

**IPPF EN Annual Meeting of the
Regional Council and Regional Management
15-16 June 2019**

Conference Centre, Radisson Blu Hotel Olümpia
Tallinn, Estonia



REPORT

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Context of the 2019 Annual Meeting

The 2019 RC-RMM meeting was hosted by the Estonian MA¹ and conducted on Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 June at the Conference Centre of the Radisson Blu Hotel Olümpia in Tallinn, Estonia. 30 IPPF EN MAs were represented¹.

IPPF recently embarked on a journey of reform of the Federation's governance and resource allocation system. Under leadership of an executive committee and supported by two independent taskforces, in close collaboration with Member Associations, donors, partners and beneficiaries, preparatory work is being done to transform and revitalize the Federation. Therefore, this year's meeting had a focus on the **IPPF reforms**. The annual gathering was an excellent opportunity for volunteers and senior staff from our Member Associations (MAs), as well as the YSAFE steering committee to understand and support this process of reform and to provide their vision for the way forward. Steven Sinding, who heads the Independent Commission on Governance joined the meeting.

In addition to the IPPF reforms, a core topic of the meeting was **SRHR in the Digital Era**. A video talk from Rob Cover, Associate Professor at the University of Western Australia, about youth, gender and identity and how these are shaped by digital media provided an inspirational opening – and was followed by break-out sessions and a marketplace of MA good practices and tools.

In follow-up of a recommendation from last year, a paper compiling the different viewpoints on **Sex Work** within the European Network was presented and discussed.

Please note that this is a summary of the discussions that took place during the meeting from a more detailed content perspective. A record of the formal business of the Regional Council, including decisions taken in its capacity of IPPF RC and as the formal 'General Assembly' required under Belgian law, are recorded in the formal minutes of the meeting.

All presentations and resources are available on the drive:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1PKInuI8lVTOW21x6-ieP5ASbVdDb0v_L?usp=sharing

Annexes to this report:

- ANNEX 1 – List of participants
- ANNEX 2 – Summary of evaluations

¹ Apologies for absence were received from Marie-Dominique Pauti (France); Emina Osmanagic (BiH), Katerina Glosova (Slovak Republic), and Simon Herteleer (YSAFE). We also received apologies from Natika Halil, formal ED of the UK MA which ceased trading a couple of months ago.

SRHR in the DIGITAL ERA

Keynote Speech “Digital Media, Young People and Sexuality”

After the opening speeches, Rob Cover, Associate Professor at the University of Western Australia, joined the meeting virtually to talk about youth, gender and identity and how these are shaped by digital media. Following his [speech](#)², participants attended parallel group discussions to learn about opportunities and challenges that the digital era poses to their work and SRHR in general.

Group discussion “Using Digital Tools for Social and Political Mobilization”

Participants of the session expressed a clear need to get (new) tools and to share good practices for a better mobilization of local groups and populations. Two models were presented using digital tools for social/political mobilization that showed how – in the first case – digital tools can be used to mobilize and engage people and in the second case create awareness and sensitize the public:

All Out, a worldwide network that provides support and funding for action, calls out for people to get engaged during moments of crisis and opportunities. It mainly uses online tools (petitions, sign-ons ...), and constantly looks at creative strategies to address a problem, going from signing petitions to making single donations, participating in protests offline, doing flash mobs, becoming a supporter of the organization. Their calls include both online and offline engagement.

Their model is based upon:

- identifying moments of crisis or opportunity around LGBT rights. Not all problems can be addressed with this model, so some checking needs to be done before going into action;
- coming up with creative strategies to ring the alarm;
- getting thousands of people to engage with the issue by using mainstream media.

Their actions (mostly advocacy campaigns as the system works best for that) have supported e.g. grassroots empowerment campaigns such as by LGBT+ refugee people in Kenya; the first Indian LGBT+ campaign; emergency fundraising to help Russian partners.

For good results, analysis needs to be done in advance of the problem that arises, as their method isn't useful for all kind of interactions. A large network of supporters and contacts allows rapid action and support.

With **De Stemwijzer** Sensoa asked all Flemish political parties to answer questions related to LGBT, gender and SRHR, thus making them to take a stand about specific topics. All parties completed the survey. Prior to the elections, voters could check which party would best match with their own values and positions via an online test. The method used, helped to create political awareness, created quite some media attention and stimulated public debate, but also provided elements for future advocacy. The answers from the political parties will be driving the MA's local advocacy calendar for the next governing period. It showed that Flemish political parties have no ultra-conservative or anti-choice agenda on SRHR.

