

Young people and HIV



UNAIDS definitions¹
Adolescents: aged 10–19 years.
Young people: aged 15–24 years.

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¹ Definitions used for the Global AIDS Response Progress Reporting indicators. For programmatic purposes, UNAIDS also uses the following definitions: adolescents, 10–19 years; youth, 15–24 years; young people, 10–24 years.

KEY MESSAGES

1. Despite the progress made in the past 10 years, with a 46% decline in new HIV infections among young people (15–24 years), the world is still behind on achieving the targets set for young people. Progress is uneven, with steep reductions in new HIV infections among young people in some countries, in particular in eastern and southern Africa, but limited progress in reducing HIV incidence among young key populations in most countries.
2. Two out of every seven new HIV infections globally in 2019 were among young people (15–24 years). Additional efforts need to be made to address the structural factors that increase the vulnerability of adolescent girls, young women and young key populations and their risk of acquiring HIV, such as gender inequalities, gender-based violence, poverty, stigma and discrimination, and insufficient implementation of comprehensive sexuality education programmes.
3. Age of consent laws and policies are one of the main barriers for adolescents and young people to access sexual and reproductive health and HIV services and need to be removed to ensure equal access to health and well-being services by young people.
4. National prevention strategies and programmes must holistically address the needs of young people in all their diversity, especially young women and young key populations in high-incidence locations.
5. Barriers to the participation of young people need to be removed and support for their meaningful engagement and leadership in all HIV-related processes and decision-making spaces needs to be scaled up to ensure the sustainability of responses led by young people.
6. Globally, only one in three young people demonstrate accurate knowledge of HIV prevention. Access to high-quality, gender-responsive, age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education programmes, both in school and out of school, must be urgently strengthened to ensure young people have the knowledge they need to prevent new HIV infections.



Two out of every seven new HIV infections globally in 2019 were among young people (15–24 years).

Global targets on HIV relating to young people

Global AIDS Strategy 2021–2026: End Inequalities, End AIDS

- ▶ Result Area 7: Young people fully empowered and resourced to set new direction for the HIV response and unlock the progress needed to end inequalities and end AIDS.

2016 United Nations Political Declaration on Ending AIDS

- ▶ 61 (f): Commit to reducing the number of adolescent girls and young women aged 15 to 24 years newly infected with HIV globally each year to below 100 000 by 2020.
- ▶ 61 (m): Commit to reducing the risk of HIV infection among adolescent girls and young women by providing them with quality information and education, mentoring, social protection and social services, which evidence shows reduce their risk of HIV infection, by ensuring girls' access and transition to secondary and tertiary education and addressing barriers to retention, and by providing women with psychosocial support and vocational training to facilitate their transition from education to decent work.

46%

Despite the progress made in the past 10 years, with a 46% decline in new HIV infections among young people (15–24 years), the world is still behind on achieving the targets set for young people.

UNAIDS global estimates for 2019

Adolescents and young people living with HIV

Total number of adolescents living with HIV: 1 700 000
[1 100 000–2 400 000].

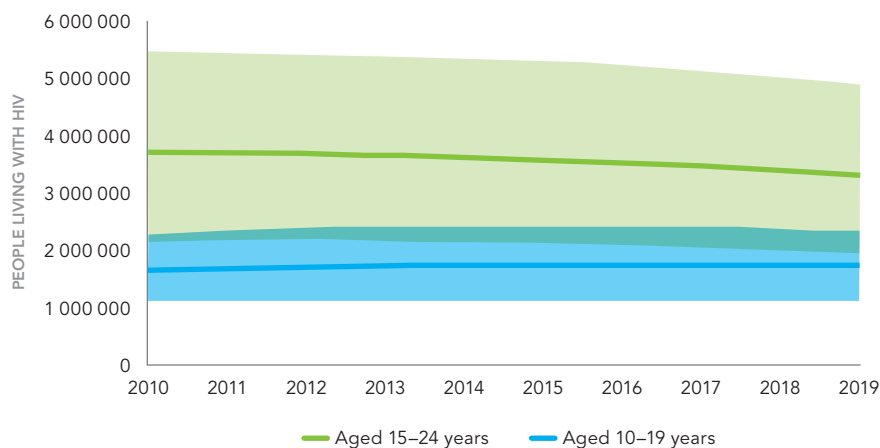
- ▶ Total number of adolescent boys: 740 000 [540 000–990 000].
- ▶ Total number of adolescent girls: 1 000 000 [550 000–1 400 000].

Total number of young people living with HIV: 3 400 000
[2 000 000–4 900 000].

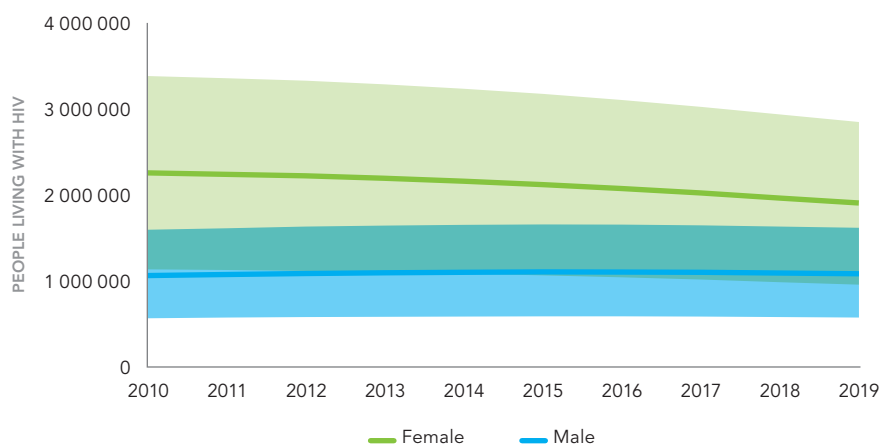
- ▶ Total number of young men: 1 200 000 [640 000–1 800 000].
- ▶ Total number of young women: 2 100 000 [1 100 000–3 200 000].

