

Fact Sheet

There are more than 600 million girls in the developing world. Millions of them lack access to education and health services, are subject to harmful practices like early marriage and female genital mutilation, and are vulnerable to HIV and AIDS, violence and abuse. Investing in these girls will bring enormous dividends to the girls, their families and their communities.

Education

- Girls represent 55 per cent of the more than 75 million children who are not enrolled in primary school.
- Of over 513 million students enrolled in secondary schools in 2006, only 47 per cent are girls.
- Women represent 59 per cent of the world's more than 130 million illiterate youth.

Maternal Health

- Maternal deaths related to pregnancy and childbirth are an important cause of mortality for girls aged 15-19 worldwide, accounting for 70,000 deaths each year.
- Girls who give birth before the age of 15 are five times more likely to die in childbirth than women in their twenties.

Early Marriage

- Worldwide, more than 60 million women aged 20-24 were married before they turned 18.
- If present trends continue, more than 100 million girls will probably be married as children in the next decade.
- Each year, 15 million adolescent girls become mothers.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting

- Around 70 million girls and women aged 15-49 in 27 countries of Africa and the Middle East are estimated to have undergone genital mutilation or cutting.

HIV and AIDS

- Globally, young people aged 15-24 account for 45 per cent of all new HIV infections in adults. In sub-Saharan Africa, 75 per cent of the infections are among young women.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, young women aged 15-24 are three times more likely to be HIV-infected than male counterparts.

Sexual Violence

- It is estimated that 150 million girls under 18 have experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence involving physical contact.
- Between 1 and 4 out of every 10 women have experienced physical violence before the age 16.
- For a large number of girls, the first experience of sexual intercourse in adolescence is unwanted and even coerced.