

Adolescent Well-Being (AWB) Strategy Paper Discussion Note for the PMNCH Board (4-5 July 2024)

Introduction

PMNCH has played a pivotal role in advancing Adolescent Well-being (AWB)¹, through knowledge creation, collaborative advocacy, and the [1.8 Billion Young People for Change](#) global campaign. By convening and leading efforts to secure commitments to increase financial support, undertake policy reforms, and improve service delivery for AWB, PMNCH is the driving force in ensuring adolescents receive the attention and resources they deserve by creating a youth-led movement and positioning adolescents as central to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the post-2030 agenda. To advance the AWB agenda, PMNCH's 2024-25 strategy will build on the successes of the 1.8 Billion campaign and the Global Forum for Adolescents (GFA), and leverage opportunities for advocacy for impact at the country level for now and post-2030. Guiding principles for this work include:



1. Positioning adolescent well-being front and centre in the lead-up to 2030 and in the post-SDG era to support the mainstreaming of AWB in global fora, regional platforms and within national policies and programmes.
2. Convening partners to advocate for (better) gender-responsive policy and programmes and more funding for AWB including through commitment mobilization, policy development, implementation and accountability.
3. Addressing inequalities and advocating for adolescents in all their diversity – including for increased access to health services, education, safe spaces for adolescent leadership, nutrition, employment and skills development.
4. Promoting and institutionalizing Meaningful Adolescent and Youth Engagement (MAYE), including advocating for partners to evaluate their own efforts in this area, and continually monitoring PMNCH's efforts.
5. Advocating for and supporting country-focused efforts for capacity building and strengthening, policy development, accountability and measurement related to AWB across all its domains, while leveraging the diverse constituencies within PMNCH to drive progress towards equitable AWB between and within nations.
6. Leveraging the [Agenda for Action for Adolescents \(AAA\)](#) to drive action at the global, regional and national level both during the current decade and within the post-2030 agenda.

Current Context

While significant strides have been made in advancing adolescent well-being, various challenges persist, threats of rollback on previous gains and impeding further progress on AWB. Global

¹ Adolescent well-being is defined as: Adolescents have the support, confidence, and resources to thrive in contexts of secure and healthy relationships, realizing their full potential and rights. The five domains of AWB include: Good health and optimum nutrition; Connectedness, positive values, and contribution to society; Safety and a supportive environment; Learning, competence, education, skills, and employability; and Agency and resilience



pushback on crucial issues such as SRHR of adolescents including comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and the anti-rights movement pose significant barriers to progress. Additionally, issues such as climate change, artificial intelligence (AI), and cyber-bullying pose intersectoral risks and challenges, demanding attention and resources but also providing an opportunity for engaging, mobilizing and working with adolescents and youth for solutions. Furthermore, increasing conflict and crises are diverting attention and funds globally, while economic constraints faced by many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) are reasons for significant reduction in resources allocated for education, health, social welfare, nutrition etc., which are critical for AWB.

PMNCH stands uniquely positioned to advocate for increased accountability and prioritization of AWB within national policies and programmes, ensuring continued attention and action for AWB. In this context, there is a need for intensified focus on:

- a) prioritizing adolescents being left farthest behind including younger adolescents between 10-14 years (fostering a preventative approach and empowering them to make informed decisions), those living with disabilities or health conditions, HIV/AIDs, affected by crisis and other disadvantaged groups (such as ethnic minorities or from the LGBTIQI+ community) to ensure inclusivity and equity;
- b) improving adolescent participation and engagement in crucial issues impacting their lives such as climate change, digital interactions, and mental well-being, among others;
- c) building on PMNCH's established leadership in AWB, to raise awareness among parliamentarians, policymakers, and programme managers about the profound impact of their decisions on AWB;
- d) leveraging the growing power of adolescents and youth in all diversity to ensure their intentional and meaningful engagement on issues that affect them most.

As discussions around achieving the SDGs and developing the post-2030 agenda pick up pace, PMNCH has a crucial role in advocating for AWB's centrality in shaping the global development of the post-2030 agenda. As part of this, opportunities for joint advocacy by PMNCH and its partners (including UN agencies, INGOs, adolescent- and youth-led organizations, and others) are emerging under the auspices of the 1.8 Billion campaign - leveraging PMNCH's strengths in bringing multisectoral partners together for a common agenda. Partners will be engaged across different deliverables of the AWB PMNCH 2024-2025 workplan for:

- conceptualization and development of knowledge products e.g. country case studies for the AWB Investment Case (Colombia, India and South Africa), country case studies for AWB measurement approaches to facilitate national-level AWB advocacy, a massive open online course (MOOC) complemented by a multi-sectoral professional development programme for AWB practitioners at the country level, and a set of resources for ease of use and reference by policymakers, such as a costed list of interventions;
- engagement during key milestones (such as the UN Summit of the Future) and on political platforms;
- follow up and mobilization of political and financial country commitments for uptake of Agenda for Action for Adolescents;
- increased national-level engagement with youth-led and youth-serving organizations

- advocating for MAYE.

