



UNFPA Mission Statement

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is an international development agency that promotes the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity. UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programmes to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every young people is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.

UNFPA – because everyone counts

FAMILY PLANNING AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Half of the people on Earth are under 25 years of age. Some 1.8 billion are aged 10-25. In Viet Nam, those under 25 total 37.8 million people, or 44.9% of the entire population. There are 24.9 million people aged 10-25, or 29.6% of total population (GSO, 2007 Population Change Survey).

Although most people become sexually active during adolescence, young people often have little access to the family planning services and education they need. Some of the biggest barriers are cultural taboos about young people's sexuality.

If we want to address population issues, reduce maternal deaths and give young people a good, healthy start on their lives, their right to reproductive health and family planning information and services must be promoted, and changes in policies and regulations encouraged.

Their decisions about sexual behaviour and childbearing are critical to the planet's future population size, dynamic and well-being.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

- The average age at which young people in Viet Nam become sexually active is 19.5, and about one quarter to one third have sex before marriage (SAVY).
- Parents, teachers and health service providers often are unwilling to give young people the information and services they need.
- In June 2006, the Ministry of Health issued a new regulation on the roles and responsibilities of reproductive health centres at the provincial level, obliging them to have a separate area and assigned staff for adolescent and sexual reproductive health (ASRH) services. However, health facilities at the district and commune levels do not currently have separate units for ASRH services.
- Vietnamese adolescents and youths currently access ASRH information through the mass media, at school, at health care facilities, in counseling centres, and through community meetings. Access to information via health service providers is still low. The mass media is the most influential of these channels.
- Training for pre- and in-service school teachers on ASRH topics have not been sufficient. As a result, many teachers are shy when it comes to teaching about these topics.
- Young migrants have limited access to ASRH information. Young female migrants lack

knowledge on STIs, for example (GSO and UNFPA, 2004 Migration Survey).

- Ethnic minority adolescents and youths in poor regions also have difficulties in accessing ASRH information, partly because the information is not available in their mother tongue.
- Modern contraceptive use among adolescents is generally low, and decreases with economic status. Fewer than 5 per cent of the poorest young people use modern contraception.
- In Viet Nam, the abortion rate is very high. Adolescent abortions account for about 1/3 of all abortions (MoH, 2004).
- Globally, two in five new HIV infections occur in young people aged 15 to 24. In Viet Nam, 63% of HIV infections occur in people under 29 years of age.
- Complications during pregnancy and childbearing are the leading causes of death for girls aged 15 to 19 in developing countries. They are twice as likely to die in childbirth as women in their 20s.
- Married adolescent girls generally are unable to negotiate condom use or to refuse sexual relations.

WHAT MUST BE DONE?

- A 'National Master Plan for the Care, Protection and Promotion of Adolescent and Youth Health for 2006-2010' was approved by the Ministry of Health in June 2006. It details the key problems of Vietnamese youth and proposes strategies and interventions to solve these problems on a national scale. The Ministry of Health needs to continue advocating for enough financial resources to successfully implement the Plan.

KEY MESSAGES

1. Enabling young women to postpone childbearing and to space births is key to slowing the momentum of population growth.
2. Young people should have a right and must be active participants in design, implementation and evaluation of adolescent reproductive health programmes/family planning.
3. Communities should support and encourage all individuals, including adolescents and unmarried women, to access quality family planning services.

WHAT IS UNFPA DOING?

- In Viet Nam, UNFPA supports the Government of Viet Nam to develop and implement youth-related policies and strategies. It also supports the Government to pilot a range of youth-friendly services models and interventions. UNFPA is participating in a national study on youth (SAVY 2) in order to have better understand the problems and the needs of young people in Viet Nam.

LINKS

Supporting Adolescents and Youth

<http://www.unfpa.org/adolescents/index.htm>

Making Motherhood Safer

<http://www.unfpa.org/mothers/index.htm>

Family Planning: so that every pregnancy is wanted

<http://www.unfpa.org/rh/planning.htm>

Securing Essential Supplies

<http://www.unfpa.org/supplies/index.htm>