



Yojany is a 29-year-old mother of three who struggles to support her family on the \$120 per month that her husband makes as a gardener. Yojany's oldest son has asthma, and she says she was shocked when she found out she was pregnant again.

"What is the point of having four or five kids and having them die of hunger, or running out of money when one of them gets sick?" she asked.

Uncertain about whether she could support another child, Yojany decided to ask her doctor for information about an abortion. Her doctor told her that abortion was illegal under most circumstances in Mexico but gave her information about the procedure and, after Yojany made her decision, arranged for her to obtain one. Years later, Yojany says that she doesn't regret her decision, instead saying "I feel liberated" (Berger 2007).

Background

On April 24, 2007, a two-thirds majority in the Legislative Assembly of the Federal District of Mexico City passed landmark legislation to decriminalize abortion during the first trimester of pregnancy. This law also reduced the penalties in Mexico City for women seeking abortions after three months. Ipas Mexico worked with legislators, media and activists to promote the law change, and Ipas Mexico will continue to work to ensure that women are able to receive safe, legal, high-quality abortion care in Mexico City and beyond.

Although first-trimester abortion is legal in every Mexican state if the pregnancy is caused by rape, few women outside Mexico City are able to exercise this right. Legal and medical professionals opposed to abortion often prevent women from receiving services, and bureaucratic obstacles are difficult to overcome within the time limits.

Ipas Mexico works to improve reproductive health care throughout the country, including training medical and legal professionals, helping hospitals obtain high-quality reproductive health equipment and advocating for public policies that improve care and increase women's access to abortion.

For the past seven years, Ipas Mexico has also focused on improving rape victims' access to comprehensive care. Ipas Mexico worked with the Federal Ministry of Health to create the recently adopted "Integrated Model of Care for Victims of Sexual Violence," which requires public health personnel to offer legal abortion. It specifies that while individual health-care workers can refuse to provide legal abortion services, health facilities must have staff available and willing to perform the procedure.

Adolescents are another important focus for Ipas Mexico because of their demographic relevance — in 2006 there were over 30 million young people in Mexico, according to the Population Reference Bureau — and vulnerability to unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS.

Key accomplishments

- Ipas Mexico provided legislators in Mexico's Federal District with a 12-page hoja informativa, or information sheet, containing medically and scientifically accurate data, as well as compelling arguments supporting the law change. The legislators used the hoja informativa to inform their decisions when debating legalizing first-trimester abortion. Ipas Mexico helped frame the national debate by serving the public and the media as a resource for comprehensive information on abortion and reproductive health and rights. Ipas Mexico also helped pro-choice youth activists participate politically during the weeks leading up to the liberalization of the abortion law.
- Following legalization, Ipas Mexico collaborated with the Mexico City Ministry of Health (MOH) to promote new guidelines for induced abortion services. These guidelines call for providing safe, legal abortion services on demand and at no cost to women. Ipas responded to urgent requests to purchase manual vacuum aspiration (MVA) equipment and to train abortion providers, and Ipas helped the MOH to offer services immediately after the law was passed.
- Ipas Mexico is improving access to and quality of services for adolescents and youth with a three-part strategy:
 1. *Using health reasons — specifically mental health, which has fewer judicial and bureaucratic requirements than indications for rape — as the legal justification for abortions for adolescents;*
 2. *Advocating for guidelines guaranteeing adolescents' rights to information and services, including the rights to informed consent, privacy and confidentiality;*
 3. *Training doctors and nurses to identify and treat sexual violence and forced pregnancies in adolescents who use health services.*
- Partly as a result of Ipas Mexico's work with the responsible authorities, the Mexico City MOH has committed to expand services to primary-care facilities as soon as trained personnel are available. The MOH has implemented services in 15 hospitals and has purchased 30 MVAs (two per eligible hospital) and significant supplies of misoprostol to provide legal abortions. Ipas Mexico also donated equipment to the designated hospitals.

Statistic	Data
National population	106,500,000
Total fertility rate for women aged 15–49	2.4
Maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births)	60
Percent age of married women married aged 15–49 using modern contraception	59

What Ipas's work means for women

Because of Ipas Mexico's work, women in Mexico City now have access to first-trimester abortion on demand and at no cost. As of January 2008, more than 4,700 safe, legal abortions have been performed in the Federal District since the new law was passed (Bolaños Sánchez 2008). Two new hospitals in the states of Mexico and Hidalgo now provide abortions for the legal indications considered in the state penal codes.

Additionally, Ipas Mexico has reached out to women through community events, radio and written press interviews, advertisements in metro rail cars and the website for the National Alliance for the Right to Decide (ANDAR), which provides information about how to obtain an abortion. These efforts ensure that women in need are aware of the new law and available services.

Works cited

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