



UNICEF-GPIA International Conference 2010

Adolescent Girls – Cornerstone of Society: Building Evidence and Policies for Inclusive Societies

The New School, Theresa Lang Center, 55 W. 13th Street, NYC

April 26-28, 2010

WHAT: The aim of the conference is to inform thinking and practices around key issues and trends related to adolescent girls. Recent years have seen a growing interest in the topic of adolescent girls as a strategic group in addressing poverty alleviation and gender equality. While the experiences gained through years of programmes in promoting protective environments in schools, working to eliminate harmful traditional practices, and addressing sexual abuse has provided a growing evidence base, there has not yet been sufficient empirical evidence or knowledge generated to drive effective and innovative policies. The 5th International Conference organized by the Graduate Program in International Affairs at the New School and UNICEF will review current global trends and ideas regarding adolescent girls, explore ways to fill the knowledge gaps and showcase lessons learned and good practices for effective and strategic policymaking.

WHY: Strategic investments in girls' social protection, health, education, and livelihood skills promote social justice and are essential for achieving internationally agreed upon development goals, human rights norms and other global commitments. Understanding and addressing the needs of adolescent girls is key to ensuring the fulfillment and protection of their rights, as they face the specific challenges of marginalization, inaccessibility to resources, and invisibility.

Much of the current discussion about adolescent girls revolves around sexual and reproductive health issues such as early marriage, sex trafficking, genital mutilation, early pregnancy, and rape. While these remain critical issues, a broader conceptual framework is needed that would seek to understand development issues from their perspective: how girls experience these issues, how their lives are lived. A literature review prepared for this conference identified gaps not only in hard evidence and data on the situation of adolescent girls, but also lack of substantive discussion around key issues of 21 century examining the impact of globalization, economic crises, demographic transitions, technology and innovations, and climate change on their lives. Positioning adolescent girls at a center of research and policy agenda, the conference sets out to fill some of those gaps, while also looking at the underlying causes of gender-differentiated outcomes.

HOW: The Conference will create a space for engaging debates and peer consultation among UNICEF and UN staff, New School faculty and students, academic and research institutions from across the globe, NGO practitioners, and other external experts and partners for consolidating evidence from a number of perspectives and disciplines.

PAST CONFERENCES: The GPIA-UNICEF international conferences, held at The New School since 2004, covered a wide range of topics researched and presented by more than 200 experts from nearly 50 countries around the world.

FOR THE CALL FOR PAPERS, BACKGROUND PAPER AND MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

www.equityforchildren.org

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