

INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR WOMEN'S RIGHT TO SAFE ABORTION

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

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The International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion is a membership-based network that includes local, national, regional and international organisations and agencies, as well as individuals such as healthcare providers, policymakers and academics, all of whom support the right to safe abortion.

What we stand for

Goals

- Safe abortion as a universally accessible, publicly available and funded healthcare service.
- Full social and legal decriminalisation of abortion.

Mission

To bring together organisations and individuals who support and promote the right to safe abortion through knowledge creation and sharing, network and coalition building, and advocacy.

Intended outcomes

- Increased attention to and support for the right to safe abortion in key international, regional, and national decision-making spaces.
- Increased visibility and public awareness of the negative impact of unsafe abortion.
- Contribute to the reduction of stigma around obtaining an abortion and around the provision of safe abortion care.
- Greater understanding that the right to decide whether and when to have children is a critical aspect of gender equality, sexual and reproductive autonomy, and the right to life and health.

Institutional base

The Campaign's institutional base and fiscal agent in 2019 was the Centro de Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos (Promsex), based in Lima, Peru, as in previous years.

Campaign Chairing Committee

- Beverly Winikoff, Gynuity Health Projects, USA
- Susana Chavez, Promsex/Consortio Latinoamericano contra el Aborto Inseguro (CLACAI), Peru
- George Hale, Finance Director, Promsex, Peru
- Sivananthi Thananthiran, Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women, Malaysia
- Jane Fisher, Antenatal Results and Choices, UK

International Advisory Group

- Ammal Awadallah, Palestinian Family Planning and Protection Association, Palestine
- Inna Hudaya, Indonesia
- Kinga Jelinska, Women Help Women, Netherlands
- Mariana Romero, Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad (CEDES), Argentina
- Rodica Comendant, Central European/ Western Asia Regional Network, Moldova
- Satang Nabaneh, Think Young Women, The Gambia
- Selma Hajri, Right and Access for Women to Safe Abortion, Middle East & North Africa Region, Tunisia
- Sonia Correa, Sexuality Policy Watch, Brazil
- Soukeyna Ndao Diallo, Association des Femmes Juristes Senegalaises, Senegal
- Shruti Arora, The YP Foundation, India
- Suzanne Majani, Ipas Africa Alliance, Kenya
- Bela Ganatra/Antonella Lavelanet, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, World Health Organization, Switzerland – Observers

Main Activities in 2019: Executive Summary

Support for Campaign member groups to organise national meetings to launch a national coalition for abortion advocacy. These were organised by Promsex in Peru (February), Nifin'Akanga Madagascar (March), Middle Africa Network for Women's Reproductive Health in Gabon (March), Think Young Women in the Gambia (May) and Surkuna in Ecuador (May). In 2019, a terms of reference for applications for grants was prepared, applications were received and the grants provided. Reports were published in January 2020.

Support for the initiation of RAWSA MENA, a new Middle Eastern & North African Regional Network, led by Campaign member Groupe Tawhida Ben Cheikh, Tunisia. We provided some funding and support for fundraising, preparation of the agenda and invitations, participated in the meeting, and edited and published the final report in French, Arabic and English, Tunis, 15-16 April 2019.

Coordination of the European safe abortion networking meeting, a new initiative by the Campaign, which met on 25 July 2019. We prepared the agenda and chaired the meeting, which included 14 people from 12 groups in six countries, in Paris. Participants agreed to continue meeting in early 2020 with a view to focusing on the Gender Equality Conferences in Mexico and Paris.

International Safe Abortion Day, 28 September 2019 – We proposed, coordinated and developed the theme "Abortion is health care", #MyAbortionMyHealth, and letter to all UN agencies inviting their support for the day. We did a feature story on 28 abortion providers who changed the world, overseeing preparation of visuals and a tweetathon with partners. Afterwards, we published six newsletters with reports of activities around the world and press reports in five languages.

Young Activist Network for Abortion Advocacy (YANAA) – This new network by and for young people was initiated based on a proposal by participants in the youth workshop in the Campaign's International Forum in 2018. It was launched on 28 September 2019 to focus on activism and advocacy for safe abortion, coordinated by regional representatives from six regions.

Campaign Advisory Group Meeting, Lisbon, 28-30 October 2019

Sixteen key Campaign members met with the Campaign staff in Lisbon to discuss changes in the political landscape, the meaning of Campaign membership, the contribution and role of regional networks, alliances and partnerships with international NGOs, the role of the international advisory group, Campaign coordination activities, mission and goals, and recommendations.

