

Executive Summary

Eighth meeting of the Global Action for Measurement of Adolescent health (GAMA) Advisory Group

Virtual, 4-6 May 2022



Background

To improve adolescent health measurement globally, WHO, in collaboration with UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, the World Bank Group, and the World Food Programme (WFP), established the Global Action for Measurement of Adolescent health (GAMA) Advisory Group (AG) in 2018.

The objectives of the GAMA AG's work are to:

- provide technical guidance to WHO, partner UN agencies and other relevant measurement groups to define a core set of adolescent health indicators, for the purpose of harmonizing efforts around adolescent health measurement and reporting;
- promote harmonized guidance for adolescent health measurement, supporting countries and technical organizations in collecting useful data to track progress in the improvement of adolescent health.

The GAMA AG meets twice per year to advance work towards these objectives. The completed work is described on the GAMA website¹ and in journal articles accessible from this website. The most recent activity was a systematic selection of priority indicators for global and national adolescent health measurement, along with an identification of measurement gaps, using a participatory process. This list is now being assessed in a feasibility study in 12 countries across all WHO regions, and is being further aligned with existing measurement efforts to harmonize global data collection.

The current workplan outlines planned activities until February 2023. In March 2022, the GAMA Secretariat arranged an ad-hoc meeting (i.e. an additional meeting in addition to the two expert meetings that are held each year), convening the GAMA AG, UN representatives, and a representative of the funding agency to generate ideas on future work of the GAMA AG beyond February 2023; and what should be prioritized in the area of adolescent health (ADH) measurement within five years from now.

It is against this background that WHO convened the eighth meeting of the GAMA AG from 4 to 6 May 2022. In this meeting, a broader group of participants than in the ad-hoc meeting were convened: the GAMA AG and representatives of UN agencies, but also representatives of other technical advisory groups (TAGs), including the Mother and Newborn Information for Tracking Outcomes and Results TAG (MoNITOR); the Child Health Accountability Tracking TAG (CHAT); and the new TAG on measurement of healthy ageing (TAG4MHA); WHO regional adolescent health focal points; WHO technical experts; representatives of funding agencies; as well as external partners and observers. The participants were updated on the feasibility study and the harmonization work; and also continued the discussion on future activities of GAMA, building on the initial conversations that came out of the ad-hoc meeting.

The meeting was held virtually. To accommodate for the different time zones, two sessions were held each day, with the afternoon session being a repeat of the morning session.

¹ <https://platform.who.int/data/maternal-newborn-child-adolescent-ageing/advisory-groups/gama>

Executive Summary

This report summarizes presentations, discussions, and outcomes of the eighth GAMA meeting, which was held virtually between 4 and 6 May, 2022.

Meeting objectives

- To provide updates and obtain feedback on work led by the WHO GAMA Secretariat;
- To provide an opportunity for meeting participants to brief on projects that are relevant to the objectives of the GAMA AG;
- To prioritize activities proposed by the GAMA AG for the next five years.

Expected outcomes

1. Documented feedback on the work led by the WHO GAMA Secretariat;
2. GAMA AG and other meeting participants briefed and updated on on-going adolescent health measurement work;
3. List of prioritized activities proposed by the GAMA AG for the next five years (which can also be incorporated into the next funding proposal).

Completed, ongoing and planned activities until February 2023

The Secretariat is currently conducting two work streams: a feasibility study and work related to harmonization. The harmonization work will feed into the feasibility study, and both work streams will be used to refine the indicator list. The final indicator list is planned to be launched by February 2023.

Feasibility study

The overarching aim of the feasibility study is to determine the feasibility of the priority indicators for adolescent health measurement as proposed by the GAMA AG, in different countries covering all WHO regions. 12 countries have confirmed their participation in the study. Inception meetings have been held with all countries, except for Malaysia (pending), and the process of identifying national stakeholder participants has begun. These steps will be followed by mapping of country data availability and data sources for each indicator; and a survey and a virtual meeting with national stakeholders, all to be completed by the fall of 2022. A “deep dive” in a subset of countries is planned to be finalised by November 2022, followed by an analysis phase, to be completed by December 2022.

