



UNITED NATIONS
UGANDA



THE EDUCATION PLUS INITIATIVE (2021-2025)

Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women in Uganda



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A unique Opportunity to renew commitments towards Empowerment of Adolescent Girls, Boys and Young Women as partners to End AIDS, Gender based Discrimination and Violence.

Title: A high-profile, high-level political advocacy drive to accelerate actions and investments for adolescent girls, young women, and boys so that they can be agents of change to prevent new HIV infections, reduce teenage pregnancy, early marriages, gender-based violence by having access to secondary school education as an entry point.

Subtitle: Repositioning Education Plus within the HIV/AIDS response at the center of a resilient, sustainable, integrated, and person-centered approach to health and tackling gender inequalities in Uganda



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BACKGROUND

The 2021 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: Ending Inequalities and Getting on Track to End AIDS by 2030 expressed concern that, in sub-Saharan Africa, five out of six new HIV infections among adolescents aged 15–19 years are among girls. In addition, adolescent girls and young women (15–24 years) account for 24 per cent of the new HIV infections despite representing only 10 per cent of the population, and AIDS is the leading cause of death for adolescent girls and women aged between 15 and 49 years.

The 2021 Political declaration, welcomed recent efforts by countries to put in place societal enablers, including enabling laws, policies, public education campaigns and anti-stigma training for health-care workers and law enforcement that dispel the stigma and discrimination that still surrounds HIV, empower women and girls to take charge of their sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. This, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences and end the marginalization of people living with and at higher risk of HIV infection.

Adolescent girls and young women 15-24 represented 1/4 of all new cases of HIV in sub-Saharan Africa in 2019. Gender disparities exist with girls more than twice as likely to acquire HIV their male peers; 5 in 6 new cases of HIV among adolescents (15-19) girls also face highest child marriage

and adolescent childbearing in the world; high intimate partner/sexual violence and close to 34 million girls were not in secondary school- even before COVID and the situation post-COVID is at its worst.

Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of child marriage and teenage pregnancy in the world, factors that contribute to keeping them out of school. Adolescent girls and young women face multiple forms of gender-based and sexual violence, including in schools and from intimate partners. And 24% of young women 15-24 years old are not in employment, education, or training. For young women who work, the conditions, the pay and the income security their jobs offer them are poorer. These are among the structural inequalities that have only been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that threaten to roll back gains on their rights and gender equality.

In Uganda 13% of adult People Living with HIV (1.4Million) are young people. Adolescent girls and young women (15-24 years old) represented a quarter (42%) of all new cases of HIV in 2021—equivalent to 20,000 translating into 380 new HIV infections every week. The gender disparities are stark: within Uganda, adolescent girls and young women are more than twice as likely to acquire HIV than their male peers. In 2021, three in four new cases of HIV among adolescents between the ages of 15 and 24 were among girls. The high risk of acquiring HIV is just one of the many threats adolescent girls and young women face to their health, safety,

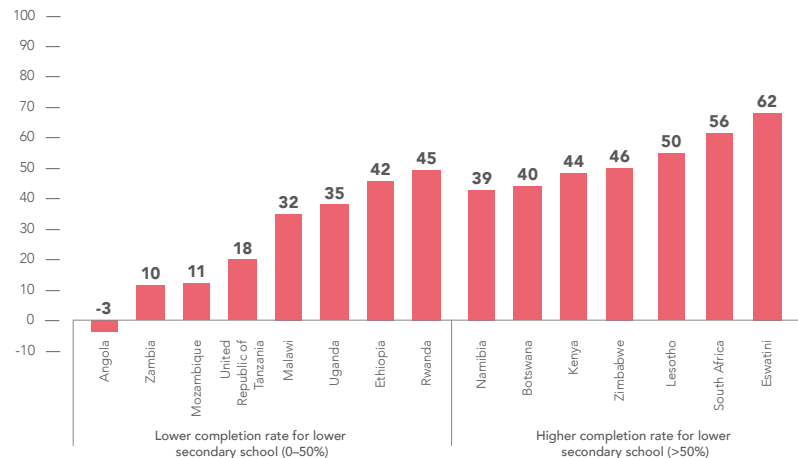
dignity, and life aspirations. While women and girls are biologically more susceptible to HIV than men and boys, unequal gender power dynamics and harmful gender norms are the root cause, compounded by intersecting forms of discrimination. In part, these factors resulted into 378,790 teenage pregnancies for girls aged 10-19 years in 2021. It is believed that there could be more than the reported number of teenage pregnancies in the same year since significant number of them who are pregnant do not attend antenatal care, thus not reported.