Participation in ICPD+25 – Organisation of a panel on "Universal Access to Safe Abortion: Leaving No One Behind" jointly with six Campaign members, a lunch meeting for 12 YANAA members, and dissemination of the Campaign's global commitment, Nairobi, 13-14 November 2019.

Health and Human Rights Journal, guest edited a special section on Abortion Law Reform in the 25th anniversary special edition, including an editorial and ten papers analysing law and policy in relation to human rights and related public health issues in South Korea, Ireland, Chile, UK, Gabon, Latin America, the Gambia, a Latin America/East Africa network, and India.

Knowledge creation and sharing, including twice-weekly newsletters with reports from Campaign members, national and international news on abortion and related issues, the work of UN agencies and human rights bodies, involvement of governments and parliaments, research on abortion, journal articles and other publications, videos and visuals, **contact with the media, a guideline for journalists on medical abortion pills, & daily social media posts** on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and the YANAA Facebook.

[Abortion internationally in 2019: An overview of the most important events and actions in words and photographs](#)

Main Activities in 2019

I. National Coalition Building Meetings

Movement building was a key activity for the Campaign agreed in the International Forum in October 2018. As part of the grant from the David & Lucile Packard Foundation for the Forum, we had included a proposal to support small grants for the initiation of new national coalitions for safe abortion advocacy in 2019. We called for proposals at the Forum itself and in early 2019, offered grants to members who had applied from Ecuador, Gabon, the Gambia, Haiti, Madagascar and Peru. These meetings took place in the first half of 2019, except for the meeting in Haiti. The meetings shared the overall aim of discussing priority issues, goals, common strategies and opportunities for movement building in each country. Young women led the meetings in the Gambia and Madagascar.

These meetings were a positive first step in bringing diverse stakeholders and voices together to increase discussion of the importance of safe abortion. Here are brief descriptions of each meeting:

Forming a Coalition to Fight for Free, Legal and Safe Abortion, by Surkuna, Ecuador

The meeting established a joint campaign for free, legal and safe abortion, provided a space to facilitate an inter-generational dialogue on the issues, and developed agreed political objectives. Work following the meeting included the creation and promotion of a meeting space for the coalition to develop a structure and strategy, identify new members to invite to be involved, and start to develop the agreed strategies. [Full Report](#)

Abortion Practices and Experiences in Gabon, by the Middle Africa Network for Women's Reproductive Health: Gabon, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon

The meeting addressed abortion practices and experiences in Gabon. Several initiatives for the network's continued work were proposed, including an international symposium, annual network meetings, continued fieldwork recording abortion experiences, and abortion complications and care with two aims: to record reliable field data and to raise awareness on sexuality and contraceptive needs, including for adolescents and caregivers. [Full Report](#)

Using Human Rights Principles to Realise Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, by Think Young Women, The Gambia

The meeting agreed that the focus of a new coalition/alliance should be solely on abortion, which was a new step in the Gambia, where there had been little attention to safe abortion previously. Plans were made to hold a meeting with UNFPA Gambia, develop a position paper for the Constitutional Review Commission on inclusion of reproductive rights in the new constitution, fundraising for abortion-related research, and awareness-raising and kick-starting a conversation on abortion. [Full Report](#)

Promoting a Network to Call for Decriminalisation of Abortion, by Nifin'Akanga, Madagascar

The workshop created a national coalition for the decriminalisation of abortion. It brought together key actors from the field, focused on knowledge sharing about abortion, and equipped the participants to carry out actions in their regions as well as planned joint actions. Following the meeting, the network planned to implement activities in each region, organise a meeting with governmental and NGO partners, and strengthen the evidence base on abortion. [Full Report](#)

Challenges and Opportunities for the Guarantee of the Right to Decide of Peruvian Women, by PROMSEX, Peru

The meeting created a space for dialogue on abortion and outlined national strategies to guarantee and expand access to legal abortion. PROMSEX will take the lead in ensuring future meetings and continued communication. The meeting did a mapping of abortion-focused organisations working in Peru at regional and national level, an analysis of the threats posed by conservative groups, and information regarding the implementation of legal strategies. [Full Report](#)

Decriminalisation of Abortion, by Solidarité Fanm Ayisyenn, with the Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights Collective, Haiti

SOFA planned a two-day meeting to launch a national debate on the decriminalisation of abortion. The agenda covered a review of the legal and policy framework, a proposal for law reform on abortion in Haiti, case examples from Mexico and Argentina, workshops addressing restrictions on abortion access, and ideas for implementing effective policies for safe abortion access. Unfortunately, this meeting could not take place due to national political instability.

