



# TRANSITIONS: ENGAGING YOUTH FOR A HEALTHY FUTURE

## WHY INVEST IN YOUTH?

At 1.8 billion, young people age 10 to 24 make up more than a quarter of the world's population—the largest population of youth ever. The term “youth” encompasses school girls in Uganda, mine workers in Zimbabwe, street boys in Ethiopia, married mothers in Senegal, sex workers in Malawi, nursing students in Kenya. Youth have differing needs, abilities, aspirations, and opportunities depending on their age, gender, ethnicity, geographic setting, family situation, education, and civil status.

Today's youth are coming of age in an increasingly complex and uncertain world. They have higher expectations, but often lack the skills and resources to succeed. They also must navigate serious risks to their health such as unprotected sex, early marriage and childbearing, and gender violence. In many countries, the dynamics of the “youth bulge,” including urbanization, limited economic opportunity, and limited access to education and health care are leading to social and political unrest and continued poverty. At the same time, youth are embracing new technologies, readily engaging with each other and the world, and insisting their voices be heard.

Youth around the world have great potential and energy to influence the direction of their lives and countries. The choices available to young people and the decisions they make—such as staying in school, using family planning,

smoking—all have an impact on their individual lives. These decisions also influence the well-being of young people's families and communities as well as national and global health and development—for the 21st century and beyond.

IntraHealth is seizing this unique opportunity to meaningfully engage youth to create solutions for their future, prepare them to be the health care users and health workers of the next decades, and support them to help build productive and healthy societies.

## INTRAHEALTH YOUTH STRATEGY

For over 40 years, IntraHealth has been working to improve access to quality health care around the world. Across all our efforts—whether supporting rural health workers, ensuring access to health education for girls, or improving family planning and HIV services—IntraHealth has engaged young people, as both users and providers of essential health services. Relying on this strong foundation, we have accelerated our commitment to youth, aiming to ensure young people transition to adulthood equipped to attain the best possible health, education, and employment. We do this through an integrated strategy that builds youth capacities, strengthens critical services and resources that support youth, and creates opportunities for youth to enter adulthood as healthy, productive citizens. While our

focus on health, education, and employment is relevant to all youth, we tailor our approach to the specific needs of different young people in different contexts, with particular attention to girls' education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender equity.

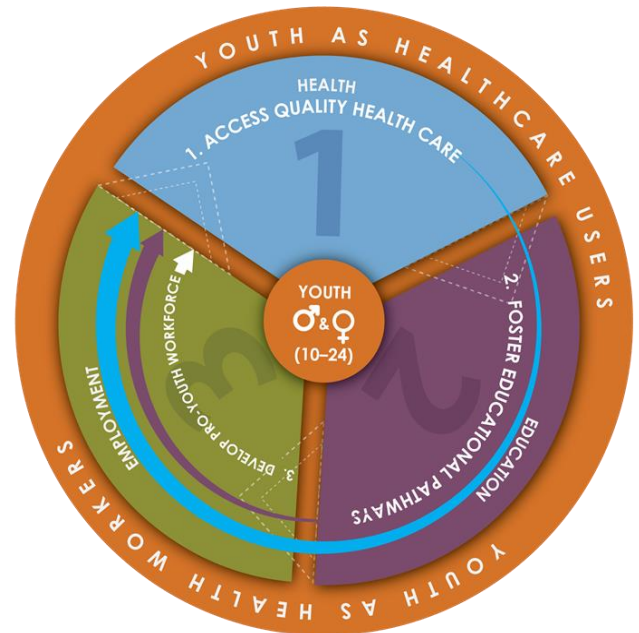
## HEALTH

IntraHealth's approach builds a strong foundation for a lifetime of good health by ensuring access to quality health information, products and services, establishing healthy practices at an early age and continuing through adulthood. We use a systems approach to strengthen health services and ensure that adolescents, as well as parents, teachers, and community leaders, have timely access to sustainable quality care. We address how health workers themselves often have biases that restrict young people's access to health care, especially reproductive and sexual health services. We work with health workers alongside civil society and governments, across ministries of health, education, labor, and finance, to help analyze and adjust policy and programs to ensure they respond to the needs and rights of youth, always with the end in mind of improving young people's health and well-being.

## EDUCATION

As youth transition to secondary school and beyond, we partner with health and education stakeholders to foster pathways for young people to enter the health and social service sector, as a growth employment sector with multiple career options. At the same time, youth who pursue health and social service careers will be contributing to the health and development needs of their communities. IntraHealth places a special focus on girls, who drop out of secondary school and health professional schools at a much higher rate than boys. We create internships, scholarships, and other work-readiness initiatives to recruit more students from communities in need. We also work with educational institutions and public and private health employers to ensure health training institutions are responsive to meet the demand for qualified health workers.

## INTRAEALTH'S APPROACH TO ENGAGING YOUTH



*IntraHealth supports expanded opportunities for youth, so they transition to adulthood as engaged and productive members of thriving societies.*

## EMPLOYMENT

Our work with youth entering the health workforce dovetails with IntraHealth's core expertise in strengthening health systems and improving access to health care. Recognizing that many newly trained providers are often youth themselves, IntraHealth works to build a supportive environment in which they can launch and sustain their professional lives. We also assist public and private health employers to place health workers where they are needed most. Other efforts include improving educational and training programs, so health and social service workers are better prepared to meet youth needs. Ultimately, the cycle continues as a pro-youth health and social service sector provides relevant, quality information and services to youth, these youth in turn lead future generations toward more healthy and productive lives and societies.

## CONTACT

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Because Health Workers Save Lives.



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