



UNITED NATIONS
INTERNATIONAL
YOUTH DAY

2015
YOUTH CIVIC
ENGAGEMENT

#CivicEngagement

[Civic engagement](#) is about doing everything we can to make a difference to the life of our communities. It requires a combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation, in order to participate fully in the decisions that affect us. This year, the International Youth Day campaign aims at promoting civic engagement and participation of youth in politics and public life.

Young people are vital to all social movements as they have active roles to play within all domains of social life, particularly: society, family, education, work/employment, and cyberspace. This year, we – the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) – wish to draw special attention to the issue of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). [SRHR](#) encompasses the right of all individuals to make decisions concerning their sexual activity and reproduction free from discrimination, coercion, and violence.

Areas where SRHR matter

Society

SRHR involves freedom and human rights; the "right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health". Within the domain of social life, the personal is the political and vice versa. SRHR issues that matter to young people should be included in political agendas and social movements.

Facts: ♦ Data from 33 developing countries shows that almost a third of women and girls cannot refuse sex with their partners, and more than 41% say they could not ask their partners to use a condom.

♦ Approximately 16 million adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 give birth each year—almost 95% of whom live in low- and middle-income countries.

Act: ♦ Never give in to peer pressure – you know your limits and no one should make you feel guilty or uncomfortable.

♦ Protect yourself – being informed only gets you so far, always be vigilant and look out for predators.

Education

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) guarantees women equal rights in access to the information, education and means that will enable them to exercise rights relating to SRHR.

Education, both formal and informal, is so important in helping to ensure the health and well-being of young people.

Facts: ♦ Girls with no education are three times more likely to marry before age 18 than those with secondary or higher education.

♦ In the United States, 83% of girls aged 12-16 have experienced some form of sexual harassment in public schools.

Act: Formal and informal education will empower you – don't compromise on your self-development and know where to draw the lines with your peers and educators.

Cyberspace

Young people are major users of online methods of interaction and communication. Cyberspace also allows for the exposure of young people to new ideas and ways of thinking that open up possibilities for learning, networking, campaigning and personal development. Although cyberspace may serve as a convenient medium of discussion, it also presents challenges and danger.

Facts: ♦ In a study in the US, 41% of adolescent girls between the ages of 15 and 17 said they had experienced bullying via the internet or mobile phone, compared with 29% of boys.

♦ 20% of all Internet pornography in the US involves children, with more than 20,000 new images posted weekly.

Act: If you are in trouble or feel harassed, never be afraid to ask for help and know where to go to for help – choose whatever medium you feel comfortable with.

Family

SRHR within the domain of family life involves issues of reproductive health and rights including maternal/child health, access to family planning and contraception, sexual health and prevention of family member/intimate partner/spouse violence.

Facts: ♦ About 19% girls in the developing world become pregnant before age 18, and about 3% become pregnant before age 15.

♦ Close to 300,000 girls and women—or 800 every day—die each year due to pregnancy- and childbirth-related causes.

♦ More than 30% of women and girls worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate-partner violence or non-partner sexual violence.

Act: Know your rights – be informed and arm yourself with knowledge on SRHR, sometimes it's the people closest to you who need to be educated.

Work/Employment

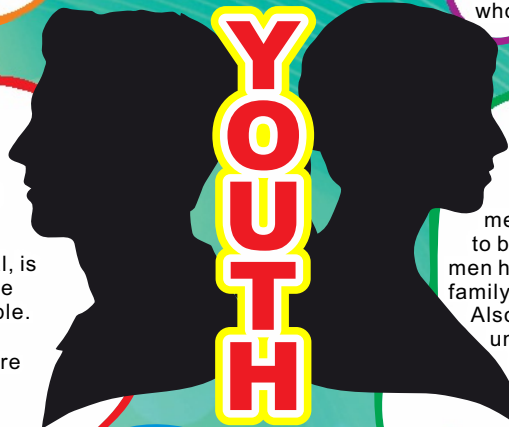
SRHR at work relates to gender equality – equal access to the same resources, opportunities and rewards regardless of gender or sexual orientation. Gender inequality, harassment and discrimination affect both women and men in different ways, for example, women continue to be under-represented in leadership roles whereas men have less access to family-friendly policies. Also, consideration of unpaid care work remains lacking.

Facts: ♦ About 50% of all women are working, compared to 77% of men. Youth represent 25% of the total working age population.

♦ More than 800 million women workers globally, or 41% of all women, still don't have adequate maternity protection.

♦ One in three women between the ages of 18-34 has been sexually harassed at work.

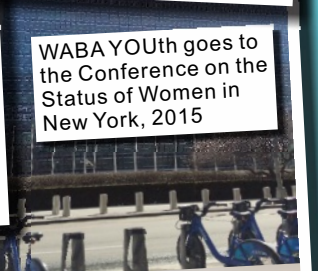
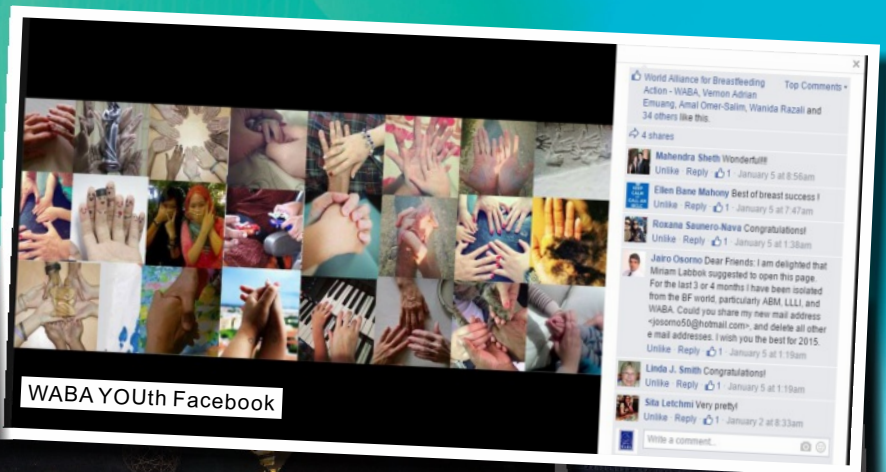
Act: Become agents of change – be aware of ways to help or educate your friends/colleagues to protect and empower themselves.



Hard W



WABA YOUth involved in SRHR issues:



To increase civic engagement, make SRHR part of the post-2015 development agenda by ensuring that:

- ✓ SRHR is prioritised during key negotiations on [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).
- ✓ Universal access to SRHR is addressed comprehensively in the post- 2015 development framework
- ✓ Youth access, including adolescent girls' access to SRHR, is prioritised.
- ✓ SRHR is represented under all relevant goals, such as Gender, Health, Education, Environment, etc.

Resources:

- <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>
- http://www.ippf.org/sites/default/files/2020_gender_equality_report_web.pdf
- <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/shalev.htm>
- <http://www.unfoundation.org/what-we-do/campaigns-and-initiatives/universal-access-project/briefing-cards-srhr.pdf>
- http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/SRH_Framework.pdf
- http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_348035/lang--en/index.htm
- <http://www.un.org/youthenvoy/youth-statistics/>

For more information, please contact:

[Nisha Kumaravel](#)
Youth Engagement and Communications Officer



World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of individuals & organisations concerned with the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding worldwide. WABA action is based on the Innocenti Declaration, the Ten Links for Nurturing the Future and the Global Strategy for Infant & Young Child Feeding. Its core partners are International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), La Leche League International (LLL), International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA), Wellstart International and Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM). WABA is in consultative status with UNICEF & an NGO in Special Consultive Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).