

[Module 1: Introduction to adolescence and to adolescent health - Adolescent health and development with a particular focus on sexual and reproductive health - Assignment](#)

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## **Background**

Today 1.5 billion of people of the world are aged 10-25 years, 1.3 billion of them in developing countries, the largest in the history. These young people are tomorrow's work force, parents, citizens and leaders. Fertility rate is decreasing day by day, so they need to grow faster and develop to enter healthy and with more than basic skills to work forces. It is the best time for the poor and rich governments to invest on young people and create an environment for young people and their families to invest on themselves. For fighting against Poverty the best way is to invest on young people and it is a great challenge for all governments.

Adolescence is second decade of life which major physical and psychological change occurs and can have risks and opportunities. An ideal environment makes it possible for a young people to develop and have fewer problems in her/his adulthood life and vice versa.

UN convention on the right of child clearly states that adolescents have the right to obtain the health information and services they need to survive and to grow and to develop their full individual potential. Social, cultural and economic factors increase the vulnerability to develop health problems.

[World Bank. World Development Report 2007. Development and the next generation. Washington: World Bank; 2007.](#)

There are many young people, more than any time in world history entering an age fraught with risks and laden with opportunities. They are workers, parents, and leaders of next generation, so their skill and experience affects quality of life of next generation.

Influence of the young people on the future of the nation is well known by policy makers.

This *World Development Report* offers a framework and provides examples of policies and programs to address the issues. It is emphasized to that proper policies and interventions during five youth transitions will have the long lasting impacts on multiple aspects of the society. These five transitions are: continuing to learn, starting to work, developing a healthful lifestyle, beginning a family, and exercising citizenship. For the development of young people only decision of the families are not adequate, but policies and institutions also affect the risks, the opportunities, and the outcomes. The report presents the following strategic directions, putting a "youth lens" on these policies:

- *Broadening opportunities*
- *Acquiring capabilities to make decisions*
- *Offering second chances*

Fertility rate is decreasing day by day, and it shows that the youth will enter the work forces with fewer nonworking dependents. Remaining unemployed will affect the economy. To succeed in today's competitive global economy; they must be equipped with advanced skills beyond

literacy. For reducing poverty, productive labor is the main asset. Providing basic education and health care, especially for children with more focus on girls are fundamentals of developing human capital as a strong base.

Investments during youth's five life transitions will develop a strong and productive human capital. Nutrition and reproductive health services are among the most important human capital investments that prepare young people to become the next generation of parents.

The report uses a framework that splits the youth lens into three mutually supportive lenses that focus policies and magnify their impact. In the framework not only governments and families but also young people, as potential investors, are treated.

[UNFPA. UNFPA framework for action on adolescents and youth. Opening doors with 4 keys. New York: UNFPA; 2007.](#)

UNFPA contributes on investing in young people and explained its fund role in this framework for action on adolescents and youth. The Framework for Action on Adolescents and Youth has been developed as a response to several needs. Almost 1.5 billion people in the world today are between 10 and 25 years old. The daily incomes of most of them are less than 2\$. More than 100 million adolescents are not going to school. Six thousand young people are infected with HIV everyday; most of them are girls in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

In this document it is described, how to translate fund's commitment to action to achieve MDGs on poverty reduction; MDG 2 on education, MDG 3 on gender equality, MDG 5 on maternal mortality, and MDG 6 on HIV prevention.

UNFPA's vision on young people is: "A world fit for adolescents and youth is one in which their rights are promoted and protected. It is a world in which girls and boys have optimal opportunities to develop their full potential, to freely express themselves and have their views respected, and to live free of poverty, discrimination and violence."

In order to fulfill this vision, UNFPA will strategically position itself in four key areas:

Key1. Supportive policy making that applies the lens of population structure and poverty dynamics analyses.

Key2. Gender-Sensitive, Life-Skills-Based Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH)

Key3. Sexual and Reproductive Health Services

Key4. Young People's Leadership and Participation

Four Main principles will guide the fund in its work: achieving social equity, protecting the rights of young people, maintaining cultural sensitivity, and affirming a gender perspective.

[WHO. Strengthening the health sector response to adolescent health & development. Geneva: WHO; 2009.](#)

In this document the reasons for investing on the health and development young people are categorized as three reasons: public health, economic and human rights reasons. Investing in the health of adolescents can decrease and prevent the estimated 1.4 million deaths every year, can improve the health and quality of life of them in the future. For raising economic productivity of a country the workforce must be healthy and competent, so the health sector has an important role in development of adolescents.

The WHO Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development (WHO/CAH) for better contribution on improving adolescents' health presented a 4S framework, which uses two entry points: HIV prevention, care and support of those with HIV; and preventing early pregnancy and pregnancy-related mortality and morbidity. Through these entry points, the 4-S framework can be used to address other public health issues affecting adolescents such as nutrition, mental health, substance use and intentional or unintentional violence.

WHO 4S framework for strengthening health sector responses to adolescent health and development are as follows:

- S1• gathering and using strategic information;
- S2• developing supportive, evidence-informed policies;
- S3• scaling up the provision and utilization of health services
- S4• strengthening action and linkages with other government sectors

### **Conclusion**

Investing in young people is the way of achieving a healthy socio-economically productive society and finally achieving MDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.