Keeping girls in secondary school is crucial – a right in and of itself, and a means to protect girls against HIV infection. Greater gains have been made in reducing new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women in countries that have higher completion rates for lower secondary school (>50%), as shown in the figure.

Meanwhile, all these intertwined issues in young women’s lives, such as HIV, early and unwanted pregnancy, and violence – and the gender dimensions that fuel them – are avoidable; and the education plus initiative is a means to achieving this.

Education Plus is a high-level political advocacy drive for **holistic, multisectoral** actions and scaled-up investments to **prevent new HIV infections** among adolescent girls and young women and positioning **secondary education** not only as their right, but a key pathway for adolescent girls and young women to be protected against HIV, in addition to its multiple social and economic benefits

Relative reduction in new HIV infections since 2010 among adolescent girls and young women (ages 15–24 years), by completion rate for lower secondary school, eastern and southern Africa



Source: UNAIDS epidemiological estimates, 2020 (see <https://aidsinfo.unaids.org/>); UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).

The Education Plus Initiative

The Education Plus Initiative, spearheaded by five United Nations women leaders (UNESCO, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNFPA and UNAIDS) is a high-profile, high-level political advocacy drive to accelerate actions and investments to prevent HIV. It is centered on the empowerment of adolescent girls and young women and the achievement of gender equality in sub-Saharan Africa – with secondary education as the strategic entry point.

It challenges government decision-makers at the highest levels to model leadership and fulfill their essential duties to realize every girl's right to health and education. It brings added pressure to persuade governments to roll out universal secondary education, free for girls and boys. Completion of secondary education, an urgent concern in the COVID-19 context, also protects against HIV – with drops in new HIV cases among adolescent girls and young women by as much as one-third to one half in some countries.

Evidence confirms that girls – and their communities and countries – reap multiple social and economic benefits from their completion of secondary school: reduced vulnerability to acquiring HIV and to becoming child brides and teenage mothers, while increasing their prospects for securing jobs and higher incomes as adult women, among others.

The initiative is a rights-based, gender-responsive action agenda to ensure adolescent girls and young women have equal opportunities to access quality secondary education, alongside key education and health services and supports for their economic autonomy and empowerment. It will foster an enabling environment for adolescent girls and young women to enjoy safe and fruitful learning experiences, and to thrive while paving their way to vibrant futures. The rewards will also reach far into the longer-term, with inter-generational effects: Empowered girls are the empowered women of the future.

The initiative's game-changing proposition is simple but ambitious--and long overdue:

- **Challenge** decision-makers and donors to significantly scale-up investments, policies and actions on education, holistic and multi-sectoral interventions for adolescent girls and young women to prevent new HIV infections and gain many other social and economic benefits, including for those already living with HIV.
- **Transform** the promise of gender equality into a reality, in the context of the *Beijing +25 process*: as well as the *Africa Agenda 2063*, the *Maputo Protocol on African Women's Rights* and the *African Union Youth Charter*, among other regional agreements on women's and young people's rights.