Trend in the total number of young people living with HIV in the past 10 years

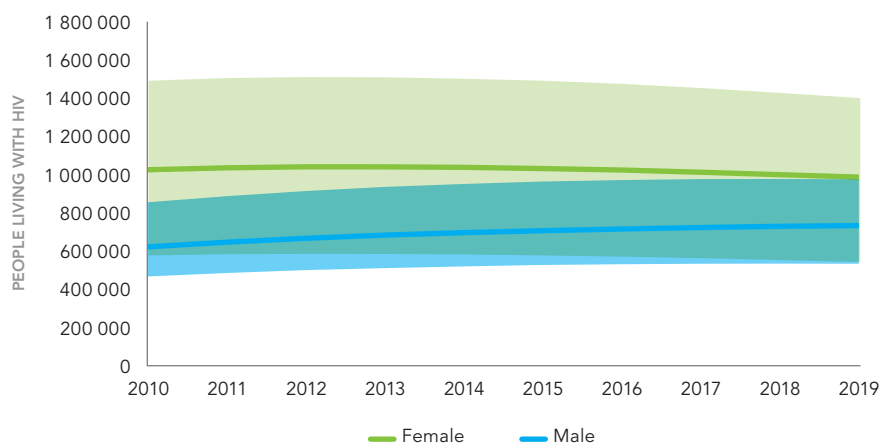
Adolecents and young people living with HIV, global



Young people living with HIV, global, by sex



Adolecents living with HIV, global, by sex



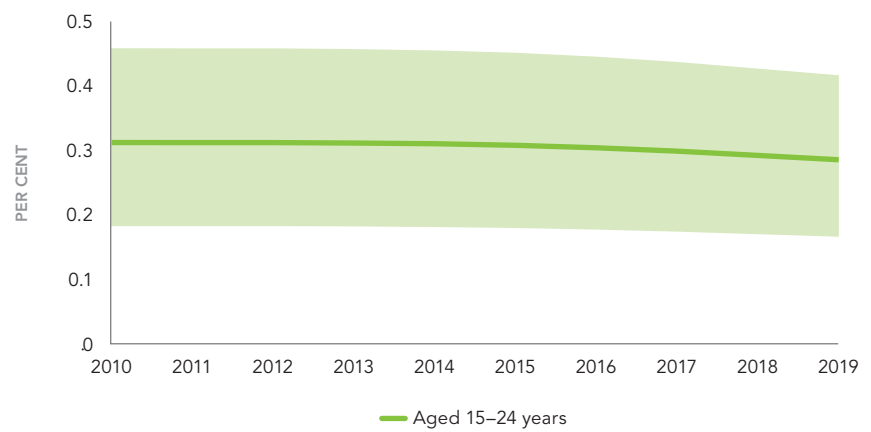
HIV prevalence among young people

HIV prevalence among young people (15–24 years): 0.3% [0.2–0.4%].

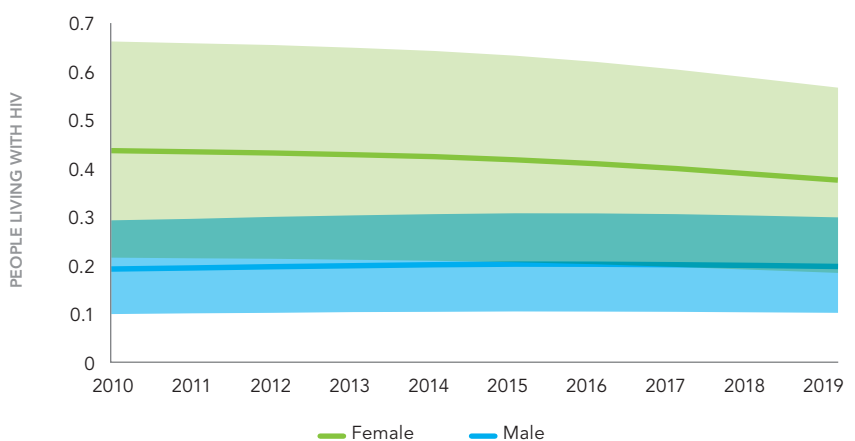
- ▶ HIV prevalence among young women (15–24 years): 0.4% [0.2–0.6%].
- ▶ HIV prevalence among young men (15–24 years): 0.2% [0.1–0.3%].

Trend in the HIV prevalence among young people in the past 10 years

HIV prevalence, global, among young people



HIV prevalence, global, among young people, by sex



HIV prevalence among young key populations

HIV prevalence among young key populations from Global AIDS Monitoring countries that submitted a Global AIDS Monitoring report between 2016 and 2020 (n = number of countries):

- ▶ Among young sex workers: 4% (n = 58).
- ▶ Among young gay men and other men who have sex with men: 6% (n = 67).
- ▶ Among young people who inject drugs: 5% (n = 23).
- ▶ Among young transgender people: 11% (n = 15).
- ▶ Among young prisoners: 1% (n = 31).

New HIV infections among adolescents and young people

New HIV infections among adolescents: 170 000 [53 000–340 000].

- ▶ Adolescent boys: 44 000 [6800–110 000].
- ▶ Adolescent girls: 130 000 [25 000–250 000].

New HIV infections among young people: 460 000 [260 000–680 000].

- ▶ Young men: 180 000 [65 000–270 000].
- ▶ Young women: 280 000 [160 000–420 000].

Eighty-two per cent of new HIV infections among young women in 2019 were in sub-Saharan Africa.

There was a 46% decline in new HIV infections among young people (15–24 years) from 2000 to 2019.

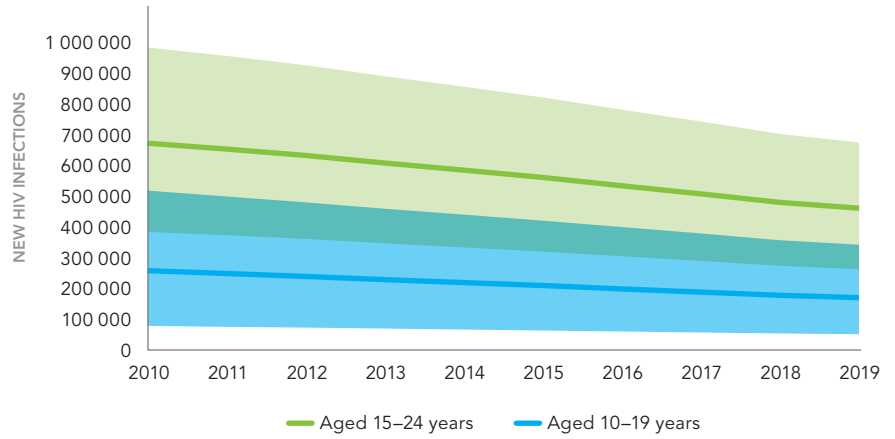
Two out of every seven new HIV infections globally in 2019 were among young people (15–24 years).



