



# Nowhere to Turn: Youth, SRH and GBV during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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# Adolescents and Young Adults

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- 1.2 billion youth aged 15-24 years in 2019 (16% of global population) projected to increase 62% by 2050
- Good health, education, and youth employment are essential for reaping the positive impacts of the demographic dividend on global economic growth
- During adolescence gender norms and stereotypes firmly take hold, with adolescent girls facing intense pressure to conform to gendered expectations
- Gender-based discrimination can be particularly exaggerated, with girls facing a greater likelihood of experiencing a range of challenges.
- Mental well-being is also key for this transition period of life



## SRH and Youth

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- Access to contraception, abortion, post-abortion care, and wider SRH services is essential for adolescents and young adults (AYA)
- Reduction in fertility among youth (15-24 years) from 244 births per 1000 women (1990-1995) to 178 births per 1000 women (2015-2020) – a decrease of 27%
- Increase in contraceptive use among unmarried (3.8% to 7.4%) and married (15% to 31%) youth (15-19 years) from 1990 to 2019
- Only a modest reduction in the unmet need for family planning (FP)



# AYA Vulnerabilities Worsen During Crisis

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**Crisis exacerbates existing inequalities**



## **Increased vulnerability**

- Increased GBV reported
- More likely to fall victim to sexual exploitation
- Social harms and gender inequalities heightened
- Safety and social support challenges
- Loss of voice and agency



## **Economic shocks**

- Loss of livelihoods
- Increased mental strain within households
- Increased care burden by women and girls

# SDGs and COVID-19 (1)

SDG Goal	Impact of COVID-19
SDG 1: No Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Globally 193 Million women and girls aged living on less than \$ 1.90 a day</li><li>• Livelihoods disrupted due to COVID-19 restrictions threaten to trap and push more women and girls into extreme poverty</li><li>• Youth in low-income households forced into income-generating activities to support family survival</li><li>• Increased cases of young women and girls engaging in transactional sex to survive</li></ul>
SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Access to SRH services disrupted (810 daily deaths preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth before COVID-19)</li><li>• Supply chain disruptions of essential medicines and services</li><li>• Reported increase in physical and sexual violence, teenage pregnancies, and unsafe abortions.</li><li>• Increased reporting of depression and other mental health issues</li></ul>

# SDGs and COVID-19 (2)

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SDG Goal	Impact of COVID-19
SDG 4: Quality Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nearly 743 Million girls locked out of school due to restrictions</li><li>• Widened inequality gap for learners from poor, vulnerable, and marginalized households</li></ul>
SDG 5: Gender Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 243M reported GBV cases (40% of all cases) in 2019</li><li>• Data already indicating that reported cases of GBV have doubled in some countries</li><li>• 12M girls marry before age 18 every year and COVID-19 is likely to increase child marriages</li></ul>

# What Next?

- Collect, track and use gender disaggregated data to inform response

- Increase and ringfence SRH and GBV funds
- Proper enforcement and adherence to SRHR and GBV laws and policies even during crisis
- Deliberate inclusion of SRHR and GBV policy actions in COVID-19 response plans

**Improve  
Delivery  
of SRH  
and other  
Services  
for Youth**

- Adapt to remote approaches
- Digitization of services
  - Tele-medicine
  - Tele-counselling
  - Social media use
  - Digitize sex education

- Expand social support
- Address harmful social norms
- Improve accountability

# Thank you

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