

IFPA ANNUAL REPORT 2009

www.ifpa.ie

access choice & advocacy



Introduction

2009 WAS A LANDMARK YEAR FOR THE IFPA'S WORK PROMOTING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS. THE ORGANISATION CELEBRATED ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY AND A HISTORIC REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS CASE WAS HEARD AT THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN STRASBOURG.

At the prime age of 40, the Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA) is in robust health. In 2009 we provided support to almost 5,000 clients through our crisis pregnancy services. Our medical services served almost 25,000 women and men at our two clinics in Dublin. Some over 1,800 young people received sex education through our dance4life hip hop and sexual health programme and 148 doctors and nurses were trained in family planning by our medical team.

Today the right to enjoy sexual relationships, free from the fear of unwanted pregnancy, is taken for granted by many Irish men and women, yet when the IFPA was formed in 1969, contraception was banned and Irish women had little control over the number and spacing of their children. The IFPA, or the Fertility Guidance Company Ltd as it was known then, sidestepped the law by providing contraception for free with clients making a "donation". This was a first for Ireland and the first of many firsts for the IFPA. In the intervening decades the IFPA has extended its remit to include providing services for a wide range of sexual health issues including pregnancy counselling, sexually transmitted infections, sexual health education, reproductive rights and policy development. All our work is informed by the real life experience of clients who attend our services.

Since 1969 steady strides have been made towards improving sexual health and choice in Ireland, but the agenda set out by the founders of the IFPA 40 years ago is far from complete. Access to sexual health services is difficult for many people, particularly young people and women from lower socio-economic groups. Sex education in schools is still patchy and in some instances inappropriate. Rogue agencies are allowed to intimidate women experiencing unplanned pregnancies and women face a life sentence in prison for terminating a pregnancy in Ireland.

In 2009 an estimated 3,000 medical card clients who actively sought out IFPA services could not be accommodated in our clinics because of insufficient funding for family planning services from the Health Service Executive (HSE).

Placing restrictions on family planning services disempowers women and men, limits social and economic possibilities and denies women's right to health. At a time when the transformative social and health benefits of contraception are being wholeheartedly celebrated, Government policy to limit access to family planning services is indefensible.

2009 ended on a high note in December with the European Court of Human Rights hearing a landmark challenge to Ireland's restrictive laws on abortion. The three women taking the case were supported by the IFPA. The scrutiny of Ireland's restrictive abortion laws at this important human rights arena was a milestone for the furthering of women's reproductive rights in Ireland.

The IFPA hopes that this case will bring Ireland in line with its international human rights obligations and will move the abortion dialogue on by bringing the focus back to women's and girl's health and wellbeing.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the support and hard work of current and former staff, board members, funders, supporters and clients. We look forward to working with you all in 2010.

Niall Behan
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Anthea McTeirnan
IFPA CHAIRPERSON

About IFPA

THE 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 SERVICE.

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 a variety of groups including service providers, young people, parents and community groups.

With our track record in providing high-quality medical services, crisis pregnancy counselling and education, 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. The IFPA's mission is to enable people to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health and to understand their rights.

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

In 2009 the IFPA provided 24,754 sexual and reproductive health consultations at our clinics at The Square, Tallaght and Cathal Brugha Street, Dublin 1.

The roll out of the national cervical screening programme, CervicalCheck, continued apace in 2009. As a registered cervical screening service the IFPA played a key role in the programme delivery with 4,508 women screened for cervical cancer at IFPA clinics in 2009.

A dramatic increase in demand for cervical screening was experienced by both clinics in February, March and April, with close to 700 tests carried out in April, almost double the monthly average. Demand was such that a queue of women seeking appointments for cervical screening formed one Monday morning in February at the IFPA's clinic in Cathal Brugha Street.

This surge in demand for cervical screening seems to have been prompted by the awareness raised by the IFPA's European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week in January and the start of CervicalCheck's advertising campaign, combined with the massive media coverage of reality TV star Jade Goody's battle with cervical cancer.

In September CervicalCheck moved to a call and re-call system of invitation based on a registry of eligible women in Ireland. The number of women presenting for cervical screening dropped significantly for four months after the introduction of the new system because there was no over-lap between the self-registration and the call and re-call systems.

The IFPA made a number of submissions to CervicalCheck regarding this new system and requested fast-track appointments for women from disadvantaged backgrounds. Shortly after CervicalCheck decided to process opportunistic cervical screens from women at high risk of failing to register for the programme, however it decided not to pay clinics and doctors for this service. In 2009 demand for services among medical card clients continued to grow, however Government funding for these services was reduced by 2.3%.

Insufficient funding forced the IFPA to ration the delivery of family planning services to medical card holders again in 2009. Clients experienced delays of up to six weeks for contraceptive consultations and clients seeking long-term contraceptive devices (such as the coil and Implanon) faced delays of anything between one to three months for initiation of contraceptive devices.

Lack of HSE funding resulted in IFPA clinics being unable to accommodate an estimated 3,000 medical card clients who sought out our services. Clients who could not be accommodated were referred back to their GP. This is an entirely unsatisfactory situation, given that clients were referred to the IFPA by their GP or sought to use IFPA services because their GP won't or can't provide a comprehensive family planning service. This makes a nonsense of the current Department of Health policy on choice of service provider in family planning.

