

[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.](#)

About one fifth of the global population is represented by young people who are the next generation of economic and social actors. Making sure that they are well prepared for their futures is enormously important to the course of poverty reduction and growth in the developing world. Young people are critical to further progress with poverty reduction and growth. Young people here is defined by age group ranging from 12-24 years- considered as relevant to cover the transitions from puberty to economic independence. These young people are faced with a number of interrelated and complex challenges that affect and set back their human capital development.

The five dimensions - learning, going to work, staying healthy, forming families, and exercising citizenship - which are referred to in the social science literature as “transitions” are critical for poverty reduction and growth because they relate to building, maintaining, using, and reproducing human capital. Therefore policies should focus on these transitions. How do governments know that what they are doing for the young people is sufficient and appropriate? A youth lens on their policies and programs would focus them on the following three directions 1) broadening the opportunities for young people to develop skills and use them productively; 2) helping them acquire the capabilities to make good decisions in pursuing those opportunities; and 3) offering them second chances, to recover from bad decisions, either by them or by others, such as their governments or families.

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

Adolescence is a period of many critical transitions: physical, psychological, economic, and social. Young people encompasses adolescents (10-19) and youth (15-24) ranging in age from 10-24 years. Young people’s transition to adulthood is diversified by various factors and therefore programming for the diverse groups of young people should be considered for better results. Young people represent the biggest generation in human history and their transition to adulthood needs to be understood in the larger developmental context. Cases for investing in young people’s health and development: 1) the Cairo Plan of Action focused on the overall health, SRH, rights, and well-being of adolescents; 2) Many of the MDG targets directly relate to young people’s health and development; 3) The UN Reform: The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness advocated a stronger alignment of UN System’s work with national development priorities, harmonization of results, and improved accountability; 4) the UNFPA’s strategic direction: life cycle approach. These are all global commitments on young people health and development. In an effort to translate the commitments to action, UNFPA has developed ‘Framework for Action on Adolescent and Youth’.

The rationale for developing the Framework For Action (FFA) stems from UNFPA’s response to organizing its strategy to the changing development context and greater emphasis on poverty

reduction. The FFA is a tool to mobilize resources and to guide and support country offices in designing national development strategies and implementing and monitoring appropriate programs for young. UNFPA's vision on young people is: "A world fit for adolescents and youth is one in which their rights are promoted and protected. To realize this vision, UNFPA engages in the following key areas: 1) Supportive policy making that applies the lens of population structure and poverty dynamics analyses 2) Gender-Sensitive, Life-Skills-Based Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Education 3) Sexual & Reproductive Health Services 4) Young People's Leadership and Participation.

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

Adolescence is a period in which an individual undergoes major physical and psychological changes, which in turn have implications on the person's social interactions and relationships. Adolescence is a time of both opportunity and risk. The health risks that adolescents face could have serious immediate and/or long term effects. Investing in adolescents helps prevent these serious consequences including deaths in this and the next generation through improving the health and well being of adolescents. Adolescents represent one fifth of the global population and investing in their health and development has economic benefits: healthy and competent adolescents entering the work force could increase economic productivity of a country.

The WHO's '4-S framework' for strengthening health sector responses to adolescent health and development employs two entry points: 1) HIV prevention, care and support of those with HIV; and 2) preventing early pregnancy and pregnancy-related mortality and morbidity. These entry points are also used to address other public health issues affecting adolescents such as nutrition, mental health, substance use and intentional or unintentional violence. The following four key areas are included in the 4-S framework: 1) gathering and using strategic information; 2) developing supportive, evidence-informed policies; 3) scaling up the provision and utilization of health services and commodities; and 4) strengthening action and linkages with other government sectors. A systematic process for strengthening the health sector's response to adolescent health and for scaling up health service provision to adolescents should begin with a set of actions at the national level, which are followed by subsequent actions at the district and health facility levels.