlisting Irish youth organisations to sign up to the Copenhagen Declaration, which identifies key areas that require political support if the rights of young people to health are to be realised. Social media outlets such as Twitter, Facebook and blogs were used to engage young people in the campaign.

The campaign was highly successful with a number of key organisations signing up to the Copenhagen Declaration – SIPTU Youth, Voluntary Service International, Young Greens, Choice Ireland, EIL Intercultural Learning, Union of Students of Ireland, Transgender Equality Network and Labour Women. In addition, statements of support for the campaign were received from seven parliamentarians.



Bernadette Keating, EIL and Vanessa Lacey, Transgender Equality Network

## A, B and C v Ireland

In December, the European Court of Human Rights delivered its verdict in the case of A, B and C v Ireland – a landmark challenge to Ireland's restrictive regulation of abortion. The Court unanimously found that Ireland's regulation of abortion violates women's human rights and that abortion, in certain circumstances, should be lawfully available in Ireland.

The case was taken by three women, supported by the IFPA, who travelled abroad for abortion services. They argued that the criminalisation of abortion services in Ireland jeopardised their health and wellbeing, in violation of a number of articles of the European Convention on Human Rights. The case was heard before the Court's Grand Chamber of 17 judges, which is reserved to hear cases that raise serious questions affecting the interpretation of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The judges unanimously ruled that Ireland's failure to give effect to the existing constitutional right to a lawful abortion in Ireland when a woman's life is at risk violates Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The decision reaffirmed the Supreme Court X Case judgment, of 1992 and sent a very strong message to the State that it can no longer ignore the imperative to legislate for the provision of life-saving abortion services.

Following the publication of the judgment the IFPA commended the bravery of the three women who took their case to the European Court of Human Rights, particularly given the stigmatisation of abortion in Ireland.

The experiences of the women, known as A, B and C, are illustrative of the reality faced by thousands of women in Ireland. Clients attending IFPA services for pregnancy counselling express frustration that they have to leave this country to access health services that they feel should be available to them at home. IFPA clients don't want sympathy, they simply want access to the health services they need.



Carmel Stewart, legal advisor for the Applicants in A, B and C v Ireland, at the European Court of Human Rights

## All Ireland Abortion & Clinical Practice Conference

In October, the IFPA co-hosted the first All Ireland Abortion & Clinical Practice Conference with the Family Planning Association of Northern Ireland (FPA NI) in Newcastle, County Down.

The conference was aimed at health professionals from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and aimed to bring them up to date with the latest developments in abortion services. Topics included advances in medical and surgical abortion techniques and best practice in abortion services.

A key aspect of the conference was post abortion care which is vital for women returning to the north or south of Ireland after having abortions elsewhere. 60 delegates from the field of nursing, midwifery, gynaecology and sexual health services attended the conference. Health professionals from Northern Ireland who attended the conference received Continuing Professional Development credits, while Republic of Ireland delegates received Continuing Medical Education credits.

The conference was co-chaired by Breedagh Hughes, Northern Ireland Board Secretary, Royal College of Midwives and Dr Christian Fiala, Medical Director, Gynmed Clinic, Vienna.

Speakers at the event included Dr John Parsons, former consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist, Kings College, London; Dr Sam Rowlands, Specialist in Sexual Health, Worcestershire Primary Care Trust; Dr Patrica Lohr, Medical Director BPAS; Dr Ailsa Gebbie, Consultant Gynaecologist, NHS Lothian; Kathy French RN, Clinical Director Brook; Dr John Spencer, Senior Clinical Consultant, Marie Stopes International and Dr Omi Ohizua, Consultant Community Gynaecologist, Walsall NHS Trust.



Evelyn Geraghty, IFPA Counselling Director, Audrey Simpson, Director FPA NI, Julie Bentley Chief Executive FPA and Mary Favier, Doctors for Choice

## FETAC Accreditation

In 2010, the IFPA's Training & Education department secured accreditation from FETAC, the statutory awarding body for further education and training in Ireland.

This means that the IFPA is now a FETAC registered provider and can offer training programmes leading to awards on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The IFPA joins over 960 providers with agreed procedures offering programmes leading to FETAC awards. FETAC awards afford participants in IFPA training programmes greater access to opportunities in further and higher education and training and in employment.