There is a clear disconnect between State policy to promote contraceptive use and what is happening on the ground. Failure to provide sufficient funding for family planning services represents a massive missed opportunity. Public expenditure on family planning care not only helps women avoid unwanted pregnancies, but, as a powerful cost-effective intervention to improve public health, it also saves public money. The total cost for delivery of one of the most popular long-term contraceptive devices, the mirena coil, which provides 5 years contraception, is only €330 compared to the high social and economic costs associated with unplanned pregnancy.

Meanwhile, demand for the IFPA's dedicated emergency contraception clinic on Sundays continued with 1,141 women availing of the service.

OTHER MEDICAL SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

- ➔ 514 women received post-abortion medical check-ups in 2009
 - ➔ 148 doctors and nurses participated in the IFPA's bi-annual post-graduate education programmes
 - ➔ 1,485 STI screens were carried out
-

“Now that Ireland has a cervical screening programme in place we are in a position to drastically reduce levels of cervical cancer through early detection of abnormal cells.”

DR CAITRIONA HENCHION, IFPA MEDICAL DIRECTOR

IFPA Vasectomy Survey

The IFPA carried out the first vasectomy in Ireland in 1973 at a time when other forms of contraception were banned in Ireland offering Irish couples permanent methods of avoiding unwanted pregnancies. Since then the IFPA has carried out over 10,000 vasectomies.

Today vasectomy is regarded as a safe, convenient and effective permanent method of contraception, which is popular among men who are sure that they and their partners do not want any or any more children.

Vasectomy involves far less risk than those associated with female sterilisation (tubal ligation). In addition the one-time cost of vasectomy (€500 total cost) compares very favourably with the outlay involved in other modern forms of contraception. Yearly costs for use of the contraceptive pill ranges between €160 and €244 and use of the Mirena Coil costs €66 yearly.

A survey of a selection of vasectomies carried out in IFPA clinics over the last 18 years paints an interesting picture of the profile and motivations of men who have had the procedure. In this period over 3,000 vasectomies were carried out by the IFPA.

The most striking finding of the survey of 328 clients is that the profile of vasectomy clients has changed very little in the last 18 years. The average age of vasectomy clients in 1990/1991 was 36, in 1998/1999 it was 38 and it was 39.6 in 2007/2008.

There has also been little change in the age of partner in this period, with the average age of partners at 34. Couples have been together for an average of 11.5 years before opting for vasectomy and have on average 2.8 children.

The same profile of client is opting for vasectomy in 2008 as in 1990 – couples in a stable relationship with two to three children who opt for vasectomy because their family is complete or they feel they can't cope with more children.

The number of single men opting for vasectomy has seen an upward trend, however, in this period. In the 1990/1991 period the clinic had no vasectomy clients who described themselves as single. By 1998/1999 2% of clients described themselves as single, increased to 8.6% in 2007/2008.

There were also changes in clients' experiences of unplanned pregnancy. From these figures it seems that unplanned pregnancy is not as strong a factor in recent years as it was in 1998/1999. In 1990/1991 54% of all previous pregnancies were described as unplanned. This figure dropped to 34% in 1998/1999 and to 6% in 2007/2008.

Another interesting trend is the range of contraception methods used before vasectomy. It is interesting to note that there has been a definite increase in the use of the pill, IUDs (intrauterine devices) and a decrease in dependence on condoms among couples who opt for vasectomy, reflecting the increased access to contraception and the availability of better quality IUDs, including the advent of the Mirena coil in the late 1990s.

Forms of contraception used before vasectomy show use of the pill steadily increasing. With 28.5% of clients indicating prior use of the pill in 1990/1991. This figure jumped to 56% in 1998/1999 and increased further to 62% in 2007/2008. This is likely to be due to increased access to contraceptive services.

Vasectomy is seen by many men as a way of removing the contraceptive burden from their partner when their family is complete. Vasectomy has become a very acceptable choice with the taboo about the subject broken by some brave men who spoke about their own experiences of vasectomy such as the recently deceased broadcaster Gerry Ryan.

Vasectomy is by far the most cost-effective method of contraception. For a single man aged 40, assuming fertility up to the age of 70, the yearly cost of a vasectomy works out at around €17 a year. For a couple, where the woman is aged 24 and assuming female fertility up to the age of 50, the yearly cost of vasectomy is €31.

CONTRACEPTION COST & FAILURE RATE

CONTRACEPTIVE METHOD	TOTAL COST	PEARL INDEX*
Vasectomy	€500 once-off	0.05%
Contraceptive Pill	€160- €244 a year	< 1% (perfect use)
Depo Provera	€260 a year	0.3-1%
*Implanon	€100 a year	0-0.5
*Copper Intrauterine Contraceptive Devices (IUCD)	€26- €52 a year	0.2-2%
*Intrauterine System (IUS)	€66 a year	0.2%
Tubal Ligation (female sterilisation)	€1,500 once-off	0.2-0.3%

*Assumes use for full term *No of pregnancies per 100 women years

CLIENT PROFILE

CLIENT	1990 / 1991	1998 / 1999	2007 / 2008
Average Male Age	36.14	38.05	39.66
Average Female Age	33.95	34.93	34.04
Average Years Together	10.98	11.53	11.95
Average number of Children	3.07	2.81	2.65
Male only – No Partner	0.00%	2.00%	8.40%

CONTRACEPTION USE PRIOR TO VASECTOMY

CONTRACEPTIVE	1990 / 1991	1998 / 1999	2007 / 2008
Condom	52.30%	65.00%	38.60%
Contraceptive Pill	28.50%	56.10%	62.20%
IUD	7.14%	5.00%	32.08%
DepoProvera (Injection)	9.50%	1.60%	2.80%
Cap	4.70%	3.80%	0.90%
Natural	2.30%	5.00%	3.70%
Abstain	4.70%	7.20%	6.60%

Counselling Services

The year 2009 was another important year for the IFPA's counselling services with comprehensive counselling services offered to clients in our 11 counselling centres nationwide.