The discussion focused on how mobilization could be done better (e.g. to young people) and how the examples presented could be used more widely. Factors of success for mobilization are partnering with

² The link directs you to the truncated version (26 mins) which was screened at the meeting. A longer version is also available (38 mins): <https://vimeo.com/341912408>

local actors, capturing urgency, identifying opportunities. Digital media constantly change, so close follow up of new tools needs to be done to ensure the use of the most popular ones among the groups targeted.

Group discussion “Harnessing the Power of the Media to Combat Opposition and Drive a Progressive Agenda”

The sessions were facilitated by Claire Provost, the gender and sexuality editor of openDemocracy - a global independent media platform - and head of investigations for the Tracking the Backlash project. Tracking the Backlash is an ongoing special investigative project and network coordinated by openDemocracy.net that follows the money, strategies, alliances and impacts of the transnational backlash against SRHR. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/tagged/tracking-the-backlash/>

Claire demonstrated how investigative journalism, combined with compelling storytelling, has significant, untapped potential to expose and challenge these movements. There is a growing international network of reporters and editors committed to doing this work.

Through group exercises, participants explored what the role of investigative journalism could be in several scenarios linked to our work. The key takeaway was the understanding that working with investigative journalists differs from our normal media work. We use investigative journalism as part of our social change and opposition countering toolkit not our ‘organizational branding’ toolkit. In many cases, the work we do with these journalists will be behind the scenes, and our organisations will not be mentioned. However, as we are on the ‘frontline’, we will often be first to notice something that is happening, and we can be a valuable source of information for these journalists. In turn they can draw attention to the barriers that are being thrown up against SRHR and spark public outrage about reproductive coercion and the shady tactics of opposition.

We need to start by knowing who the relevant journalists are in our country and context. We can contact claire.provost@opendemocracy.net to get more information on journalists in network, but you should also get familiar through your own media and reach out to make connections directly.

Group discussion “Taking Virtual Communication to the Next Level”

The session was facilitated by Toby Scott, an expert on virtual communication. He stressed that virtual communication is about human behaviours rather than tools. To illustrate this, he took participants on a journey to explore different types of projects – which can be categorized this way:

- Paint By Numbers (PBN): know what to do + know how to do it
- Quest: know what to do but not how to do it
- Fog: don’t know how nor what
- Movie: don’t know what - but know how

He then explained that leading projects requires different degrees of intimacy and presence:

- PBN: coordinate, store info, keep records
- Quest: cooperate, test, monitor and learn
- Fog: collaborate, solve together, be creative

He concluded by saying that this is the starting point: be clear of what type of project we are in and then decide upon the tools needed to communicate, to be adapted to the identified needs. For instance, quest projects require intimacy/presence: get out of emails and find project management platforms like slack; presence and synchronicity are very important for Fog projects: virtual worlds with all time zones, a single office and participants with avatars – could be on mobile phone to allow collaboration in real time; but don't bother with Qube for a PBN project.

In the discussion with participants, it was clarified that even if technology has a cost, things evolve/improve, become more user friendly and accessible very quickly. In addition, one should also consider the cost - both financial and environmental - of bringing everyone together physically. Only for large FOG projects do you need an expensive virtual collaboration tool, with a dedicated facilitator who pro-actively runs the platform. As examples of what tools to choose, Toby suggested: for Quest projects, use slack or zoom (zoom for synchronous communication, slack for asynchronous one).

Group Discussion “The digital Age of Harassment”.

This session offered a diversity of speakers on the topic of digital harassment. An [introduction provided by Alexandra Ilieva and Maria Medvedchikove from UNESCO](#) demonstrated that cyberbullying is a major public health problem, with significant morbidities affecting the individuals involved (whether as bystanders, bullies and/or victims) and an important gender equality issue. Literacy is needed to empower young people because of serious under-reporting (62% don't know where to go when being bullied). Legal systems need to be in place to allow reporting.

Different measures are being implemented, addressing the issue from a preventive (awareness raising) or punitive (digital censorship, legal ...) point of view. A comprehensive approach is needed, looking at education, but also having zero tolerance. People need to be informed about privacy settings and the way to share information (and what to keep to yourself).

Even though online/offline bullying are somewhat connected, they need to be dealt with in a different way.