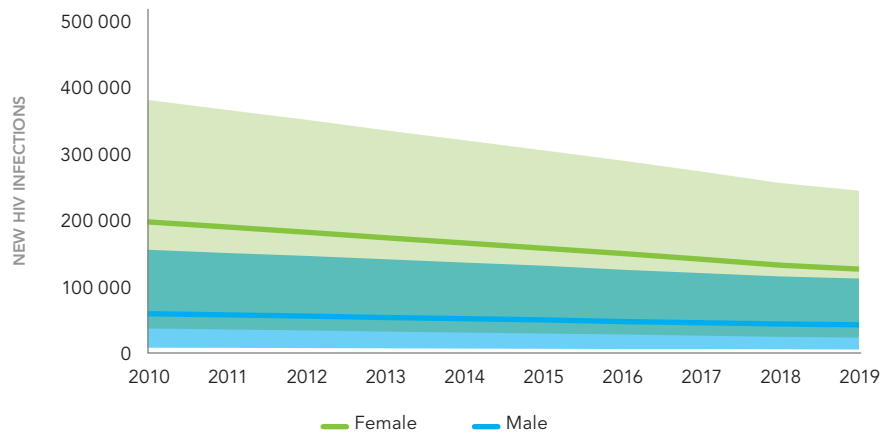
Age of consent laws and policies are one of the main barriers for adolescents and young people to access sexual and reproductive health and HIV services and need to be removed to ensure equal access to health and well-being services by young people

Trend in the number of new HIV infections among young people in the past 10 years

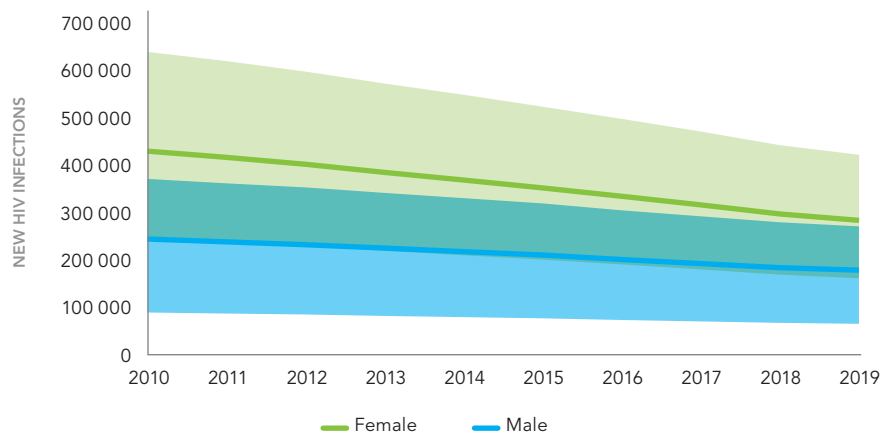
New HIV infections among adolescents and young people



New HIV infections among adolescents, global, by sex



New HIV infections among young people, global, by sex



Decrease in new HIV infections among adolescents (10–19 years), 2010–2019: 34%.

- ▶ Male: 28%.
- ▶ Female: 36%.

Decrease in new HIV infections among young people (15–24 years), 2010–2019: 31%.

- ▶ Male: 27%.
- ▶ Female: 34%.



Barriers to the participation of young people need to be removed and support for their meaningful engagement and leadership in all HIV-related processes and decision-making spaces needs to be scaled up to ensure the sustainability of responses led by young people

AIDS-related deaths among adolescents and young people

AIDS-related deaths among adolescents (10–19 years): 34 000 [23 000–50 000].

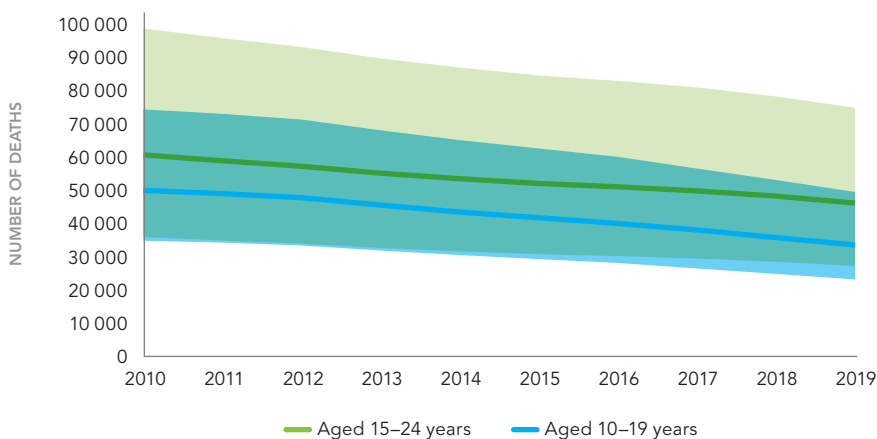
- ▶ Male: 17 000 [12 000–25 000].
- ▶ Female: 17 000 [11 000–25 000].

AIDS-related deaths among young people (15–24 years): 46 000 [27 000–75 000].