We hope to support other such meetings in the future, possibly including follow-up meetings of the above groups.

II. Regional Networking

Middle East and North Africa Region (MENA)

The Campaign provided support to the Groupe Tawhida Ben Cheikh of Tunisia to organise and convene a meeting in Tunis to initiate a regional network in the MENA region. With some of our grant money from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and also directly from the Safe Abortion Action Fund, the meeting brought together 17 NGO representatives from eight countries – Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, and Tunisia – to discuss a regional advocacy strategy on safe abortion and capacity-building activities. The meeting was also attended by Elise Denis-Ramirez and Marge Berer for the Campaign Coordination Team.

Participants reported on the wide range of country-specific situations in the region. They agreed it was important to come together to share strategic information from their countries, develop and carry out joint advocacy activities and campaigns, and stay current on relevant international and regional news and events. They agreed to launch a regional network and named it Right and Access for Women to Safe Abortion in the Middle East & North Africa (RAWSA MENA).

Participants agreed that the Groupe Tawhida Ben Cheikh would coordinate the network, as they already have established experience in working for safe abortion both nationally and in North Africa. Tunisia also has a less challenging legal and political environment, giving them greater possibility to raise issues and bring people together. See the full meeting report in: [French](#), [Arabic](#), and [English](#).

In December 2019, Selma Hajri from the Groupe Tawhida Ben Cheikh was invited to the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition meeting in Benin to represent the Campaign and give a presentation on the formation of RAWSA MENA. She also continued the promotion and expansion of RAWSA MENA in the second half of 2019, for example, by travelling to and meeting with potential new members in Morocco, Lebanon and Algeria. Successfully forming a regional network in this region is, without doubt, a crucial step on the way to making change happen in a region where access to safe abortion is highly restrictive.

Europe Region

In July 2019, Marge Berer organised a European networking meeting on safe abortion advocacy, attended by 14 representatives from 12 Europe-based national, regional, and international NGOs in six countries. While most of the groups are, or are part of, broad SRHR networks in Europe, everyone thought that a focused conversation on abortion was relevant, both to discuss European involvement in international events and in response to growing anti-abortion activity in Europe.

That first meeting had primarily a regional and international agenda. We discussed EU elections, UNFPA statements, the Universal Health Coverage Political Declaration, Sustainable Development Goals, ICPD+25 commitments, plans for International Safe Abortion Day on 28 September, and the value of a European regional conversation on safe abortion. Additional issues were the renewed focus on population, development and family planning in the context of the climate crisis, how to raise the need to address abortion in a positive way in spaces where it is being left out, opposition

tactics, and the increasingly crowded stakeholder space. Often, national-level issues such as local opposition mirrored the global landscape and made national and regional work key when advocating at international meetings.

When, at their conference in October 2019, the Inspire network (one of the spaces where abortion was important) announced they were closing down due to lack of funds, our informal network became important. We agreed to meet again in February 2020 with a view to focusing on the UN Gender Equality Conferences.

III. International Safe Abortion Day, 28 September 2019

Theme: Abortion is Healthcare ; “My Right to Decide!”; #MyAbortionMyHealth

The Campaign worked together with the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR), Campaña 28 de Septiembre LAC (Campaña Nacional por el Aborto Legal, Seguro y Gratuito-Argentina), Asia Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP), and Ipas Africa Alliance to launch International Safe Abortion Day 2019.

The theme was “Abortion is Healthcare” with the tagline “My Right to Decide!” and hashtag #MyAbortionMyHealth. We jointly developed and disseminated supplemental materials, including downloadable social media posters, banners, images, and a toolkit.

We published the first [Call to Action](#) on the International Day of Action for Women's Health, 28 May, as in previous years. Three additional Calls to Action were circulated on [26 July](#), [31 July](#), and [28 August](#).