Preliminary data, as shown by Ton Coenen, of the [‘Halt’-intervention in the Netherlands](#) (MA Netherlands) show promising results in working on sexting with young people. The project provides interventions that keep young people out of the legal system while working with them to change behaviour, but also to create awareness, recognize risky situations and engage parents. Perpetrators react positively towards the intervention, especially as they are kept out of the legal system.

The [example of a personal blog](#), presented by Adriana Radu (MA Romania), with 75.000 followers addressing issues such as gender, money, education etc., shows the possibilities of such tools to reach large (young) audiences.

The last presentation by Kari Käsper from the Estonian Human Rights Centre highlighted some legal aspects connected to cyberbullying and harassment. The issue of online harassment should be looked at together with what we want the internet to look like: how much can we influence the design of the technology, that is created by big companies? Legislation will not be the solution for the problems faced but does offer a tool to protect people (even just by the fact of existing).

Group discussion “Sexuality education through digital media”

This very popular session was introduced with an [overview of the 2019 CSE survey](#), which identified that while 80% of MAs provide CSE information online, online issues in SRHR such as hate speech and cyberbullying are in themselves not well covered. Then, three speakers – one external speaker from [UNESCO](#), the [Swedish MA](#) president and a [French MA](#) young person – presented case studies on delivering CSE through digital media.

Channels of communication covered included websites, social media, chatbots and live chats, collaborations with influencers, online video content. Common positives included:

- The ability to meet young people where they are – online, in their own language – in a way that they can keep private from parents and peers
- Creating a bridge between young people and service providers, both by signposting (as in the [French youth group’s online platform](#) that maps youth-friendly services) and by providing accessible, multilingual healthcare information that providers and teachers can use as an entry point for communication with service users and students (as in the Swedish MA’s subtitled videos).

All three presenters emphasized that organizations must allocate serious resources to make and maintain quality, up-to-date online platforms.

There was limited time for questions and answers. Participants were most activated by the common thread of online censorship as a problem for SRHR platforms and CSE delivery. They raised the collective question as to whether IPPF EN MAs could come together to demand Facebook to protect their pages from repression as educational platforms.

Group Discussion on “The Data Journey/Abortion Legislation Update”

This session used the example of the IPPF EN ‘Abortion Legislation Update’³ to explore creativity and narrative power in presenting data. The main message was that the presentation of data is never neutral and can be optimized to tell a desired story. In pairs, participants completed exercises discussing different target audiences and the different data sources needed to present a narrative to them. Data cleaning was discussed, using fictionalized samples from the abortion legislation raw table to show how non-uniform collection makes the work harder to interpret. Finally, the participants discussed a variety of data visualization examples that were shown on screen, seeing how they could be applicable in different narrative contexts and how important it is to include only the information that tells the story you want to tell.

Participants asked a few thematic questions about the abortion legislation update, indicating that several of them had been expecting a session on the implications of that upcoming report itself. Some expressed scepticism about sharing data between MAs because individual context is so important, but

³ This is a publication providing an overview and comparing the abortion legislation in the different countries of the European Network region. An update of the [2012 edition](#) is planned to be published in 2019 – and draws on data provided by the MAs.

this was used to lead into a discussion on the added value of overall regional perspectives and what can be learned between the MAs who struggle with similar issues.

Market Place

During the coffee breaks, participants could learn more about digital tools and approaches of MAs. An overview of these is part of the annex (agenda) and a link to their presentations is [here](#).

IPPF REFORMS

In May 2019, the International Planned Parenthood Federation's Governing Council voted in favour of a radical and urgent reform. The reform will help to build an IPPF that is able to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. IPPF's Director General was tasked to launch two independent commissions. One devoted to governance reform, and another to examine the resource allocation model.

The commissioners will present their conclusions and recommendations at an extraordinary General Assembly of Member Associations. The Assembly will be held in India, the birthplace of IPPF in November 1952.

The Governance Commission is headed by Steven Sinding (a former IPPF DG 2002-2006) who attended this Regional Council.

Member Associations and secretariat staff will be consulted via an online questionnaire and an interactive [website](#) devoted to the reform process which became available after the meeting and will be built further over the next few weeks.