Harmonization

Two parallel processes are currently ongoing: documentation of discrepancies with adolescent health measurement initiatives, and documentation of discrepancies with major data collection

instruments. These steps will be followed by analysis of the discrepancies. The results will be fed into the feasibility study process. In the medium and long term, the harmonization work will also support further assessment and refinement of operationalization and use of indicators proposed by the GAMA AG; as well as support efforts to promote standardized measurement.

Sub-study on relevance for SDGs

The Secretariat has received a research grant awarded by the Karolinska Institutet, to conduct a sub-study on how the indicators proposed by the GAMA AG can complement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework to enhance monitoring and evaluation of progress towards improving adolescent's lives and health.

Updates and current issues in adolescent health measurement

A series of presentations related to updates within the field of adolescent health measurement were given, including conclusions on how these updates relate to GAMA AG's past and future work. The presentations covered an update from UNICEF; a strategy for evaluation of the UNICEF-WHO Joint Programme for the mental health and psychosocial well-being and development of children and adolescents; the release of a Child Health and Well-Being Dashboard; indicators on girls' menstrual health and hygiene indicators for national level monitoring; an overview of groups of adolescents being left behind with regards to sexual and reproductive health; an initiative to measure youth empowerment with DHS data; and a presentation on the Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Exemplars (ASHER) project.

The next five years of the GAMA AG

Important themes during this meeting

Throughout the discussions and presentations of adolescent health measurement, some important themes reoccurred:

- **Well-being**
 - While some of the indicators proposed by the GAMA AG include aspects of well-being, a systematic mapping and analysis of indicators related to well-being has not been conducted.
 - The Adolescent and Young Adult Health (AYH) Unit of the WHO MCA Department is currently leading the development of an approach to adolescent well-being measurement as part of the initiative to make adolescent well-being a global priority by the UN H6+ Technical Working Group on Adolescent Health and Well-being. While this work stream is currently not conducted under the GAMA AG umbrella, many members of the GAMA AG have contributed to this work.
 - Within the adolescent health measurement field, there appears to be a common perception that the work of the GAMA AG is also extremely relevant to the broader measurement of adolescent well-being. GAMA AG has continuously been approached by stakeholders who seek advice on well-being measurement, including what indicators may be used for measuring adolescent well-being.

- **Quality of care**
 - An important aspect of adolescent health and well-being, which is currently subject to measurement gaps.
- **Boys and young men**
 - There is a lack of data on the health and well-being of boys and young men, particularly related to their sexual and reproductive health.
 - There is a need for reframing the global health community's approach to health and well-being of boys and young men, including addressing masculinity norms; exploring why health and well-being issues are not addressed; and exploring underlying reasons for behaviour that leads to negative health outcomes.
- **Measurement of impact of adolescent health interventions**
 - It is challenging to measure the impact of adolescent health interventions, and future work to overcome these challenges is needed.
- **Programmatic indicators**
 - While programmatic indicators are important to fully capture adolescent health and well-being, there is limited inclusion of programmatic indicators in the priority indicator list proposed by the GAMA AG.
 - This is particularly important for some aspects of the proposed widened scope of GAMA AG, e.g. to capture adolescents in humanitarian settings.
- **Measurement of inequalities in adolescent health**
 - The need to advance measurement of inequalities in adolescent health was highlighted throughout the meeting.

Discussion following the GAMA AG ad-hoc meeting

In March 2022, the WHO GAMA Secretariat held an ad-hoc meeting with the GAMA AG and UN representatives, to discuss the next five years of the GAMA AG and to develop a list of proposed future activities. During that ad-hoc meeting, three questions were raised for discussion. Following that ad-hoc meeting, this eighth GAMA meeting was used to present the ideas that emerged during the ad-hoc meeting, to a wider audience. Those meeting participants who had not participated in the ad-hoc meeting were invited to provide feedback on these proposed future activities.

The following input to the three questions was collected during the ad-hoc meeting as well as this eighth GAMA meeting:

1. How to ensure that the priority indicators are adopted and used in countries?

- Define the audience and seek buy-in from relevant stakeholders
- Widely disseminate final version of the priority indicator list and supporting products
- Support country implementation

2a. How to ensure that measurement approaches leave no adolescent behind?

