Adolescent Empowerment
A child’s second decade is just as important as the first one.

Young People: A Global Perspective
We have a duty to adolescents — to prepare them for a world that is rapidly evolving, where education and skills can mean the difference between employment and unemployment, between prosperity and poverty, between hope and despair. With that in mind, UNICEF is working to ensure that every young person is in school, learning, training or employed. The goal aims for every young person to have achieved literacy, numeracy and acquired skills for employability, with knowledge of human rights, gender equality, nonviolence and citizenship by 2030.

Of the 1.2 billion adolescents worldwide, more than 200 million of them are out of school. With little opportunity for schooling and skill-building, long-term employment options are limited. Given the current pace of development, it will take decades for impoverished children and adolescents to access the same skill development opportunities as children in high-income countries have. Girls are further disadvantaged. Nearly 1 in 4 girls aged 15–19 are not employed, in education or training, compared to only 1 in 10 boys.

Investing in adolescents has a significant impact, contributing to a competitive labor force, sustained economic growth, improved governance and vibrant civil societies.

UNICEF in Action
UNICEF is dedicated to supporting young people in their second decade of life. UNICEF’s agenda specifically addresses the needs of the most vulnerable, including girls, those with disabilities, and young people affected by armed conflict and displacement. In 2019, the UNICEF Adolescent Strategy for Rohingya and Host Community Response in Bangladesh aimed to provide 18,000 Rohingya and 7,800 host community adolescents with integrated vocational, literacy/numeracy, and life skills and psychosocial support in 109 multipurpose centers. UNICEF’s support to governments and
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communities includes:

- Empowering adolescents to acquire relevant skill sets so they are prepared for the world of work.

- Ensuring that adolescents are safe and supported with policies, public financing and accessible health/education services that meet their unique needs.

- Creating spaces that allow for adolescents to be civically engaged in their communities and have a voice in the issues that affect them the most.

**UNICEF Program Snapshot**

UNICEF’s UPSHIFT is designed to build skills and create opportunity for the most disadvantaged young people. In north Khartoum, Sudan, one UPSHIFT program participant was inspired to design a generator that can be powered by either fuel or solar energy to help power the local market after an economic crisis led to a fuel shortage.

- In 2019, UNICEF maximized adolescents’ physical, mental and social well-being.

- In 2019, thirty-four countries reported the establishment of 41 new policies that prioritize the well-being and development of adolescents.

- In 2019, 92 UNICEF country offices supported skills training, reaching nearly four million adolescents aged 10-19 years.