THE 'PLUS' APPROACH

The key components of the 'Education Plus' approach include the essential elements of what every adolescent girl and young woman should be entitled to in transitioning to adulthood:

1. Completion of quality secondary education
2. Universal access to health and well-being
3. Fulfillment of sexual and reproductive health and rights
4. Freedom from gender-based and sexual violence
5. School-to-work transitions, and economic security and empowerment

Key cross-cutting elements of this approach include advancing:

- » Young women's voices, leadership, participation in decision-making, and role as innovators
- » Increased gender-responsive investments and evidence-based interventions that transform harmful gender norms and masculinities, engaging men and boys as advocacy allies and agents of change
- » Quality learning to build broader life skills, critical thinking, and entrepreneurial capacities
- » Multi-sectoral, smart investments for impact and scale

UGANDA PERSPECTIVE

The Education Plus Initiative is using completion of secondary education as the strategic entry point for empowering AGYW to live a secure, healthy, fulfilling, and productive life, free of gender discrimination, violence and HIV/AIDS. This is based on the premise that if:



High-level political advocacy is carried out and the political leaders are mobilized to make the necessary policy and budgetary shifts for making AGYW complete secondary education, access Sexuality education, SRHR and GBSV services, and make successful STW transitions with adequate economic empowerment,



Strategic Partnerships and Outreach with diverse public MDAs and private, religious, cultural and civil society stakeholders programmes and funding organization are promoted to enhance multi-sectoral synergy and complementarity,



The capacities of Young Women's Leadership and Meaningful Participation in policy and planning processes, programme development, monitoring, demand creation and holding duty bearers accountable are developed,



Multi-Media Communications are deployed to reach the highest levels of government, investors, AGYW organizations and networks, diverse civil society, donors, and other partners with timely critical and quality information about the initiative,



Think Tank Groups of inter-disciplinary leading technical, academic and research institutions are engaged to generate the most compelling and persuasive cutting-edge evidence-base information and repackaging it into high-level, succinct key messages that speak effectively to ministers of finance, investors, policy and makers and other partners and stakeholders,



Data Hub for Advocacy and Communications that links with relevant global, regional and national data and statistical institutions to swiftly provide quality, updated, disaggregated and relevant data for fueling the advocacy and communications pillars are established,

KEY STATISTICAL FIGURES

POPULATION AND EDUCATION

PROJECTED POPULATION 2021

42.9million

Uganda has the second youngest population in the world

53% BELOW 18 YEARS **76%** BELOW 30 YEARS

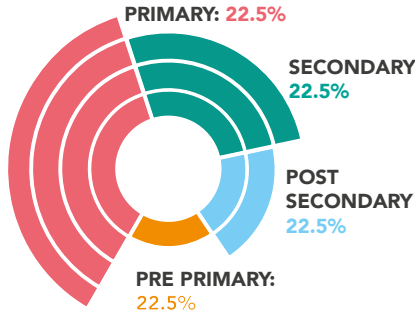
About **10 million people** of the total population are aged 15-24years



With UPE in 1997, USE 2007 and Universal Post 'Level Education and Training (UPOLET 2012) about

15million
CHILDREN ARE IN SCHOOL

Enrolment of girls and boys at primary school level has almost reached the 50/50 mark



In 2007, Uganda became the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to introduce universal secondary education.

THERE IS STILL LESS THAN

50% ACCESS TO & COMPLETION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION BY GIRLS OF AGE 13-18.

27%

Net secondary school enrolment rate



21%

Net Enrolment Rate (NER) for girls

21%

National Enrolment in secondary schools

68.5%

Transition from primary to secondary

HIV AND AIDS (15-24 YEARS)

13%

OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV **ARE YOUNG PEOPLE.**

3 IN 4



OF NEW HIV INFECTIONS OCCURRED AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15-24 YEARS IN 2021.

42%

OF ADULT HIV INFECTIONS OCCURRED AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15-24 YEARS IN 2021.

71%

OF PLHIV (170,000) AGED 15-25 YEARS WERE ADOLESCENT GIRLS DESPITE THE EQUAL TOTAL POPULATION BOYS & GIRLS



Adolescents and young people have been noted to have high interruption in ART treatment, negatively impacting viral suppression rates among those on treatment. Clients in these age groups report being less likely to return to treatment due to stigma, and knowledge gap about the benefit of treatment among other factors.





