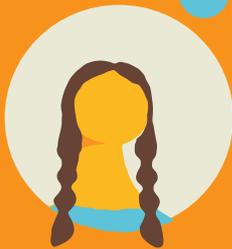




YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY: WHAT SETS THEM APART?

YOUNG PEOPLE
CHANGING THE
WORLD



GRETA THUNBERG
kicked off a global
movement to combat
climate change at the
age of 15

Today's adolescents and youth, **1.8 billion strong**, are a quarter of the global population. Growing up in a world churning with historic transformations—political, social, economic and environmental—they have both acute concerns and high expectations for themselves and their societies.

Young people today are demanding more from their governments and societies, and more from the global community. Amid pressures transcending borders, from **changing labour markets to conflicts to climate change**, some see solutions in collective action. They are shaping social and economic development, challenging discriminatory norms, and building a foundation for a better future. In early 2019, for instance, hundreds of

thousands of students in more than 100 countries, from the South Pacific to the edge of the Arctic Circle, mobilized in one of the largest international actions ever to protest the lack of tough action on global warming.

This generation is more connected through technology, media and the Internet than any other generation in human history. A full 70 per cent are online, putting them at the forefront of Internet adoption.¹

Consuming media, however, is not the same as participating in the digital economy, and adolescent and youth growing up in poverty are the least likely of all cohorts to use technology or develop digital skills. The odds worsen for girls or people with a disability. Moreover, being connected online is not a substitute for having safe

**200
MILLION**

**ADOLESCENTS AGED
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1.8 BILLION

ARE ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH,
A QUARTER OF THE GLOBAL
POPULATION



spaces for human interaction which many adolescents and youth need and seek.

This new generation on balance is the most educated and healthiest ever. Yet 200 million adolescents aged 12-17 are not in secondary school, and far too many young refugees are still being denied access to quality education.² Many young people who enter the labour market end up **underemployed, in vulnerable jobs or living in poverty** despite working hard. Gender and social inequalities favouring boys and men as well as certain social and ethnic groups over others persist in education and employment.

Adolescence is a time where young people gain skills to make choices, including on their sexual and reproductive health. Trends vary significantly

among regions. **Mean ages at first sexual experience, first marriage and first birth have all risen in sub-Saharan Africa, and risen for first marriage and first birth in Asia and Northern Africa.**

In contrast, in Latin America and the Caribbean, the timing of first birth has not changed significantly, and the regional mean age at first sexual experience has substantially declined.³

For adolescents and youth today, **transformative change is a desire** and a possibility in every part of the world. What needs to be done so that every young person can realize all of the rights and choices that they want and deserve? UNFPA has defined some top priorities based on what we have learned as a long-time, trusted partner of the next generation.

23%

OF REFUGEE
ADOLESCENTS
ATTEND SCHOOL

70%

OF YOUNG PEOPLE
ARE ONLINE

1. International Telecommunication Union. ICT Facts and Figures. 2017.
2. UNHCR. Turn the Tide: Refugee Education in Crisis. 2018. ; UNESCO. Fact Sheet No.48. 2018.
3. Bongaarts et al. Trends in the age at reproductive transitions in the developing world: The role of education. 2017.