

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.

The central idea in the overview of this report is the advocacy for governments around the world to invest in young people. With the population of young people, age 12 to 24, reaching 1.5 billion, the highest ever in the history of the world, and with the reality that this population makes up the future leaders of tomorrow (parents, the work force, entrepreneurs, etc), now is the time to invest in their development. Doing so will prepare them for the task that lies ahead, becoming productive and on the overall reduce poverty. It advocates that governments put in to place the right policies that will help the development of young people's potential through their transition. The report identifies three main policy directions (framework for addressing the needs of young people) for helping young people develop themselves and contribute to society. These three policy directions are as follows:

1. Opportunities-Broaden the opportunities for young people to access quality health and education, and to acquire education and skills and use them productively for a better future.
2. Capabilities-Develop young people's capabilities to choose well among the opportunities by recognizing them as decision-making agents.
3. Second Chance-provide an effective system that offers young people a second chance to recover or catch-up from bad decisions.

UNFPA. UNFPA framework for action on adolescents and youth. Opening doors with 4 keys. New York: UNFPA; 2007.

This document looks at adolescents and young people with special focus on the problems they face, their needs and how these needs can be addressed.

Approximately 1.5 billion people in the world today are between 10 to 25 years old, about 525 million survive on less than \$2.00 a day, more than 100 million adolescents do not attend school, 15 million girls become mothers every year, and about six thousand young people are infected with HIV every day. With this statistics, it is clear that the problems facing adolescents and young people are far more beyond sexual and reproductive health. It looks at adolescents' and young people's problems at a broader perspective to include their educational, social, and economic wellbeing, as reflected in the above statistics. These problems must be addressed through an integrated program and multi- sector concept service delivery approach.

With this background, the UNFPA focuses on a comprehensive and holistic approach to addressing the development needs of adolescent and youth. An approach that takes into consideration, meeting other objectives of the global community, such as poverty reduction, education, gender equity, reduction of maternal mortality, and prevention of HIV, of which adolescent and youth are a major player.

The UNFPA's vision is, a world fit for adolescents and youth, that is one in which their rights are promoted and protected, one 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; a vision that sees young people live in complete totality. The fund shall play a supportive role to governments and partners, and encourage new partnership in an effort to promote multi-sector approach in the realization of these visions. In order to address the needs of adolescents and young people, in fulfillment of its vision, the fund proposes strategically positioning itself in four key areas summarized as follows:

- Key 1. Supportive policy making that applies the lens of population structure and poverty dynamics analyses. In this strategy, the UNFPA shall focus public policy on young people and incorporate their issues in national MDG-based development and poverty reduction strategies. To facilitate this, it will support programs to demonstrate what could happen to poverty reduction if social investment is made in adolescent and young people.
- Key 2. Gender-sensitive, Life-skills-Based Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Education. The fund will take a lead in facilitating the provision of comprehensive, gender-sensitive, life skills-based SRH education in schools and community, to equip girls and boys with the ability to turn knowledge into practice.
- Key 3. Sexual and Reproductive Health Services. UNFPA shall promote a core package of health and SRH services and commodities that will include contraception, HIV prevention, and maternal health services. It shall support service delivery models within the national program context, not isolated projects.
- Key 4. Young People's Leadership and Participation. UNFPA shall pay special attention to working with young people through youth-adult partnership and identify mechanisms for incorporating young people's input into policy and programming process.

UNFPA shall engage in policy dialogue, policy analysis, and policy advocacy aimed at including young people's issues in the national development strategies, plans, and processes of SWApS, PRSs, and MDG.

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

This document was produced by the World Health Organization (WHO), and the portion under review focuses on three main aspects of adolescence; the definition of adolescence, three rationales why we should invest in the health and development of adolescents, and four basic frameworks for addressing the health and development of adolescents.

It defines adolescence as the period representing the second decade of life. This is a period characterized by opportunities, where the individual, if guided properly, can move into a stage of healthy and productive adulthood. On the other hand, it is also a period of risk, at which time if the wrong decisions or behaviors are adapted by the individual, may lead to serious health problems with immediate as well as long term consequences. It provides three basic rationales (public health, economic, and human right reasons) why investment must be made in the health and development of adolescents. It is estimated that about 1.4 million deaths globally among this population occur yearly from different causes (road traffic injuries, violence, suicide, HIV, and pregnancy related causes). Most of these deaths can be avoided if the health and development needs of adolescents are well taken care of. Adolescents represent one-fifth of the global

population. With a healthy and competent adolescent population entering the work force, the economic productivity of a country can be raised. This goal can only be achieved if their health and development are well invested into. The third reason for investing in the health and development of adolescents is in fulfilment of the United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child, (which states that adolescents have the right to obtain the health information and services they need to survive and to grow and develop to their full individual potential), which most countries are a signatory.

The final portion of the document outlines a strategy for addressing the needs of adolescents through a framework by which the health sector response to adolescent health and development can be strengthened. This is referred to as, “The World Health Organization (WHO) 4-S framework for strengthening health sector responses to adolescent health and development. To achieve its objectives, the framework uses two programmatic entry points which are presently of major focus for adolescent health; adolescent HIV programs and early pregnancy prevention and pregnancy-related mortality and morbidity programs. The 4-S framework is outlined as follows:

- S1. Gathering and Using Strategic Information-It gives the ministry of health the authority to facilitate the systematic collection, analysis, dissemination, and use of data for the purposes of advocacy and informing relevant policy and program development.
- S2. Developing Supportive evidence-informed Policies-National SRH and HIV strategies should include enabling and guiding policy statements on what programmatic actions need to be carried out and how they should be implemented in order to effectively address the specific needs and problems of adolescents.
- S3. Scaling up the provision of health services and commodities-Ministries of health should play a leadership role in guiding the provision of health services to adolescents, both within and outside the government.
- S4. Strengthening other sectors-The health sector, especially ministries of health should engage with other sectors and civil society bodies to actively contribute to addressing SRH and HIV in adolescent, and supporting them to do so using evidence-based approaches.