Adolescence in Tanzania
Adolescents in Tanzania

For young Tanzanians everywhere

If you are between ages 10 to 19, this book is meant for you.

Adolescence in Tanzania: For young Tanzanians everywhere aims to stimulate understanding and discussion of the challenges and opportunities facing adolescents in Tanzania today. Read it, discuss it with your teachers, parents and peers, and let us know what you think.

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Dar es Salaam, October 2011
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Introduction

This report was prepared for the young people of Tanzania. It summarizes a longer report about adolescents written for Government authorities and other leaders in the country. The report encourages these leaders to pay more attention to young people between the ages of 10 and 19 years, known as ‘adolescents.’ It urges them to invest money and change laws to make sure that young people have more and better opportunities as they grow.

Leila, 10 years

“My dream is to help to improve the school system in Tanzania and also help orphans go to school.”

Photo: UNICEF/Hiroki Gomi
In Tanzania, not enough adolescents are attending and completing school. Too many adolescents don’t know how to protect themselves against HIV and AIDS, or are orphans and have to take care of their younger brothers and sisters. And a large number of young people are victims of violence, in their homes, schools or communities.

There is good news too! National surveys were carried out in 2010 to measure progress on many topics important to young people. Most of the facts and figures in this report come from the ‘Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey’ (TDHS), which asked families all around the country questions about health, education and living conditions. This kind of survey is carried out in Tanzania every five years. When we compare the results in 2010 with a similar survey carried out in 2004, we can see how things are changing.

The results of the 2010 survey show that fewer girls are getting married and having babies when they are still children themselves. More adolescents are protecting themselves against HIV.

Many young people are involved in activities to help themselves and others – through music, peer education, or volunteering. Today’s adolescents, girls and boys, are tomorrow’s leaders: doctors and nurses, teachers, artists, mechanics, hairdressers, community leaders, engineers and government policy-makers.

This booklet is for you, the adolescents of Tanzania. It describes both the good news and some of the problems that still need to be solved. We hope it will inspire you to become part of the solution. Tanzania’s future will soon be in your hands.

**What is adolescence?**

Adolescence is a time of great change. Young people between the ages of 10 and 19 are beginning their journey toward becoming adults. At 10,
most are still children. But by 19, some girls and boys are married and have their own children. Many are working to support their families. So these ten years are a busy, and sometimes confusing, time. Changes take place in a young person’s body, in their feelings and in how other people treat them.

Physical changes happen at different times for different young people, but by the age of 19 most have reached their adult size and shape.

During this time most adolescents worry a lot – about whether they are attractive to the opposite sex and have enough friends, and what the future holds for them. Some worry about other things too – like whether they are HIV-positive, whether their family can afford to send them to secondary school or where their next meal will come from.

Adolescence is also a time of exploration and discovery. Young people try out new personalities and behaviours to see what fits them best. During these 10 years most adolescents create the identity, the ‘self,’ they will have as adults.

Adults often demand that adolescents take on more and more responsibility as they become older. Some parents want their adolescent children to leave school so they can take care of younger children or work. Some feel their daughters are ready to get married by the time they reach 15, or even younger. At the age of 10, children in Tanzania can be put in jail for crimes, because the law states that they are old enough to take responsibility for their actions.

You may think some of these things are unfair. Adolescents spend a lot of time thinking about what is fair and what is not. They often question their parents, teachers and other adults. This is part of growing up and deciding what kind of person they want to be, and how they want their family and country to be. Being able to talk openly to others about their ideas, feelings and problems helps adolescents reach adulthood safely.
Fina, 10 years

“I used to see the albino killings on TV and I got very scared. I know my mother worries about me a lot. I feel most safe and at peace when I’m at school because I am with my friends.”

