

FROM EVIDENCE TO ACTION: HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This section of the *Preventing Early Pregnancy and Poor Reproductive Outcomes Toolkit* provides users with a framework for action to reduce adolescent morbidity and mortality due to early pregnancy. Designed for advocates, this section outlines a step-by-step process for encouraging action among decision-makers, opinion leaders, medical personnel, researchers, and affected communities to prevent early pregnancy and poor reproductive outcomes among adolescent girls.

Strategic advocacy as outlined in this toolkit will primarily serve to a) inform key stakeholders so that they understand the causes and effects of early pregnancy, and b) urge them to work toward solutions to prevent too early pregnancy and pregnancy-related mortality and morbidity. This can be accomplished in many ways, such as:

- Mobilizing communities
- Generating media attention
- Working directly with local officials
- Lobbying for policy and institutional changes
- Implementing programmes

Advocacy Planning Checklist

The checklist below outlines a step-by-step process to develop actions based on recommendations from the *WHO Guidelines for Preventing Early Pregnancy and Poor Reproductive Outcomes Among Adolescents in Developing Countries*. Answering the questions at each step will help advocates gather much of the information needed to select, design, and implement targeted advocacy activities to prevent early pregnancy and improve adolescent reproductive health.

1 Understand the context	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is your geographical target area? National, regional, local?• What national policies exist regarding early pregnancy and the factors that lead to it?• What are the issues regarding early pregnancy and adolescent reproductive outcomes in your target area?• What are the factors contributing to this situation in your target area?• What is being done to prevent adolescent pregnancy? Are there organizations that work on adolescent sexual and reproductive health?• Are community members, health providers, policy-makers, and other key decision-makers working to prevent early pregnancy?
2 Select a focus outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which of the six outcomes highlighted in the WHO Guidelines is a priority to achieve through advocacy in your target area? <p>OUTCOME 1: Reduce marriage before the age of 18 years</p> <p>OUTCOME 2: Create understanding and support to reduce pregnancy before the age of 20 years</p> <p>OUTCOME 3: Increase use of contraception by adolescents at risk of unintended pregnancy</p> <p>OUTCOME 4: Reduce coerced sex among adolescents</p> <p>OUTCOME 5: Reduce unsafe abortion among adolescents</p> <p>OUTCOME 6: Increase the use of skilled antenatal, childbirth, and postnatal care among adolescents</p>
3 Determine the goal for action based on the focus outcome selected	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What advocacy goals could lead to actions by policy-makers, families and communities, and health service providers to prevent early pregnancy?
4 Define objectives to support the goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What action or change will the advocacy goal promote?• Once the advocacy goal has been defined, the next step is to develop SMART objectives to support achievement of the goal. Be sure your objectives are: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound

<p>5 Identify your target audience(s)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can groups be influenced in order to achieve the specific advocacy goal? • What actions and contributions can be made by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy-makers - Families and communities - Health service providers - Adolescents?
<p>6 Determine the outputs and indicators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What actions will be needed in order to meet the advocacy objectives? • What activities will be conducted? • How will progress toward the advocacy goal and success be measured? • How will the advocacy plan be monitored and evaluated?
<p>7 Determine available resources and possible barriers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can you/your organization offer? What are your organizational strengths? • What organizational gaps exist in achieving the goal? What resources are needed to address these gaps? • Can/should partner(s) or other stakeholders be brought in to address those gaps? • What are the social, cultural, economic, and political barriers to achieving the advocacy goal?
<p>8 Identify partners and allies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which groups, organizations, or individuals can serve as strategic partners to help meet the advocacy goal and objectives? • Are there other organizations or individuals aligned with your cause whose partnership could increase the impact of your advocacy (e.g., champions within government ministries, key civil society coalitions)?
<p>9 Develop strategic action plan and messages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the advocacy plan meant to accomplish (e.g., share knowledge, build political will, promote a specific action)? • What external factors (e.g., political, cultural, budgetary) might affect implementation of the work/advocacy plan? • What clear, concise messages related to the advocacy plan should be conveyed to the target audience(s)? • How will the advocacy messages be disseminated to the target audience(s)?
<p>10 Execute the advocacy and action plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the timeline for implementing the advocacy plan? • Which staff members and organizations will be involved in the execution of the plan? What will be each person's role? • What is the available budget for implementing the advocacy plan? What fundraising plans are in place to support the advocacy work?

The policy briefs and PowerPoint presentations in this toolkit should be used to engage community leaders and decision-makers at all levels, particularly as a way to initially present the evidence to them and encourage them to support the proposed interventions.

Conclusion

Whether you decide to work independently or assemble a core group of partners, the steps illustrated here form the foundation for a sound and well-executed advocacy plan.

Strategic planning is key to the success of your advocacy campaign. Identifying a clear, achievable goal and utilizing resources effectively will help to ensure favourable outcomes. The WHO Guidelines provide recommendations on how to prevent early pregnancy and poor reproductive outcomes among adolescents in developing countries. Implementing these recommendations to address early pregnancy is up to you. The time for action is NOW.