TEENAGE PREGNANCY

47% OF THE TEENAGE MOTHERS
ARE PEASANTS IN
SUBSTANCE AGRICULTURE

18% ANNUAL BIRTHS IN
UGANDA ARE AS A
RESULT OF TEENAGE PREGNANCIES

The districts in North Central, Busoga, Bunyoro, Lango, Tooro and West Nile registered the highest numbers of teenage pregnancies in 2021

43% ESTIMATED HEALTH FACILITY
EXPENDITURE ON TEENAGE MOTHERS
OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH 2019/20

21% INFANT MORTALITY **28%** OF THE MATERNAL
DEATHS
RESULT FROM TEENAGE PREGNANCIES



1 IN 4

GIRLS IN UGANDA
AGED 15-19 YEARS
**HAVE HAD A CHILD
OR ARE PREGNANT.**

28%
OF MATERNAL DEATHS
OCCURS AMONG YOUNG
GIRLS (15-25 YEARS)

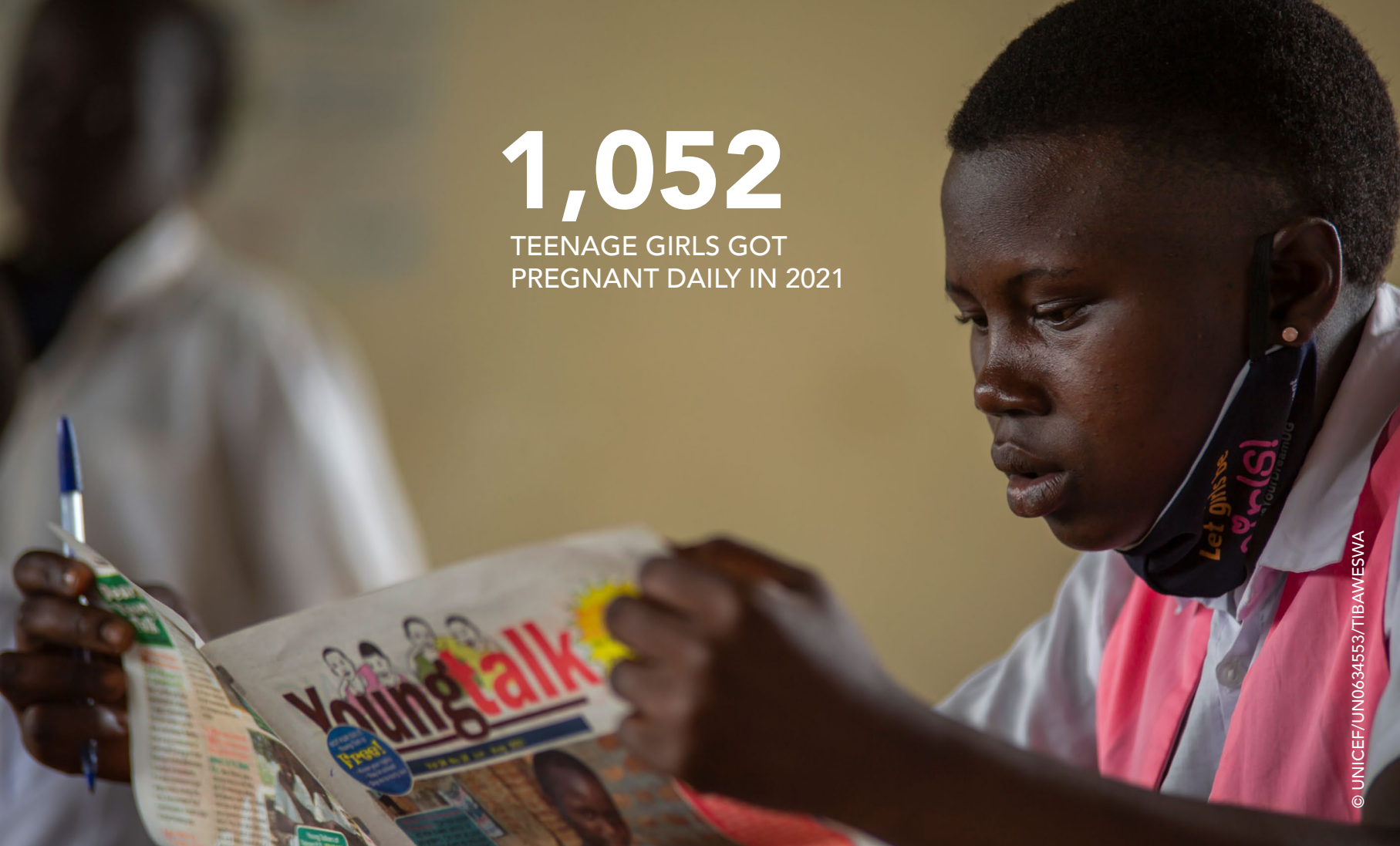
YOUNG PEOPLE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR
34% OF NEW HIV INFECTIONS
ANNUALLY

