

**Abstract Summary:**

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) works to provide youth-friendly services to young people throughout the world. Of the 152 Member Associations (MA) within IPPF, 80% use peer education to increase adolescents' participation in family planning and reproductive health (FP/RH) service delivery. There is potential to increase a peer educator's impact through leadership training and repositioning young people as agents of change. In the Ghana MA, a peer coaching leadership program was implemented to build the capacity of young people in advocacy, community mobilization, and project initiation.

The peer coaching program has reached 160 youths within the Ghana MAs. Once the coachees have implemented their 6 month action plans, the results will be analyzed and distributed in March, 2016. Expected results of the program include finding improvement in the coachees' activities, like youth programmatic decision-making, resource allocation, and influencing FP/RH policy and services in their communities. Analysis of the program's benefit to the coaches and their ability to support their peer coachees will be reviewed as well. By building on the already existing peer educator group, we will build more impactful peer educators and FP/RH leaders in their communities.

**Presentation Title:** Creating a Society for New Leaders in Ghana: Experiences from a peer-coaching model

**Introduction and Objectives:** The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) works to provide youth-friendly services to young people throughout the world. Of the 152 Member Associations (MA) within IPPF, 80% use peer education to increase adolescents' participation in family planning and reproductive health (FP/RH) service delivery. IPPF utilizes the peer education approach to train peer educators to provide FP/RH information, services, and referrals to young people. Currently, IPPF's Youth Action Movement (YAM) - the youth component within IPPF - equips peer educators with FP/RH information. Members of YAM cited a need for training to develop their leadership skills. With such a strong, existing cohort of FP/RH peer educators, there is potential to increase their impact through leadership training. Applying the YAM peer-to-peer approach to FP/RH service delivery has proven successful over the past years, this new program could reposition young people as agents of change.

**Methods:** Peer coaching is a process that aims to develop the capacity and skills of a learner (coachee), with the support of a coach with similar status as the coachee. As part of the Leadership, Management & Governance (LMG) Project, IPPF created a youth leadership peer coaching program in the Ghana MA (and also the Kenya and Uganda MAs), to build the leadership capacity of young people. The program included two types of coachees: adolescents at the MA receiving education (for example: midwives or nurses), and incoming YAM members. Coachees are paired up and

coached by experienced YAM leaders below the age of 30 to develop leadership skills, including advocacy, community mobilization, and project initiation. The coaching process is through online communication, supplemented with regular face-to-face meetings. Coaches and Youth Program focal points of the MA will track the progress of each mentee and their utilization of leadership skills.

**Results and Conclusion:** The peer coaching program has reached 160 youths within the Ghana MAs. Once the coachees have implemented their 6 month action plans, the results will be analyzed and disseminated in March, 2016. Expected results of the program include finding improvement in the coachees' YAM activities, like youth programmatic decision-making, resource allocation, and influencing FP/RH policy and services in their communities. Analysis of the program's benefit to the coaches and their ability to support their peer coachees will be reviewed as well.

IPPF's large base of youth peer educators requested training in leadership to increase their skills and improve their ability to influence and inspire their communities and peers. Through the training of this existing group, they are expected to become more impactful peer educators and FP/RH leaders in their communities. This peer-to-peer learning model supports the capacity of the MAs to yield strong youth leaders in FP/RH, and can be scaled up to multiple MAs in different African countries.