This strategic approach will ensure a cohesive, stronger advocacy for adolescent well-being, eliminating duplication of efforts and maximising impact. This work will be underpinned by principles of equity, including gender, race and ethnicity. PMNCH will leverage its vast network of global, regional and national level partners in the adolescent and youth well-being space to develop and disseminate key knowledge synthesis products and advocacy tools, guided by MAYE principles. The section below details this approach.

Leveraging PMNCH's network of partners to promote and sustain the momentum of 1.8 Billion campaign

Building on the gains of the 1.8 Billion campaign, PMNCH will aim to sustain the campaign's momentum through targeted engagement with partners, and intensified engagement with national-level partners in priority countries. These efforts will be complemented by the Digital Advocacy Hubs (DAHs) to expand and support its global, regional and national partner networks. As laid out in the previous section, efforts will include engagement with national-level youth-led organizations through small grants for increased advocacy for adolescent well-being and uptake of the AAA; advocacy for increased national uptake of global AWB knowledge products introduced during the GFA (e.g. investment case report and measurement approach); advocacy with national governments (through a detailed analysis of the What Young People Want responses); and national events (building on engagement with national partners who organized the massively successful 124 national events ahead of the GFA). To ensure intentional engagement of adolescents and youth and progress on AWB two key initiatives will be launched: an accountability report on advancement on MAYE and a global report to measure progress on AWB. Knowledge products such as the investment case and measurement approach will serve as advocacy tools for mobilizing an increase in national budgets, policies and programmes for adolescent well-being among Member States. These efforts at the country level will be complemented by a massive open online course (MOOC) and multi-sectoral professional development programme for professionals and future professionals working in the AWB sphere through collaboration with national training institutes and universities.



Expanding political advocacy and leadership for a targeted focus on adolescent well-being

The GFA served as a critical platform to garner political support for adolescent well-being through Member State and non-state actor [commitments](#). The mobilization efforts coordinated by PMNCH partners led to commitments for more investments, better policies, and smarter programmes for adolescent well-being in 18 countries and two intergovernmental fora (the African Union and the European Union). Building on the gains made, PMNCH partners will advocate for increased political leadership to enhance accountability for the commitments made, mobilize for new commitments, and support uptake, attention and prioritization of AWB in the Summit of the Future and post-2030 agenda.

This will include follow-up and advocacy for commitments made (aligned with the AAA) and mobilization for new commitments; leveraging national, regional and global platforms (such as the Global Leaders Network, UHC2030, IPU, Collaborative Accountability and Action Plans (CAAPs), and Voluntary National Reviews, inter- governmental fora including G7, G20, and African

Union, among others); enhanced collaboration with parliamentarians and partners working with parliamentarians; dissemination of good practices of youth-led commitment mobilization in countries by partners (e.g., through strategic and increased engagement and advocacy for adolescent well-being with global and national-level partners for key milestones /resolutions/ outcome documents and high-level events).

Leveraging digital and traditional media to promote AWB

Utilizing the reach and power of media (traditional and digital) and AI, PMNCH will leverage its high-level champion base, including youth champions and national partners to increase visibility and uptake of PMNCH's AWB initiatives (including knowledge synthesis products, events) and the AWB agenda more broadly.



Engagement with media will have a global and national focus -- now as well as leading into the post-2030 era through traditional and digital media at national, regional and global levels. This will be achieved through:

- Opinion editorials in international media outlets on key adolescent well-being issues and knowledge products such as the investment case;
- Blogs, videos and social media takeovers by youth champions at crucial events such as WHA, IPU, ICPD, UNGA, WHS.

Opportunities for cross-thematic and cross-functional action with MNCH and SRHR workstreams

The [Adolescent Well-being Framework](#), published in 2019 underscored the need for and importance of cross- sectoral collaboration for a more holistic approach to adolescent well-being. This requires coordinated efforts across the three thematic workstreams – specifically focusing on MNCH and SRHR issues that particularly affect AWB. Key issues such as the prevention of child marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), adolescent pregnancy, prevention of new HIV infections, Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), and Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) rights demand focused attention, particularly in high-burden countries.

PMNCH partners will be equipped with evidence, networks and messages to achieve greater action through key influencers, including parliamentarians, the media, national multi-stakeholder dialogue and multilateral processes (e.g. UN, AU, G7, G20). In 2024-2025, cross-thematic efforts will encompass advancing the AAA through MNCH, SRHR, and AWB commitments at the national level, supported by digital capacity-building programmes and the DAHs.

Joint planning through CAAPs, Global Leaders Network, high-level advocacy, and media and parliamentarian- led "rapid response" initiatives on critical issues like adolescent pregnancy, FGM, and child marriage will be prioritized. Finally, leveraging ICPD@30-related events and platforms will serve to highlight Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR) issues and drive collective action towards meaningful change.

