

Young Health Programme in Brazil

The Programme is taking place in five municipalities in the State of Maranhão in Brazil. Over 40% of the population are under the age of 19 and its poverty rates are the highest in the national Human Development Index. Maranhão has the second highest ranking of child labour, with 240,000 children and adolescents working in the streets.

The Young Health Programme in Brazil is focused on educating young people on sexual and reproductive health, the prevention of Non Communicable Disease (NCD) behaviours including tobacco use and alcohol abuse and broader health issues.

The Programme is being implemented by Plan Brazil in partnership with Promundo.



AstraZeneca 

Young Health Programme

A global community investment initiative

in partnership with



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Plan

Young Health Programme in Brazil



Key issues for adolescent health include increased HIV cases in younger populations, high rates of unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion and increased sexual coercion. Other significant health issues include sexual violence, substance abuse, malnutrition and NCD-related deaths.

What do we want to achieve through the Programme?

The Programme will reach an estimated 60,000 adolescents in the five municipalities over 5 years. It will also indirectly influence a population of over 115,000 including policy makers, educators, health professionals and communities where these adolescents live.

Objectives:

- **Objective 1:** To inform, engage and empower adolescents on health, with a primary focus on gender and sexual reproductive health and rights
- **Objective 2:** To influence public policy, engage with key decision makers, and increase public awareness of adolescent health issues
- **Objective 3:** To strengthen the existing delivery of health and education services to provide improved quality and access to adolescents

What activities are taking place locally?

The overall aim is to improve the health choices of adolescents within the identified areas and considerable focus is placed on driving change through the young people themselves.

The target audience is adolescents (between 10 and 24 years), their families and communities. Some of the local activities taking place include:

- Training adolescents to become opinion leaders who engage and inform their peers on their rights in terms of health issues. Topics discussed in the peer education programme include gender, sexual and reproductive health, sexual diversity, pregnancy and drugs
- Promoting adolescent participation in public policy campaigns to improve services
- Ensuring sustainability of initiatives by executing the Programme in very close collaboration with the schools who will ultimately own the project. The Programme is also engaging various stakeholders including parents, Community Health Agents and health service providers to ensure community support and engagement

What progress has been made so far?

- During the first 3 years the YHP has worked successfully in collaboration with local schools, health workers, government stakeholders and NGOs
- During this time 57,082 young people have been reached directly, either as peer educators or through outreach activities and 75,625

people have been reached in the wider community through awareness raising activities and mass media campaigns making a total of 132,707 people.

- Partnerships with 24 schools have been key to facilitating the outreach activities of the Programme. Mutual strengthening has also taken place between the YHP and the government run Health in School Programme
- 263 Peer Educators have been trained and have gone out to fellow adolescents and community members with health messages and information.
- The YHP in Brazil has been successful in developing partnership with the Technical School of the National Health System to train Community Health Agents (CHAs) across the State about adolescent health. 641 have been trained in the first 3 years. The training has sensitised CHAs about the specific health issues affecting adolescent girls and boys, and they are increasingly delivering adolescent friendly activities in their communities, such as supporting the health fairs
- Numerous public campaigns have been carried out on specific issues relevant to adolescent health involving media, young people, schools, wider community members and government. Thousands of people received key messages over these important dates such as World Aids Day (1st December), International Women's Day (1st March), the Carnival period (February) and National Day for Fighting Sexual Abuse and Exploitation against Children and Adolescents (18th May). On the ground campaign activities have been supported by radio spots and news articles appropriate to the day. One particular highlight was YHP successfully launching its own campaign, Adolescent Health Week during September 2013 in collaboration with government stakeholders and other organisations. All this work is contributing to a more enabling environment for adolescent health and gender equality
- YHP in Brazil has been recognised for its expertise on adolescent health with the methodology of the YHP now sought by the government to be included in relevant planning forums

Local Partner

The Programme is being delivered on the ground by Plan Brazil in partnership with Promundo. Promundo is a Brazilian non-governmental organisation (NGO) that promotes gender equality and seeks to end violence against women, children and youth.

www.promundo.org.br