



ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



Save the Children

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Save the Children recognizes adolescents and youth as social actors and agents of change, yet they often face significant rights violations and lack of access to education and other services. Save the Children programming prioritizes the needs of adolescents as one the most excluded and vulnerable groups in the region.

Save the Children currently implements 42 projects that involve adolescents and youth, primarily in the fields of Education, Health and Child Protection. In addition, Save the Children **“Every Last Child Campaign”** raises awareness of the issues facing adolescents in five countries in the region¹.

Currently, there are 166 million adolescents and youth aged 10-24 in Latin America and the Caribbean, or 26% of the total population in the region (UN Population Division, 2015). Despite its size, this group is often at risk for social exclusion, due to the lack of labor opportunities, resources and access to formal employment.



30% of adolescents and youth in the region live in poverty and face discrimination, mostly in education and health services².



56% have gone on to complete secondary school, mostly of poor quality, therefore lacking knowledge to optimize their role in the labor market³.



The unemployment rate is three times higher among youth aged 15-29 compared to adults; in 2015 it was 15.3%. This disparity is greater for women⁴.



1 of 5 adolescents and youth in the region – around 20 million – does not study or work⁵.



7 of every 8 youth from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay and Peru, hold an informal job⁶.



1 Perú, Bolivia, México, República Dominicana and Honduras.



45% of all births in LAC are to 15-24 years old. A total of 9 million births were from girls between the ages of 15-19².



Over 80,000 children and adolescents were detained in 2014 and 2015 while trying to migrate from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala⁸.

2 ECLAC, 2015

3 UNFPA & ECLAC, 2011

4 ILO, 2015

5 World Bank, 2016

6 Work4Youth, 2015

7 UN Population Division, 2015

8 US CBP Agency, 2015 & SEGOB Mexico, 2015

Terminology

Adolescents

Youth

Young People

Pre-Adolescents

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15

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20

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24

Source: UN Definition of Youth.

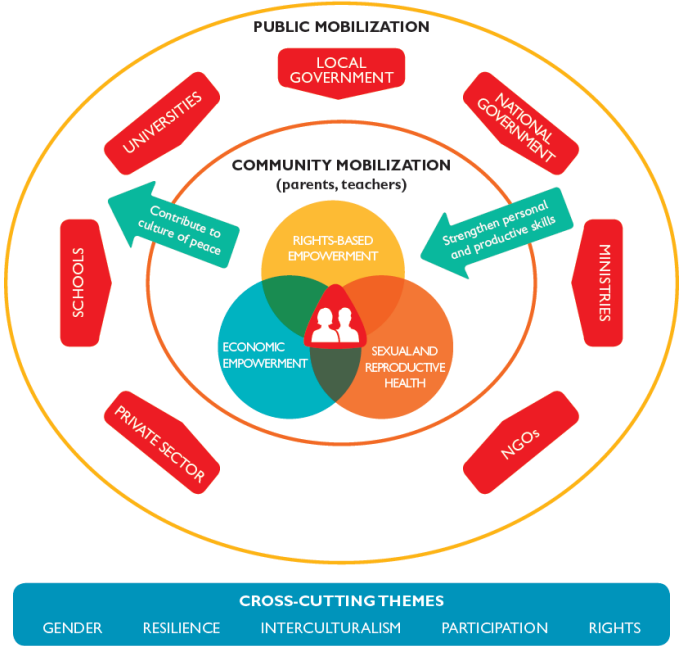




COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH FOR ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

Save the Children works with children, adolescents and youth between the ages of 10-24 to strengthen their capacities and to ensure that they are able to exercise their economic and sexual and reproductive rights.

The comprehensive approach model promotes synergy between personal autonomy and economic development within a rights-based and gender equality approach. It takes into account advocacy-based community mobilization, the social context, and the participation of political entities, schools, the private sector and NGOs.



Our approach is to protect adolescents and youth from violence, ensure access to an inclusive quality education, employment opportunities, and to enable them to choose to delay parenthood. The methodology establishes an enabling environment, where adolescents and youth are able to develop income-generating activities. At the same time, the framework encourages adolescents and youth to become advocates in key decision-making processes.

THEMATIC AREAS		
Personal Empowerment	Sexual and Reproductive Health	Economic Rights
Strengthen skills, capacities and personal empowerment in adolescents and youth... and problem-solving skills for informed decision-making.	Provide tools for adolescents and youth to promote transformative gender equality processes, considering issues such as violence, gender equity (including new masculinities) and the exercise of a safe and pleasurable sexuality.	Include adolescents and youth as part of a productive chain, either through their insertion into the labor market or by supporting them in the development of productive enterprises guaranteeing fair and dignified work conditions during the exchange process with other actors of the productive chain.