Last year the IFPA provided counselling services to 1,080 clients offering non-judgmental pregnancy counselling and information on abortion, adoption and parenting.

In addition, the IFPA's National pregnancy helpline (1850 49 50 51) provided advice and information to 3,790 callers.

In 2009 an area of increasing concern for the IFPA was the difficulty experienced by women with travel restrictions in accessing safe and legal abortion services abroad – this includes women seeking asylum, migrant workers and other migrant women facing travel restrictions.

Women with travel restrictions who choose to terminate a pregnancy must apply for a visa from the country to which they will be travelling and a re-entry visa from the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform. The process of applying for these travel documents is complex, expensive and can take several weeks. In addition to these bureaucratic hurdles there is the cost of flights, accommodation and the termination procedure itself. Women who wish to terminate a pregnancy and are unable to borrow or raise the necessary funds will be forced to parent against their will or may resort to illegal methods to terminate their pregnancies in Ireland.

Rogue crisis pregnancy agencies continue to operate unchecked in Ireland causing considerable distress to women who unwittingly attend their services. The sole purpose of these organisations is to prevent women from having abortions. In many instances, they misinform and intimidate women to achieve their aim.

In 2009, 18 women attended the IFPA for counselling after a negative experience at the hands of rogue agencies. The IFPA is certain that these figures represent just the tip of the iceberg. Women described being harassed, bullied, and being given blatantly false information. The IFPA urges the Government to bring forward statutory regulation for all pregnancy advice services prescribing minimum codes of practice and standards.

KEY SERVICES

- ➔ The IFPA now provides crisis pregnancy counselling at 11 centres nationwide: Cork, Tallaght, Dublin city centre, Dundalk, Galway, Gorey, Letterkenny, Limerick, Monaghan, Sligo and Waterford.
 - ➔ The IFPA's counselling service is free and operated by professional accredited counsellors.
 - ➔ The IFPA also offers follow up post-abortion support, if necessary.
-

The IFPA's counselling service provides a safe and confidential space for anyone to explore their feelings about their pregnancy and to discuss their options – abortion, parenting and adoption. IFPA's counselling service is non-directive. This means that IFPA counsellors offer non-judgemental counselling and assistance and support a woman's own choice in all cases. If required IFPA counsellors will provide clients with accurate, honest and clear information on how to access abortion services overseas, as well as information on parenting and adoption.

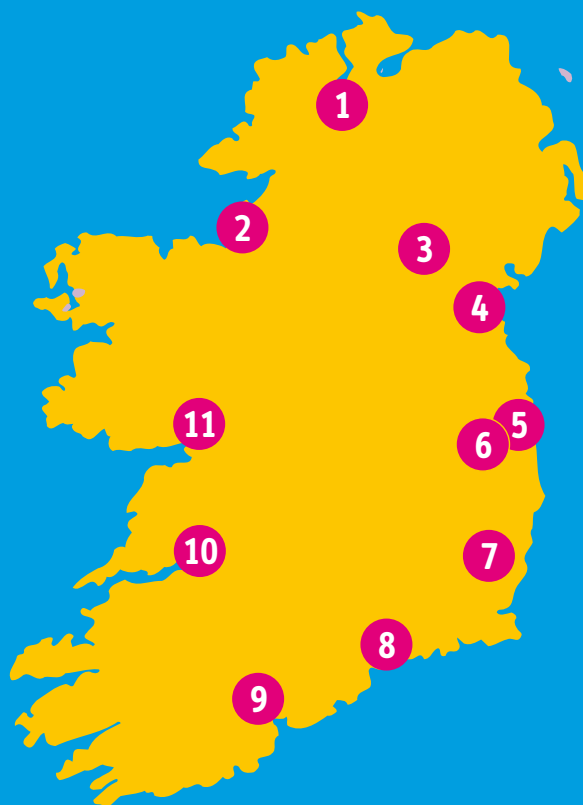


“Clients attending for counselling with the IFPA continually express anger and frustration that they have to travel outside of the jurisdiction for a service they feel should be available to them at home.”

EVELYN GERAGHTY, IFPA DIRECTOR OF COUNSELLING

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

The IFPA promotes the right of all people to accurate and relevant information about reproductive health. Key to this mission is providing training and education about sexual and reproductive health.

2009 saw significant development and expansion of the IFPA's Training and Education Department. At the heart of all the training programmes offered by the IFPA is clear, honest and straightforward information about sexual and reproductive health and rights. We aim to provide everyone who participates in our programmes with the knowledge and tools to keep themselves and those they care about sexually healthy.

Now in its second year, the IFPA's popular Speakeasy programme went from strength to strength in 2009. The eight-week programme provides parents and other caregivers with the information, skills and confidence to talk to children about relationships, sexuality and growing up.

In 2009 the Speakeasy programme was delivered to 52 participants from six different community groups including Clondalkin Partnership, Dóchas, Cumas and Southside Traveller Action Group.

