

Delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled



How we work

UNFPA is on the ground improving lives in about 150 countries that are home to 80 per cent of the world's population. In these countries, the Fund is a catalyst for progress. Working with governments, and through partnerships with other UN agencies, civil society and the private sector, we make a real difference in the lives of millions of people, especially those most vulnerable. Our network of regional and subregional offices provides technical expertise and coordinates efforts of our country offices that work on the front lines of development.

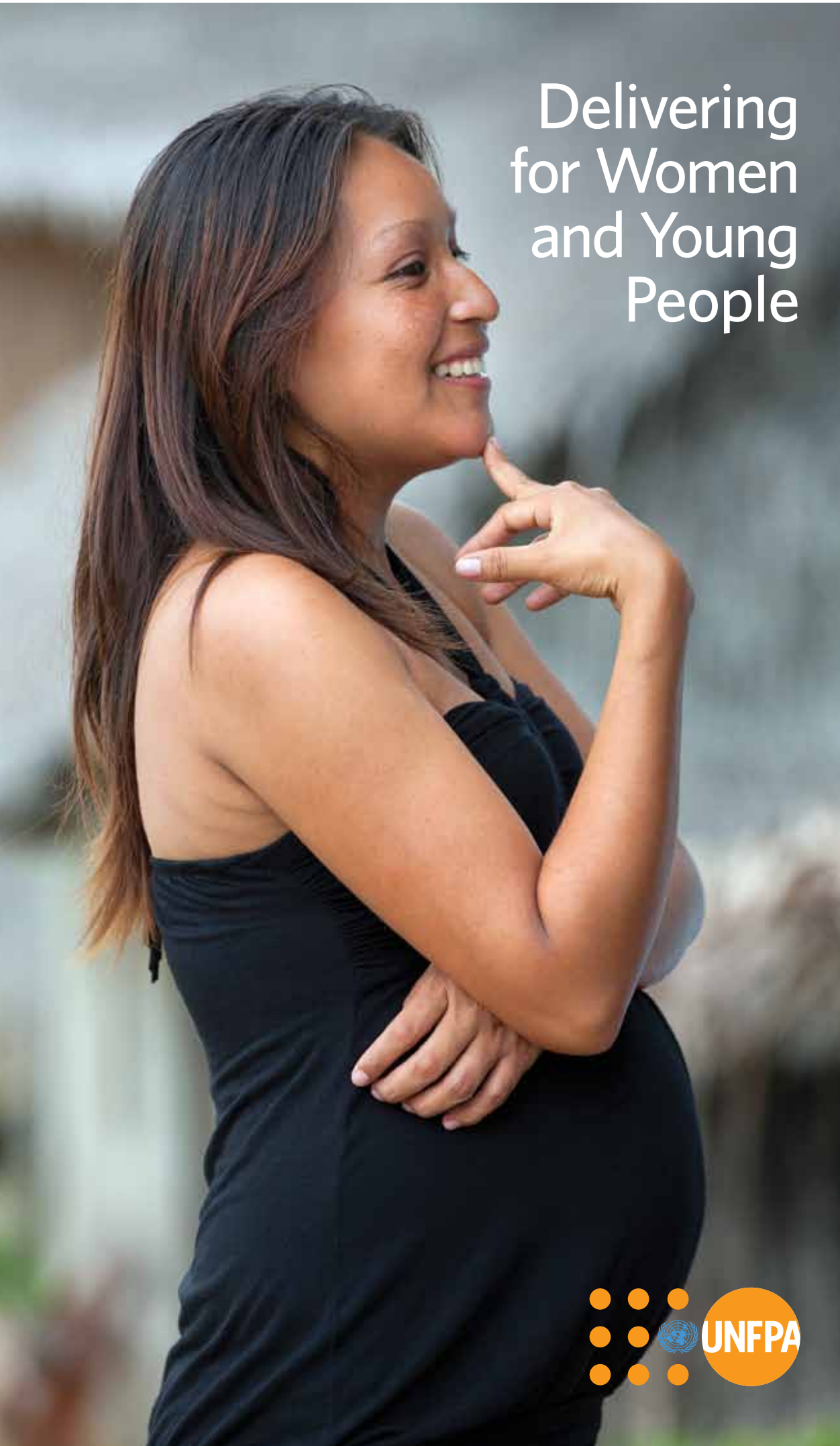
UNFPA anticipates and responds to tomorrow's challenges today. We help countries use population data to assess and anticipate needs, and to monitor progress and gaps in delivering on our promises. We provide technical guidance, training and support to empower our partners and colleagues in the field. And we help ensure that the reproductive health and rights of women and young people remain at the very centre of development.