Photo: UNICEF/Hiroki Gomi
Some facts and figures

- Adolescents make up about 20 per cent of the population. One out of every five Tanzanians is an adolescent.
- Only one-third of adolescents are enrolled in secondary school.
- By the age of 19, almost half of all girls are pregnant or have already given birth to a child.
- Adolescent girls aged 18-to-19 are nearly three times more likely to be infected with HIV than girls aged 15-to-17.
- About one in every three adolescent girls has been sexually abused.
- Seven out of ten of adolescent boys and girls have experienced physical violence.
- Violence, abuse and exploitation continue to undermine opportunities for adolescents throughout Tanzania.
Adolescents and education

Getting a good education is one of the most important things adolescent girls and boys can do. It improves their chance of getting a good job and earning enough money to support themselves and their families. Well-educated young people can also contribute a lot to their country by using their knowledge and skills to solve Tanzania’s most urgent problems.

Kelvin, 15 years

“I like my school and I am happy here. There is no stigma – we all play and laugh together. The only problem is that I cannot use the toilets at school because of the stairs. I am lucky though because I live near school. If I have to go, my friends always help to take me home and then bring me back again.”

Photo: UNICEF/Hiroki Gomi
Adolescents and education in Tanzania

During the last few years Tanzania has taken important steps to make sure that more children attend school, especially by passing a law that says that parents must send their children to primary school, and by getting rid of primary school fees. By 2010, almost all (95 per cent) primary school-aged children were enrolled.

Some schools still ask pupils to make small payments that not all families can afford, and a large number of children and adolescents (about 20 per cent) do not go to school regularly or complete primary school. Children in Shinyanga, Kigoma and Tabora, where many families are very poor, are the least likely to complete primary school. In some cases girls as young as 11 or 12 years old are taken out of school to get married.

Feeding hungry students

The Tanzanian Government and the World Food Programme, a United Nations agency, worked together for three years (2007-2010) to make sure that young people in some of the poorest parts of the country would not go hungry. They gave daily meals to 640,000 primary school children.

The results were positive. More children attended school in the districts where the meals were offered than in other nearby schools. The students learned more, and did better in class. More of them went on to secondary school, and fewer of them dropped out, compared to students at nearby schools where no meals were offered.

Tanzania’s Ministry of Education and Vocational Training hopes to begin carrying out this kind of work across the country. The cost of providing a mid-morning snack and lunch for one child per school day is about Tshs 43,500 per year.
More adolescents are going to secondary school today than 10 years ago, but still, in 2010, two out of every three adolescents were not going to school.

Girls drop out of secondary school earlier than boys. Some of the reasons are:

- Parents want them to help with house chores
- Schools don’t have private toilets for girls
- Girls get pregnant or get married
- Fear that someone will hurt them at school or on the way to school.

Later on, many boys also begin to drop out, mainly due to poverty and because their parents want them to start work. By the last year of secondary school, the number of boys and girls attending is about the same -- but the numbers are very low. Only 4 out of every 100 adolescents complete six years of secondary education.

Many young people stop going to school because they don’t pass the school-leaving exam. This is not always their fault. Most classrooms don’t have enough textbooks, so several pupils must share. When homes don’t have electricity, pupils can’t study at night. Schools may not have enough teachers, so classrooms are too crowded. Some parents – especially those who are poor or didn’t go to school themselves -- don’t want their children to pass the exam, because if the child goes to secondary school the parents must pay school fees.

Another group that has a hard time staying in school is adolescents who have disabilities. Some are blind. Others have lost an arm or a leg. Most schools are not organised to help these young people learn. Adolescents who are caring for a sick family member, or are sick themselves, also find it difficult to stay in school. When young people are bullied or
teased because they look different, they are also more likely to drop out of school.

**Why invest in education?**

Education offers huge benefits: (1) to adolescents themselves, who will be more likely to earn a better living; (2) to the children and families they will have; and (3) to the country, which will benefit from their knowledge.

For example: the more education a girl has, the better able she will be to care for herself and her own children. Girls who have gone to school also know more about how to feed and care for infants, so their children have a better chance of surviving and growing up healthy. Also, educated girls are more likely to wait until they are older to get married or pregnant. And boys and girls who stay in school learn more about HIV and how to keep from getting infected.