Evaluation of the programme indicates that parents have increased confidence in talking to their child about sex and relationships, in particular in the area of puberty, contraception and sexually transmitted infections. Parents also reported enhanced awareness of opportunities when the issue of relationships and sexuality can be raised.

Responding to numerous requests to provide training to support workers, parents and people with intellectual disabilities, the department has developed a new Speakeasy programme to deal with some of the emotional issues associated with sexuality and development faced by young people with intellectual disabilities and their parents and carers.

In 2009 the department delivered skills4life workshops to 192 young people in schools and community groups as part of the IFPA's dance4life programme. This training gives participants the knowledge to protect themselves against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections; it also focuses on development issues and seeks to give young people the tools to share the knowledge they have gained with their peers.

In addition, the department's general relationships, sexuality and HIV/STI prevention training programme was delivered to four different organisations.

In 2009 the Training & Education Department received funding from COSC (The National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence) to develop resources to promote the awareness of violence within the community. A poster and leaflet were produced and distributed to all IFPA services along with a briefing pack.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- ➔ Sexual health workshops for young men seeking asylum.
 - ➔ Sexual health training for members of the Traveller community.
 - ➔ Sexual health sessions for LGBT men and women in collaboration with USI in Belfast.
-

Speakeasy is an eight-week course designed to provide parents with the information, skills and confidence needed to talk to their children about relationships and sexuality.

Topics covered include:

- ➔ Puberty and reproduction
- ➔ Influences on sexuality from inside and outside the home
- ➔ Relationships and sexuality education in school
- ➔ How to answer your child's questions
- ➔ Sexually transmitted infections
- ➔ Contraception
- ➔ Keeping children safe from harm

“Speakeasy’s guided discussion helped me be more clear, confident, fluent and aware of questions relating to sex, sexual health, and even my own values concerning these issues. I now notice opportunities for discussing this information with my daughter and feel more confident about what is appropriate and when. My daughter has noticed this new confidence in me and has approached me with her questions far more frequently and openly than she had before.”

BREANNA COYLE, A RECENT SPEAKEASY PARTICIPANT FROM DUBLIN



International Advocacy

In 2009 the IFPA had significant success in its mission to increase awareness of the importance of sexual and reproductive health at an international level.

In March the IFPA organised a study tour for three Irish politicians and two journalists to Bolivia to learn about the sexual and reproductive health and rights needs of vulnerable young people and the innovative service delivery mechanisms developed to meet these needs (see Key Events for more).

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.

A highlight of the All Party Group's programme in 2009 was the visit of Chadian obstetrician Dr Grace Kodindo to the Houses of Oireachtas to meet with members to discuss how to tackle maternal mortality in Chad and other developing countries (see Key Events for more). In December Deputy Ciarán Cuffe attended Copenhagen Climate Change Conference as a representative of the All Party Group.

Throughout the year parliamentarians were also briefed on emerging topics such as female genital mutilation, ICPD + 15, the new UN gender entity, UN Commission on population and development, UN Commission on the Status of Women, reproductive health supplies in emergency situations and the UN Human Rights Commission resolution on maternal mortality. 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), 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 2009 State of World Population Report (see Key Events for more). Also in 2009, as a collaborator in the Countdown 2015 project, the IFPA produced a fact sheet on Ireland's track record on policies and funding for reproductive health supplies.

At home the IFPA is an active member of Dóchas, the Irish Association of non-governmental development organisations, and in 2009 we worked with Dóchas members to advocate for accelerated progress on international commitments to gender equality issues as well as participating in the We Don't Care Less campaign.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:

- ➔ Chair of the Irish All Party Group Senator Fiona O'Malley participated in a study tour to Zambia to learn about the unmet need for reproductive health supplies.
 - ➔ IFPA Board member participated in a study tour to Uganda organised by the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development.
 - ➔ IFPA representative attended the EuroNGOS AGM and annual conference in Latvia. Financing in Times of Crisis was the theme of the conference.
-

“On the study tour to Bolivia we had an opportunity to see at first hand the very real benefits of targeted and innovative health interventions in a very low resource setting.

We could see how very simple and inexpensive interventions helped young people avoid unwanted pregnancy, prevent the transmission of HIV and address underlying issues of gender based violence.”

SENATOR FIONA O'MALLEY, PARTICIPANT IN IFPA STUDY TOUR TO BOLIVIA



Bolivia: Irish Delegation is briefed on youth outreach programme during study tour to Bolivia



Dr Mary Henry and Dr Grace Kodindo at the Oireachtas



SWOP Launch: UNFPA Director for Human Resources Sean Hand & IFPA Chairperson Anthea McTeirnan

Youth Initiatives

The IFPA promotes the right of all young people, to sexuality education, information and dedicated, confidential and affordable sexual healthcare service. The IFPA also promotes the right of all 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. In 2009 the reach and impact of the IFPA's dance4life programme expanded significantly. The HIV and sexual health awareness programme was delivered to a total of 1,350 young people at 21 youth groups and schools across Ireland.

This international programme uses dance, music, film and workshops to engage young people in the global issue of HIV/AIDS and their own sexual health. It is offered to schools and youth organisations for free by the IFPA.

A particular emphasis on targeting marginalised groups in 2009 saw the programme being delivered to early school leavers, students in community schools in deprived areas, young people with intellectual disabilities, young people seeking asylum and students from Youthreach. In 2009 the programme was also delivered to third-level students for the first time at Blanchardstown Institute of Technology.