Activities were organised in more than 33 countries. These ranged from one activity in some countries to more than 30 activities reported in India alone, and actions in more than 30 cities in Germany, where the demand was the decriminalisation of physicians who provide abortion care. Other 28 September activities included:

- [First rally for choice in Malta](#);
- [Stakeholders meeting for reduction of maternal mortality due to unsafe abortion in Tanzania](#);
- [National Comprehensive Abortion Care Trainers' Workshop in India](#);
- [Festival for Women's Lives to discuss and debate women's rights in Brazil](#);
- [Mexican activists taking to the streets in five cities on 28 September to demand safe and legal abortions](#);
- [An art exhibition showcasing the work of women who have had an abortion in Malaysia](#);
- [Women in Ecuador taking to the streets of Quito to call for decriminalisation of abortion in cases of rape](#); and
- [FIGO statement celebrating and supporting International Safe Abortion Day](#).

We mapped and collected reports of activities and shared the reports on our website and in five newsletters on [10 October](#), [17 October](#), [23 October](#), [15 November](#), and [29 November](#). Additionally, we tracked the media coverage in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and German and shared a list of those reports in a newsletter on [4 December](#). Our webpage [28 September 2019](#) has a comprehensive list of global activities.

What we were unable to map was the extensive celebration of the day on countless social media sites, which was far more extensive than even a few years ago. This is an important sign of the way in which women's rights advocacy has increasingly migrated onto the internet and changed how issues like the right to safe abortion are being taken up, especially by younger generations.

#MyAbortionMyHealth – A Tweet-a-thon

The Campaign convened a tweet-a-thon on 27 September in 2019. With the hashtag #MyAbortionMyHealth, the event reached thousands of impressions on Twitter. The hashtag was still being used widely in December 2019 (more than 15,000 impressions in that month alone).

International Safe Abortion Day is now widely known at local, national and international level, and acknowledged if not actively supported at governmental and inter-governmental level. As a unifying global day it is an important way to raise awareness of the need for safe abortion worldwide, contributing to the mobilisation of civil society and a growing range of more official stakeholders. We hope it will not take 75 years to become an official UN day, as happened in the 20th century with International Women's Day.

The 2019 theme "Abortion is Healthcare" was taken up widely. It also caused constructive debate within the movement, as some groups in countries where most abortions are illegal and privatised rightly argued that abortion was *not* in fact part of healthcare in their countries. Others argued that by defining abortion as healthcare, we were promoting continued control by doctors of what is and is not allowed to happen to women's bodies. Instead, they argued, we should be promoting self-managed abortion with pills which, although not always feasible and requiring more information and support than is available everywhere, seeks to reduce the role of the health system in restricting access to safe abortion – with the aim of putting that control into women's own hands.

28 Providers for 28 September

This year we published stories about exceptional abortion providers who have dedicated their lives to ensuring access to safe abortion services through research, policy and service delivery. The stories were collected from Campaign members and in many cases the providers themselves, and reflect their continuing influence, contributions and commitment to women's and girls' health. See [28 Providers for 28 September 2019](#)

From Pakistan, Chatro Dewi who works at the Sartion Sehat Center (Female Friend Health Centre) said: "I offer all services free. Despite threats by some local people, who told me to stop my work (...) I do not want any woman or girl in my village to have an unsafe abortion, nor for any young girl to be killed in the name of 'honour'."

As head of the Reproductive Health Training Center in Moldova, Rodica Comendant said: "It has become my life's mission to ensure that women in Moldova and in our region are no longer discriminated against, but treated with that same respect when they need this important medical service."

Mariana Romero, from Red de Acceso al Aborto Seguro in Argentina, said: "Providing technical assistance to health teams is what I enjoy the most. I conceive of this work as a place where bioethics, rights, health systems, beliefs, competency and empathy intersect. It is a never-ending challenge and I feel privileged to be part of it."

An Open Letter to UN Leaders

In an [OPEN LETTER to UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Heads of UN agencies & national leaders](#), we called on them to make public statements in support of International Safe Abortion Day and asked for the UN to recognise the day as an official UN day. Additionally, we asked for abortion to be acknowledged as part of public healthcare. We pointed out that in the past decade, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Committee against Torture, Committee on the Rights of the Child, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Committee on Civil and Political Rights, and the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights have all called for abortion to be decriminalised and made safe. Additionally, we urged that the UN Human Rights Committee's General Comment 36 on the right to life, Article 6 Para 8, ICCPR, be implemented by all member states.

We translated the Open Letter into [Spanish](#) and [Portuguese](#) for sharing with members to use. We encouraged members to adapt and use the letter to write to government leaders, other national and regional stakeholders, and those representing their country at ICPD+25 in November 2019. Lastly, we suggested they shared any response they received with their national media.

