Adolescent girls are disappearing from public awareness and the international development agenda.

- In 2013, girls accounted for nearly two thirds of new HIV infections among adolescents aged 15 to 19.1
- About 1 of every 10 girls under age 20 has been raped or subjected to a forced sexual act.2
- Nearly a quarter of girls aged 15 to 19 reported being victims of violence since they turned 15.3
- In 2012, 17 per cent of women were married between 15 and 19 years of age.4
- If there is no reduction in the practice of child marriage, the number of girls under age 18 married each year will grow from 15 million today to 16.5 million in 2030 to over 18 million in 2050.5
- An estimated half a billion women and girls lack adequate facilities to manage menstrual hygiene needs with dignity, privacy and safety.6
- In two thirds of the countries in which there is gender disparity in lower secondary education, it is girls who miss out.7
- Only 17 per cent of young women from the poorest households have comprehensive knowledge of HIV.8

However, adolescent girls have the power and potential to transform the world for the better – for themselves and us all.

- If all women had secondary education, there would be 49 per cent fewer child deaths.9
- A literate mother is 23 per cent more likely on average to seek help from a skilled attendant at the birth of a child.10
- In low-income countries, if all mothers had a secondary education, there would be a 26 per cent reduction in stunting.11
- In sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, child marriage would drop by 64 per cent if all women had a secondary education.12

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From 1970 to 2009, more than half the reduction in under 5 mortality can be traced to increases in the average number of years of schooling for young women.\(^\text{13}\)

**Investing in adolescent girls is one of the smartest ways to secure a better and more sustainable future.**

- Investing in girls so they can complete the next level of education could lead to lifetime earnings of up to 68 percent of annual gross domestic product.\(^\text{14}\)
- The cost of adolescent pregnancy as a share of gross domestic product could be as high as 30 per cent over a girl’s lifetime.\(^\text{15}\)
- Women and girls reinvest 90 per cent of their income back into their families and communities, compared to only 30 – 40 per cent for men and boys.\(^\text{16}\)

**With targeted investments in age-specific programmes and services, we can empower adolescent girls to be the leaders and innovators of tomorrow.**

- Education, skills training and access to information technology can transform adolescent girls' lives and prepare girls for life, jobs and leadership.
- Investment in age-specific services on puberty, menstrual hygiene management, and sexual and reproductive health are essential to providing adolescent girls with the health care information and services they need.
- Physical, mental and sexual violence against adolescent girls in any form must not be tolerated.
- Social and economic policies must be enacted and consistently implemented to protect adolescent girls from child marriage, trafficking and sexual exploitation.

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\(^{16}\) https://girlup.org/impact/challenges-girls-face/leadership/