



**YOUTH HEALTH:  
A GLOBAL ISSUE OF CONCERN**

Investing in young people is critical for any society due to a host of ethical, economic, human rights and gender related issues. As most young people become sexually active in their adolescent years, it is ever more important to address their key concerns early in time.

With around half a million, or 20% of its population aged 15-24, Armenia needs to invest in adolescent and young population. Thus, the Government should declare and maintain this as a top priority for itself. Adolescence is the life period for learning and exploring, and thus can serve as the best platform for establishing healthy attitudes and behaviors.

**OUTCOME:**

To empower the youth in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia to become aware and realize their right to quality S&RH and ensure their access to comprehensive youth friendly S&RH services in the country. The outcome will be measured through such indirect indicators as decrease in the number of unwanted pregnancies, the spread rate of STIs, including HIV/AIDS, as well as incidents of gender-based violence.

**EXPECTED OUTPUT:**

- ✓ Safer sexual behavior among youth, through increased awareness and improved knowledge on S&RH issues and rights, including puberty, sexuality, childbirth, fertility regulation, STIs, including HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence.
- ✓ Innovative approaches replicated and tested and capacities built for the delivery of youth friendly S&RH services and improved access to affordable contraception.
- ✓ Inter-country collaboration on youth S&RH and rights between parliamentarians, educational and health authorities, youth oriented (N)Gos, national experts and young peer-educators from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.

**FACING THE CHALLENGE**

**CURRENT SITUATION:**

Overall, the status of S&RH has significantly improved since the start of the UNFPA's activities in the mid-1990s. However, despite some reductions in abortion rates and increase in the contraceptive prevalence rate, S&RH services and the overall level of awareness remained inadequate in Armenia, and the entire region of the South Caucasus.

Despite these improvements, there are still some alarming statistics substantiating swift action in the area of S&RH. These include around 50% abortion rate for all pregnancies in Armenia; more than 25% rate of incidence of abortion among young women (aged up to 24); recent upward trend of secondary infertility incidence in the country.

**ENTRY POINTS:**

Some of the elements of the status quo will require heightened attention:

- rigidity of some of the target/beneficiary groups with regard to IEC activities in S&RH, such as parents
- novelty of action, especially with regard to the work with the media and role models
- insufficient infrastructure of delivering quality service to youth in the area of SRH, especially with youth-friendly focus
- weaker sustainability of the previous action and need to ensure a renewed emphasis on national ownership and longer-term sustainability of the tangible progress
- limited legislative support and greater need for progressive language in relevant legislation and government decrees.

### ACTION

The action includes an array of activities and interventions, aiming at covering the entire spectrum of stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The primary dimensions of the action imply:

- informing, educating, and communicating with youth about their S&RH and rights,
- improving availability of and access to quality youth friendly S&RH services,
- strengthening the S&RH policy environment through national and inter-country networking.

The awareness raising efforts include the following key activities:

- facilitating peer-to-peer communication, including that thru Internet,
- producing and applying IEC materials,
- using media and celebrities to promote educated choice(s) in S&RH behavior patterns,
- educating the broader public, as well as S&RH professionals on youth-friendly approaches in S&RH.

The improvements in infrastructure include the following key components:

- training of healthcare providers on various relevant S&RH issues,
- provision of continuous access to contraceptives, as well as expansion of the network of youth-friendly S&RH service centers,
- strengthening the capacity of educators and parents in particular to provide counselling and thus prevent potential S&RH complications among adolescents.

The work on the policy level will imply the following activities:

- close collaboration with EPF in order to strengthen the existing pan-European networks in S&RH,
- establishing and encouraging a direct dialogue between the targeted youth and national decision-makers.

### PARTNERS

#### INTERNATIONAL:

The Project utilizes the available resource, including the existing European networks and accumulated expertise in Europe and in select locations of the developing world. Among the major official international partners are:

European Parliamentary Forum (EPF), International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Y-PEER Global Network, YouAct European Network, Council of Europe, and other affiliated institutions.

#### STATE INSTITUTIONS:

National Assembly of RA, Ministry of Health of RA, Ministry of Education of RA, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, National Statistical Service of the RA, National HIV/AIDS Center, and other affiliated institutions.

#### NGOs:

Pan-Armenian "For Family and Health" Association (PAFHA), Scientific Association of Medical Students of Armenia (SAMSA), Armenian Young Women Association (AYWA).

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