The Campaign website carried a comprehensive report of all these activities, as it has done in previous years.

IV. ICPD+25: Nairobi Summit – Accelerating the Promise

Campaign Panel

In November 2019, the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was held in Nairobi, Kenya. We organised a concurrent panel entitled “Safe Abortion in Health Systems: Regional Challenges, Progress and Accelerators”. The session centred around three main questions: “How has the space for safe abortion changed in your region since the ICPD Conference in Cairo in 1994?”, “What are the major concerns you see?”, and “What steps need to be taken to expand access to safe abortion now?” The conference was attended by Shilpa Shroff and Christina Boateng for the Campaign Coordination Team.

Shilpa Shroff co-chaired the panel with Susana Chavez, Executive Director of Promsex. The panellists were:

- Ana Cristina González Vélez, La Mesa por la Vida y la Salud de las Mujeres, Colombia
- Sivananthi Thanenthiran, Asia-Pacific Resources and Research Centre for Women, Malaysia
- Hedia Belhadj, Groupe Tawhida Ben Cheikh, Tunisia
- Wafa Adam, Young Activist Network for Abortion Advocacy (YANAA), Sudan
- Ernest Nyamato, Ipas Africa Alliance, Kenya
- Clay Cook, Reproductive Health Training Center, Moldova (not present)

Participation was at full capacity, with approximately 300 people attending the session. ICPD in 1994 acknowledged that abortion was a serious global health problem. Since then, advances have been made and there are far fewer deaths from unsafe abortions. Some of this improvement is due to abortion law reform in a number of countries, but it is also due to growing self-use of medical abortion pills in place of unsafe surgical methods by untrained providers. Even so, there are still 25 million unsafe abortions annually, almost all in the global south. The 25 years in between have proved that the Cairo compromise “abortion must be safe where it is legal” was not a compromise but a licence to allow unsafe abortions to remain rife in many countries.

YANAA Lunch

The Campaign also hosted a lunch for participating youth to meet each other, learn about YANAA and meet YANAA Committee members. Twelve young people participated in the lunch, were keen to learn more about YANAA and how to engage to voice their concerns about access to safe abortion for youth, and how to advance the safe abortion advocacy agenda in their regions.

Campaign Commitment to ICPD+25

All the governments and NGOs attending ICPD+25 were invited to make a commitment to one of the Conference’s goals: zero preventable maternal deaths, zero unmet need for family planning, and zero gender-based violence and harmful practices against women. The Campaign’s commitment, which was shared at the Campaign’s panel and in the newsletter, was as follows:

“The International Campaign for Women’s Right to Safe Abortion commits to campaigning for the following to achieve zero preventable maternal deaths by 2030:

- *Decriminalisation of abortion*
- *Universal access to safe abortion in every country*
- *Availability of safe abortion at the woman’s/girl’s request*

in recognition that safe abortion is necessary to achieve gender equality and women's/girls' right to life and health."

Other Conferences and Meetings Attended

During 2019, Campaign Coordination staff attended the following conferences and meetings:

- Latin American Consortium against Unsafe Abortion (CLACAI) Advisory Meeting, Lima, February. Attended by Marge Berer
- World Health Organization Policy and Coordination Committee, Geneva, March. Attended by Marge Berer
- Women Deliver, Vancouver, May. Attended by Elise Denis-Ramirez
- Médecins Sans Frontières, Delhi, July. Attended by Shilpa Shroff
- Inspire (EuroNGOs), Athens, October. Attended by Marge Berer and Michelle Lee

V. Campaign Membership

Members

Campaign members include international, regional, and national networks; a diverse range of civil society organisations (CSOs); women's organisations; youth organisations; activists; international and national policymakers and leaders; abortion providers and other health care professionals; legal and human rights advocates, organisations, and experts; and researchers and academics.

At the end of 2019, the Campaign had 1,448 members from 129 countries. We welcomed new members almost every week in 2019, on average three per week, with a 6% increase in membership in 2019. We continue to contact potential new members to build the network. Most Campaign members are directly involved in one or more aspects of abortion work, but many are also involved in broader sexual and reproductive health and rights, development, women's rights and/or human rights work.

We conducted a membership survey in July 2019 to learn more about our members, their views on our work, and the ways in which we might best support their work. We learned that respondents joined the Campaign to receive comprehensive news about abortion, to learn about other abortion advocates' work, to follow the Campaign's activities, and to be part of a diverse international network and movement.