A further 470 young people were reached at a hip hop and HIV/AIDS awareness event held to mark World AIDS Day on December 1st (see Key Events for more).

The year 2009 also saw the establishment of ASK (Advocates for Sexual Knowledge) the IFPA's youth-led advocacy group. The group's mission 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.

Strong links between the IFPA and the Union of Students Ireland (USI) continued in 2009 with IFPA participation in SHAG (Sexual Health Awareness & Guidance) week and IFPA representation at college debates countrywide.

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS:

- ➔ IFPA youth representatives attended sexual and reproductive health and rights training with YouAct and International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).
 - ➔ IFPA Training & Education participated in a youth-led sexual health film project at The Base Youth Centre in Ballyfermot, Dublin 10.
 - ➔ dance4life programme was the feature of a documentary made by final year media students in NUI Maynooth.
 - ➔ IFPA attended World Health Organisation conference on Adolescent Health
-



dance4life participants, World Aids Day event

“This dance4life programme is a very effective way of educating young people about their sexual health. It works because it uses the language teenagers today speak – music. Never before have I heard students say so readily that ‘the workshop was great’. This is because it was so relevant to their present lives and was presented in a format that they love.”

ANNE MALONE, TEACHER AT NENAGH, CO TIPPERARY

Majira Project

In 2009 the IFPA initiated a ground-breaking project aimed at improving the sexual and reproductive health of asylum seekers and refugees living in Ireland.

Women seeking asylum in Ireland regularly attend IFPA services and often report difficulties in accessing appropriate, confidential and sensitive sexual and reproductive health services. Barriers experienced by women seeking asylum include communication difficulties, discrimination, gender-based violence, cultural differences and personal autonomy restrictions.

In response, the IFPA teamed up with AkiDWA (the national network of African and migrant women living in Ireland) in 2009 to develop a project that would inform women seeking asylum and refugees of the available sexual and reproductive services, empower women to exercise their rights to these services and raise awareness among service providers of the barriers experienced by women seeking asylum.

With financial support from the European Refugee Fund, the project focussed on four major areas: peer education training, facilitated access to specialist sexual and reproductive health clinics, a consultative forum and the development of a good practice guide for the delivery of sexual and reproductive health services for women seeking asylum.

Sexual and reproductive health peer education training was delivered over 10 weeks to 29 women seeking asylum. Graduation events for participants were held in Dublin and Limerick attended by politicians and representatives of partner organisations.

Fifty one women seeking asylum in Ireland attended specialist sexual and reproductive health clinics for health checks.

In addition a consultative forum met on three occasions to identify and respond to sexual and reproductive health issues for women seeking asylum and refugees. Four Majira graduates participated in the forum.

Throughout its lifespan the project engaged 15 other partners from Government departments and state agencies to NGOs, for-profit organisations and advocates. Most of these organisations have responsibility for providing services to asylum seekers and refugees.

The Majira project found that the sexual and reproductive health services of this group is particularly poor in Ireland. Awareness of services, appropriateness of referrals and education about sex and reproductive health were identified as particular barriers.

Combining information sessions with 'drop in' sexual and reproductive health clinics was found to greatly increase service take-up among women seeking asylum.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- ➔ Publication of 8,000 leaflets detailing women's health services available for all women living in Ireland.
 - ➔ Four three-hour sexual and reproductive health information sessions were held in reception centres around the country.
 - ➔ Work commenced on the production of a good practice handbook for people working with female asylum seekers in Ireland.
 - ➔ Last year the IFPA continued to work with the National FGM Steering Committee to progress the actions of the FGM Plan of Action developed by the IFPA in 2008. A key activity for this group in 2009 was a presentation on FGM to the Oireachtas Health Committee.
-



Majira Participants attend Reproductive Justice Conference in Dublin

“I will discuss and pass on the information to both far and near, especially those who have no access to such information to be able to take good care of their health and also to say no to any STI by applying the necessary precaution measures.”

MAJIRA PARTICIPANT, LIMERICK



Majira Participants Group Meeting, Dublin



Majira class representative Tabi Rose Esemé at Majira graduation, Mansion House, Dublin



Majira Graduation Dublin, Senator Fiona O'Malley, Lord Mayor of Dublin Cllr Emer Costello, Majira Programme Officer, IFPA CEO Niall Behan and Majira class representative Tabi Rose Esemé

Communications, Campaigns & Publications

In 2009 IFPA campaigns, communication work and publications brought positive messages about sexual and reproductive health and rights to a very wide audience.

The year got off to a busy start with European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week in January. The IFPA spearheaded this awareness week and launched the campaign in the Mansion House with the assistance of the Lord Mayor of Dublin Cllr Eibhlin Byrne and Fair City actress Una Kavanagh.

There was significant coverage in the broadcast and print media with strong messages about the importance of attending for regular smear testing. 10,000 pearl of wisdom badges, the international emblem of cervical cancer prevention, were distributed during the week.

Publication of the annual abortion statistics in the UK generated much media coverage in the national press and the IFPA was called upon to give its opinion as a provider of crisis pregnancy counselling services. The IFPA highlighted how Government cuts to family planning budgets would impact on unplanned pregnancy rates.

The IFPA teamed up with SpunOut.ie in the production of four YouTube films on the basics of sex and sexual health. Topics covered include how to put on a condom, sexual health screening and contraception.

