

DATA COLLECTION & AGE DISAGGREGATION

for young people in humanitarian action

Today half of the 1.4 billion people living in countries affected by crises and fragility are under the age of 20. Yet there is no streamlined way to capture young people's situation in humanitarian settings. Different actors use different age category definitions and age disaggregations, if any at all, making it difficult to get a holistic picture of young people's situation on the ground.

Purpose of this brief

This brief is a guidance note for programmers and policy makers to facilitate internal and external advocacy efforts to ensure age disaggregated data collection and use in humanitarian settings.

This brief suggests age disaggregations within the broader category of young people (ages 10-24) based on existing global definitions of adolescents (ages 10-19) and youth (ages 15-24) and common age disaggregation brackets used in data collection.

The recommendations outlined in this brief should be considered in policy-making, programme planning and design, monitoring and evaluation and in any data collection effort, regardless of whether the programme or research is focused on young people. Following these recommendations in existing data collection efforts, including needs assessments, monitoring information systems, population data statistics, will ensure streamlined collection of data and help visualize the realities of young people in humanitarian settings, as well as inform programmes and policies.



**Compact for
Young People**
in Humanitarian
Action



Considerations on the generation and use of age-disaggregated data pertaining to adolescents and youth in humanitarian settings

DATA COLLECTION, USE AND INTERPRETATION:

1 **Data collection:** Collect age by date of birth where possible, otherwise collect data that allows the use of the recommended age brackets and categories.

2 **Age disaggregation:**

- Age brackets: Use the recommended age brackets and definition of age groups (Box 1) to the extent possible when analysing and reporting results on adolescents and youth for comparability and streamlining.
- Sectoral considerations:
 - Different sectors may have different needs for disaggregation based on sector-specific considerations.
 - Within your sector, disaggregate in 1 year increments or 2-year aggregates wherever possible, ensuring compatibility with the overall age brackets recommended in this brief.

3 **Use and dissemination:** Provide guidance on how to interpret the data to ensure a clear and common narrative and make the data available to young people and stakeholders.

DEFINITIONS OF AGE GROUPS

CATEGORY	AGES	COMMENT
Children	0-17	Convention of the Rights of a Child (CRC) definition of a child
Adolescents	10-19	Adolescence is the transition from childhood to adulthood and comes with different social and cultural expectations. The time category captures psychological and physical developmental changes, and although individuals have different development curves, the age categories indicates when majority of changes take place in a population.
Younger adolescents/ Very young adolescents (VYA)	10-14	Onset of puberty, self-consciousness increases, social restrictions may be introduced with menarche, etc.
Older Adolescents	15-19	Relationships and peers become more important, furthering consequential thinking, need for independence.
Youth	15-24	With the recognition of regional adaptations and age brackets, such as the African Charter defining youth as 15-35, and the resolution 2250 expanding the age category of youth from 18-29 years.
Young People	10-24	The umbrella term for adolescents and youth, recognizing that this term does not translate to all languages, including spanish.

Box 1 provides the UN definitions of categories relevant for work on young people. Streamlining definitions of sub groups within the adolescent and youth cohort is important for programming and policy. Using these categories has implications for data collection. In addition to this, categories such as young adults can be considered up to the age of 35.

¹ Recognizing that countries may have different definitions of young people and the related categories, this brief suggests the use of the UN definitions for the purpose of data collection. Keeping in mind that an additional category of 30-34 could be added in countries where young people are considered up to the age of 35.



1 Data Collection Considerations

COLLECTING INDIVIDUAL DATE OF BIRTH VS. INDIVIDUAL AGE

Whenever possible, for data collection carried out at the individual or household level, we recommend that the date of birth for each individual respondent or member of the household be recorded. Collecting individual date of birth information provides flexibility in aggregating data into various age ranges, and can prolong the usefulness of the data.

The level of specificity of the date of birth that you collect depends on the purpose of your data collection. If data is collected for the purposes of identification or protection (e.g. intake for case management), the full date of birth (dd/mm/yyyy) should be collected. If data is collected for assessment or other purposes, it should be proportional to the information needed to avoid undue risk of identification for respondents (e.g. mm/yyyy).

Where date of birth is not known:

Collection of data: For individuals whose exact date of birth is unknown, record an estimated date of birth based on best available information, defaulting to 01 July combined with the estimated year of birth and indicating that this date of birth is an estimated date.

