

# Why invest in very young adolescent (VYA) sexual & reproductive health



**1.2 billion**

adolescents in the world  
(largest group of 10-19 year-olds in history!)



**50%**

are between 10-14 years old  
(very young adolescents)



**90%**

live in low or middle  
income countries  
(where many adolescents are vulnerable)



Most global health policies and programs are directed at children under 5 and older adolescents.

**VYAs are overlooked.**

**Yet, VYAs face unique challenges.**

Early adolescence marks a critical transition between childhood and adulthood:

social pressure of conforming to inequitable gender norms

developing sense of gender and sexual identity

sense of invulnerability

understanding changing fertility and sexuality

navigating rapid puberty changes

ideas and behaviors broadening beyond family to peer groups

**SOLUTIONS INVOLVE EVERYONE**



Parents



Adolescents



Policymakers



Program Designers, Teachers, Providers



Donors



Researchers & Evaluators

**!** Policies and programs that work with VYAs to foster gender equitable relationships, body pride, self-efficacy and comfort with emerging sexuality set the stage for healthy future relationships and positive sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

**Let's work together to keep VYAs from falling through the cracks.**



learn more

<http://tinyurl.com/investinginVYAs>