

At A Glance

Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Introduction

More than half of the world's population is under 25. Most live in the poorest countries, where complications during pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death for girls 15-19. Twenty-three million adolescents need contraception but don't have it, and over 1 billion young people need accurate, unbiased information and health care, free from judgment. Pathfinder is making sure they get it.

Pathfinder programs understand that young people are not homogenous, and we therefore implement a variety of age- and life stage-tailored approaches. These approaches consider factors which influence young people's lives at the individual (e.g., knowledge and skills), relational (e.g., engaging peers, partners, parents), social (e.g., school and work environment), and structural (e.g., services and government laws and policies) levels. We apply a positive youth development lens which normalizes adolescent development and supports the ability of all adolescents and youth, inclusive of marginalized groups such as young people with disabilities, and those living in rural areas, or with HIV.

Strategies

Mainstreaming youth programming

Pathfinder ensures young people can access sexual and reproductive health information and care without judgement and bias. Our programs are designed based on the age and gender of the youth we serve and are developmentally and culturally responsive.

Building an enabling environment with youth at the center

A range of social, cultural, political, and economic factors impact young peoples' sexual and reproductive health outcomes. Pathfinder works to lift barriers to the advancement of young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights through integrated, multisectoral programming that addresses young people's holistic needs.



Above: Priyanka Kumari and Chandani Kumari were counseled on sexual and reproductive health in India. Photo Credit: Sarah Peck

Pathfinder Impact in 2022

6.3 million people younger than 25 received contraception through Pathfinder-supported programs.

Meaningfully engaging adolescents and youth

Adolescents and youth themselves inform Pathfinder's program design, implementation, monitoring, and accountability. We cultivate young people's leadership and programmatic skills, recognizing that programs must see young people not simply as stakeholders but as shapers of their own priorities.

Shifting policies and strengthening health systems

Pathfinder supports policies, procedures, and programs that respond to the diverse needs and preferences of young people. We strengthen the capacity of health systems and providers to serve youth with quality care, enhancing the delivery of quality, responsive services.

Supportive Social Environment

Pathfinder considers the complex interplay between individual, interpersonal, household, community, and societal factors (structures, policies, systems) that influence adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights (AYSRHR) outcomes. We promote peer support and empower young couples to communicate, learn, and decide together about healthy sexual and reproductive health (SRH) choices. We engage with community influencers, institutions, and health stakeholders to publicly champion positive norms and promote the right of all young people to access SRH services.

Highlight: Shukhi Jibon, Bangladesh

Accelerating Universal Access to Family Planning (AUAFP), known as Shukhi Jibon in Bangladesh, reaches those most in need of family planning services and information. In partnership with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the project supports developing and deploying skilled, responsive, and respectful family planning providers and strengthens the delivery of quality family planning services, especially for adolescents and youth.

Designs digital health tools for communication between providers and adolescent and youth clients.

Works with young people and their communities to transform norms surrounding SRH information and services.

Advances the government of Bangladesh's FP2030 commitment to the right to health for adolescents, youth, and all Bangladeshis.

Youth Agency and Choice

Pathfinder works to ensure that young people have increased knowledge, skills, intention, and agency to make healthy decisions about their SRH. We support young people's ability to hold and champion favorable attitudes and perceptions related to sexuality, gender equity, and SRH rights and entitlements. In doing so, young people develop a better understanding of healthy relationships and agency to maintain respectful social and sexual relationships free of violence.

Highlight: Act With Her, Jordan

Act With Her increases girls' (ages 10-17) agency and facilitates healthy transitions to adulthood, including through puberty and secondary school,

Youth-Responsive Access and Point of Care Readiness

We support quality youth-responsive sexual and reproductive health services. Pathfinder works with governments to recognize youth-specific needs and widen access through points of care that are tailored to youth and appeal to youth's interests, shaped by how they want to interact with services. This includes digital programming and self-care. Innovations for service delivery are youth-centered and youth have opportunities to hold service providers accountable.

Highlight: Family Planning Activity, Uganda

Uganda Family Planning Activity addresses underlying social, cultural, and structural barriers to family planning access, particularly among adolescents, youth, first-time parents, and low-parity women in 11 districts across Uganda.

Engages multiple stakeholders across government, cultural and religious institutions, civil society, private sector, and implementing partners to strengthen leadership and coordination to address barriers to family planning uptake

Increases the proportion of the national health budget allocated to family planning.

Addresses contraceptive stock-outs to increase access to quality voluntary family planning.

Shifts social norms through evidence-based social and behavior change communication techniques to improve health timing and spacing of pregnancies.

and—if they so choose—through sexual debut, employment, marriage, and childbearing. Act with Her also engages boys, families, and communities to shift inequitable gender norms, and works to increase the adolescents' accessibility and use of key health care, education, and other systems.

Works across multiple sectors and at individual, community, and systems levels to empower adolescent girls.

Gives girls the opportunity to gain the necessary individual and collective capabilities via curriculum-based groups facilitated by "near peer" mentors ages 18-24.

Catalyzes positive shifts in gender and social norms through gender-synchronized and transformative activities with boys, parents, and communities.

Pathfinder International is driven by the conviction that all people, regardless of where they live, have the right to decide whether and when to have children, to exist free from fear and stigma, and to lead the lives they choose. As a global health organization with locally led, community-driven programs, we support women to make their own reproductive health decisions. We work with local partners to advance contraceptive services, comprehensive abortion care, and young people's sexual and reproductive rights in communities around the world—including those affected by poverty, conflict, climate change, and natural disasters. Taken together, our programs enable millions of people to choose their own paths forward.

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