

# THE WATCHDOG

## Inside this issue:

<b>The Point of Youth Participation</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Life is Beautiful But Could Be 20 % Better!</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>What's Up On Monday?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Get Your Facts Right!</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Young Woman Sentenced to 42 Years in Prison After her Child Dies from Complications at Birth</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Latest on Mn Mn</b>	<b>5</b>

## Monday's Agenda:

- 7:30AM Women's Coalition Briefing, Crowne Plaza Hotel
- 9:00AM NGO Briefing, Conference Room 4
- 1:00PM CRLP/WEDO lunch panel— *Critical Concerns: Reproductive Rights and Adolescent Rights*, Conference Room B (Where the youth get to speak... So be there!)

## The Point of Youth Participation

One of the key issues of the Youth Coalition is youth participation at all levels of decision-making processes. Young people should be involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of programs for youth. *What is the relevance of this and why is it so important?*

The starting point is that young people themselves, know what their livelihoods, problems and needs are. Youth are the future: the leaders of tomorrow. They are key to making the development processes now and in the future work. Let us not waste the human resource young people are. As this ICPD+5 process has shown, given the opportunity, young people are able to clearly articulate their issues and help the international community to address their special needs.

The point is not so much that young people want to do everything on their own. They need to work as partners with governments, NGOs, the private sector and multilateral agencies. All these players have to coalesce to make a difference. However, without young people be-

ing involved, everybody is merely talking ABOUT youth, and not WITH them. We need young people to voice the concerns of young people. Their needs are not the same as the needs and concerns of adults. Without young people's involvement in the identification and design of youth programs, these programs will fail. They will not address the needs of young people, and as such are a waste of money, time, efforts and human resources.

Young people have a subculture with its own dynamics and language, and as such, youth are more likely the ones who can really reach the young people a program is focused on. They are part of the same subculture, aware of and integrated with the unique dynamics and language of the youth. Speaking their language, they know how to approach young people and how to talk with them. Young people know and can represent their own needs and those of their peers, and considering the "generation gap" prevalent in most societies of the world, they have more confidence in people their

age and are able to work with them to make a real difference in society, if society will let them.

The question of "responsibility" seems to be a crucial part of this process. The official "youth" bracket as defined by WHO is 15 - 24 year olds. Therefore, proposal 65 *bis* states that, in essence, 15-24 year olds should be involved in "all aspects of decision-making related to the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes for youth." Subject to regional and cultural variation, children, adolescents, and youth, whatever you wish to call them, fight in wars, have families and marry. If they are old enough to enter into these life-altering commitments, then it seems only logical that they should be entitled to involvement in "all aspects of decision-making". Youth involvement will ensure that young people's unique needs will be addressed, and given the opportunity, young people will be responsible.

By Anouka van Eerdewijk & Gemma Hobcraft

# Life is Beautiful But It Could Be 20% Better!

## *The Domino Effect of Resource Allocation*

### *The five key themes of the Youth Coalition:*

1. 20% resource allocation
2. Sex education
3. Youth Participation
4. Sexual and reproductive health services
5. Sexual and reproductive rights are human rights.

Society can be divided into three. Youth, the less youthful and the ageing population (or to be more politically correct the youthfully challenged population). Youth are not the be all and end all of society, but we are, undoubtedly a priority. We the "youth" of today (those aged between 15-24) are crucial to the maintenance of society. At present we, the youth, are the largest generation in the world--1.06 billion of us. We are the ageing population of tomorrow and investment in us will result in the foundations for a stronger future society. We, more than ever, need resources to help us make informed choices about our future and have the opportunity to enjoy our lives. However, our "largest generation" label has repercussions. We will become the largest generation of parents, and therefore, we, more than ever, need to be equipped with the tools to make informed decisions about partnership and parenthood. We need funding for sexual and reproductive health services and education

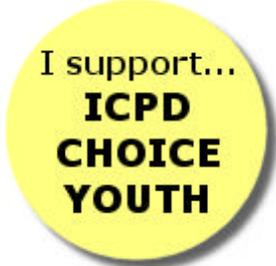
programmes, and we need it today. That is why the Youth Coalition has called for at least 20% of donor countries' ODA allocation for reproductive health programmes to be earmarked for meeting the needs of adolescents.

One of the concerns expressed about recognizing the priority of young people at the international level, is that it might mean diverting attention away from other sections of the population, such as the aged, as an expanding demographic. However, one must remember that, an aged population will need to depend on the younger generations, as well as the state, in their later years. A strong, educated and healthy generation of youth allows for a ready workforce which can fuel the economy to support the ageing population. All generations are not separate entities; they are interdependent on one another.

