Adolescent and youth voices and engagement in the development of an adolescent well-being measurement approach: An overview

Key messages:

- Incorporating adolescent and youth voices is a critical part of developing a new adolescent well-being measurement approach.
- The overall breadth and continuity of adolescent and youth engagement comes from the global 1.8 Billion Campaign, which the measurement work is a part of.
- Additionally, there are specific efforts to further incorporate adolescent engagement and perspectives into the measurement work.

Background

The current workstream to develop an adolescent well-being measurement approach, led by WHO with PMNCH and partners, is embedded in the wider global youth-led campaign “1.8 Billion Young People for Change”, launched in October 2022 to mobilize more and better action for adolescent well-being. The Global Forum for Adolescents, which will be held in October 2023, is a key milestone for the campaign. The Forum aims to reach more than 1 million people across the world through a digital interactive programme, bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders to garner political and financial attention and commitments from countries to adopt policies and programs prioritizing adolescents’ well-being. The campaign grew out of the 2019 Call to Action for Adolescents, which was convened by PMNCH and supported by UN agencies, civil society, and leaders around the world.

Meaningful adolescent and youth engagement and partnership is a cornerstone of the campaign and includes the development of a Global Consensus Statement on Meaningful Adolescent and Youth Engagement, which was spearheaded by young people.

Examples of prior adolescent and youth engagement as part of this movement include:

- Consultations with youth networks and adolescent-serving organizations supported the development of a consensus definition and conceptual framework of adolescent well-being.
- Youth researchers co-authored and peer-reviewed a set of 15 technical papers to support a series of multistakeholder consultations on programming to promote adolescent well-being based on the consensus framework.
- Regional multistakeholder consultations held in 2021 to discuss operationalization of the consensus framework included youth networks and youth-led and youth-serving organizations.

Incorporating adolescent and youth voices into the development of the measurement approach

One of the asks from the 2021 regional consultations was for a set of standardized indicators to support adolescent well-being monitoring. WHO, together with PMNCH and other UN partners, are leading the development of an adolescent well-being measurement approach and are engaging adolescent and youth and incorporating their perspectives in a number of ways:

- Because this work is embedded in the larger campaign, we are drawing on the adolescent and youth engagement that has already taken place and look to build on the ongoing engagement in the broader campaign.
An Expert Consultative Group, which includes several youth researchers, has been established to support the development of the adolescent well-being measurement approach. Adolescent and youth input into key interim steps will be sought during the process.

Adolescent and youth engagement in key activities in 2023 and beyond

Prioritization of adolescent well-being concepts: The aim is to ensure that adolescent and youth voices and perspectives on well-being are incorporated into the selection of concepts to prioritize for subsequent indicator selection. Building on existing inputs from adolescent and youth, the concept prioritization will be informed by:

- The AWF and the background papers for the multistakeholder consultations.
- Reviewing the literature on adolescent perspectives about what well-being means to them.

Selection of indicators: The indicator selection process will be a purely technical step, building directly off the concept prioritization.

Presentation of draft measurement approach: The culmination of the work to prioritize concepts and select indicators will be the presentation of a draft measurement approach for discussion and feedback at the GFA in October 2023. The aim will be to

1) present the draft measurement approach,
2) provide information on the process,
3) review the alignment of the prioritized concepts and draft indicator list with the documented perspectives of adolescents on their own well-being, and
4) solicit feedback from stakeholders – including adolescents – to incorporate into finalization of the indicator set.

Beyond the Global Forum for Adolescents: Following the GFA, a second phase of work will be undertaken to finalize the measurement approach. This could include assessing the feasibility of the measurement approach at a country level, assessing the correspondence between proposed measures and those used in existing initiatives or data collection efforts, as well as further consultations with young people from different regions and population groups to get feedback on the measures.