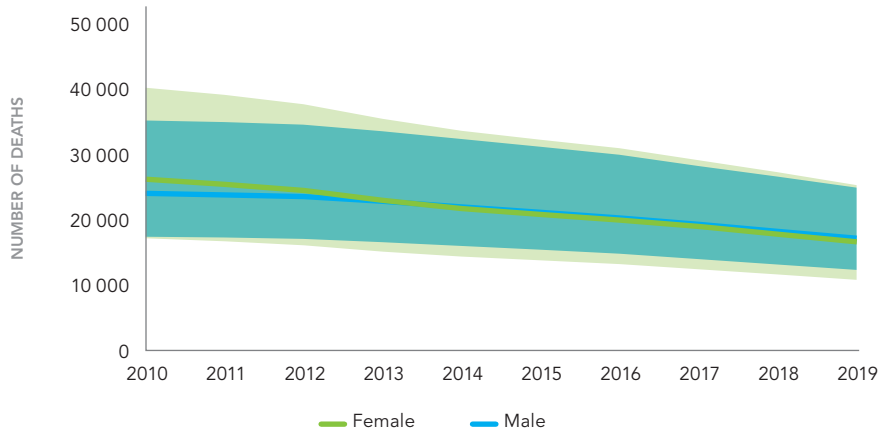
- ▶ Male: 21 000 [13 000–33 000].
- ▶ Female: 26 000 [13 000–44 000].

Trend in the number of AIDS-related deaths among young people in the past 10 years

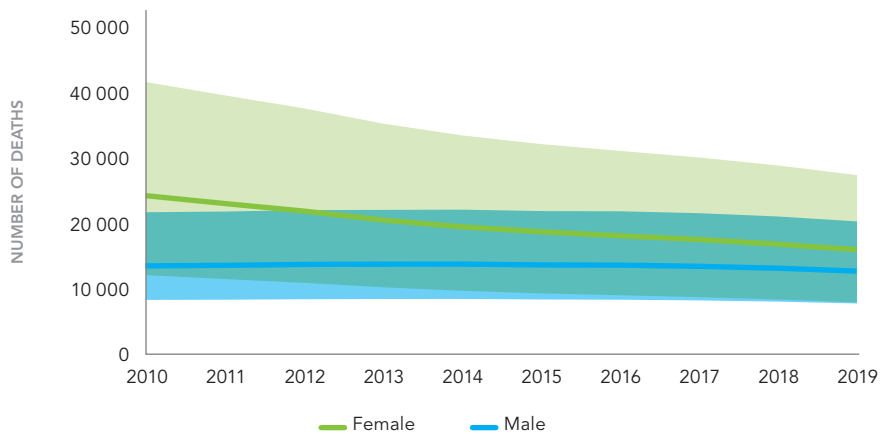
AIDS-related deaths, global, by age group



AIDS-related deaths among adolescents, global, by sex



AIDS-related deaths among young people, global, by sex



National prevention strategies and programmes must holistically address the needs of young people in all their diversity, especially young women and young key populations in high-incidence locations.

Decrease in AIDS-related deaths among adolescents (10–19 years), 2010–2019: 33%.

- ▶ Male: 29%.
- ▶ Female: 37%.

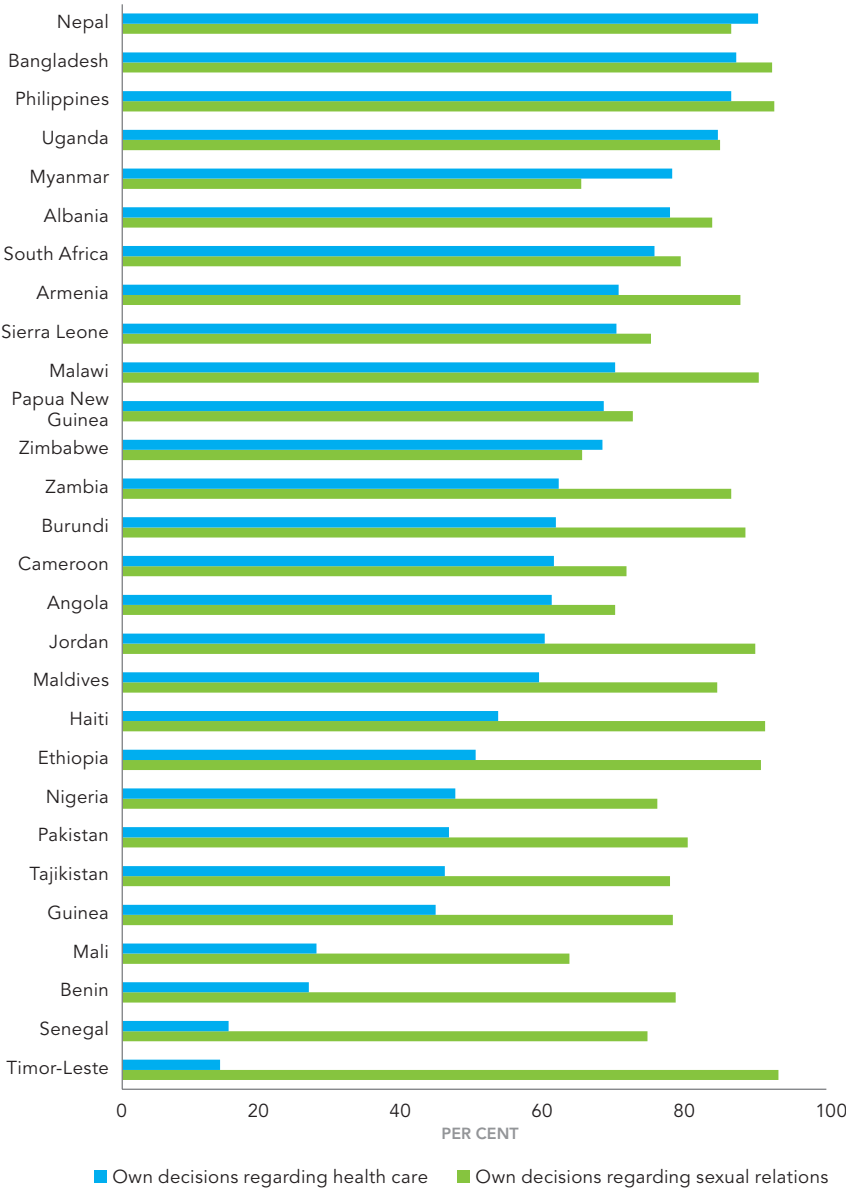
Decrease in AIDS-related deaths among young people (15–24 years), 2010–2019: 24%.

- ▶ Male: 6%.
- ▶ Female: 34%.