Cover: © Mark Tuschman/Planned Parenthood Global • Gatefold: © Mark Tuschman • Interior panels (from left to right): UNFPA Executive Director Dr Babatunde Osotimehin with young people © UNFPA Philippines; Mother and child © Mark Tuschman/Planned Parenthood Global; Mother, baby and midwife © Ra'ad Adayleh; Young girls © Rob McBride.



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Delivering for Women and Young People





UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, expands the possibilities for women and young people to lead healthy and productive lives.

It is the lead UN agency for delivering a world where:

- every pregnancy is wanted
- every childbirth is safe
- every young person's potential is fulfilled.

We are making real progress. Since UNFPA started working in 1969, the number – and rate – of women dying from complications of pregnancy or childbirth has been halved. Families are smaller and healthier. Young people are more connected and empowered than ever before.

But too many are still left behind. Nearly a billion people remain mired in extreme poverty. Reproductive health problems are a leading cause of death and disability for women in the developing world. Young people bear the highest risks of HIV infection and unintended pregnancy. More than a hundred million girls face the prospect of child marriage and other harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation or cutting.

Much more needs to be done to ensure a world in which all individuals can exercise their basic human rights, including those that relate to the most intimate and fundamental aspects of life.

Delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted

Few things have a greater impact on the life of a woman than the number and spacing of her children. That's why international agreements going back decades affirm that individuals should have the right (and the means) to freely decide when (or if) to start a family and how many children to bear. Yet, in this new century, some 222 million women who want to avoid or delay childbearing still lack access to the quality services and supplies needed to prevent pregnancy.

Simply meeting the unmet need for voluntary family planning would reduce the number of maternal deaths by nearly a third, and pay for itself. That's because adding contraceptive choices to basic health care would mean fewer pregnancies and newborn health services required. This would avert 54 million unintended pregnancies, 26 million abortions (of which 16 million are unsafe), and 7 million miscarriages. It would also prevent 79,000 maternal deaths and 1.1 million infant deaths.

- [Training health workers to deliver quality family planning services](#)
- [Supplying contraceptives in emergency situations](#)
- [Ensuring youth-friendly reproductive health care](#)
- [Providing counselling and choices to women who want to avoid or delay pregnancy](#)
- [Educating men on the benefits of birth spacing](#)

In 2012, UNFPA helped 46 governments procure enough contraceptives to protect 42 million couples from unwanted pregnancies for one year.

every childbirth is safe

We know how to save almost all women who die giving life. The first step is to ensure they can plan their pregnancies and space their births. Skilled birth attendance at delivery, with backup emergency obstetric care and essential supplies in place, is also critical.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of reducing maternal death and disability is finding ways to reach all women, even those in the poorest, most remote areas, or in times of natural or man-made disasters. This involves bolstering health systems. It is also critical that pregnant women are able to access all the care they need, from prenatal HIV testing to antenatal care for newborns, at the same clinic or health centre. This approach saves money and saves lives.

- [Training midwives and health workers](#)
- [Preventing and treating obstetric fistula](#)
- [Supplying clean birthing kits following disasters](#)
- [Strengthening emergency obstetric care](#)
- [Ensuring reliable supplies of essential medicines and equipment](#)
- [Enabling birth spacing](#)

In two decades, maternal death worldwide was reduced by 47 per cent. UNFPA has worked with ministries and service providers in every region to help health systems deliver for women.

and every young person's potential is fulfilled

People under 25 constitute 43 per cent of the world's population – and that figure rises to almost 60 per cent in many least developed countries. Their reproductive choices will shape future demographic trends.

UNFPA advocates for the rights of young people, including the right to accurate information and services related to sexuality and reproductive health. Empowered with knowledge and skills to protect themselves and make informed decisions, they can realize their full potential and contribute to economic and social transformation.

Investing in young people, especially adolescent girls, is one of the smartest investments a country can make. As parents, teachers and leaders of the next generation, they can help break the cycle of poverty, strengthen the social fabric and create a sustainable future.

- [Promoting the human rights of adolescents](#)
- [Preventing HIV infection](#)
- [Engaging young people in decisions that affect them](#)
- [Supporting age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education](#)
- [Creating safe spaces for adolescent girls](#)
- [Encouraging abandonment of harmful practices](#)
- [Encouraging leadership](#)

Every day in the developing world, 39,000 girls are married and 20,000 girls give birth before age 18.