

'LET'S COME TOGETHER'

Q&A SERIES WITH THE IPPF TRUSTEES

In conversation with

Hayathe Ayeva



An MA volunteer, Hayathe Ayeva is a Togolese activist for SRHR and the current national president of the Youth Action Movement (YAM) of ATBEF - Togo. She is a third-year pharmacy student from the Togo National School of Paramedics. Hayathe is involved in ATBEF's decision-making processes, training, activities and drafting of their various strategic documents, among other things.

Tell us a bit about yourself and what attracted you to working with the organization as part of the Board of Trustees (BoT)?

I am Hayathe AYEVA, 23, an activist passionate about the sexual and reproductive health of young people, and I define myself as a "lifetime committed activist". I am originally from Togo and a "Hayathe Solution" promoter. In addition to being a volunteer member of the BoT, I am currently the chair of the YAM of the Association Togolaise pour le Bien-Être Familial (ATBEF).

I come from a conservative community and couldn't stand to see my friends, who were brilliant at school and promised a bright future, suddenly drop out of school because of early marriage, pregnancy or gender-based violence. This situation saddened and revolted me. I decided to commit myself fully to defending human rights by joining IPPF.

What do you see as the key mandate of the BoT?

The main mandate of the BoT is to appoint its Director General and to manage the actions of the Director General by ensuring that it is consistent with the defined strategy of the Federation.

A 'seat at the table' would mean having the same opportunities as everyone else to listen, share and influence without retribution. In your time at the BoT, how true has this been? What does your role entail?

During my tenure, I have indeed seen that I have a "voice in the making".

This means that I have the opportunity to actively participate in the discussions, to express my opinions and to contribute to the decisions made by the board.

Member, Board of Trustees

This openness to listening and collaborating has been encouraging, as it has allowed every member, myself included, to share ideas and perspectives without fear of reprisal.

My role on the Board of Directors is to provide my expertise and knowledge in the specific area assigned to me.

As a board member, I strive to represent the interests of stakeholders and contribute to the achievement of objectives in an ethical and responsible manner.

Our world is changing fast. What do you think are the key priorities for IPPF at this time?

IPPF's main priorities are to put young people at the centre of all the Federation's programmes and projects, move towards inclusiveness and promote its united strategy.

Governments need to be more encouraged to understand the merits of sexual health.

In some IPPF regions, youth do not fully play a part in policy-making or service-delivery mechanisms as yet. Is it due to cultural differences or resistance to change? What are your thoughts on this?

Cultural differences play a major role in this situation. In some societies, young people may be less inclined to speak out in public or to question established norms.

Traditional hierarchies and attitudes towards authority may also play a role in their reluctance to take part in decision-making.

On the other hand, resistance to change could also contribute to this dynamic.

Service delivery mechanisms and political structures can be deeply entrenched in some regions, making introducing new ideas or new voices, especially from young people, difficult.

Institutional inertia and the fear of upsetting the existing balance can hinder the involvement of young people.

If you had to name some flagship programmes/initiatives you would wish Member Associations/affiliates to replicate, which ones would those be and why?

Some exemplary programmes/initiatives that I recommend MAs replicate due to their positive impact and potential to meet community needs are: Comprehensive sexuality education programmes in schools, mobile health clinics, vocational training programmes for young women, and digital information platforms.

In Togo, you are known as a “lifelong activist in the name of sexual education”. How can you use this global platform, as a youth member of the Board of Trustees, to ensure this mission garners broader impact and reach?

As a young board member and activist for sex education in Togo, I strongly believe that my position within this global platform can play a key role in expanding the impact and reach of this vital mission. I intend to: Advocate globally by participating in international forums and collaborating with other board members to advocate for the integration of sexuality education into global health and education programmes, and through education, sharing successful experiences, creating strategic partnerships, and promoting media awareness.

Also, training and capacity building of local actors in different regions, sharing knowledge and resources to develop effective sex education programmes adapted to local needs.

The development of a mobile application, ‘InfoAdoJeune’, a platform that helps young people access reliable information on SRHR, was one of your projects at ATBEF – Togo. Do you believe that all IPPF affiliates should follow suit?

We are today in a digitalized world, and young people are the major active users of social networks. The development of the mobile application "InfoAdoJeune" to provide reliable information on sexual and reproductive health to young people in Togo is certainly a commendable initiative. However, the decision of whether all IPPF affiliates should follow this example will depend on several factors specific to each affiliate and context.

Adapting a mobile application or a similar platform requires taking into account various aspects, such as the availability of financial, technological and human resources, as well as the relevance and effectiveness of such a solution in each local context. My Association, ATBEF, will remain available to effectively support the implementation and design procedures.

‘Come together’ is the Strategy for IPPF. How can we turn this inward and strengthen the interaction and solidarity between the BoT and affiliated organisations? What would be the outcome be if so? How do you see the new Federation’s strategy guide its work?

To turn the strategy inwards and strengthen the interaction and solidarity between the Board and affiliated organisations, the following could be envisaged: regular communication platforms, collaborations on projects, workshops, joint trainings, experience sharing, and networking events.

The expected result of this approach would be greater cohesion within IPPF, better mutual understanding between the Board and affiliates, and closer collaboration to achieve common goals.

IPPF's new regulations establish a new, skills-based Board of Trustees to govern IPPF as per the strategic direction set by the General Assembly. Following the GA's recommendations on reform, seven Trustees come from IPPF, and six are external Trustees. Nine of them are women, and one-third are young people under 25 years of age.

In conversation with Hayathe Ayeva Member, Board of Trustees

Regarding the strategy of the new Federation, it could serve as the basis for the development of new joint initiatives and to strengthen the collective voice for sexual and reproductive health rights on a global scale.

What words of encouragement or inspiration can you share with affiliates across the Federation?

Fellow Federation affiliates, at the heart of our commitment to SRH is the determination to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the individuals and communities we serve. Your work has an invaluable impact, and each step you take brings the world closer to a reality where rights are universally respected. You are catalysts for change, advocates for well-being, and creators of possibility. The union of the Federation is a force that transcends borders and differences. By working together, we not only share knowledge but also hope and vision for a world where SRH is an undisputed right for all. Together, we are writing a chapter of hope, equality and respect.



What’s one word people who know you best would use to describe you?

Tireless

If you could spend a day with any leader in the world, who would it be?

Malala Yousafzai. Her commitment to girls' education and human rights, despite the challenges and dangers she has faced, is inspiring and reflects my own passion for empowerment and education.

If you could add a word to the dictionary what would you add and what would it mean?

“Empathenergy”, combining “empathy” and “energy”. It would describe the ability to channel our empathy into a positive force to create meaningful change in society and support those in need.

If you could pick up a new skill in an instant what would it be and why?

Competence in finance, it will help me to increase my personal and professional goals.

If you were famous, what would you be famous for?

It would be for launching a global initiative to improve access to education and empower young people, especially girls, in disadvantaged regions, to create opportunities to realize their full potential.

What would you be if you were a piece of office equipment and why?

I would be a notebook. I would collect and preserve ideas, thoughts and inspirations, reflecting my penchant for learning, creativity and positive contribution.

Do you have a question for Hayathe?

Write to: governance@ippf.org