Demographic and Health Surveys

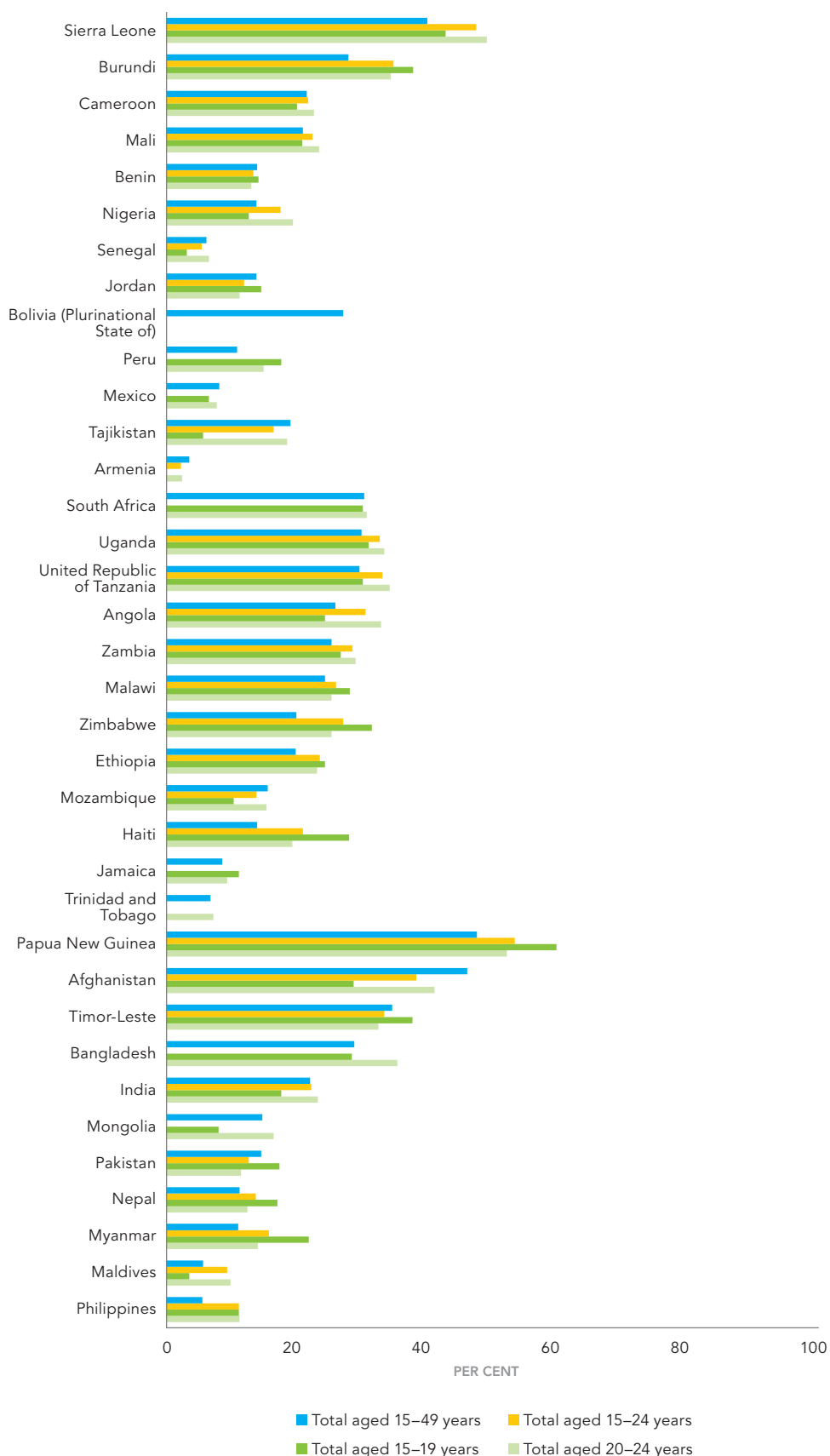
Adolescent girls and young women

Percentage of young women (aged 15–24 years) currently married and not pregnant who make their own decisions regarding health care and sexual relations, countries with available data, 2015–2019



Adolescent girls and young women

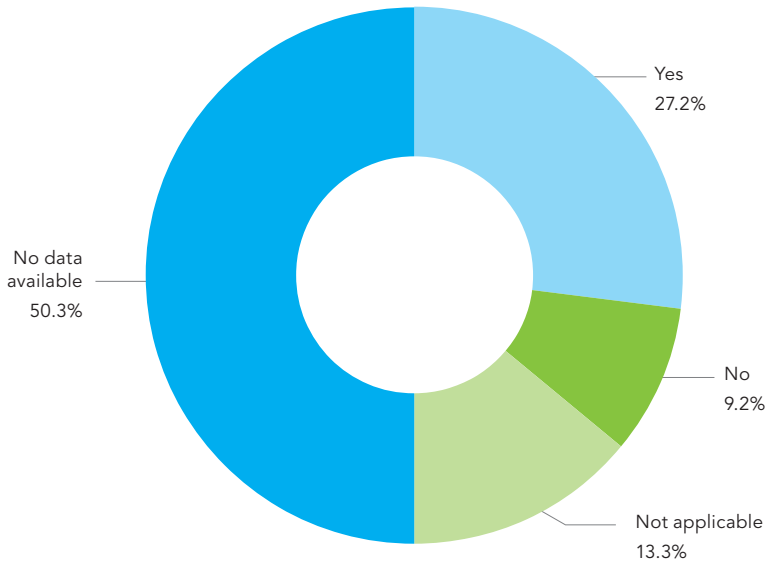
Percentage of ever-married young women who have experienced physical or sexual violence committed by their husband/partner in the 12 months preceding the survey, 2015–2019, compared with national total