Further details about the reform process are outlined in a '[Roadmap to Reform](#)'

Plenary Session

The session aimed to provide a general overview of the background, context and future process of the IPPF current reforms. It was explained by the 3 EN GC representatives (Gabriel Bianchi, Alice Ackermann, Gunta Lazdane) that there were regional dynamics in the Federation's governance with specific interests having taken over the global vision - leading to the blocking of crucial reforms.

Steven Sinding, Chair of the Governance Commission recapped on the history of the 67 years old Federation still operating with structures that don't fit today's environment anymore: the accountability changed with new donors' expectations, creating a misalignment between accountability to the membership and to donors – and tensions between regions.

During the plenary discussion, it was stressed that the main donors of IPPF (mostly governments) see IPPF as an international organization. The [current governance structure and previous reforms](#) were presented stressing that implementation should also be a priority for any future reforms. The finance situation was discussed, as IPPF lost USD 9 million in 2018 following a period of finance mismanagement. It was also explained that the current resource allocation formula is no longer fit for purpose and hence needs to be revisited.

Through group discussions - participants brainstormed on a new way forward for IPPF while reflecting on what they consider to be IPPF's 'roses and thorns', their 'fears and hopes' related to IPPF's future and its reform. These are summarized [here](#) (last slides).

Additionally, the Executive Directors shared the thinking that had taken place at a meeting on the reforms they had convened the previous day, and which, subsequent to the meeting, they formulated in a [LETTER \(LINK\)](#)

At the end of the meeting, Steven Sinding addressed the audience expressing appreciation for the whole group to share their candid and frank views on the way forward for IPPF. He noted that he observed a lack of unanimity among the participants about what IPPF's main orientation should be (Federation vs Development Organisation) and indicated that the broad range of advice made him more confused than he already was – but promised to work hard to draft a concrete report that represents consensus of all MAs globally.

WHERE DO MAs STAND ON SEX WORK?

The [results of a survey](#) among MAs provided the basis of the [discussion paper](#) that was developed to gain better understanding of IPPF EN's viewpoints towards sex work and their experiences engaging with sex workers. The survey collected responses from 21 MAs and partners, which gave a good representation of the membership. It showed that there is strong support from MAs to allow IPPF EN to openly support decriminalization (71%). 40% offer services towards sex workers; many undertake advocacy which takes many forms, going from bringing cases to court, use media, developing position papers etc.

At the meeting, the MAs confirmed their strong support for an IPPF position and for one which asks for decriminalization in principle. They did however request more information, evidence, clarification of the different models (decriminalization, legalization, Nordic model) and their (legal) impact in particular: what would it mean for sex workers. There still seems some misunderstanding about the role of decriminalization and legalization of sex work. When drafting a position, sex workers' organizations should be consulted to clarify certain points such as their view on decriminalization and legalisation and the impact both have on sex workers, but also their opinion about the policies that could be adopted (nationally/internationally).

It was noted that sex workers do support decriminalization, as they want their health and human rights to be realized and do want policies that allow this. Some of the MAs who already have policies or are in a process of creating one/making linkages with local groups.

MAs welcomed a continuation of the discussion, without having a clear view on the exact process to be followed. Within that discussion, trafficking and forced sex work should be considered separately from sex work and the values of IPPF could be a good starting point.

MAs asked for ENRO to take the lead on this in consultation with MAs, considering the differences in local context. It was agreed that a position should come out as many other organizations and institutions are publishing their positions. In the absence of an official stand, IPPF should support sex worker networks.