Such an approach addresses the immediate needs of adolescents and lays the groundwork for creating an inclusive environment where all adolescents thrive in all aspects of their lives and live with dignity and respect.

Key questions

- How can the Board utilize its network of stakeholders to promote the adoption and implementation of the Agenda for Action for Adolescents within global and regional frameworks and strategies and, national policies/programmes for impact? How can these actions be tailored to ensure alignment with existing initiatives?
- What targeted advocacy strategies can PMNCH implement to secure additional funding and resources for advancing adolescent well-being outcomes? How can these strategies address the specific challenges and risks posed by competing priorities in the current global development landscape?
- What strategies and strategic partnerships can PMNCH leverage to spotlight and prioritize adolescent well-being in the post-2030 agenda?

Conclusions and next steps

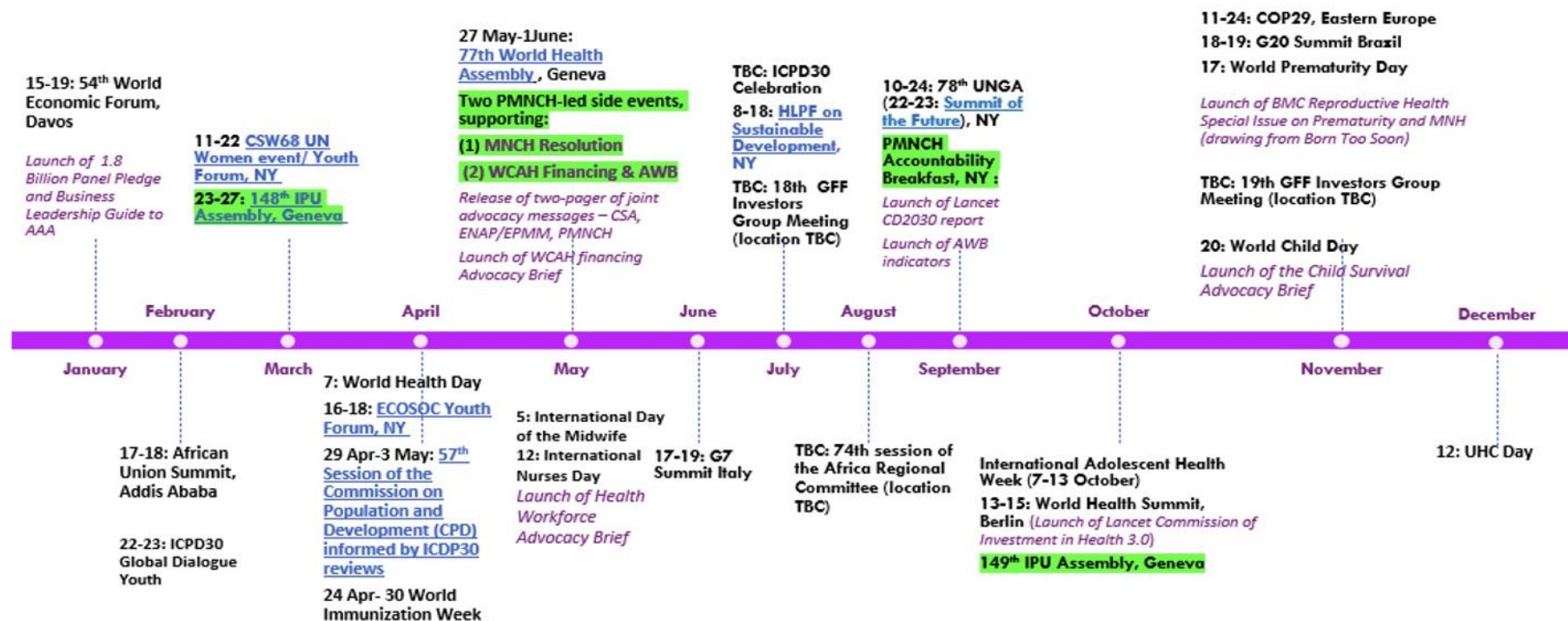
This strategy paper outlines a comprehensive plan for advancing adolescent well-being in 2024-2025, while laying the building blocks for action for the post-2030 agenda. Moving forward, PMNCH in conjunction with global, regional and national partners and stakeholders will continue to work towards translating the recommendations outlined in this strategy paper into concrete actions and investments.

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Annex: Key milestones for AWB advocacy 2024 – 2025



Prioritization criteria (approved by SAC, May 2022)

(i) Be reflective of Board-agreed RF goals and 2022-23 advocacy priorities; (ii) Strong potential for visibility (media appeal and social media reach); (iii) Strong platform for messaging through PMNCH (GLN) champions; (iv) Attractive to policy influencers, including from outside health; (v) Where possible, directly linked to global and regional political events (e.g., side events associated with G7, G20, AU, IPU, UNGA etc.); (vi) Maximum of 20 "tier 2" (PMNCH-supported) events each year; (vii) Agreed by partners as priority events, led by partners, facilitated by Secretariat