- Define specific adolescent sub-populations/vulnerable populations, building on previous work.
- For defined sub-populations:
 - Examine suitability of current measures and approaches;
 - Prepare guidance on measurement approaches/disaggregation;
 - Develop and document measurement methodologies.
- Consult vulnerable groups in our work processes.

2b. How to better integrate adolescent health measurement within the global measurement context?

- Disseminate and advocate for uptake of the priority indicators, including at major global events.
- Prepare guidance on use and impact of the priority indicators.
- Engage with global stakeholders in adolescent health measurement and other relevant areas.
- Summarize existing country-level data to populate the priority indicators.
- Strengthen linkages between adolescent health efforts and maternal and newborn health efforts.

Prioritization of activities proposed by the GAMA AG for the next five years. The input collected during the ad-hoc meeting as well as during this eighth GAMA meeting was synthesized by the WHO GAMA Secretariat into a list of seven proposed future activities. In a session reserved for the GAMA AG and UN representatives, these activities were ranked in order of priority. 22 participants individually ranked each activity, based on perceived importance and urgency.

The proposed activities, in order of combined perceived level of importance and perceived level of urgency, are as follows:

- 1. Measure inequalities in adolescent health**
- 2. Indicator validation studies**
- 3. Populate the indicators**
- 4. Report on adolescent health 2025**
- 5. Broaden scope to include adolescent well-being measurement**
- 6. Broaden scope to include more programmatic indicators**
- 7. Identify indicators for expanded and context-specific measurement areas**

Changes in the composition of the GAMA AG

Several reasons were identified for why the composition of the GAMA AG may need reconsideration in the future. These reasons include potential expansion of the scope of the GAMA AG; and a need to recruit additional young GAMA experts.

Final prioritization of activities

In the final prioritization of activities, the WHO GAMA Secretariat will also take into consideration global adolescent health priorities as well as input from colleagues at WHO.

Next steps

Expanding the range of donors

The WHO GAMA Secretariat will approach additional donors to seek funding for the next phase of the GAMA AG beyond February 2023. Possibly, different donors will be approached with regards to specific activities/projects of the next work plan.

Action points

- **Feasibility study**
 - Map different types of input that will be received from the study.
 - Identify the principles/criteria for when to keep or discard priority indicators of the list, based on input collected in the study.
 - Consider how youth representatives may be consulted in phase 3 of the study.
 - Consider how vulnerable groups may be consulted in the process.
 - Consider how to engage countries not participating in the feasibility study, and consider running the results through a high-income country at some point during the process.
 - Consider identifying early country adopters through the feasibility study (for the purpose of developing case studies/success stories).
 - Consider incorporating a pilot dissemination plan into the feasibility study, to explore country responses to suggested dissemination activities.
 - To participating countries, clarify expectations regarding the potential use of sub-national data in the assessment of country data availability.
- **Harmonization**
 - As part of the harmonization efforts, ensure the recommendations of the GAMA AG are incorporated into reviews of larger surveys (DHS, MICS etc.) .
 - **Measurement of inequalities in adolescent health** Define what is meant to be “left behind”/vulnerable/marginalized (criteria).
 - Identify specific groups that are “left behind”.
 - Establish a better term than “being left behind”.
 - Assess what is already being done in terms of measuring inequalities across WHO and explore collaboration with relevant groups at WHO.
- **Continue collaborations between GAMA and other initiatives**
 - UNICEF-WHO Joint Programme for the mental health and psychosocial well-being.
 - MoNITOR and CHAT TAGs: Reinstate exchange of updates and discussions with CHAT and MoNITOR in future GAMA meetings.
- **Country cases/success stories**
 - Continue collaboration with Gates Ventures/Exemplars in Global Health.
- **Measurement of impact of adolescent health interventions**
 - Contribute to the discussions on the measurement of impact of adolescent health interventions.

- **Dissemination of the priority indicator list**
 - Begin disseminating the priority indicator list now, while clearly stating that it is a draft version.

Next meeting

The next meeting will take place during the fall 2022, hopefully in-person, if the COVID-19 situation permits.

Eighth Meeting of the GAMA Advisory Group, virtual, 4-6 May 2022*Concept note*Background and Scope

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It is against this background that WHO is organizing the eighth meeting of the GAMA AG, scheduled to be held virtually, from 4-6 May 2022.

