

UNFPA Supplies: Support to Youth

There are 1.8 billion young people (ages 10–24) in the world at the moment, more than ever before. They make about **1/4 of the world’s population**. The vast majority of young people live in developing countries, and in many they comprise a huge proportion of the population (up to 60 per cent).

A central part of UNFPA’s mandates is enabling both boys and girls to develop their full potential in their personal lives and in society. Sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights have a big role to play: it is estimated that there are around **500 million adolescent girls** living in developing countries who are entering – or about to enter – sexual and reproductive life.

The challenge: barriers and unmet need

More than half of girls aged 15–19 who are sexually active and want to avoid pregnancy are not using modern contraception, the **highest level of “unmet need”** among any age-group. But adolescents face a range of barriers in obtaining and using contraceptives, which include lack of knowledge, social stigma, lack of access to quality family planning services, and existence of laws and policies preventing provision of contraceptives to unmarried adolescents.

In 2014, an estimated 12 million girls aged 15– 19 gave birth, and 3.2 million had an unsafe abortion. **Adolescent pregnancy** is often not the result of a deliberate choice, but rather the absence of choices.

UNFPA Supplies provides support to countries and partners to implement a wide range of targeted interventions to increase adolescents’ awareness and access to quality family planning services, including contraceptives. We also advocate with governments to include youth needs in their sexual and reproductive health policies, and support the development of national plans and strategies to increase youth access to family planning.



Reproductive health information and girls’ empowerment, Nigeria

UNFPA launched the “No Hoodie No Honey” campaign to empower girls aged 15–24 with accurate information to practise safer sex. The aim of the campaign is to reduce unintended pregnancies, HIV and sexually transmitted infections among young people, while empowering both girls and boys with accurate information to enable them make informed choices about their sexual health and relationships. It uses animated videos, social media, radio and promotional

materials to appeal to youth, changing perceptions to give girls the freedom and capacity to negotiate condom use.

UNFPA Nigeria developed and produced facilitators’ guides, videos and promotional materials and the Campaign was also promoted on radio in Abuja through daily hypes and live discussions, and on social media by popular personalities.

Watch the campaign’s video at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=alzF-KQbii8

Advocating to include youth needs in national agendas

UNFPA Supplies works to foster an enabling environment that allows young girls and boys to access quality family planning services and information, and take an informed decision about their sexual and reproductive health free of coercion and stigma. Leveraging its extensive in-country presence and its long standing relationships with governments, UNFPA Supplies conducts targeted advocacy to include young people's reproductive health needs into national policies, and provides support in policy and strategy formulation.

In 2014, 37 of 46 supported countries already included youth needs on family planning in their **policies** (4 countries more than last year), and in an additional 6 countries policies were being prepared. Also, 27 countries already adopted a medium-term costed plan to **operationalize** their youth-sensitive policies, and in 10 more countries the medium-term costed plan was being developed.

Increasing access to family planning

In order to increase knowledge on family planning and use of contraceptives among young people, UNFPA Supplies supports countries to adopt strategies that have proven successful in reaching young potential users with youth-friendly information and services.

In 2014, 43 of the 46 UNFPA Supplies focus countries have designed **targeted initiatives** and plans to improve access to reproductive health services and contraceptives by youth. More than 80 per cent of these initiatives were resourced and being effectively **implemented**. Community engagement is also key to overcoming barriers for young people's access family planning: in 2014, 42 focus countries carried out media campaigns and advocacy on family planning at community level.

The use of social media and **web and mobile technologies** has vast potential for reaching young populations. UNFPA Supplies actively supports countries to make use of these technologies for reaching young people. In 2014, 28 focus countries were using mobile and/or web-based technologies to reach youth with information and services.



Peer educators reaching thousands of youth with e-vouchers, Mozambique

From March to September 2014, 350 peer educators delivered 97,258 health promotion sessions, at the same time distributing 26,000 condoms and vouchers redeemable for contraceptive services and supplies in Maputo City and Quelimane.

They are part of MoBIZ, a new project using social marketing techniques and Movercado, an integrated platform developed by PSI and already operational in

Mozambique. The aim is to increase access to and use of sexual and reproductive health information, services and products especially by urban and peri-urban adolescents and youth (10–24 years). Funding is from the Netherlands and UNFPA. The effort integrates with the *Programa Geração Biz*, a multisector initiative for adolescent sexual and reproductive health implemented by Mozambican ministries of health, education, and youth and sports with financial support from UNFPA and technical assistance from Pathfinder International.

For more information visit

<http://www.unfpa.org/unfpa-supplies>