We will use their responses to develop a new membership strategy focused on increasing engagement and collaboration between the Campaign Coordination team and our members, as well as expanding and consolidating the membership base.

VI. Solidarity Requests

In 2019, we shared the following requests from Campaign members for solidarity, which included signing petitions and letters, and holding protests outside embassies:

- In January 2019, in [Ecuador](#), Las Comadres called for signatures on a petition supporting a bill in the Assembly allowing abortion following rape.
- In [Northern Ireland](#) in February 2019, the Alliance for Choice launched a fundraiser in order to be able to make a video of a popular singer singing about a personal abortion experience live at a special event in Belfast.
- In [Argentina](#), on 28 May, the International Day of Action for Women's Health, in support of the abortion bill tabled that day in the Congress by the Campaña Nacional por el Derecho al Aborto Legal, Seguro y Gratuito, there was a huge demonstration in Buenos Aires and in more

than 100 cities across the country, and solidarity demonstrations in Montevideo, Madrid, Berlin, San Francisco, Toulouse, Stockholm, Copenhagen and Guanajuato.

- In [Canada](#), in June 2019, Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights circulated a petition calling for full and equal access to abortion care in Canada.
- In August 2019, in preparation for the United Nations High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage in September, the Partnership on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) is circulating a [global call to action](#) calling for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) policies and health care packages to be included as an essential part of Universal Health Coverage. Safe abortion is listed as one of the essential services.
- In [Morocco](#), in September 2019, a woman journalist was arrested leaving a gynaecologist's office along with her fiancé, accused of having consented to or had an illegal abortion and sex outside marriage. The doctor and two of his staff, an anaesthetist and medical assistant, were also arrested. This caused outrage across Moroccan media and social media. We shared the petition internationally. All were found guilty and imprisoned but she was able to prove she had never been pregnant and that they were married, so everyone was released.

VII. Young Activist Network for Abortion Advocacy (YANAA)

On 27 September 2019, we announced the launch of YANAA, a new international network as part of the Campaign, by and for young people, that focuses on activism and advocacy in relation to safe abortion. The decision to initiate this network arose from a recommendation at the Campaign's International Forum in October 2018 by a workshop for young women, who called for an increase in the Campaign's organisational focus on youth. We initially formed a regionally representative six-member steering committee from Argentina, India, Malaysia, South Africa, Sudan, and Sweden, coordinated by Elise Denis-Ramirez. They were invited to London in June 2019 for a two-day workshop in which they developed the initial terms of reference for YANAA and formulated the aims, vision, and strategic goals

YANAA is committed to advancing abortion rights globally for young people, developing advocacy initiatives and ensuring inter-generational dialogue. The network aims to bring youth perspectives on abortion and develop youth-led advocacy strategies on all aspects of safe abortion, from parental consent access to abortion pills to decriminalisation. As a project of the Campaign, YANAA's strategies are aligned with the overall aims of the Campaign.

YANAA convened a Tweet-a-Thon on 27 September to mark International Safe Abortion Day and to launch the network on all major social media platforms (Instagram, Twitter and Facebook) @yanaanetwork. At the end of 2019, the YANAA Committee began to plan specific initiatives in India and South Africa, led by the YANAA Committee members from those countries.

YANAA focuses on how abortion stigma impacts safe abortion access and education for young people, as well as highlighting the advocacy work our members and other young activists are doing on abortion, which means sexual health and relationships education are also a key focus. For more about YANAA, see our [website](#) and connect via [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

VIII. Knowledge Creation & Dissemination

Twice Weekly Newsletter

The Campaign publishes a twice-weekly newsletter. In 2019, it carried well over 500 reports, not least due to a substantial increase in the content sent to us by Campaign members for sharing. This has established the Campaign newsletter as a recognised platform to disseminate international news. The newsletter carries evidence and data on abortion, the policies and programmes of

governments, UN agencies, human rights bodies, national health systems and courts, as well as reports of advocacy campaigns and other activities, hotlines, members' experience and perspectives, as well as a wide and growing list of publications, videos and other resources.