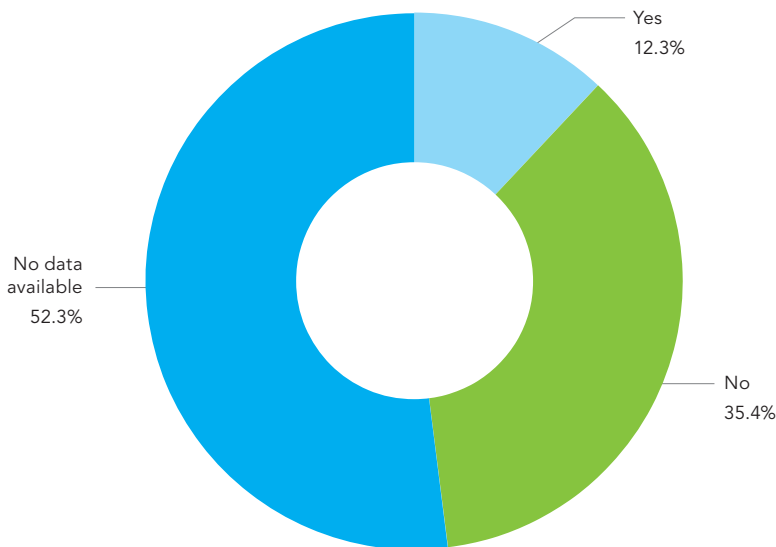
National Commitments and Policies Instrument

Prevention targets and strategies for adolescent girls, young women and their male partners

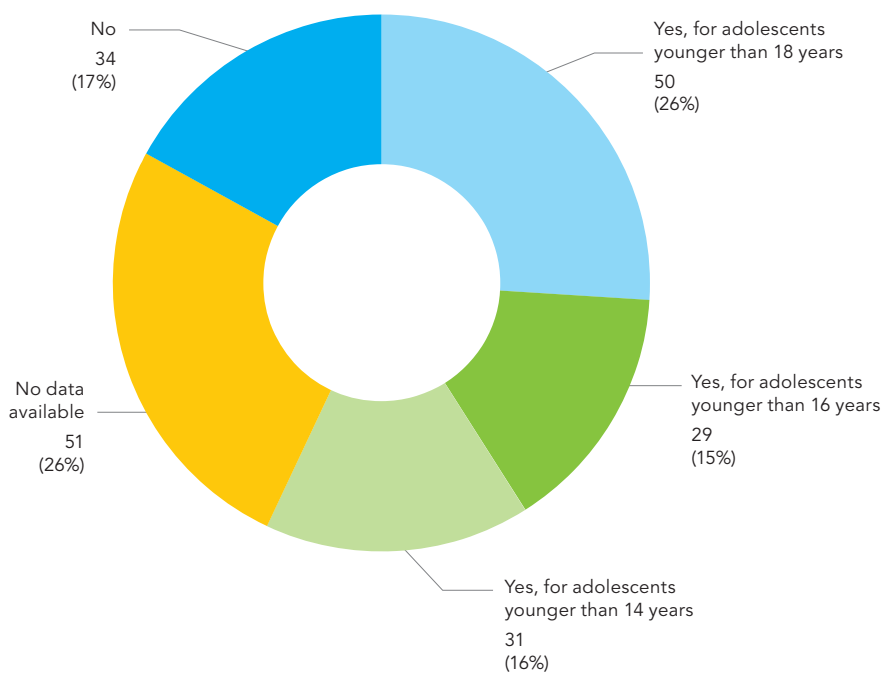
Countries that report having a national prevention strategy to reduce new HIV infections among adolescent girls, young women and their male partners in communities with a high HIV incidence, global, 2019, $n = 195$



Countries that report having set national prevention targets for adolescent girls, young women and their male partners in communities with a high HIV incidence, global, 2019, $n = 195$

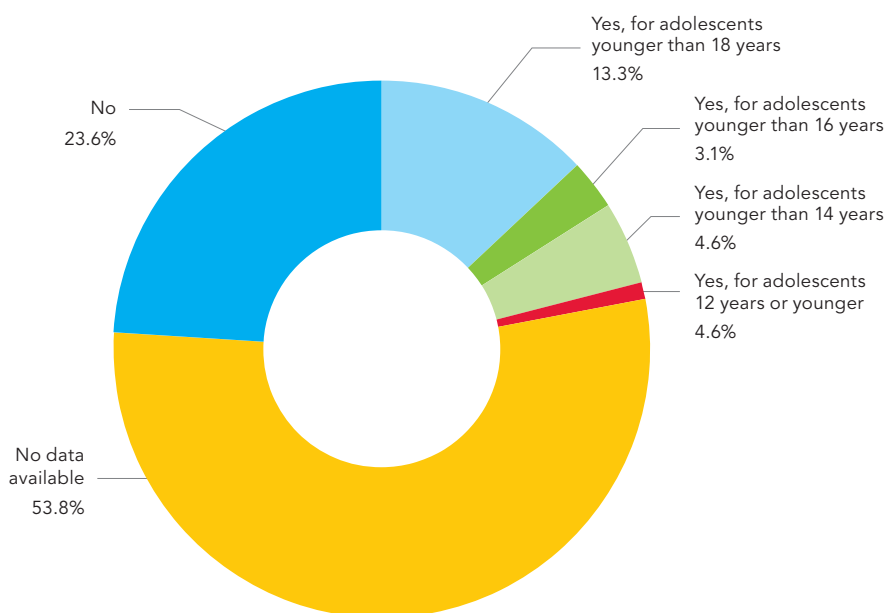


Number of countries with laws requiring parental consent for adolescents to access HIV testing

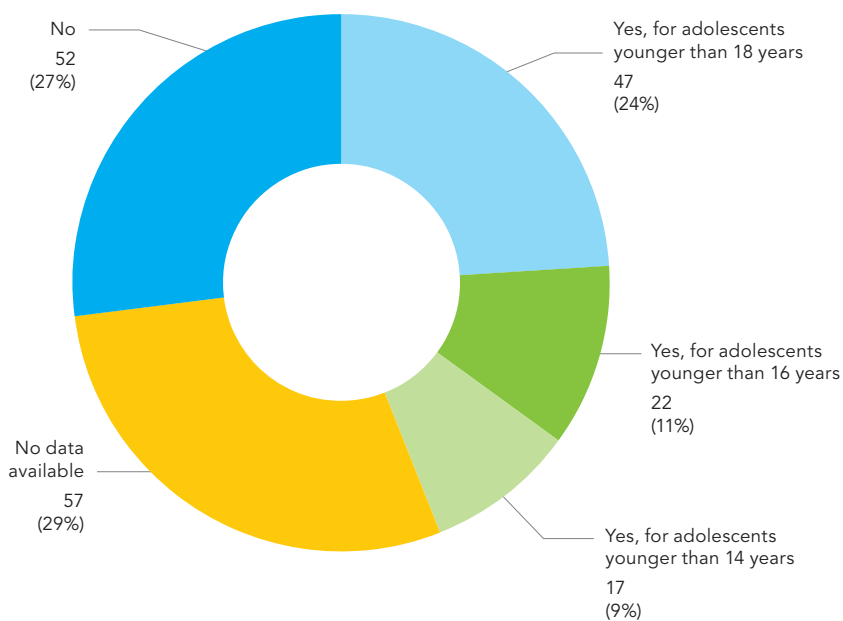


Percentage of countries with laws requiring parental consent for adolescents to access contraceptives