Ultimately, a country's development will hinge on its human capital.

One example of the desperate need for sexual and reproductive services for adolescents is that of the devastating effect HIV/AIDS has had on many places. HIV/AIDS has reached epidemic proportions in some parts of Sub-Saharan Africa. There are accounts of entire villages composed of the aged and young children--the middle demographic being depleted. How will this trend impact on national development? How can a country exist with an entire generation at risk? Investing in the youth of today, is crucial for a country's tomorrow.

By Gemma Hobcraft



I support...  
**ICPD  
CHOICE  
YOUTH**

**COLOFON:** Sonu; Erin; Gemma; Alison; Anouka; Nynke; Cassius (for the AM trip to Kinko's)

## What's Up On Monday?

*The Shadow Circus: The CIA in Tibet*, 6:30PM, \$20.

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Avenue at 2nd Street (call 481.3569 for directions)

This documentary explores how from the mid-1950's to 1969, the CIA aided Tibetan guerillas fighting the Chinese occupation.

*Kirov Ballet*, 8:00PM, \$30-\$125.

Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center: 65th Street at Columbus Ave. (362.6000 for directions)

See the legendary Kirov Ballet perform *Sleeping Beauty*.

## Get Your Facts Right!

**Myth:** Sexual and reproductive health education promotes promiscuity.

**Fact:** A 1997 UNAIDS report which assessed the review of 68 programmes of sexual health education from diverse countries, illustrated that such education does help to delay the first sexual intercourse and protect sexually active youth from STDs including HIV and from pregnancy.

**Myth:** Youth are not responsible enough to intelligently articulate their needs and issues which affect them.

**Fact:** Around the world, young people, even below the age of 15 or 16 are considered responsible enough to fight in wars, becoming economic providers, and look after the well-being of their families. Each year 15 million children are born to adolescent mothers, accounting for

11% of all births. If society feels young people are able to engage in these life-altering commitments, they are entitled to become part of the decision-making process at local, national, and international levels.

**Myth:** Supporters of reproductive rights favour coercive population control measures.

**Reality:** Supporters of reproductive rights believe that women have the right to determine the number and spacing of their children. Reproductive rights advocates oppose coercive measures such as forced abortion or sterilization that deprive women of their choice to bear chil-

dren and assert that governments provide women with the information necessary to make fully-informed choices.

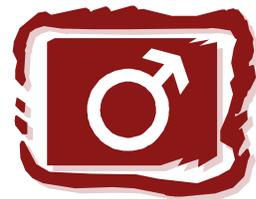
**Myth:** Emergency contraception (EC) is a form of abortion.

**Reality:** The World Health Organization recognizes that EC is not a form of abortion; rather, it is a set of contraceptive methods that can be used within the first few days following unprotected sex. EC *prevents* pregnancy whereas abortion *terminates* pregnancy.

By Alison & Erin

Information take from CRLP, FCI, and UNFPA

*"Reproductive rights advocates oppose coercive measures such as forced abortion or sterilization that deprive women of their choice to bear children..."*



# Young Woman Sentenced to 42 Years in Prison After her Child Dies from Complications at Birth

*"Family, friends and the local clergy's testimony to Alba Lucia's "introverted," "hard-working," "naive," and "timid" character fell on deaf ears. Alba Lucia's own words were not heard nor used in court."*

Alba Lucia Rodriguez Cardona, a 20-year-old Colombian woman from Pantanonegro, has been convicted of homicide for the death of her baby during delivery. Since April 1996, Alba Lucia has been incarcerated in an Abejorral jail, serving a sentence of 42 years and five months. The severity of Alba Lucia's sentence sent a shock not only to her family and peers, but also through the women's rights community in Colombia, where, in contrast, a man convicted of kidnapping and murder of 63 people has been sentenced to 30 years in prison.

Her travails began in July 1995, when Alba Lucia traveled to Medellin to visit family. During her stay, she went out with a local man named José Aidemar, was unable to remember the events of half of the evening. Soon after she returned to her parents' home, she discovered she was pregnant. Shocked and confused as she believed she was still a virgin, she soon realized that she had been drugged and raped by José. Ashamed of the rape and its resulting pregnancy, Alba Lucia told no one. When she was ready to give birth, on April 4, 1996, Alba Lucia went to the bathroom of her family's home, and birthed her baby daughter without any assistance. The birth was difficult and Alba Lucia's baby died soon after

she was born. When Alba Lucia began to hemorrhage and went into shock, her sister took her to the hospital.