Abortion Law Reform – Special Section of the Health & Human Rights Journal

In the December issue for Human Rights Day 2019 of the [Health & Human Right Journal](#), Marge Berer and Lesley Hoggart were Guest Editors for the special section on Abortion Law Reform and wrote an editorial to introduce it. The articles were as follows:

- Editorial: Progress towards decriminalization of abortion and universal access to safe abortions: national trends and strategies, by Marge Berer, Lesley Hoggart
- Eliminating abortion from criminal law: a just cause, by Ana Cristina González-Vélez, Carolina Melo-Arévalo, Juliana Martínez-Londoño
- The role of reproductive justice movements in challenging South Korea's abortion ban, by Sunhye Kim, Na Young, Yurim Lee
- From the grassroots to the Oireachtas: abortion law reform in the Republic of Ireland, by Anna Carnegie, Rachel Roth
- Abortion in Chile: the long road to legalization and its slow implementation, by Gloria Maira, Lidia Casas, Lieta Vivaldi
- Rights-based claims made by UK anti-abortion activists, by Pam Lowe, Sarah-Jane Page
- Midwives and Post-Abortion Care in Gabon: "Things have really changed", by Aimée Patricia Ndembi Ndembi, Justine Mekuí, Gail Pheterson, Marijke Alblas
- They are girls, not mothers: the violence of forcing motherhood on young girls in Latin America, by Ximena Casas
- The Gambia's political transition to democracy: is abortion reform possible? by Satang Nabaneh
- Preventing state harassment of abortion providers: the work of the Legal Support Network in Latin America and East Africa, by Ximena Casas, Michelle Kimathi-Osiemo, Dee Redwine, Claire Tebbets, Karen Plafker
- Denial of safe abortion to survivors of rape in India, by Padma Bhate-Deosthali, Sangeeta Rege

Press and Media: Communications and Engagement

We continued to expand our press list with contact details of local, national, and international journalists, editors, and news agencies who publish pro-choice, abortion-related content. We wrote to journalists bylined on news stories, social media, listserves, and Google alerts to invite them to join the press list. We also did a thorough update and restructuring of our existing list towards the end of 2019, which led to a decision to seek to expand our contacts in 2020 to journalists in Central America, Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, and the Pacific.

The Campaign was quoted 11 times in the international press in 2019, including:

- BBC, May 2019, [Google changes policy on abortion advertising](#)
- The Irish Times, September 2019, [Abortion campaigners protest 'restrictions' in legislation](#)
- Scroll, November 2019, [The cases of two child rape victims show why India needs guidelines for late-term abortions](#)
- The Independent, November 2019, [Slovakia set to pass law forcing women to view images of embryo or fetus before abortion](#)
- Eve Woman, November 2019, [Debate on legalising abortion stokes passions](#)
- Thomson Reuters Foundation, December 2019, [Slovakia – in sixth vote – backs abortion rights](#)

Medical Abortion: Guidelines for Journalists

Monitoring of international press coverage found many damaging misconceptions about abortion with pills that were repeated and reinforced in the media. We therefore decided to develop guidelines for journalists on how to report accurately on medical abortion pills. These [guidelines](#) were prepared in the second half of 2019 and published in early 2020.

Social Media

In 2018, we had examined who read the newsletter, who went to the website, and who used our three social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. We found they each drew different audiences.

The Campaign's social media channels and website showcase our work, our members' work and international news on abortion. These are one of the best ways to bolster member engagement, as well as to engage quickly and efficiently with members about their work. We have established our digital voice as a key player within the abortion advocacy and information-sharing space across social media, carving out a niche for amplifying and sharing advocacy and information about service provision at grassroots level, including in regions that receive less media attention.

At the end of 2019, we had on:

- Facebook – more than 20,000 followers, a relatively stable number compared to last year.
- Instagram – 1,136 followers. This content mainly reached accounts in London, Dublin, Mexico City, Delhi, and Warsaw.
- Twitter – 4,275 followers, a 14% increase from the year before. Our content on Twitter gained a notable 561,100 impressions, which is the number of posts seen by Twitter users. This implies that our content has been featured as part of trending topics, breaking news, and broader women's health themes and feminist discourse, which a large number of Twitter users are interested in and engaging with.

We participated in several Tweet-a-Thons during 2019, including the following:

- #IMarchForSafeAbortion (11 November 2019), on why the right to safe abortion is important and
- #WeDeserveBetter (6 December 2019), which was part of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign against Violence against Women, focusing on why abortion bans are a form of violence against women.

