

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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World Bank. World Development Report 2007. Development and the next generation. Washington: World Bank; 2007.

This report offers a framework and provides examples of policies and programs to address youth and adolescents issues. It talks about five youth transitions and majors on how to secure human capital by investing in the youth. The transitions include; continuing to learn, starting to work, developing a healthful lifestyle, beginning a family and exercising citizenship. There is a lot of emphasis on investing in young people and some of the strategies to be employed include but not limited to:

- Creating opportunities by improving the quality of education and health services
- Enabling the youths by creating capabilities in them to make independent wise decisions
- Giving the youth second opportunities in order to correct past mistakes and grow.

The report outlines that the youth are currently facing a myriad of challenges including poverty and disease burden. HIV/AIDS is a burden to many youth not mentioning the burden of STIs. The only way to help them is by empowering them through equipping them with the necessary skills, give them an opportunity to make money by utilizing them for labour. Providing the youth with basic education and quality health services will help reduce the disease burden. The report appreciates the efforts of many countries to provide basic primary education but that is not enough. There is a cry on the quality of education being provided. The emphasis should be on equipping the youth with the necessary skills to survive outside school since big numbers fall out after primary education in developing countries. Financial systems to enable youth continue with their education should be put in place e.g. loans, bursaries. The challenge to many developing countries is to create pools of skilled labour force right from basic school levels in order to develop. The skills of the labour force affect investment climate. The youth have bigger opportunities to learn because of their young age. If youth remain unemployed for a long time results in wastage of human resource. Unemployment can result in social unrest and cause investors to shy away.

The surging numbers of the youth is emphasized. For the first time ever in history has it happened. The numbers are a fiscal and economic risk. There is therefore need to create opportunities for the young people. There is need for them to go beyond primary education to enhance their skills. Quality should be emphasized. This especially affects the developing countries because of poverty and poor education systems. Governments need to put in policies that will ensure that youth get the right skills and also provide a conducive environment for them to utilize the skills. Issues like minimum wages should be looked into to avoid locking the youth out. They should be involved in the workforce whether formally or informally. Self employment should be encouraged.

Governments should have strategies that are in line with youth development by creating more opportunities. Should set standards, develop accreditation and evaluation systems. The youth

should be actively involved in decision making processes. They should be empowered through use of technology. The need for the youth to equip themselves with the right behavioral skills should be emphasized. Motivation, persistence, cooperation are among the skills. The youth should be given a second chance.

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

The framework lays an emphasis on the current demographic findings to bring to attention the need to handle youth and adolescent matters with more urgency than ever before. few of the statistics include;1.5 billion people in the world are between ages 10-25 years, more than half of all youth live below 2\$ a day, more than 100 million adolescents do not attend school,15 million adolescent girls become mothers every year. UNFPA therefore has a big role to play in developing adolescents and youth. Adolescent sexual reproductive health should be within the framework of development of young people. Education, livelihood and citizenship is emphasized. The framework suggests that as the global community focuses on poverty eradication, support of adolescents and youth should be part of it. By taking care of this group UNFPA will be playing a critical role in achieving the millennium development goals especially on poverty reduction, education, gender equality, improving maternal health and HIV prevention. The funds invested are to help adolescents and youth to gain access to opportunities. This is meant to empower them with skills, provide them with access to health, connect them livelihood and employment programs, uphold their rights and encourage them to participate fully in development plans. Investing in the youth will bring up a society that is healthy, socioeconomically productive and poverty free.

The framework lays out UNFPAs vision for young people where their rights are promoted and protected. The framework calls for intersectoral collaborations and partnerships In order to fulfill the vision .Four areas are identified referred to as the four keys. These are:

- Supportive policy making that applies the lens of population structure and poverty dynamic s analysis. Involve young people in MDG based development and poverty reduction strategies
- Gender sensitive life skills based sexual and reproductive health education. Done through schools and communities. Improve quality of education, retain girls in schools and include SRH education in school curricula.
- Sexual and Reproductive Health services package of health and SRH services and commodities that will include contraception, HIV prevention, and maternal health services. Scale up youth and adolescent friendly SRH services
- Young people's leadership and participation. Involve youth in policy, programming, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

There is emphasis on working with the youth on advocacy on key issues. Youth and adolescent Issues should be incorporated in the poverty reduction strategy. There is need to forge alliances with governments, development partners and society to achieve the goals. Interventions to be done at program level to create an essential package for adolescents and youth composed of education, SRH services and livelihood components. In addition advocates mobilizing stakeholders to create an environment for policy and programmatic interventions. Through the

process there will be guidance through achieving social equity for young people, protecting their rights, maintaining cultural sensitivity and affirming gender perspective.

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

The framework starts by defining adolescence and its main challenges. It then outlines the need to invest in the health and development of adolescents. Many young deaths occur from preventable causes. There is need to adopt healthy behaviors to prevent health problems now and for the next generation. The burden of the adolescent population is outlined as approximately 1/5 of world population. Healthy, competent adolescents who enter the work force can raise economic productivity of a country. Not investing in young people will result in the vicious cycle of ill health and socioeconomic deprivation. Emphasis is laid on the rights of the adolescents as regards their health. The framework also outlines that there is need for collaboration between the governments, NGOs and private sector in this. WHO approaches this through its 4-S framework and uses two programmatic entry points as; HIV prevention, care and support, preventing early pregnancy and pregnancy related mortality and morbidity. Priorities of the adolescents are a focus of Millennium Development Goals. The framework appreciates that most countries have programs, strategies and budgets to address them.

The 4-S framework addresses the following areas;

S1. Gathering and using strategic information.

There is lack of current and up-to-date data available to inform policy and program development. Also data on important outcomes e.g. maternal mortality and outcomes of programmatic activities is lacking. Therefore need ministries of health to facilitate systematic collection, analysis, dissemination and use of data.

S2. Developing supportive evidence informed policies.

National SRH and HIV strategies identify adolescents as an important group but do not specify how to address the needs. There is need for SRH and HIV strategies to include enabling and guiding policy statements based on evidence on what programmatic actions need to be carried out and how they should be implemented in order to effectively address specific and problems of adolescents.

S3. Scaling up the provision of health services and commodities.

There are a range of barriers that hinder the provision of health services to adolescents especially in government facilities. Ministries of health should play leadership roles in guiding the provision of health services to adolescents within and outside government. Improve quality of health services to adolescents.

S4. Strengthening other sectors.

All sectors need to collaborate in providing health information and education, building life skills, empowering adolescents and mobilizing communities to respond to the needs of the adolescents. All partners should work together to address adolescent issues using evidence based approaches.