**Brainstorming**

If Tanzania spent more money on education, it could be used to train more teachers, buy more textbooks and make it affordable for all parents to send their children to secondary school.

How else could more money for education be used? What do you think?

Let us know at: UNICEF, P.O Box 4076, Dar es Salaam or email daressalaam@unicef.org
Abu, 13 years

“We share one textbook between many students so you never have the chance to read for yourself. The teachers are so overwhelmed so you have to read and learn on your own. Therefore it is important that every student has one math, English and science textbook for themselves.”

Photo: UNICEF/Hiroki Gomi

Lots of ways to learn

The Temeke Vocational Training Centre in Dar es Salaam helps more than 550 adolescents to learn skills that will help them find a job. Most of these young people had to drop out of school, but they still want to learn.

Students can learn about electricity, cooking, carpentry, sewing, weaving, nutrition, arts and cloth-making. Students live with parents or relatives while they study. Many of the adolescents at the Centre have faced personal difficulties. The Centre offers life-skills classes for them on Fridays, and encourages them to participate in ‘barazas’ where they learn how to speak out, and prepare for life after they graduate.

Photo: UNICEF/Julie Pudlowski
Elizabeth, 18 years

has a malaria test at the Yombo Vituka Clinic in Dar es Salaam which offers youth friendly services.

Youth volunteers at the clinic, called ‘peer educators,’ teach adolescents about risky sexual behaviour; HIV; early pregnancy; child marriage; drug and alcohol abuse; and sexual exploitation, abuse and violence.

Hassani is one of the volunteers. He explains, “Young girls like coming to the youth-friendly services here because they feel more comfortable, they have some privacy and they can speak openly and freely. If they go to the regular clinic, they may meet neighbours and friends or find doctors who are judgemental, so they don’t tell the doctors their real problems. Through youth-friendly services they get sexual and reproductive health education, and they also get support from the peer educators.”

Photo: UNICEF/Hiroki Gomi
Taking care of ourselves

Newborn babies and young children face many risks to their health and survival. Adolescents face their own set of problems, such as:

1. Getting married very young and having babies (girls)
2. Not getting enough good food
3. Finding a health clinic or doctor that understands them

Early marriage, pregnancy and childbirth

Between 2004 and 2010, some important changes took place in Tanzania among girls between the ages of 15 and 19.

- The number of marriages between adolescent girls and older men dropped by almost one-quarter.
- Pregnancy and childbirth fell by 12 per cent, especially among older girls.
- The use of contraceptive methods to prevent pregnancy doubled, from 8 per cent to 16 per cent

This is all good news for girls because early marriage is often not what the girl wants, but instead what the husband or the girl’s family wants. Once married, girls are expected by husbands and families to have children.

Young girls’ bodies are not ready to have a baby, so they are at greater risk of dying or being permanently injured while giving birth. If a pregnant girl or young mother does not eat enough, or eat healthy foods, both the girl and her child can become ill, or even die, from malnutrition. The younger the girl, the less likely she will know how to care for her baby. A baby born to an adolescent mother is twice as likely to die in the first month of life as a baby born to an older mother.
Pregnant girls are usually expelled from school. The law says that girls should be allowed to return to school after giving birth. But after having a child, it is much harder for a girl to return to school, because she has to find someone to take care of the baby, and because she may experience teasing and sexual harassment.

So the fact that more girls are trying to prevent pregnancy, and getting married at a later age shows that girls in Tanzania are being smart and taking care of themselves. Still, more girls need to follow this example.

**Eating enough, eating right**

Getting enough to eat, and eating the kinds of food their bodies need to grow, is hard for some adolescents. The poorest families have less food available. In large families, it can be hard to feed everyone. In some families men and boys are given the best, most nutritious foods, like meat.