Unfortunately, her doctors equated the secrecy and shame surrounding her pregnancy, along with the death of her child, as a crime and reported Alba Lucia to the police, for strangulating her newborn child. Alba Lucia was jailed as soon as she was released from the hospital.

Alba Lucia seemed to have the cards stacked against her. Poor and unknowledgeable of her rights, Alba Lucia did not know how to best defend herself. Both the District Attorney prosecuting the case as well as her own legal Defender used only the medical examiner's testimony as evidence. Family, friends and the local clergy's testimony to Alba Lucia's "introverted," "hard-working," "naive," and "timid" character fell on deaf ears. Alba Lucia's own words were not heard nor used in court. The District Attorney of Abejorral dismissed her charges against José Aidemar, claiming that the three hours was not sufficient time for José Aidemar to rape Alba Lucia. On April 2, 1997, Alba Lucia was convicted of homicide and sentenced to 510 months in jail (42 years, 5 months). A second, superior court upheld the sen-

tence four months later, although its magistrate recognized that there were "mistakes" made in the original case against Alba Lucia.

Today, Alba Lucia remains in the municipal jail in Abejorral, awaiting an appeal before the Supreme Court. *The Red Colombiana de Mujeres por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos* (Colombian Women's Network for Sexual and Reproductive Rights) has appointed Colombian lawyer Maria Ximena Castilla Jiménez to present Alba Lucia's appeal before Colombia's Supreme Court.

Unfortunately, Alba Lucia's plight is only unique in its severity. Women in Colombia often suffer what *the Red* entitles "misogyny in Colombian penal jurisdiction." The Colombian legal system denies flee legal representation to poor women in civil courts.

Anyone wishing to help Alba Lucia or to learn more about her case may contact the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy in New York, the *Corporación Casa de la Mujer* (Cra. 28, No. 51-52, Apto. Aéreo 36151, Bogotá Colombia) or the *Red Colombiana de Mujeres por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos* (Cr. 48 No. 63A-60 Medellin, Colombia).

By Alison-Maria Bartolone

## YOUTH COALITION FOR ICPD

c/o ACPD  
430 - 1 Nicholas Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
CANADA K1N 7B7

Phone: 613-562-0880  
Fax: 613-241-7550  
Email: [info@youthcoalition.org](mailto:info@youthcoalition.org)

*We're on the Web!*

[www.youthcoalition.org](http://www.youthcoalition.org)

*"Min Min was sentenced to 20 years in jail. Murderers normally get 10 in Nepal."*

## The Latest on Min Min

*The Watchdog* recently talked to Dr. Indira Kapoor from International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) of the South Asia Region, and there have been some positive developments in Min Min's case. The process for Min Min's release has begun. However, it's not yet known when she will be free. Dr. Kapoor also informed the *Watchdog* that they, together with the Family Planning Association (FPA) of Nepal, have a plan for Min Min's rehabilitation in Nepal. When her release is secured, upon Min Min's wishes, she will be placed in a foster home and there will be assistance for her education and daily living.

Dr. Kapoor recently vis-

The Youth Coalition for ICPD is an organization composed of committed youth working at the local, national, and international levels to promote the full implementation of the Programme of Action stemming from the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo. The Youth Coalition emerged from the ICDP+5 Youth Forum, held in the Hague, in February 1999.

Through public education, advocacy, and coalition building, the Youth Coalition strives to ensure that the sexual and reproductive health rights, needs, and concerns of young people are addressed fully, and that young people from around the world are actively and meaningfully involved in all aspects of development, especially sexual and reproductive health, rights, and education issues. Its members, which range between the ages of 15 and 29, come from diverse backgrounds and represent every region in the world.

ited Min Min. Life in prison is hard for her. She is the youngest prisoner and is under the threat of being bullied by the older women. Dr. Kapoor talked to Min Min about all the support she has received from around the world. When asked what could for her, Min Min simply said all she wanted, was to be release from jail.

Hopefully, this attention to Min Min's horrible experience will help secure her freedom. While the Youth Coalition, and many other groups involved in the ICPD+5 have been advocating for progressive language in paragraph 45 (a), requesting that laws containing punitive measures against women who have undergone illegal abortions be reviewed. It is the Youth

Coalition's hope that some action can be taken at the international level so that no one else must endure what Min Min has been through.

By Nynke Inkeri Jager