Towards the end of the year much of the IFPA's communications work centred on a challenge to Ireland's abortion laws at the European Court of Human Rights taken by three women living in Ireland. There was enormous national and international media interest in the case and the IFPA was called upon to provide briefings to journalists from all of Ireland's main media outlets, as well as journalists and broadcasters from the UK, France, Germany, USA, Netherlands, Poland and Belgium. In addition, the hearing was covered by media outlets right across the globe including Japan, Australia, Fiji, Canada and Malta.

Throughout the year the IFPA also participated in a range of media activities in national and regional newspapers on topics including STIs, sex education, cervical cancer, crisis pregnancy counselling agencies, contraception, abortion, age of consent and maternal mortality. In addition IFPA representatives participated in TV and radio interviews and debates including RTE's Drivetime, Today with Pat Kenny, Gerry Ryan Show and The Afternoon 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. This means that the IFPA is committed to publishing images and messages which avoid stereotypes or sensationalism and maintain full respect for human dignity.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- ➔ Launch of IFPA electronic newsletter bringing the latest news and events regarding sexual and reproductive health to supporters, colleagues and health care workers on a quarterly basis.
- ➔ 55,000 Talk Contraception booklets were distributed to IFPA clinics, student unions, student health centres, family planning clinics and GPs as part of World Contraception Day.
- ➔ IFPA launch ECCA's HPV Vaccination Across Europe Report in April. The report raises concerns about clinic-based vaccination provision.
- ➔ IFPA motion on the right to safe and legal abortion in Ireland passed at National Women's Council of Ireland AGM.
- ➔ IFPA hosted the launch of Ann Rossiter's book *Ireland's Hidden Diaspora – The Abortion Trail and the making of a London-Irish Underground 1980-2000*.

“The IFPA believes that women and girls do not give up their human rights when they become pregnant nor should the State take these human rights away with impunity.”

NIALL BEHAN, CEO IFPA, IRISH EXAMINER, DECEMBER 9, 2009



IFPA's Grace Wilentz, actress Úna Kavanagh, IFPA Medical Director Dr Caitriona Henchion and Lord Mayor of Dublin Cllr Eibhlín Byrne at the launch of European Cervical Cancer Awareness Week

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 and training and policy development over the last 40 years. The organisation is regularly called upon to give its expert opinion and presentations on diverse issues.

In 2009 the IFPA made a presentation to the Law Reform Commission on young people's access to contraception. The IFPA recommended legal recognition of the evolving capacity of young people to make informed decisions regarding their healthy development. It also called for statutory protection from prosecution for health care providers who provide advice or treatment to under 16s where they do so to protect the interests of the young person. Decriminalisation of consensual sexual activity between under 17s and incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Child into domestic law was also recommended.

IFPA recommendations featured prominently in the subsequent Law Reform Commission's Consultation Paper *Children and the Law: Medical Treatment* which was published in December.

The IFPA produced a submission to the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform in advance of Ireland's combined 6th & 7th progress report under the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The submission highlighted the Government's failure to prepare the State's report in accordance with Convention requirements, the lack of any policy progress in relation to women's sexual and reproductive health and the Government's continued disregard for Committee recommendations to ensure women have to safe and legal abortion services.

In 2009 the IFPA also contributed to the Women's Human Rights Alliance's development of a shadow report for the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Throughout the year the IFPA provided 80 policy briefings to students, researchers and organisations on a range of topics relating to sexual and reproductive health.

OTHER KEY ACTIVITIES:

- ➔ Participation in CervicalCheck consultative process regarding opportunistic Screening and rapid consultation. The IFPA strongly recommended the return to the system where health care professionals can register clients.
- ➔ Presentation on sexual violence and sexual health at Trinity College Dublin's Rape Awareness Week.
- ➔ Presentation on using UN conventions to advocate for sexual rights and gender equality at Banulacht and NWCI International Women's Day Conference.
- ➔ Position Paper on over-the-counter status of emergency contraception.
- ➔ Production of paper on the Regulation of the Information Act and paper on Abortion and Human Rights in Ireland by visiting scholar Mercedes Cavallo from the University of Toronto's Sexual and Reproduction Helath Law Programme.

The absence of an appropriate legal framework, guidelines and public health policy creates unnecessary and artificial obstacles to Irish adolescents’ healthy sexual development resulting in inconsistent delivery of services, inadequate legal protections for doctors and low uptake of sexual and reproductive health services, ultimately contributing to poorer health outcomes for young people.

.....
**IFPA SUBMISSION TO THE LAW REFORM COMMISSION ON
YOUNG PEOPLE’S ACCESS TO CONTRACEPTIVE SERVICES**
.....

Key Events

European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week

In 2009 the IFPA partnered with CervicalCheck, the National Cervical Screening Programme, to promote the Pearl of Wisdom as the international emblem of cervical cancer prevention during European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week.

10,000 Pearl of Wisdom badges were distributed by the IFPA in January as part of European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week to 43 different organisations.

Because the national screening programme had commenced its work in September 2008 the theme of this year's ECCPW was to raise awareness among women about the importance of attending for cervical cancer screening.

A media campaign secured good coverage in the broadcast and print media and all Irish female politicians were sent two pearls of wisdom badges along with a fact sheet about cervical cancer. The IFPA also attended the ECCPW summit meeting in Brussels during the week.