Adolescent bodies are growing fast, and they need to eat a lot. If they don’t eat enough nutritious foods they can become ‘anaemic.’ This means that their bodies don’t contain enough of the right nutrients, especially iron, to grow and develop. They may feel weak and tired, and get sick more often. Girls and boys also have a harder time doing well in school when they are hungry or poorly fed. Adolescent girls are two times more likely to be anaemic than boys. One study in Tanzania showed that 75 per cent of adolescent girls were anaemic during their first pregnancy.

Another study was carried out in Tanga, to see what happened to pregnant adolescent girls when they got a weekly iron tablet. It showed that girls who got the iron were much less likely to become anaemic, and their babies were healthier.
A lot of people don’t realize that using something as simple as iodized salt can help young children to develop better and to do better in school.

Eating a lot of green vegetables and fruit is good for adolescent girls and boys because these foods help them to fight disease.

**Youth-friendly health services**

One of the reasons that adolescents don’t go to a health clinic when they are sick (or get tested for HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases - STDs) is their fear of being seen at clinics where testing is done. They feel embarrassed. They worry that their parents will learn that they are having sex — or that the doctors and nurses won’t keep their information private, or will treat them badly. To encourage more adolescents to get the care they need, Tanzania is creating ‘youth-friendly’ health services.

About one-third of the health clinics in Tanzania now have youth-friendly health services, offering HIV testing, contraceptives and treatment for STDs.

**Brainstorming**

If the Government were going to spend more money on helping adolescents to be healthy, it could offer iron tablets to adolescent girls to prevent anemia. It could educate all Tanzanians about the danger to girls of getting married and having children at a young age. The Government could also support more youth-friendly health facilities.

What else could be done? How should the Government spend its money? What do you think?

Let us know at: UNICEF, P.O Box 4076, Dar es Salaam
or email daressalaam@unicef.org
Sharifa, 11 years, tells her story:

“My father died from HIV when I was very young, before I even started school. When I remember him I feel like crying, because I don’t have a father anymore like the other children. I was ten when I found out I also had HIV…my mother sat me down and told me that it was true, I do have HIV. I cried and cried and my mother tried to comfort me. At school the other children always say ‘don’t sit with her or talk to her because she has HIV.’

It makes me very sad when they say those things. When I’m at home I like to eat outside, but the other mothers told my mother not to allow me to eat outside because they were afraid I would infect their children with HIV if they ate with me. So I stopped eating outside. I want to tell other children not to exclude me because of my condition. Play with me, eat with me and let’s walk to school together. It will make me happy and give me peace.”

Photo: UNICEF/Sala Lewis
Adolescents and HIV/AIDS

Almost all adolescents in Tanzania have heard of HIV and AIDS, but only half know how people get infected. If they don’t know that, then they also don’t know how to protect themselves.

HIV is a virus that can be passed along in many ways, and can be treated (but not cured) with the right mixture of drugs, which are called ‘anti-retrovirals,’ or ARVs. AIDS is the disease that people get if they have HIV but don’t get treatment.

Although HIV is passed along mainly through sex, there are other ways to get the virus. A mother who has HIV or AIDS can pass it on to her baby during childbirth or in her breastmilk. HIV can also be passed on through sharing needles with someone who is infected or during earlobe piercing. It can be passed on by being cut with a sharp instrument (like a knife or needle) that has infected blood on it. Girls who go through female genital cutting and boys who get circumcised face high risks because the same knife is used on many children. Rape can also result in HIV infection if the attacker has the disease.

Many HIV+ people, especially children and adolescents, are innocent victims of the disease. But some people don’t understand this, and are very cruel to those who have HIV or AIDS.

HIV cannot be passed on by eating with or by shaking hands or even hugging a person who has the disease.

Sometimes adolescents do things that put them at high risk for HIV infection. For example, having several sex partners; or not using a condom to protect themselves; or trading sex for money, food or clothes.

Many adolescents think ‘it won’t happen to me.’ Or they don’t know that you can get HIV from having sex just one time!
Today in Tanzania about 160,000 children and adolescents under the age of 15 are thought to be living with HIV. Only about half are getting treated with ARVs. Less than 30,000 girls and boys between 15 and 17 years have HIV. But by age 18 and 19, more than twice that many young people have become infected.

