

UNFPA IN MALDIVES



because everyone counts





United Nations Population Fund

Delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

UNFPA Maldives Country Office
3rd Floor, Shinetree Building,
Boduthakurufaanu Magu,
Male' 20184,
Republic of Maldives
Tel: (960) 3316940, Fax: (960) 3317936
maldives.office@unfpa.org

www.facebook.com/UNFPAMaldives
maldives.unfpa.org

Cover photo credits: Yaasir Ahmed
Design and layout: Shaneez Bushree



Maldives at a glance

- Population of Maldives
400,000
- Population density of Male'
77,170 per km²



More than **1/3** of people are in Male', making it one of the most densely populated cities in the world.

Young people aged 15 to 24 years makes up **22%** of the total population.

Timely public policies help the 75, 000 young people reach their full potential.

Investment in youth development is essential to benefit from the Maldives demographic dividend with a greater number of working age people and fewer dependents.

Population densities across countries

Maldives	1,138 per km ²	South Africa	43 per km ²
Bangladesh	1,093 per km ²	United States	32 per km ²
China	142 per km ²	Saudi Arabia	14 per km ²
France	118 per km ²	Australia	3 per km ²

The largest ever proportion of young people are entering their reproductive years. That makes the right of every individual to choose when and how often to have children especially important.



Half of the Maldives population is under 25 years of age.



-



years

On average a Maldivian girl gets married at 19 years and has the first child by 20 years.



85% of 15-17 year olds reported their first sexual experience as wanted or voluntary, indicating the prevalence of consensual sexual behavior among young people.

Maldivian youth is generally sexually active before marriage. The prevalence of risky sexual behavior among youth including high risk, unsafe and unprotected sex with multiple partners lead to a complex mix of health, social, economic and legal consequences, primarily connected to the occurrence of unintended pregnancies.

Access to reproductive health information and services is paramount to adolescents and young people.

Few young people receive adequate preparation for their sexual lives. This leaves them vulnerable to coercion, abuse and exploitation, unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV.

More than half of the respondents to the 2009 Demographic and Health Survey youth questionnaire **did not know** that a woman could get pregnant following first sexual intercourse.

To promote healthy lifestyles among adolescents and youth, they need knowledge and skills to take **responsible decisions** to protect their own health and wellbeing.

Life skills teach young people to understand the changes they go through in puberty. Thus they are better equipped to make positive life choices, improve reproductive health, plan pregnancies and protect themselves against STIs including HIV.

Access to family panning



- **60%** of married women either want no more children or want to delay at least 2 years before their next child.
 - **16%** unwanted births
 - **19.8%** unplanned births
- Providing access to family planning reduces the number of women who give birth too young, too often or simply not at the right time.

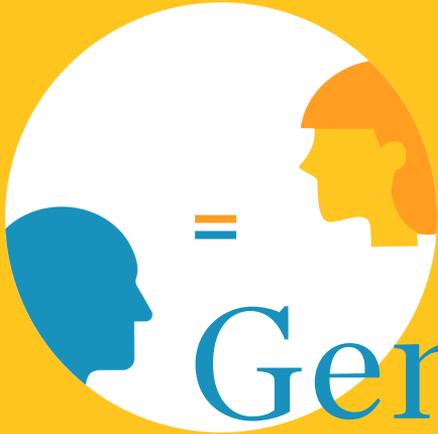
Making every pregnancy wanted

Ensuring that every child is wanted and every childbirth safe leads to smaller and stronger families.

Yet 1 out of 4 pregnancies are not planned.

When women are healthy, educated and able to exercise their fundamental right to determine the number and spacing of their children, they trigger progress in their families, communities and nations. Advancing reproductive health and rights will enhance their well-being and productivity and improve prospects for current and future generations.





Gender
equality
is a win
for all

When women are educated & economically active, the entire family benefits.

Particularly in the context of the high divorce rate, it is more important that women can be economically independent. This will also reduce single mothers' dependency on the state.

Reproductive and sexual rights, including such intimate issues as when, how and with whom to have sex; when, how and with whom to have children; and how to express gender and sexuality must be guaranteed for all.

1 in 3 women between the ages of 15-49 in the Maldives would have suffered at least one form of physical or sexual violence or both during their lifetime.



In a world of seven billion, every person should enjoy equal rights and dignity. Yet women continue to face widespread discrimination and violence and we cannot afford to squelch the full potential of half the world's population.

The Rights Side of Life, the second baseline human rights survey in the Maldives, reports that men are now less likely to agree that they should never hit their wives than in 2005. Justifications given for wife beating, among others included not completing household chores to satisfaction, disobeying the husband and refusal to have sex with the husband.

When women undertake the bulk of domestic work, including child rearing it often becomes a barrier to greater female participation in public life.

Childcare facilities, maternity leave, job sharing and other effective policies can increase women's employment and participation in public life.

The effects of violence against men and women go beyond just the survivor. It impacts all of us and we, men and women, have an obligation to stop it!

WHAT IS UNFPA DOING?

- To help couples **plan families**, to help mothers undergo **pregnancy and deliver safely**, and to enable individuals to **protect them from sexually transmitted infections** including HIV/AIDS, we support individuals, including young people, **access to sexual and reproductive health information** and services through technical guidance, policy advice and trainings.



- To enable young people's **responsible life decisions** as they enter adulthood, we support the Ministry of Education to incorporate age-appropriate life skills education in the **school curriculum**. To provide for **youth-friendly health services**, we strengthen **community based organizations** to deliver sexual and reproductive health information to young people.

- To protect women and men against Gender-Based Violence, we strengthen mechanisms for healthcare providers to respond to Gender-Based Violence. We also support civil society to promote gender equality and raise awareness on gender-related issues.



- To **build evidence** so that **population dynamics** are reflected in planning and formulating **policies** for **sustainable** development, we provide technical assistance to direct resources where they are most needed. This includes support to national surveys such as Census and Demographic and Health Survey. Population dynamics have an effect on every aspect of human, social and economic progress and sexual and reproductive health and gender equality.

United Nations Population Fund

Delivering a world where every pregnancy
is wanted, every childbirth is safe and
every young person's potential is fulfilled.



United Nations Population Fund
3rd Floor, Shinetree Building,
Boduthakurufaanu Magu,
Male' 20184,
Republic of Maldives

Tel: (960) 3316940, Fax: (960) 3317936

maldives.office@unfpa.org
maldives.unfpa.org

www.facebook.com/UNFPAMaldives

