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Introduction to youth inequalities

Youth is a period of major changes in people's lives such as **leaving the educational system, entering the labor market and the start of their reproductive phase.**



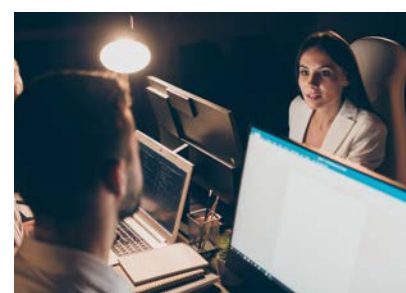
A fourth of the region's population consists of young people between the ages of 15 and 29.

Hence, the importance of investing in that population group as one of the fundamental pillars for achieving sustainable development with equality.



Social inclusion of young people

Social inclusion of young people should be approached from a multidimensional and integrated perspective with a rights-based focus in which, in addition to accessing education, health or a decent job, they should feel part of the society they are jointly building with others.





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However, young people in the region often encounter inequality gaps in various aspects of their lives including in the labour, political and cultural spheres, on the level of decision-making and in striving to participate in debates on issues that affect them.

Education and Labour

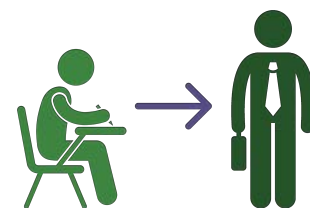


Young people have only limited access to tertiary education in the region with a gross tertiary enrollment rate of 52.7% in 2019, which means that level of studies remains out of reach for roughly half of the entire youth population.

Young people also encounter problems in transitioning from school to work.

For example, in 2018 close to two out of every 10 people between 15 and 24 were neither in the educational system nor the labor market, with that rate higher in rural areas than in cities.

Those who do manage to enter the labor market often run up against hurdles in their search for a decent job whether because they lack the necessary skills or employers demand prior work experience.



Health

When it comes to health, young people residing in rural areas, along with people in low-income groups, have much less access to preventive and curative care.





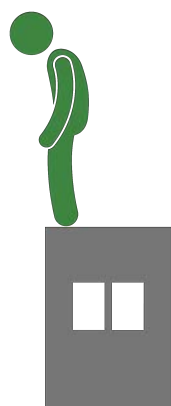
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This has leads to various impacts such as teenage pregnancy rates, which are greatest among young women belonging to indigenous groups, of African descent or living in rural areas, thereby making it harder for them to enter the workforce or remain in the educational system. All of this affects their entire future.



Suicide is another health issue that especially affects young people.



Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people worldwide after accidents and homicide, according to World Health Organization data. People between 20 and 24 years of age have the highest suicide rates of any age group in the region.

In addition to suicide, a considerable number of young people suffer from mental, emotional, food-related or **behavioural disorders**.

Violence

In many countries in the region, young people are exposed to high levels of violence with rates varying depending on their gender.

For example, deaths caused by **violence or intentional injury** are more common among **young men**, while **young women** are at greater risk of being victims of **sexual abuse or rape, kidnapping or violence** at the hands of their partner and are also more exposed to **verbal or psychological violence**.

Young men



Young women





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Although young people benefit from intergenerational gaps in accessing cultural activities and using cultural assets, among low income strata such cultural access is more confined due to the lower probabilities of technological access and usage among impoverished youth.



Such gaps also extend to young people's participation in social affairs and roles as citizens, key factors for allowing them to engage in decisions that affect their own development and participate in building joint projects.



For example, many young people in the region are far removed from, and distrustful of conventional politics, opting instead to engage in social movements as their main avenue for political participation and for voicing their demands.



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