ANNEX 1 – List of participants

COUNTRY	VOLUNTEER	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
1. Albania	Glen Guxho	Bruna Hylviu
2. Austria		Angela Tunkel
3. Belgium (Sensoa)	Alexis Dewaele	Dirk Pyck
4. Belgium (FLCPF)	Katinka Intzandt	
5. Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ena Mesihovic	
6. Cyprus	Marilena Kyriakou	Maria Epaminonda
7. Denmark	Marie Beha	Bjarne B Christensen
8. Estonia	Jonas Grauberg	Marko Gummert
9. Finland	Maria Kaisa Aula	Eija Koivuranta
10. France	Mathilde Chafreau	Sharlen Sezestre
11. Georgia	Ana Tomadze	Nino Tsuleiskiri
12. Germany	Dr. Gülhan Inci	Jutta Gueldenpfennig
13. Ireland	Natasha O'Brien	Niall Behan
14. Israel	Ruti Gilat	Sharon Cherkasky
15. Kazakhstan	Natalya Rakhalskaya	Galina Grebennikova
16. Kyrgyzstan	Uluk Batyrgaliev	Galina Chirkina
17. Latvia	Laura Isajeva	Rita Kubulina (not ED)
18. Lithuania	Asta Markeviciene	Esmeralda Kuliešytė
19. Macedonia	Katerina Spasovska	Bojan Jovanovski
20. Netherland	Lotte Dijkstra	Ton Coenen
21. Norway	Berit Austveg	Tor-Hugne Olsen
22. Portugal	Antonio Sousa	Rita Barros
23. Romania	Mihaela Madalina Matache	Carmen Suraianu
24. Serbia	Marija Jevtic	Dragana Stojanovic
25. Slovak Republic		
26. Spain		Filomena Ruggiero
27. Sweden	Hans Linde	Anna-Karin
28. Switzerland	Noemi Grutter	Barbara Berger
29. Tajikistan	Maksuda Muzofirzoda	Ravshan Tohirov
30. Ukraine	Hanna Kostenko	Galina Maistruk
YSAFE		
Louise Withalisson		
Maryna Honcharova		
Viktor Damjanovski		
Muna Shukorova		
REC		
Juella Skarra		
Petra Bayr		
Reinis Upenieks		
Gabriel Bianchi		
Johannes Rindal		
Alice Ackermann		
Daniela Draghici		
Esther Albarran		
Niki Georgiou		

Regional Office STAFF
Lena Luyckfasseel
Eef Wuyts
Caroline Hickson
Luisa Tantucci
Eimear Sparks
Anamaria Suciu
Catherine Bailey Gluckman
Drashko Kostovski
Koen Block
Helga Gibbons
Soizick Martin
Marieka Vandewiele
External Participants *4
Adriana Radu
Alexandra Ilieva (UNESCO)
Maria Medvedchikova (UNESCO)
Claire Provost (Open Democracy)
Yuri Guiana (All Out)
Ania Shapiro (Consultant)
Will Campbell (Consultant)
Steven Sinding (Commission Governance)
Snjezana Bokulic (IPPF CO)
Achile Togbeto* (IPPF CO)
Gunta Lazdane* (IPPF GC)
Rob Cover* (University of Western Australia)

⁴ Those who participated virtually are indicated with an Asterix *

ANNEX 2 – Summary of evaluations

Overall, respondents (56) rated the RC-RMM meeting highly: they were very positive about the opportunities to network and got inspired by the keynote lecture and workshops in break-out rooms.

- They particularly appreciated the update and insights on the crisis in IPPF and the possibility to discuss a new way forward.
- Some wanted more time for discussion and a less dense agenda.
- The marketplace, that was now organised during the coffee breaks to allow more discussion about the reforms, unfortunately did not work well.
- Also, the safeguarding training got very mixed reviews.

Some scores:

- agenda: ‘good’ (37.5%) to ‘excellent’(23.2%); 21.4% scored it ‘fair’ or ‘unsatisfactory’
- introduction to safeguarding: 48.9% respondents rated it between 8/10 and 10/10
- discussing SRHR in the Digital Era: score by 80% of respondents of $\geq 8/10$
- IPPF reforms: rating of $\geq 8/10$ by 62.4% of respondents; 25% scored it 6 or 7/10
- networking and learning from each other’s experiences: 89.3% scored it at 7/10 or more
- SRHR within a digital era: 80% rating it at 8/10 or higher
- Location: 91% scoring the location ≥ 8 ;
- Meeting arrangements: 91.1% gave it 8 or more
- Office support: 8 or higher by 96.4% of respondents

From what worked particularly well, people mainly highlighted:

- Networking, changing views and sharing experiences
- The workshops, as well as the keynote speech
- Talking about the crisis and the planned reforms gave insight to people and helped to better understand the situation
- The interventions on a digital era and the sex work discussion
- The meeting of EDs that was fruitful and helped feeling like a ‘federation’

Despite the high rating, some lessons can also be learned from this meeting. The main points raised here refer to the tight agenda, the need for more discussion time and the fact that the marketplace didn’t receive the attention it deserved by organizing it during the breaks. People would have liked to receive some documents earlier, such as the report on sex work, to allow better personal preparation and active participation to the session.

These meetings are often attended by people that are not that familiar with the organization. Therefore, the use of acronyms should be limited to a minimum to allow better understanding, but also better introduction of the people present before speaking.

The feedback provided will be discussed internally to allow us doing an even better job next year.