

'LET'S COME TOGETHER'

Q&A SERIES WITH THE IPPF TRUSTEES

In conversation with

Professor Isaac Adewole



An external member of the Board of Trustees, Professor Isaac Adewole, has been a Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, since 1997. He was the former Nigerian Minister of Health from 2015 to 2019.

Amongst the skills required for the Board of Trustees, Professor Adewole can point to knowledge of governance at the international or national level, advocacy experience and working with government, and leadership in SRHR.

Tell us a bit about yourself, your journey to being a part of the Board of Trustees (BoT) and what your role entails.

I am a global health expert and leader, a medical doctor in clinical practice for more than four decades. I am a researcher on women's health with a special focus on SRHR.

I am an activist, unionist, administrator, community and political leader.

I am a former Minister of Health in Nigeria; former Vice Chancellor of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria; and former President of the Africa Organisation for Research and Training in Cancer.

I am the co-founder of the African Cancer Coalition and a member of the International Taskforce on Elimination of Cervical Cancer in the Commonwealth.

I applied to join the BoT in 2020 and was fortunate to be nominated by the NGC. In addition to my role as a BoT member, I am currently the Chair of the Resource Allocation and Technical Committee (RATC).

My appointment as a member of the BoT was renewed for my second and final term at the last General Assembly in Bogota, Colombia.

Member, Board of Trustees Chair, Resource Allocation Technical Committee (RATC)

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

To oversee the implementation of the aims and objectives of IPPF, a locally owned, globally connected civil society movement that provides and enables services and champions sexual and reproductive health and rights for all, especially the under-served.

Your expertise extends to Obstetrics and Gynaecology, gynaecologic oncology and HIV prevention and treatment, all areas crucial to IPPF. Through the BoT, what changes do you like to see implemented through our programmes for them?

As a member of the IPPF BoT, I will work assiduously with affiliates for the cohesion of policies to guide rights-based programming, implementation and resourcing of family planning programmes globally.

In addition, I will focus on supporting affiliates to build community resilience, given the burden of global humanitarian situations and the need for a humanitarian-development nexus. I would also like to see diversification of revenue generation activities among the affiliates.

Unrestricted funding is a lifeline. As Chair of the Resource Allocation Technical Committee (RATC), you are responsible for making recommendations to the Board about matters relating to allocation. What factors guide the Committee's choice?

Resource allocation in IPPF has undergone radical transformation as part of the Governance Reforms following the endorsement of the Independent Resource Allocation Commission report in December 2019.

We have sub-divided unrestricted grants to three streams labelled 1,2 and 3. We are currently implementing a new resource allocation model that focuses on objectivity, transparency, need and deliverables.

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

IPPF took cognizance of the changes we are witnessing globally hence the adoption and ratification of the new Strategy document labelled IPPF AGENDA 2028. Our key priorities are:

- We want to reach more of those who are excluded and marginalised with quality and people-centred care.
- We want to address legal and societal barriers to rights and health, to win hearts and minds through feminist action and international solidarity.
- We want to work in partnership with other sectors to achieve transformation of people's lives.
- We want to nurture affiliates and ensure every affiliate is heard, supported effectively, and can implement its goals.

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

Expand choice and promote options with wider access while promoting digital and self-care. I would love affiliates to replicate safeguarding and implement policies on sex work and youth integration.

In Nigeria, abortion laws are restrictive. During your term as the Nigerian Minister of Health, were there attempts to change the laws? What advice can you give affiliates fighting for this exact cause?

During my term as Health Minister, we concentrated more on training on medical abortion and safe abortion. We felt we should devote more energy and resources to improving quality of care.

Evidence gathering, evaluation and research is a key focus in IPPF Programmes. As a person passionate about research, why is this aspect important?

It is through these activities that we can write our story, improve on services and ensure quality.

'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 if so? How do you see the new Federation's strategy guide its work?

I see the implementation of Pillar 4, Nurturing our Federation, as the most important pillar. A key strategy would be better and deeper engagement with affiliates which we have started.

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The outcome is an increased sense of belonging and accountability. The BoT, under the leadership of Kate Gilmore, is committed to diligent implementation of the new IPPF Strategy.

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

We are together on this journey and committed to the targets that we have set for ourselves in the new IPPF Strategy.

When working together, the sky is not the limit but the beginning!



What do you believe is your best trait or attribute?

Strong organisational ability and time management capability, which has guided me in my leadership positions.

What's something you would change if you ran the world?

I will eliminate poverty and injustice, which is rampant, particularly in developing countries of which my country is one.

What is an important work ethic?

Integrity. It tells us who and what you are and serves as a motivation for others.

What's something you're passionate about outside of work?

Football or soccer. I love the lessons of teamwork, which is a prominent feature of soccer.

What's been your biggest life lesson?

Take care of your health the way you take care of your car. Good health is our greatest possession.

Any particular skill that you would recommend to everyone to learn?

Information technology or language. We are in a rapidly changing world that is being impacted by it.

Do you have a question for Issac?

Write to: governance@ippf.org