

# INTRAHEALTH INTERNATIONAL STATEMENT AT 70TH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

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## 16.3 GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR WOMEN'S, CHILDREN'S AND ADOLESCENTS' HEALTH (2016– 2030): ADOLESCENTS' HEALTH

Nearly half of the world's population is under age 25. These youth have phenomenal capacity to improve their own lives and the future of their communities. Unfortunately, they also face serious health risks like early marriage and childbearing, lack of access to contraception, gender violence, and more.

IntraHealth International believes global focus must shift from adolescent-friendly projects to adolescent-responsive health systems that address changing demographics and the unique health needs of adolescents—starting with health workers. Provider attitudes toward youth, especially related to family planning and reproductive health, have been cited as adolescents' primary barrier to accessing health services. It is essential to ensure health system and workforce policies are responsive to the needs and rights of youth.

Further, the global community must meaningfully engage youth to prepare them to be the healthcare users and health workers of the future. Over 70 million young people are unemployed. Simultaneously, the world faces an acute shortage of health workers at all professional levels. Investing in health workforce development not only enables more responsive health service delivery for youth, but it creates decent jobs in one of the most in-demand sectors worldwide. It is imperative to engage youth in learning environments that will pave the way for them to contribute to the needs of their communities as doctors, nurses, lab technicians, and community health workers, as well as those who support the growing health sector such as software developers, financial analysts, and biomedical engineers. Such investments will unlock adolescents' incredible potential for building healthier, more productive societies.

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