Be sure to ask clarifying questions, for example referring to seasons or life events (menarche, marriage, childbirth, schooling), compared to a person whose age is known, or ask about historic events or national or local significance to get the best possible estimation.

For children, when data is collected for protection purposes and not research or analysis, where dates of birth are estimated, ensure that the most generous interpretation of age and dates is used. For example, if a child only knows their year of birth, they should be treated as if their birthday is 31 December for that year.

Recording of data: In the cases when date of birth information is exact it should be indicated in the collection form using a question for 'Exact date/ age' (Yes/No). This should be captured in the database via an indicator variable (e.g. a "1" or a "0" indicator for a variable called "exact date/age"), to facilitate data quality assessment and sensitivity testing of the data.

2 Age Disaggregation Considerations

AGE BRACKETS:

When data is collected using 1-year increments, it allows for slicing and analysing the data in different ways. Where this is not possible the suggested minimum disaggregation is:

- 10-11, 12-14, 15-17, 18-19, 20-24.

This disaggregation allows for analysis of children, adolescents, young adults as well as young people. The age brackets are necessary to reflect developmental stages and to recognize different needs within the broader age categories laid out in Box 1. It is particularly important to differentiate between the different stages of adolescence for programming purposes related to sexual and reproductive health, and education.

The internationally recognised distinction between children (0-17 years) and adults (18+) is crucial to take into consideration given the differences in treatment under the law between children and adults.

While WHO uses the following breakdowns: 10-13 (early adolescence), 14-16 (middle adolescence) and 17-19 (late adolescence), these brackets do not correspond with some other critical benchmarks in humanitarian programming, such as school ages (with primary school age ending at 11 years) and childhood (0-7 years).



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SECTORAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Depending on the sector using the data, and the specific application of the data, the following age brackets are relevant.

Key age brackets for:

- Population: <1, 1-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24,...
- Mortality: <1, 1-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24,...
- Literacy: 10-14, 15-19, 20-24,...
- Educational attainment: [country-specific school entry age] 5-11, 12-14, 15-19, 20-24,...
- Economic activity: [country-specific]-14, 15-19, 20-24,...
- Child labour statistics: 5-17
- Households and living arrangements: 1, 1-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24,...
- Infant and young child feeding: 0-5 months, 6 months-23 months, 2-5



3 Considerations for data use and dissemination:

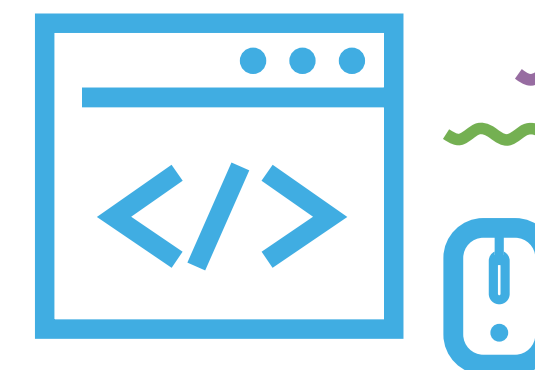
With data disaggregated by age as the common goal, it is recommended that organisations conduct joint data analysis processes, including young people themselves, to generate findings and recommendations. This disaggregated analysis should be presented and disseminated alongside overall figures and statistics, and key messages should be communicated to allow for easy interpretation of the data.

When reporting on adolescent and youth, use the definitions of age categories laid out in Box 1, choosing those that serve the purpose of your analysis.

When disseminating data, work with other agencies to ensure a clear and common narrative and make the data available to young people and other stakeholders through:

- Infographics;
- Simplified interpretations and key messages;
- Online platforms;
- Webinars.

Note: This brief provides guidance on age disaggregated data collection. Programmers should also collect data that is disaggregated by other important factors that demonstrate the diversity of young people, such as disability, sex, gender, schooling status, and marriage status, among others.



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Task Force 5: Data for young people in humanitarian action



WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

Using accurate information to understand the needs of young people in humanitarian settings.

- **Advocate** for increased investments in data on young people
- **Mainstream** data collection on young people
- **Streamline** data collection and analysis
- **Review** data collection methodologies, including participatory methods

WHO ARE WE?

Co-chairs: UNFPA & UNHCR

Members: OCHA, WFP, UNICEF, Plan Int'l. NRC, WRC, UNMGCY, UMR

You can learn more about the compact and join us at

www.youthcompact.org