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Meeting objectives

The objectives of the eighth meeting of the GAMA AG are to:

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Expected outcomes

- documented feedback on the work led by the WHO GAMA Secretariat;
- GAMA AG and other meeting participants briefed and updated on on-going adolescent health measurement work;
- list of prioritized activities proposed by the GAMA AG for the next five years.

Methodology

The eighth meeting of the GAMA AG will be held virtually over three days. To accommodate for participants joining from different time zones, two sessions (with one being a repeat of the other) will be held each day. A Teams link will be shared in advance. The meeting will be held in English.

Participants

The eighth GAMA meeting will bring together:

- The GAMA AG;
- Representatives from the Mother and Newborn Information for Tracking Outcomes and Results (MoNITOR), the Child Health Accountability Tracking (CHAT) Technical Advisory Groups, and the Technical Advisory Group for Measurement of Healthy Ageing (TAG4MHA);
- Representatives of UN agencies;
- WHO regional adolescent health focal points;
- WHO technical experts;
- External partners;
- Members of funding agencies.

Agenda

Wednesday, 4 May 2022

DAY 1 [all times in CET]			
SESSION 1	SESSION 2 (repeat)	Moderator: Dakshitha Wickremarathne / Emmanuel Adebayo	
11:00 - 11:20	16:30 - 16:50	Opening session - Welcome, introductions, COI statements - Expected outcomes of the meeting	Ann-Beth Moller
11:20 - 11:30	16:50 - 17:00	Overview of progress on work led by the WHO GAMA Secretariat and expected deliverables by February 2023	Regina Guthold
11:30 - 12:00	17:00 - 17:30	Update on the feasibility study of the priority indicators in 12 countries	Anna Kågesten
12:00 - 12:10	17:30 - 17:40	Break	
12:10 - 12:40	17:40 - 18:10	Update on harmonization of the priority indicators	Holly Newby
12:40 - 13:15	18:10 - 18:45	The next 5 years of the GAMA AG: Overview of outcomes of an ad-hoc meeting and collection of feedback from meeting participants	Andrew Marsh

Thursday, 5 May 2022

DAY 2 [all times in CET]			
SESSION 1	SESSION 2 (repeat)	Moderator: Ann-Beth Moller	
11:00 - 11:15	16:30 - 16:45	Strategy for evaluation of the UNICEF-WHO Joint Programme for the mental health and psychosocial well-being and development of children and adolescents	Chiara Servili
11:15 - 11:30	16:45 - 17:00	Assessing the impact across the life course of preventive adolescent health and wellbeing interventions	Valentina Baltag
11:30 - 11:45	17:00 - 17:15	Child Health and Well-Being Dashboard: What does it contain on Adolescents	Theresa Diaz
11:45 - 11:50	17:15 - 17:20	Announcement of webinar on Girls' Menstrual Health and Hygiene indicators shortlist for national level monitoring	Marni Sommer and Thérèse Mahon
11:50 - 12:05	17:20 - 17:35	Discussion on linkages between presentations 1-3 with the work of the GAMA AG	All
12:05 - 12:15	17:5- 17:45	Break	
12:15 - 12:30	17:45 - 18:00	Which groups of adolescents are being left behind on Sexual and Reproductive Health, and why and what could be done about it?	Venkatraman Chandra-Mouli and Elsie Akwara
12:30 - 12:45	18:00 - 18:15	Measuring Young Women's Empowerment with DHS Data	Kerry MacQuarrie
12:45 - 13:00	18:15 - 18:30	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Exemplars	Jen Kidwell Drake, Nyovani Madise, Naa Dodoo
13:00 - 13:15	18:30 - 18:45	Discussion on linkages between presentations 4-6 with the work of the GAMA AG	All

Friday, 6 May 2022

DAY 3 [all times in CET] (CLOSED SESSION FOR GAMA AG AND UN REPRESENTATIVES)			
SESSION 1	SESSION 2 (repeat)	Moderator: Regina Guthold	
11:00 – 12:20	16:30 – 17:50	Prioritization of activities proposed by the GAMA AG for the next five years	All
12:20 – 12:30	17:50 – 18:00	Next steps and closing of the meeting	All