Our followers on social media include young abortion and sexual health advocates, women's health activists, feminist activists, healthcare providers, women interested in abortion rights, the right to bodily autonomy, and more broadly, feminist themes and activism – among the new wave of abortion activists and campaigners. Our Instagram has a younger following of women and non-gender conforming people who are interested more broadly in feminist causes and rights, while our Twitter and Facebook have an older following. A large majority of our followers on Facebook and Twitter are working within women's health, or directly involved with abortion advocacy and the provision of abortion services; this is only somewhat less so on Instagram.

Facebook engagement and interaction are almost entirely with our members, partly due to Facebook's content stream design, which makes it harder for content to reach those who do not follow our page, unless someone who does specifically shares it.

Website

The Campaign's website continued to expand as a knowledge platform in 2019, with an increase in reporting of international abortion-related news, policy, research and advocacy, along with tools and resources for journalists, campaigners, policy-makers and researchers.

The website was accessed from 183 countries in 2019, with the top ten being Canada, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom and USA. There were 140,000 page views by 77,000 users, of whom 82% identified as English speaking, followed by French and Spanish speakers. The safe abortion methods page had over 32,000 views alone. The majority accessed the site via organic search, our social media channels and the

newsletter. The total is a threefold increase over 2017. There was also a four-fold increase in web traffic via Instagram, in keeping with trends establishing this platform as one of the industry's fastest growing, although Facebook and Twitter remained our respective highest sources of social media referrals overall.

We decided we needed to update and redesign the website, and in the second half of the year work began on planning the redesign, with the aim of completion in 2020.

Presentations

In 2019, we were invited to give the following presentations on abortion, mostly to post-graduate students in/near London:

- Medical abortion has the potential to change everything, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, February, by Marge Berer
- Campaigning for abortion, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, March, by Marge Berer
- Membership, network building and the WHO Strategic Approach to strengthening sexual and reproductive health policies and programmes, RAWSA MENA Network meeting, April, by Marge Berer
- Medical abortion pills: what can we learn from other countries, for medical students at University College London, Doctors for Choice UK, April, Marge Berer & Pam Lowe
- Global Landscape on abortion and changes in the last two years, Webinar on Abortion for Women's March Global, July, by Marge Berer
- Choosing when you don't have a choice, for Médecins sans Frontières, Mumbai, July, by Shilpa Shroff
- International Safe Abortion – 28 September – Campaign, for Global Justice Now, Brighton Youth Society, University of Sussex, by Christina Boateng, September

IX. Campaign Structure, Meetings and Funding

Campaign Trustees and Advisory Meeting

The Campaign's Board of Trustees and International Advisory Group met on 28-30 October 2019 in Lisbon, Portugal to discuss strategy, fundraising, and future activities. Agreements included:

- Strategy – The Campaign is strong on information sharing and should maintain that, but should focus more on advocacy, especially supporting grassroots members.
- Goals – The conflict between trying to make self-managed abortions permissible and feasible, while the anti-abortion movements are trying to re-criminalise abortions, and "self-care" is the norm in many poor countries, where it is very often unsafe.
- Young women – There are young activists working together at national and regional level, who are sometimes in conflict with older feminists, so it is important to address their relationship to YANAA, the Campaign's new network.
- For International Safe Abortion Day, 28 September, themes should allow for regional and national variation and relevance.
- Charity status – it was agreed we should seek charitable status in England.
- Fundraising – Proposal to work with affiliated regional networks to raise funds jointly.

Charity Registration

In November 2019 the Coordination team began the process of registering to become a charity in England and submitted an application to the Charity Commission. Charity status was granted on 13 February 2020.

Campaign Team

The Campaign team expanded in the second half of 2019 to eight people, of whom six were part-time and two were full-time, five based in London, one in Oxford, and one in Mumbai: Marge Berer,

Michelle Y Lee, Shilpa Shroff, Christina Boateng, Elise Denis-Ramirez, Rachel Mantock, Elena Michael, Will D Villiers.

Funding

The Campaign is grateful to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a core funding grant of £596,845 in support of our work for the period from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2020, and Marie Stopes International for managing the grant. In addition, a part of the \$250,000 grant we received from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation in 2017 for the International Forum in 2018 included support for the national coalition building meetings and the RAWSA MENA regional network meeting, which took place in 2019. Lastly, our thanks to Promsex, Peru, for housing the Campaign, for their year-long support and acting as our fiscal agent throughout 2019.

Prepared by Elise Denis-Ramirez and Marge Berer