The accreditation was the culmination of two years of work during which time the IFPA's training department developed a range of policies and procedures in areas ranging from communication and programme delivery to recruitment and self evaluation. This work ensures that the IFPA continues to deliver quality assured programmes which are now linked to an internationally recognised awards body.

In 2010, the department's highly popular Speakeasy course became the first IFPA training programme to achieve FETAC accreditation. This achievement paves the way for other IFPA courses to be FETAC-accredited in the future.

Speakeasy is an eight-week course designed to provide parents with the information, skills and confidence to talk to their children about sex and relationships. Participants in this course can now achieve level 2 on the National Framework of Qualifications. Particular care was taken when designing this course to make it accessible to people with learning difficulties. In 2010, 53 Speakeasy graduates were put forward for a FETAC award.



Stan McHugh CEO FETAC, Martin Naarendorp, Sexual Health Trainer IFPA, Anita Butt Training Coordinator IFPA and Sean Haughey TD, Minister of Lifelong Learning at the FETAC Awards Ceremony

# Financial Report

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010

CONTINUING OPERATIONS	2010	2009
	€	€
Income	2,856,072	2,747,453
Expenditure	(2,877,541)	(2,755,471)
(Deficit) / Surplus on ordinary activities before interest	(21,469)	(8,018)
Interest payable and similar charges	(17,570)	(18,299)
Deficit for the year	(39,039)	(26,317)

NO STATEMENT OF RECOGNISED GAINS OR LOSSES OTHER THAN THE SURPLUS OR DEFICIT FOR THE ABOVE TWO FINANCIAL YEARS.

## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2010

FIXED ASSETS	2010	2009
	€	€
Tangible assets	398,521	464,603
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Stocks	18,520	39,506
Debtors	70,720	60,953
Cash at bank and in hand	238,275	153,940
	327,515	254,399
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(514,518)	(429,101)
Net current liabilities	(187,003)	(174,702)
Total assets less current liabilities	211,518	289,901
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(109,087)	(142,246)
Capital Grants	(42,634)	(48,819)
Net assets	59,797	98,836
<b>RESERVES</b>		
Revenue reserves account	59,797	98,836
	59,797	98,836

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD: ANTHEA MCTEIRNAN CHAIRPERSON HELEN CORNELISSEN DIRECTOR

# Board of Directors

Kevin Baneham / Karen Ciesielski / Helen Cornelissen / Sonya Donnelly / Danny Dunne (appointed 01.04.2010) / Linda Kelly / Kelly Mackey / Anthea McTeirnan / Maeve O'Sullivan (resigned 21.09.2010) / Leslie Sherlock (appointed 01.04.2010) / Louise Tierney (resigned 21.09.2010)

# Staff

In 2010 the IFPA had a staff complement of 50 people. The organisation welcomed new staff members and said goodbye to others. The IFPA was also assisted in its work by a number of interns and a vibrant team of volunteers.

## IN 2010 THE HEADS OF OUR MAIN DEPARTMENTS WERE:

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE:** Niall Behan

**MEDICAL DIRECTOR:** Caitriona Henchion

**COUNSELLING DIRECTOR:** Evelyn Geraghty

**FINANCIAL CONTROLLER:** Ben Howe

**TRAINING COORDINATOR:** Anita Butt

**CLINIC MANAGER, TALLAGHT:** Annette Smith

**CLINIC ADMINISTRATOR, CATHAL BRUGHA STREET:** Deirdre Jones

# Who We Work With

## KEY PARTNERS & FUNDERS:

Banúlacht	European Parliamentary Forum on Population & Development (EPF)
Catholics for Choice	Family Planning Association Northern Ireland
Centro de Investigación, Educación y Servicios, Bolivia	Health Service Executive
CervicalCheck – National Cervical Screening Programme	International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)
Countdown 2015	Irish Aid
Crisis Pregnancy Programme	Irish Council for Civil Liberties
dance4life International	National Women's Council of Ireland
Doctors4Choice	Restless Development, UK
Dóchas	Sexual Health Centre, Cork
EuroNGOs	St James's GUIDE Clinic
European Union	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
European Cervical Cancer Association	Women's Human Rights Alliance





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**CODE OF  
CONDUCT ON  
IMAGES &  
MESSAGES**