The earlier adolescents begin to have sex, the more partners they will probably have, and the higher risk they face of getting infected with HIV.

A good sign

Today in Tanzania, more adolescents are going for HIV testing. In 2004 only 7 per cent were getting tested, but in 2010 more than 35 per cent of adolescent girls aged 15-to-19 got tested. This is a good sign because those who test positive can seek treatment and avoid passing on the virus. The number of boys getting tested also increased, but only to 15 per cent. It is important for more adolescent boys as well as girls to get tested.

To make sure that they and their children are not affected by HIV, many more adolescents need to learn about HIV and how to prevent it — from parents, teachers, doctors and nurses, religious leaders, youth groups or other sources. In Tanzania, young people with the least education and who live in the poorest households are around three times less likely to know about HIV prevention than those who attend secondary school or live in wealthier households.

More people also must learn to treat people living with HIV with kindness, and not blame them or make them feel alone. In Zanzibar, an organisation called ZAPHA+ (Zanzibar Association of People Living with HIV and AIDS) helps people learn to do this.

Brainstorming

If the Government spent more money on adolescents, it could try to make sure more of them learn about HIV and how to protect themselves
Abasi, 15 years, said:

I remember the day very well when my mother told me that she had HIV. I was 11 years old and I didn’t believe her. I went and asked my father. He told me it was true. I went to the beach and walked alone for a long time wondering how my mother got the virus. Then I decided that I would take care of her and let her continue to take care of me too. I joined ZAPHA+, which is an organisation that helps families affected by HIV.

I like my ZAPHA+ club a lot because I get to be with other children who are also affected by HIV and we play and laugh together. Every Sunday my mother and I sit with children from the community and teach them about HIV and AIDS and how to live in peace with one another. Excluding people living with HIV is not a good thing. My mother is a health worker living with HIV and she inspires me.

Photo: UNICEF/Sala Lewis

from the disease. It could also support more programmes like ZAPHA+ to help people with HIV and their families, and discourage discrimination against HIV+ people.

What else could be done? What do you think?
Let us know at: UNICEF, P.O Box 4076, Dar es Salaam or email daressalaam@unicef.org
she had been with other men and that their child wasn’t his. “He said he was going to kill me and bury me with my child. He started hitting me all over my body with an axe handle.”

“My mother-in-law heard me screaming and she came to rescue me. My father came and also told him to stop beating me, but it only made it worse. He beat me even more and harder.”

Finally Penina’s mother took her to safety. She moved back home and the local ward tribunal annulled her marriage. Now she is 13 and has two small children. Her main wish is to go back to school.

UNICEF/Hiroki Gomi
Protecting adolescents from violence


These laws and agreements all state that children and adolescents have rights, including the right to be protected from harm.

Parents, families, schools, police and other adults are supposed to protect young people. But sometimes they are the ones who hurt or abuse children and adolescents. For example: in Tanzania it is legal to beat an adolescent, both in schools and at home. Some adults think this will help make them behave better. But beating never helps, and is a violation of the right to be protected.

In 2011, the results of a national study on violence against children in Tanzania were released. The researchers had interviewed thousands of young people aged 13 to 24 years about their experience with violence when they were growing up. The study showed that:

- Nearly 3 out of every 10 girls and 1 out of every 7 boys had at least one experience of sexual violence before they reached 18 years.
- Nearly 6 per cent of girls had been physically forced to have sexual intercourse before the age of 18.
- Dating partners, neighbours, and strangers were mainly responsible for sexual violence against girls and boys.
- The attacks usually happened at somebody’s house or on the way to school.
- Most of the attacks happened between noon and 8pm.
The study also showed that about one quarter of girls and boys had experienced emotional violence by being threatened with abandonment or made to feel as if they were unwanted.