IN 2021 ABOUT 31,566
TEENAGE GIRLS GOT PREGNANT
MONTHLY AN EQUIVALENT OF
1,052 DAILY.

ABOUT 250
CHILDREN AGED BELOW
15 YEARS GOT PREGNANT
MONTHLY

1,052

TEENAGE GIRLS GOT
PREGNANT DAILY IN 2021





GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

IN 2020, THE COUNTRY REGISTERED INCREASED GBV CASES

2019

1,084

2020

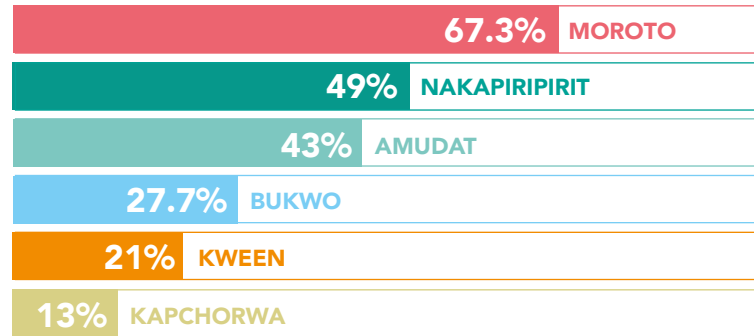
11,883



18-24 YEARS' EXPERIENCE SEXUAL GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE **DURING THEIR CHILDHOOD PERIOD**

Uganda is among the 11 countries globally that reported high levels of violence (physical, sexual and/or emotional) among children and women in range of 19.2% - 75% (UNAIDS, July 2021 Global update.)

HARMFUL PRACTICES SUCH AS **FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION** AFFECT A LARGE PROPORTION OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN EASTERN UGANDA DISTRICTS





19.2% - 75%

PHYSICAL, SEXUAL AND/OR EMOTIONAL
VIOLENCE AMONG CHILDREN AND
WOMEN (UNAIDS, July 2021 Global update)



SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH



ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



45.7%
ADOLESCENT GIRLS
AND YOUNG WOMEN



44.8%
ADOLESCENT BOYS
AND YOUNG MEN

HAVE COMPREHENSIVE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT PREVENTION OF HIV

ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN'S SRH IS POOR AND CHARACTERIZED BY **EARLY SEXUAL ACTIVITY AND PERSISTENT HIGH TEENAGE PREGNANCIES** (25%).

12%

OF AGYW ENGAGE IN SEX BY 15 YEARS

55%

OF AGYW ENGAGE IN SEX BY 18 YEARS

There is a high unemployment and underemployment among the young women in Uganda which result in low incomes and exclusion from economic development, markets, and a range of social services. Fewer women are employed but more are underemployed and not economically active compared to men in the age group 13-24 years.



37%

63%



FEWER FEMALES THAN MALES ENROLL FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN BUSINESS, TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS.

The literacy level of women and girls aged 10 years and above is also lower than their male counterparts.

Uganda Household Survey Report, 2019/20



72%
FEMALE

81%
FEMALE



including unplanned pregnancy
and sexually transmitted infections

Addressing your life stress and that of
your partner before engaging in
sexual activity

2 THE RIGHT TO LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF THE PERSON


Everyone has the right to be
free from all forms of
violence including physical
sexual, emotional and social
abuse.

What is my responsibility?

- Never be violent physically,
mentally, sexually, emotionally or
sexually towards any other person

Looking for...

THE SECRETARIAT

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