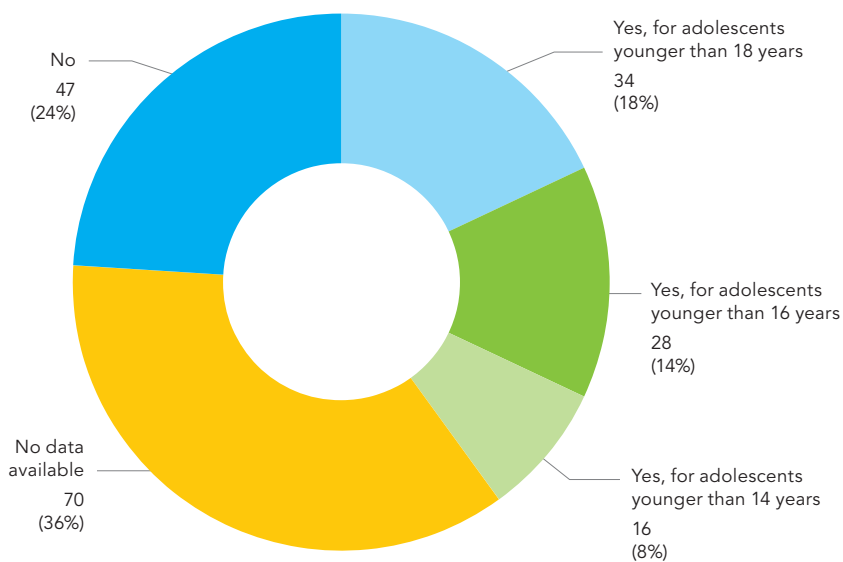
Countries with laws requiring parental consent for adolescents to access contraceptives, including condoms, global, 2019, $n = 195$



Countries that require parental consent for adolescents to access HIV treatment

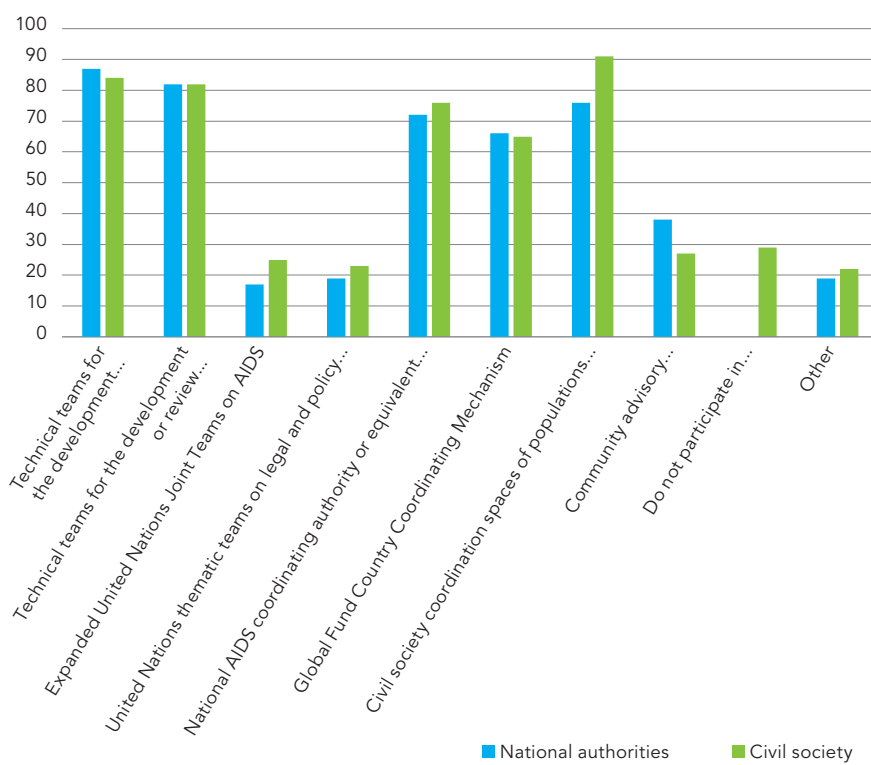


Countries with laws requiring parental consent for adolescents to access sexual and reproductive health services



Countries in which young people are reported to participate in decision-making spaces where these exist

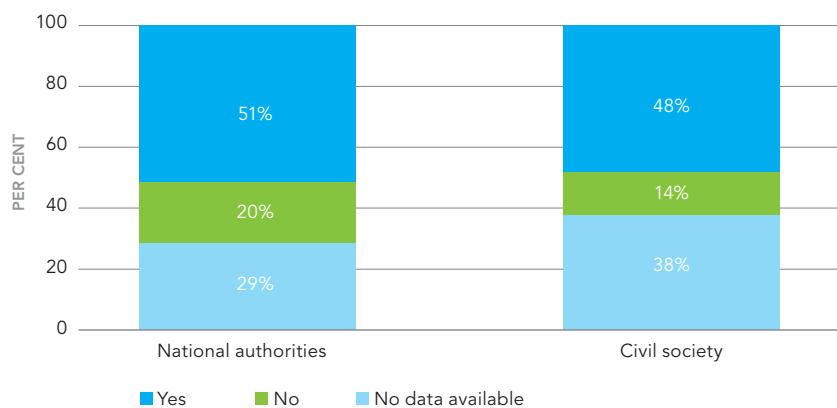
Countries in which young people are reported to participate in decision-making spaces where these exist, global, 2019, n = 131



Description of the graph above

- ▶ If yes, do young people participate in any of the following decision-making spaces in the national HIV response?
- ▶ Technical teams for the development, review and update of national AIDS strategies and plans.
- ▶ Technical teams for the development or review of programmes that relate to young people’s access to HIV testing, treatment, care and support services.
- ▶ Expanded United Nations Joint Teams on AIDS.
- ▶ United Nations thematic teams on legal and policy reform and review.
- ▶ National AIDS coordinating authority or equivalent, with a broad-based multisector mandate.
- ▶ Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanism.
- ▶ Civil society coordination spaces of populations most affected by HIV.
- ▶ Other: please specify _____
- ▶ No.

