

[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**

Adolescence means the period of transition from childhood to adulthood during which adolescents experience enormous physical, psychological and sexual changes. Many definitions are used to describe this period. Independently from what point of view is defined generally is accepted that the adolescents' number in today world is very high. Adolescents represent one fifth of the global population and about one milliard young people are at 10-19 age. Young people become conscious about their role in active participating in decision making for reproductive health that may influence on their recent situation, future and future of next generation. Global health services for adolescents are concerned for problems related to early changes of sexual behavior. Early onset of puberty influences increased sexual activity of adolescents in young ages. Risk for sexual transmitted diseases infections, HIV/AIDS and undesired pregnancy is high. Adolescents have problems to receive health care related to reproductive health, because most of public health services are organized for adults. The United Nations programs contributed to improve the health and social services dedicated to adolescents around the world. International institutions have created special frameworks and strategies for supporting special needs and problems of adolescents.

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

Young people are tomorrow workers who will be involved in different sectors of work. Investments during youth's life will affect young people's wellbeing and it is big challenge. The World Bank Framework focuses attention on broadening opportunities for young people to develop skills and use them productively, helping them acquiring the capabilities to make good decisions in pursuing those opportunities and offering them second chances to recover from bad decisions, either by them or by others.

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

UNFPA in more than thirty years extensive work experience created strategic position for development of adolescents and youth status in society. In response to young people needs, the Framework for Action on adolescents and Youth outlines a strategic direction in contributing towards meeting the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on poverty reduction; and increases UNFPA's role in achieving MDG 2 on education, MDG 3 on gender equality, MDG 5 on maternal mortality, and MDG 6 on HIV prevention. UNFPA is moving from focusing just on the reproductive and health aspects of young people's development towards advocating a more integrated and comprehensive approach that considers the environment in which young people live, have access to education, health (including sexual and Reproductive Health), and

employment in the context of poverty reduction. All these aspects influence the quality of life of this vulnerable part of the world population.

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

WHO Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development (WHO/CAH) contributes to the goal of improving adolescent health. Current actions are accorded with WHO's aim basically orientated to recommending comprehensive, multi-sectorial and evidence-informed Adolescent Health approaches; and by delineating and supporting the critical contribution of the health sector, including the leadership role of health ministries. National Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and HIV programs should incorporate key elements of the 4-S framework for strengthening the health sector response to Adolescent Health by: - gathering and using strategic information; - developing supportive, evidence-informed policies; - scaling up the provision and utilization of health services and commodities; and - strengthening action and linkages with other government sectors. They should put in place initiatives grounded in national HIV, SRH or other programs, aimed at expanding the coverage and improving the quality of health services for adolescents (especially those who are more likely to face health and social problems) in order to achieve clearly defined health outcomes. A systematic process has been developed for strengthening the health sector's response to Adolescent Health in individual countries, and specifically for scaling up health service provision to adolescents. Points of health service delivery carry out actions that enable adolescents to obtain the health services they need, and are appealing and friendly to adolescents.

## **Conclusions**

Adolescent population is the future potential of a country. Increasing investments and cultivating a good environment for young people is the key for preventing economic, social, health problems and crisis. Active participation in national programs for realization of the Millennium Development Goals and making young people more aware of long-term consequences of their action today is the most effective way to contribute to a future wellbeing and reducing poverty.