**Step Forward**

Tanzania now has a Government agency, the Multi-Sector Task Force on Violence against Children, that plans to:

1. Teach more adults – police, doctors, teachers and social workers -- how to help children and adolescents in trouble, and
2. Educate all adults on how to protect young people from harm and abuse.

The Task Force will also try to make sure that all the rights and protections for young people in the ‘Law of the Child Act 2009’ are in place. But this costs a lot of money, at a time when the Government faces many other demands.

Although the number of adolescents who are getting married has fallen, still one girl in six gets married before reaching the age of 19. Some girls who marry young come to regret their decision after a short time because of the way they are treated. Many girls who marry young are forbidden by their husbands to visit their families or friends, go to school, decide whether or not they want to have a child, or make any important decisions about their own future.

Almost one out of every three married adolescent girls says that they have been pushed, shaken, slapped, kicked, punched, choked, burned on purpose, threatened or attacked with a knife or gun by their husbands.
Children who live on the streets have usually left their homes because of abuse, violence or hunger. “With the little we have, we help each other,” said one girl living on the streets in Mwanza.

Photo: UNICEF/Shehzad Noorani

**Life on the streets**

Sometimes children and adolescents feel that they have no choice except to run away from home and live on the streets. Maybe they live in a poor family that doesn’t have enough food, or their parents died of AIDS, or they are beaten at home.

Once they are on the streets, life is not kind. Older youth steal from them and beat them, storekeepers treat them badly, and the police may arrest them. Both boys and girls risk being raped or sexually assaulted.
They have a hard time earning money to eat and live, and most don’t go to school. In Tanzania and many countries, it is mainly the poorest boys and girls who live on the streets.

Another danger is being kidnapped and forced to do dangerous work. This is called “trafficking.” Sometimes the work is heavy labour that is bad for a young person’s health. Boys and girls may also be used for prostitution. The traffickers tell the young person (or their family) that he or she will be given a good job and have a chance to attend school. But this is usually not true.

Families need to know how to protect adolescents and younger children from harm and violence. More doctors must learn how to treat young people who have been sexually abused. Adolescents who want to report a crime should get more privacy from the police, and adolescents shouldn’t be put in prison with adult criminals.

**Brainstorming**

How do you think that adolescents can best be protected from harm and violence?

What steps should the Task Force take to protect adolescents from sexual violence? What else could be done?

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or email: daressalaam@unicef.org
in theatre, song and discussions aimed at teaching adolescents how to protect themselves. After four years of volunteering with Ishi, Venancia says:

“Being a youth adviser has instilled in me hope and passion to keep educating youth and helping them to adopt good sexual behaviour. When I finish school I want to educate the youth about teen pregnancy, child rights, HIV prevention, etc. I also want to keep singing, on the side, and use my songs in my work.”

Photo: UNICEF/Hiroki Gomi
Getting involved: adolescent participation

Tanzania’s ‘Law of the Child Act’ states that: “A child shall have the right to express an opinion, to be listened to and to participate in decisions” that affect his or her well-being.

When adolescents have a chance to speak up about decisions made by their families, at their schools or in their communities, it teaches them how to express themselves, how to listen to others and respect different opinions. Young people learn how to ask for what they want, and they learn that sometimes they have to accept what other people want. This is an important lesson for their whole life.

Unfortunately, adolescent participation is usually not encouraged in Tanzania. In many families, adolescents are told what to do and punished if they don’t obey.

Most schools don’t ask young people for their opinions either. Some schools in Tanzania have student councils (groups of students elected to represent their class). Studies have shown that schools with student councils generally have less conflict and better examination results, and students and teachers get along better.

But opportunities for participation are available, and many adolescents are becoming involved in them.