Study Tour to Bolivia

In March the IFPA organised a study tour for three Irish politicians and two journalists to Bolivia in March 2009 to learn about the sexual and reproductive health and rights needs of vulnerable young people.

The Irish group was hosted by Centro de Investigacion, Educacion y Servicios (CIES), which runs an innovative outreach programme for street youth and other marginalised young people in Bolivia. This programme was funded by the European Commission, but this funding expired in early 2009.

The delegation who travelled to Bolivia comprised Senator Fiona O'Malley, Senator Dominic Hannigan, Deputy John Deasy, Irish Examiner journalist Caroline O'Doherty, photographer Crispin Rodwell, and Niall Behan and Meghan Doherty from the IFPA. The study tour witnessed how central sexual and reproductive health is to health service delivery to young people, particularly vulnerable young people. Furthermore, the group concluded that the MGDs can not be achieved without proper attention to sexual and reproductive health and rights.



Fair City Actress Una Kavanagh with the Pearl of Wisdom at the launch of European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week



Irish Delegation meet representatives of CIES, IPPF and Bolivian parliamentarians

Maternal Mortality Briefings

Chadian obstetrician Grace Kodindo travelled to Ireland in May as a guest of the IFPA to attend a number of screenings of BBC Panorama documentary *Dead Mums Don't Cry*, which charts Dr Kodindo's efforts to lower the rate of maternal mortality in Chad.

On her visit to Ireland Dr Kodindo met with Oireachtas members of the Irish All Party Interest Group on Sexual and Reproductive Rights, Health, Population & Development to discuss how the international community is progressing in its goal to reduce the number of women dying during pregnancy and childbirth.

Nine parliamentarians, representing all political parties, attended the screening and discussion, including a former Minister of State for Overseas Development Aid, Deputy Tom Kit. Discussion after the screening centred around the need for more women at the political level to take on the issue of maternal mortality, addressing issues of unsafe abortion and the essential role of supplies in achieving MDG 5.

Dr Kodindo also met with members of Dóchas, the Women's Studies Department, Trinity College and members of the Joint Consortium on Gender Based Violence to discuss how to tackle maternal mortality in Chad and other developing countries.

IFPA Conferences

Founder member of US women's movement SisterSong Loretta Ross was the key note speaker at a reproductive justice conference in October. Co-hosted by the IFPA and UCD's Women's Studies Centre, the conference explored the issues of reproductive health and social justice.

The conference was chaired by Director of UCD's Women's Studies Centre Katherine O'Donnell. Other panellists included Director of the National Women's Council of Ireland Susan McKay; Senator Ivana Bacik; disability rights activist Rosaleen McDonagh; Lash Back's Aoife Dermody and Catherine Conlon from UCD.

In November, the IFPA teamed up with NUI Galway's Irish Centre for Human Rights to host a conference on the legal and human rights context of abortion. Irish and global academics and lawyers explored Irish and global perspectives on the issue of abortion.

Speaking at the event were Joanna Erdman, International Reproductive and Sexual Health Law Programme, University of Toronto; Christina Zampas, Senior Regional Adviser and Legal Adviser for Europe Centre for Reproductive Rights; Aminata Toure, Chief on Gender, Culture and Human Rights, UNFPA; Eileen Fegan, law lecturer at Queen's University Belfast and Natalie McDonnell, legal consultant, Irish Family Planning Association and law lecturer at Trinity College Dublin.



Dr Grace Kodindo and Senator Fiona O'Malley address the All Party Interest Group on Sexual and Reproductive Rights, Health, Population and Development at the Houses of the Oireachtas.



SisterSong National Coordinator Loretta Ross; Senator Ivana Bacik; Director of UCD Women's Studies Centre Katherine O'Donnell; Director NWCI Susan McKay and CEO IFPA Niall Behan.

IFPA Celebrates 40 Years

The IFPA celebrated its 40th anniversary in style at the Pillar Room in the Rotunda Hospital in Dublin at the end of November. IFPA supporters, board members and staff from the past and present gathered to celebrate the event. John Gormley, Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government and leader of the Green Party, officiated at the event. IFPA Chairperson Anthea McTeirnan described how the founding members – doctors, gynaecologists, teachers and social workers – came together in an attempt to counter the suffering caused by the State’s blanket ban on contraception.

IFPA Chief Executive Niall Behan described how the agenda laid down by the organisation’s founders was not yet complete and highlighted key issues such as affordability of contraception, access to sexual health services, sex education and the criminalisation of abortion in Ireland.

Founding member Jim Loughran was in attendance and the IFPA’s dance4life team performed a segment of the programme’s hip hop dance routine, which is used to engage young people in the issue of HIV and sexual health.

World Aids Day Event

The IFPA helped almost 500 young people to mark World AIDS Day at a hip hop and sexual health event in Ballyfermot on December 1st.

The IFPA joined forces with The Base Youth Centre, Ballyfermot to deliver the dance4life HIV/AIDS and sex education programme to 470 young people from schools and youth organisation in the west Dublin area. Youth organisations which participated in the event included Youthreach, Kylemore Training Centre, Cherry Orchard Equine Training Centre, National Learning Centre, Caritas Secondary school, Kylemore community school and St Dominick’s secondary school.

The dance4life programme uses dance, music, film and workshops to help young people engage in the issue of HIV/AIDS and their own sexual health.