SAVE THE CHILDREN'S WORK WITH ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH BY COUNTRY

BOLIVIA

Save the Children Bolivia provides adolescents with **economic opportunities** by enabling them to develop their own business initiatives or access vocational training.

Empowerment initiatives promote positive decision-making and enable youth to become advocates for their rights. **Sexual and reproductive health** programs provide access to information and services, with an emphasis on menstrual hygiene, as well as the prevention of early parenthood and maternal and infant mortality. **Rights-based education** includes programs to ensure access to quality basic education. Programming focuses on indigenous communities.

COLOMBIA

Save the Children Colombia works in areas affected by violence, indigenous areas and with rural afro-descendent populations. They work to support adolescents staying in school and gaining access to higher education through passing their exams. **Economic rights** initiatives with adolescents includes training designed to strengthen production, commercialization and marketing skills to develop productive initiatives. Their work in **sexual and reproductive rights education** ensures that adolescents are familiar with their rights and aware of issues related to gender and rights, as well as basic reproductive physiology.

ECUADOR

Save the Children Ecuador focuses on **protecting adolescent migrants** on the border with Colombia. Programming focuses on rights-based education, services for victims of trafficking and development of advocacy skills among adolescents.

EL SALVADOR

Adolescents and youth in El Salvador are extremely vulnerable to violence and Save the Children's programming is tailored to **reduce violence** through violence prevention in the schools (using SC's Choices curriculum), as well as through CureViolence, a program which attempts to interrupt the cycle of gang violence. El Salvador takes an **ecological approach** that identifies stakeholders in adolescent development and works with them to generate positive change in the quality of life of adolescents. Work with adolescents and youth includes both **vocational training and the development of skills** related to employability.



GUATEMALA

In Guatemala *Schools Building Peace* provides adolescents and youth with **inclusive, violence-free quality education** designed in part to empower them to defend their rights. Save the Children works to strengthen national child protection systems and provides psychosocial care for adolescents who are victims of violence. **Adolescent livelihoods** projects in the national coffee sector work to abolish child labor, by building awareness about the rights of children, improving their access to quality education, generating employment opportunities and improving the economic situation of their families.



HAITI

Comprehensive adolescent development programming provides violence-free education, health, nutrition and hygiene in school and community-based child protection activities. The program focuses on delaying the onset of sexual activity, promoting contraceptive methods among sexually active adolescents, encouraging abstinence from drug use, developing productive skills and adopting positive gender norms. The program also increases **access to services through mobile clinics**.

HONDURAS

The PRESSURE Network builds adolescents' capacity to **advocate for stronger national child protections systems**. Honduras' *Schools Building Peace* project provides adolescents and youth an inclusive quality education that is free of violence, to empower them to defend their rights. Honduras' *FORPAZ* project reduces insecurity in communities that are extremely vulnerable to violence by strengthening local care systems for children and adolescents.

PERU

Peru is home to the largest number of indigenous adolescents and youth in the region and programs include an **intercultural and inclusive education**, benefiting adolescents and youth with disabilities and/or indigenous groups. Save the Children's **livelihoods** work ensures that adolescents and youth go to school, acquire better skills and qualifications by offering them tools to language barriers they may face and key skills for employability. Also the office promotes the adoption of new masculinities and works towards the prevention of sexual violence against adolescents.

MEXICO

Programs promote adolescents and youth participation in local and national-level **advocacy** activities. They also increase access to and use of quality **sexual and reproductive health** services to prevent teen pregnancy. Mexico also works in **education** to develop skills that adolescents need to establish productive enterprises. Additional initiatives include improving social and living conditions of their families to reduce and avoid risky behaviors; and promoting healthy eating habits and physical activity. Mexico is also part of the regional project *Schools Building Peace*, which provides adolescents and youth with an inclusive quality education that is free of violence, to empower them to defend their rights.

NICARAGUA

Adolescent livelihoods programming promotes economic and food security and builds resiliency by equipping adolescents and youth with tools to make informed decisions. Nicaragua also works to ensure access **to quality education even in emergency contexts**; strengthening national **child protection systems**; and **improving health and nutrition** facilities in schools and communities.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Save the Children promotes the rights of adolescents by setting up *Child Protection Committees*. These empower adolescents and youth and support the National Child Protection System, primarily to prevent child labor. The comprehensive adolescent development program works to **reduce teen pregnancy** by strengthening self-esteem, leadership, values, critical thinking and assertive decision-making, as well as the development of productive and life skills.



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