Baraza la Watoto is another way for adolescents to get involved. The first Baraza la Watoto wa Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania was created in 2002. Now, adolescents can join Junior Councils in 90 districts around the country.
Mayasa, 17 years, from Zanzibar

is a member of the Young Reporters Network. “I was so happy to hold a recorder for the first time and to learn how to use it.” Radio programmes developed by Mayasa and other adolescents can be heard weekly on ‘Toto’s Corner’ on 96.8FM on Zenji FM every Sunday at 10am on ‘Mlango wa Watoto’ on 92.2FM on Radio Sauti ya Injili every Sunday at 2pm, on ‘Paza Sauti’ on Radio Tumaini and on ‘Wasaa Wetu’ on Pambazuko Radio every Saturday.

Photo: UNICEF/J acqueline Namfua

In Tanzania and Zanzibar J unior Council members have met with local government officials to express their opinions about issues such as: physical punishment, the marriage law, health services and protecting the rights of young people.
Roots and Shoots

Another way for adolescents to get involved in the world around them is to volunteer to work on issues that they care about. Those interested in protecting the environment often work with ‘Roots and Shoots,’ started in Tanzania around 20 years ago, and now active in many schools around the country.

Through Roots and Shoots, adolescents contribute to improving the environment by participating in tree-planting, community clean-up campaigns, caring for wildlife and other similar activities.

It is not always easy for adolescents to know what opportunities for participation are open to them. If they don’t have Internet, television or a newspaper, or are not in school, information is hard to come by. Most adolescents in Tanzania rely on the radio for news and information. Those living in cities have more access to other media, but even so not many programmes are made for adolescents.

Some exceptions are the radio programmes produced by the Young Reporters Network. Adolescents are involved in producing and broadcasting these programmes. Also, the Child-to-Child programme on Radio Kwizera broadcasts programmes of special interest to children who live in Tanzania as refugees from other countries.

Brainstorming

If you had a radio show, what would you talk about? Does your local community radio station have a programme where adolescents can talk about the issues that matter most to them? Tell us about the ways in which you contribute to your community and school.

Let us know at: UNICEF, P.O Box 4076, Dar es Salaam
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Today’s adolescents, tomorrow’s leaders

In just 10 years, adolescents who are 15 today will be 25. You will probably have your own family and a job or career. You will be the new generation making important decisions and helping to build the country.

The facts and figures discussed here show that too many Tanzanian adolescents are not going to be ready to play this role. We’ve seen that progress has taken place, but that much more progress is needed.

Rachel, 19 years

I sing about what I see in our communities. I sing about what is true.

Photo: UNICEF/Hiroki Gomi
Making sure that Tanzania’s next generation of adults is healthy and well-prepared -- ready to take on the job of developing the nation depends on:

- More adolescents completing primary and secondary school
- Fewer girls marrying young, so they can finish school, make better decisions about their lives and have healthier babies
- Reaching more young people with information about HIV prevention
- Better protection for adolescents (especially girls) against all kinds of violence and harm
- Giving more young people opportunities to have a say in decisions that affect them, whether at home, in school or in their community.

National leaders have been taking some important steps to make sure that this happens. For example: the Government got rid of fees for primary school so even the poorest children can attend. It passed the Law of the Child Act, is supporting youth-friendly health clinics, and created the Task Force against Violence against Children.

But some problems can’t be solved with laws alone. To put a stop to violence against women and girls, for example, everyone must agree that violence and abuse are wrong. To convince parents to send their children to school involves making sure that all parents understand the importance of education to today’s youth. In other words, solving some problems means changing everybody’s behaviour.

Adolescents can help to get these messages across. Today’s adolescents can help to promote change by reaching out to their friends, schoolmates and families, and by adopting healthy attitudes and behaviours themselves. You can be role models – as peer educators, volunteers, members of Baraza la Watoto – for other adolescents. You can decide
what you think is fair or unfair, and try to speak out for fairness, through song, theatre, youth radio programmes or student councils.

We hope that every young person who reads this booklet learned something new. And we hope it will help you to be ready to face the tasks that await you.

Let us know at: UNICEF, P.O Box 4076, Dar es Salaam or email daresalaam@unicef.org

These girls are laughing during the performance of a play about HIV and AIDS. Using entertainment can help to get the message across to young people.

Photo: UNICEF/Julie Pudlowski