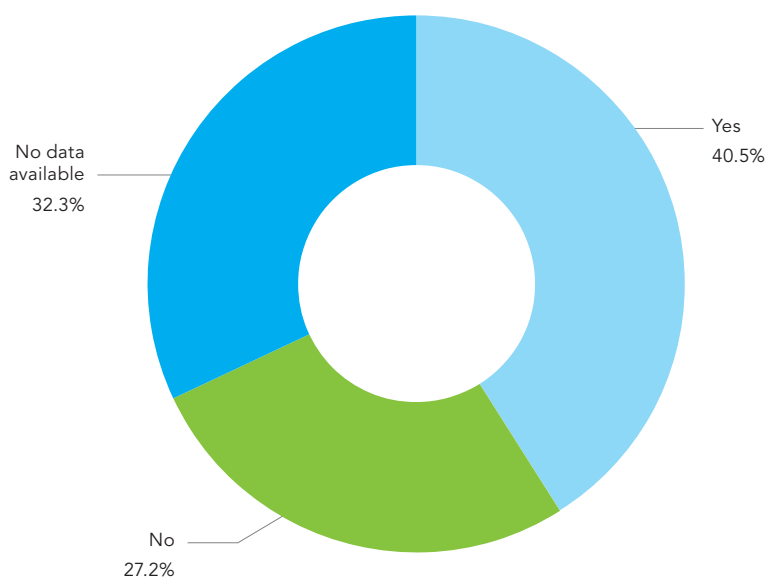
Countries reporting that young people participate in policy/guidelines/strategy development related to their health, global, 2019, n = 195



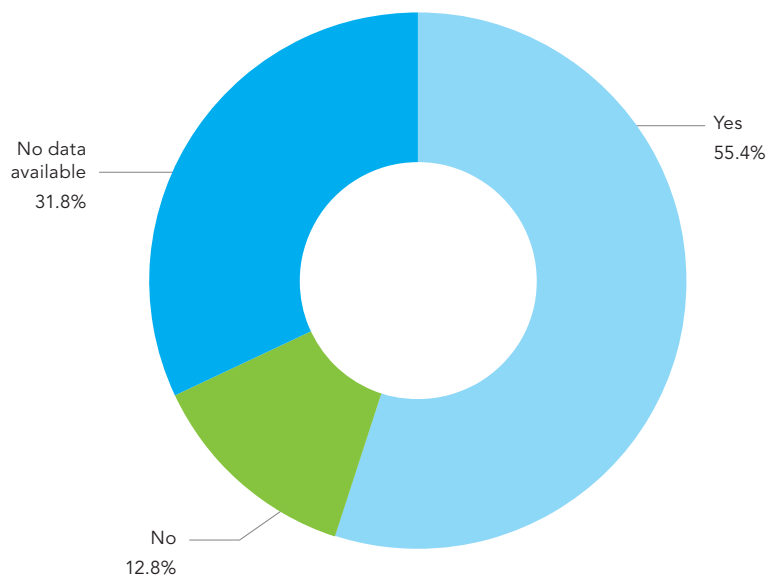
Life-skills-based HIV and sexuality education policy

Globally, only one in three young people demonstrate accurate knowledge of HIV prevention.

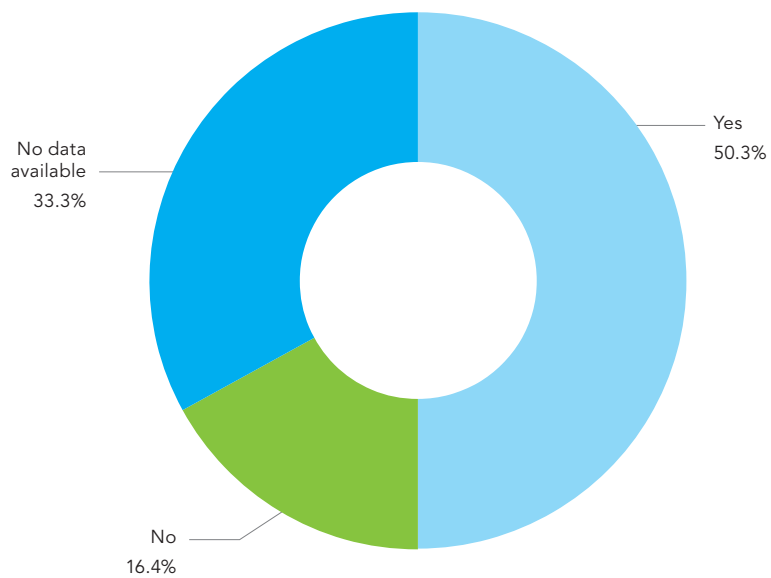
Countries reporting education policies on life-skills-based HIV and sexuality education—primary school, global, 2019, n = 195



Countries reporting education policies on life-skills-based HIV and sexuality education—secondary school, global, 2019, $n = 195$



Countries reporting education policies on life-skills-based HIV and sexuality education—teacher training, global, most recent data, percentage of reporting countries, $n = 195$





“It is important to invest in new generations of youth leadership to ensure the sustainability of the HIV response. This can be done by engaging and supporting young people in all their diversity, particularly those affected by HIV, to influence and lead HIV service delivery, decision-making, monitoring, accountability, research and advocacy. Young people must be empowered to play leadership roles in shaping new social norms around gender, sexuality, identity and consent.”

Global AIDS Strategy 2021–2016

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