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Rebecca Gomperts, MD, MPP

Recipient, 2012 Allan Rosenfield Award for  
Lifetime Contributions to International Family Planning



Rebecca Gomperts (born in Paramaribo, Surinam) studied medicine and visual arts in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. After working as an intern in surgery and radiology, she became an abortion doctor and sailed as a ships doctor and environmental activist aboard the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior.

While sailing in South America, she met many women who greatly suffered due to lack of access to reproductive health services and safe, legal abortion. These women and their stories were the inspiration for Dr. Gomperts to start [Women on Waves](#), a non-profit organization founded in

1999.

When invited by local women's groups, Women on Waves sails to non-territorial waters bordering countries where abortion is illegal, and provides medical abortions on the ship—safely and legally—to women with unwanted pregnancies. Women on Waves has created enormous public interest after successful campaigns with a ship in Ireland (2001), Poland (2003), Portugal (2004) and Spain (2008). The campaign in Portugal catalyzed the legalization of abortion in February 2007.

In 2005, Dr. Gomperts also initiated Women on Web, an online abortion help service that helps women in countries where there is no access to safe abortion services to get access to a medical abortion with Mifepristone and Misoprostol. Together with local women's organizations, Women on Web initiated safe abortion hotlines in Ecuador, Chile, Peru, Venezuela, Argentina, Pakistan and Indonesia and trained women's groups in Africa in the use of Misoprostol for safe abortion and safe birth.

In 2011, Dr. Gomperts completed a Master of Public Policy at Princeton University. She is now pursuing her PhD at Karolinska Institutet.

In addition to professional articles and essays, Dr. Gomperts also authored the novel *Zeedrift*. She has been honored with the Ms. Women of the Year award (2001), the Women Making History Award (Planned Parenthood of New York City, 2002), the Clara Meijer-Wichmann

Penning Award (Liga voor de Rechten van de Mens, 2002), the Margaret Sanger Woman of Valor Award (2004), and the Global Women's Rights Awards (Feminist Majority Foundation, 2007). She was named as one of the "Women Deliver 100: the most inspiring people delivering for girls and women" in 2011.