

DOING IT WITH FACTS

YOUTH matter!

There are more young people today than at any other point in human history, but they face a world of war, conflict, gender-based violence, discrimination and lack of education.

This generation of youth is the largest in history. Even more important, this generation of youth is shaping history. – Ban Ki Moon



9 out of 10 of the under-24s live in the developing world, and there are 600 million adolescent girls globally. This makes young people a particularly vulnerable group!

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Young people between the ages of 10 and 19 years account for 11% of all births worldwide, but they account for 23% of the overall burden of disease due to pregnancy and childbirth.

Every year, 70,000 adolescents die from complications during pregnancy and childbirth.

Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH)

- ✓ The definition of SRH is fluid, and depends on cultural, environmental and even sociological contexts.
- ✓ According to WHO, health is a state of physical, mental and social wellbeing.
- ✓ Reproductive health addresses reproductive processes, functions and systems at all stages of life.
- ✓ This includes the preservation of universal human rights, and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, gender-based violence, and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

ECONOMY

- SRH reduces healthcare costs, improves productivity and increases rates of education – all of which lead to greater economic growth.
- Access to SRH is still a problem particularly in developing countries where most young people live.

EDUCATION

Young girls are especially vulnerable to SRH-related issues – forced marriage, unplanned pregnancies, disease and infection, domestic violence and responsibilities – which affect her chances of attaining quality education.

HEALTH

Lack of access to SRH increases maternal and child deaths, chances of HIV/AIDS infection, TB, malaria, and non-communicable diseases.

EQUALITY

Gender-inequality denies girls the opportunity to make decisions about their bodies.

ENVIRONMENT

In developing countries, young women are made to be the primary resource managers for households, and are thus disproportionately affected by environmental degradation, water scarcity, and natural disasters.

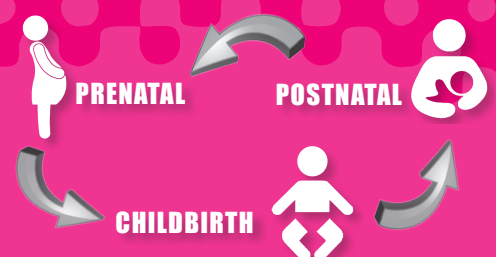


Reproductive health is the “...right of access to appropriate health-care services that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant.” (http://www.who.int/topics/reproductive_health/en/)

Reproductive health has:

- been under-represented within the debate of SRH.
- focused on PREVENTION rather than MANAGEMENT of pregnancies with young people.

The reproductive cycle



What's breastfeeding got to do with all this?

- ✓ Breastfeeding is established during the third part of the reproductive cycle – the postnatal stage.
- ✓ After pregnancy and childbirth, breastfeeding happens next.
- ✓ Breastfeeding is an INTEGRAL part of post-natal care.



SHR encompasses PHYSICAL, MENTAL and SOCIAL WELLBEING, BREASTFEEDING plays a significant role in all three components!

Physical Health

✓ INFANT HEALTH

Breastfeeding saves lives! It can reduce the global death rate of children below 5 by about 20%, and also reduces a child's chance of developing allergies, immunity deficiencies, obesity and cognitive impairment.

✓ MATERNAL HEALTH

Breastfeeding reduces a mother's chance of developing diabetes, osteoporosis, cancer, and cardiovascular disease.

✓ BIRTH SPACING

This natural child-spacing and family-planning method prevents both mothers and babies from mortality, morbidity and malnutrition

✓ WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Mums will lose their pregnancy weight more quickly and will avoid gaining weight between pregnancies.

Mental Health

✓ Breastfeeding makes mums and babies develop a strong emotional bond, which reduces chances of postnatal depression through oxytocin (the love hormone).

✓ A mum's ability to provide food and sustenance gives her a sense of security and importance.

✓ Losing pregnancy weight through breastfeeding helps mums regain their confidence and develop a healthy body image.

Social Well-being

✓ Adoption and baby dumping is a serious issue and negatively impacts a country's social and economic wellbeing. The emotional bond that can be created through breastfeeding may address this issue.

✓ Young people are easy targets of consumerist practices as they are particularly impressionable. Breastfeeding challenges consumerism as it encourages the investment of time, love and effort, and not a rush to buy pumps, bottles and the latest, most expensive formula milk!

✓ Human milk is a natural, renewable food that acts as a complete source of babies' nutrition. Breastfeeding does away with packaging, carbon emissions and the impact of dairy farming on the environment.

The 10 TIPS for LACTIVISM!

1 Know the facts and share the knowledge.

2 Stay up-to-date with breastfeeding news.

3 Use social media for feedback.

4 Tackle the titans – report violators of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.

5 Engage your peers.

6 Attend related conferences and exhibitions.

7 Form allies with other social interest groups.

8 Be mentored by a professional.

9 Connect the dots... YOUth are the link.

10 Get creative!

GET IN TOUCH WITH US!

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The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of individuals and organisations concerned with the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding worldwide based on the Innocent Declaration, the Ten Links for Nurturing the Future and the WHO/UNICEF Global Strategy for Infant and 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, Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM) and LINKAGES. WABA is in consultative status with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).