Data Brief—Holistic Approach to Adolescent Girls' Health

GIRL Center

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HOLISTIC APPROACH TO ADOLESCENT GIRLS’ HEALTH

The adolescent population is growing and so is their potential. Of Africa’s population is <25; Africa’s youth population is expected to increase by more than by 200% by 2055.

The World Bank estimates that limited educational opportunities combined with barriers to school completion for girls cost countries between US$15 trillion and US$30 trillion in lost lifetime productivity and earnings.

Adolescent Girls (AG) experience greater obstacles across the ten dimensions of Women’s Health and Wellbeing, which accumulate throughout the life course.

90% of young women do not use the internet in low-income countries; male adolescents are twice as likely to be online. This limits girls’ agency and their opportunities to develop critical skills.

In 2018, about 16% of women ages 15 to 24 were subject to intimate partner violence, the highest rate among women who have been in a relationship across age groups.

Pregnancy and childbirth complications are the leading cause of death for ages 15-19 worldwide. Adolescent pregnancy also forces young women to leave school, decreasing their lifetime earning potential.

In almost all regions of the world, youth unemployment is higher for young women than young men; in Northern Africa and the Arab States, it is twice as high. Young women are also more likely to engage in poorly regulated “invisible” domestic work, which leaves them vulnerable to exploitation.

“The pressure put on families when water and food become scarce can bear down on pre-existing gender discrimination... Insecurity and conflict make earning a living even more difficult. Girls are at risk from violence both inside and outside the home.”

The challenges to the health and well-being of adolescent girls are interconnected, but so are the benefits!

“Girls multiply benefits for their communities: Strategic investment in adolescent girls’ education, health, safety, and economic opportunities can help end intergenerational poverty; positively affect the most marginalized and underserved communities; and boost the economies of entire countries.”

REFERENCES


This data brief was created by the Population Council’s GIRL Center in collaboration with Exemplars in Global Health to inform the thematic roundtable discussion on a Holistic Approach to Adolescent Girls Health at the Girls Deliver Pre-Conference on Adolescent Girls held in Kigali, Rwanda ahead of the Women Deliver 2023 Conference.

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