

Young People Worldwide

One-third of the world's population, approximately 1.7 billion people, is between the ages of 10 and 24 years.¹ Today's generation of young people is the largest the world has ever known. In general, young people are healthier and more educated today than the generations before them. Nonetheless, young people, particularly young women, face significant challenges that prevent them from meeting their full potential.

Half of all new HIV infections occur in young people ages 25 and under, and 14 million adolescent girls give birth every year.^{2,3} Over 70,000 teenage girls are married each day.⁴ Complications from pregnancy, childbirth, and unsafe abortions are the major causes of morbidity and mortality for young women between the ages of 15 - 19 years in the developing world. Girls under 16 are five times more likely to die in childbirth than women in their 20s, while mothers under 20 years are twice as likely to die as women in their 20s.⁵ People between 15 - 24 years have the highest rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.⁶ Furthermore, approximately 20% of women under 24 years of age have been infected with the specific strains of human papillomavirus (HPV), an STI that cause almost all cervical cancers.⁷

These global statistics speak for a neglected population. Young people's choices are hindered by poverty, lack of access to schooling, gender disparities, and silence.

Therefore, young people must be empowered through balanced, comprehensive laws, policies, and education that provide them with both awareness about and autonomy over their own sexual and reproductive health. Globally, regionally, nationally, and locally, we must work together to deliver for youth.ⁱ

Young People in Asia

- In India, 54% of women are married by the age of 18 years.⁸
- In India, 25 - 35% of adolescent girls begin child bearing as early as 17 years.⁹
- In India, although abortion is legal, unsafe abortions account for 50% of all maternal deaths of girls between 15 and 19 years.¹⁰
- In Indonesia, 46% of AIDS cases were reported in young people ages 15-29 yrs.¹¹
- In Indonesia, approximately 60% of female sex workers are below the age of 24 and half of them are below the age of 15.¹²

¹ Population Reference Bureau. *The World's Youth 2006 Data Sheet*. Washington, DC: PRB; 2006.

² Joint United Nations Programme on HIV AIDS (UNAIDS). *2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, Geneva, Switzerland: UNAIDS, 2006.

³ UNFPA. 2004. *The State of World Population 2004: The Cairo Consensus at Ten: Population, Reproductive Health and the Global Effort to End Poverty* New York: UNFPA: 76.

⁴ UNFPA, *State of World Population 2003: Investing in Adolescents' Health and Rights*, New York, 2003. http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2003/pdf/english/swp2003_eng.pdf (accessed September 25, 2007)

⁵ UNFPA, *Early Marriage and Violence Limit Girls' Opportunities and Violate Their Rights*, October 2003. http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2003/presskit/press_releases/swp2003_pressrelease03.pdf (accessed October 9, 2007)

⁶ "The World's Youth 2000." *Population Reference Bureau*. http://www.prb.org/pdf/WorldsYouth_Eng.pdf (accessed October 10, 2007)

⁷ Executive Summary of Lancet Sexual and Reproductive Health Series. 2006 http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/publications/srh_lancetseries.pdf. (accessed on October 9, 2007)

⁸ International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS), 2000. *National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2)*, India, 2000.

⁹ United National Population Fund CST for CASA, *The South Asia Conference on Adolescents*, Kathmandu, Nepal (1999), 22.

¹⁰ CEDPA, *Adolescent girls in India choose better future: an impact assessment*, Washington, DC (2001): 7.

¹¹ Indonesia Planned Parenthood Association, *Youth Fact Sheet*, 2005.

- In Bangladesh, the average age for women to marry is 14.2 years¹³
- In Vietnam, it is estimated that the average woman has about 1.3 abortions in her lifetime.¹⁴ According to the Vietnam Family Planning Association, the high abortion rate is due to a lack of sex education and contraceptive use.^{15°}

Women Deliver has drawn together experts on these issues from all over the world. If you have comments on this fact sheet or recommendations for additional fact sheets, please contact vbrocato@familycareintl.org or nsorkin@familycare.intl.org.

ⁱ For the purpose of the WOMEN DELIVER Fact Sheet, we use the terms “youth” and “young people” interchangeably to refer to individuals ages 10 - 30. Nonetheless, we recognize the UN definition of young people as 10-24 years, youth are 15-24 and adolescents are 10-19.

¹² Indonesia Planned Parenthood Association, Youth Fact Sheet, 2005.

¹³ Population Reference Bureau. Meeting Young women’s Reproductive and Sexual Health Needs. 2000

¹⁴ Population Reference Bureau. An Overview of Population and Development in Vietnam, 2003. <http://www.prb.org/Articles/2003/AnOverviewofPopulationandDevelopmentinVietnam.aspx> (accessed October 8, 2007)

¹⁵ Medical News Today. “Vietnam’s High Abortion Rate, Lack of Sex Education Among Young People, Agence France-Press Examines.” (10 July 2005) <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/27187.php> (accessed October 16, 2007)

[°] The Youth Working Group fully supports a woman’s right to choose a safe abortion.