State of the World Population Report

As collaborating partner of the United Nation’s Population Fund in Ireland, the IFPA co-ordinated the Irish launch of the organisation’s State of the World Population Report in October. This year’s report was entitled ‘Facing a Changing World: Women, Population & Climate Change’ and it illustrated how the battle against climate change is more likely to be successful if policies take into account the needs, rights and potential of women. It also highlighted how poor women in poor countries are among the hardest hit by climate change.

Sean Hand from UNFPA headquarters in New York presented the report and Minister of State for Overseas Development Peter Power officiated at the event, which was attended by ambassadors, politicians and development NGOs.



Rosemary Jordan and founding member Jim Loughran



State of the World Population Report LAUNCH: IFPA CEO Niall Behan, Minister of State for Overseas Development Peter Power, UNFPA’s Sean Hand & IFPA Chairperson Anthea McTeirnan

ABC v Ireland

In December the European Court of Human Rights heard a landmark challenge to Ireland's restrictive abortion laws. Three women, supported by the IFPA, argued that the criminalisation of abortion services in Ireland jeopardised their health and wellbeing.

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.

All three women travelled abroad for abortion services. They argued that Ireland's abortion laws contravened their human rights under Articles 2 (Right to Life), 3 (Prohibition of Torture), 8 (Right to Respect for Family and Private Life) and 14 (Prohibition of Discrimination) of the European Convention on Human Rights. The IFPA hopes that the case will bring Ireland in line with its international human rights obligations and that the Court will establish a minimum degree of protection to which a women seeking an abortion to protect her health and well-being would be entitled.

The experiences of the women, known as A, B and C, are illustrative of the reality faced by thousands of women in Ireland. Since 1980, at least 138,000 women have been forced to travel abroad to access safe abortion services, enduring unnecessary and unjustifiable physical, emotional and financial hardship.

The hearing was a landmark day for reproductive rights in Ireland and highlighted in an international forum the Irish Government's unwillingness to address the reality of women's and girl's lives and health in Irish law and policy.

The experiences outlined by A, B and C are illustrative of the reality faced by thousands of women in Ireland who must travel abroad to access safe and legal abortion services.

Through our services the IFPA knows that the criminalisation of abortion in Ireland has little impact on abortion rates. It does however significantly add to the burden and stress she experiences during a crisis pregnancy.



IFPA dance4life team on World Aids Day



Senior Counsel for A, B & C Carmel Stewart, Lead Counsel for A,B,C Julie Kay, IFPA Director of Counselling and IFPA CEO Niall Behan. * Credit Paul O'Driscoll

Financial Report

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2009

CONTINUING OPERATIONS	2009	2008
	€	€
Income	2,747,453	2,812,753
Expenditure	(2,755,471)	(2,789,272)
(Deficit) / Surplus on ordinary activities before interest	(8,018)	23,481
Interest payable and similar charges	(18,299)	(28,509)
Deficit for the year	(26,317)	(5,028)

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 2009

.....

FIXED ASSETS	2009	2008
	€	€
Tangible assets	464,603	517,422
CURRENT ASSETS		
Stocks	39,506	28,774
Debtors	60,953	98,174
Cash at bank and in hand	153,940	184,962
	254,399	311,910
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(429,101)	(474,119)
Net current liabilities	(174,702)	(162,209)
Total assets less current liabilities	289,901	355,213
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(142,246)	(175,056)
Capital Grants	(48,819)	(55,004)
Net assets	98,836	125,153
RESERVES		
Revenue reserves account	98,836	125,153
	98,836	125,153

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

.....

Board of Directors

Maeve O’Sullivan **CHAIRPERSON** (January – November) / Anthea McTeirnan **CHAIRPERSON** (November – December) / Helen Cornelissen / Karen Ciesielski / Kelly Mackey (Appointed July) / Kevin Baneham / Linda Kelly (Appointed July) / Louise Tierney / Sonya Donnelly /

Staff

In 2009 the IFPA had a staff complement of 55 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 2009 THE HEADS OF OUR MAIN DEPARTMENTS WERE:

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Niall Behan

MEDICAL DIRECTOR: Caitriona Henchion

DIRECTOR OF COUNSELLING: Rosie Toner (January -November)

DIRECTOR OF COUNSELLING: Evelyn Geraghty (Appointed December)

FINANCIAL CONTROLLER: Ben Howe

CLINIC MANAGER, TALLAGHT: Annette Smith

CLINIC ADMINISTRATOR, CATHAL BRUGHA STREET: Deirdre Jones

Who We Work With

KEY PARTNERS:

AkiDwA / Catholics for Choice / Centro de Investigacion, Educacion y Servicios, Bolivia / Countdown 2015 / Dóchas / EuroNGOs / European Cervical Cancer Association / European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF) / International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) / Legal Momentum / Women’s Human Rights Alliance / Sexual Health Centre, Cork / St James’s GUIDE Clinic / United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) / Equality and Rights Alliance / dance4life International / Restless Development, UK / Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUI Galway / Women’s Studies, UCD School of Social Justice /

KEY FUNDERS:

Crisis Pregnancy Agency / Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform / Health Service Executive / Irish Aid / COSC / CervicalCheck / EU /



Irish Family Planning Association 60 Amiens Street, Dublin 1, Ireland
TEL 01 - 806 9444 FAX 01 - 806 9445 EMAIL post@ifpa.ie www.ifpa.ie



**CODE OF
CONDUCT ON
IMAGES &
MESSAGES**

