

# RP7: Sexual and Reproductive Resilience of Adolescents in Ghana and Tanzania



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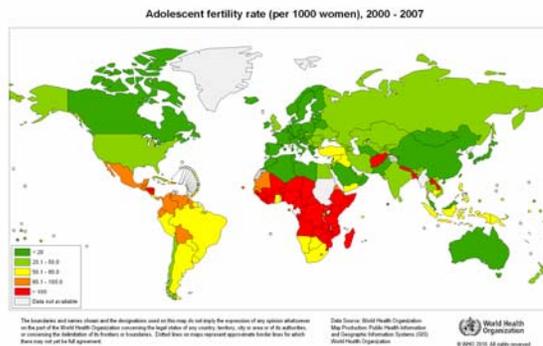
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Health research tends to focus on risk and vulnerability. This project moves beyond these perspectives by applying the new strength-based concept of 'Sexual and Reproductive Resilience'. The project aims at creating a better understanding on how adolescents living in rapidly changing urban and rural contexts in Ghana and Tanzania can deal more competently with the threat of teenage pregnancy. Moreover it examines how social actors (peers, parents, community) as well as institutions (initiation rites, religious movements) and organizations (interventions) can contribute to building adolescents' resilience towards teenage pregnancy.

## Background

Over half the world's population is under 25 years. Children and adolescents hold the key to our future yet many of them must overcome numerous challenges to lead healthy lives. One crucial concern is their sexual and reproductive health.

Figure 1: Adolescents fertility rates<sup>1</sup>



## Objectives

Focusing on sexual and reproductive resilience of adolescents in Tanzania and Ghana, the project aims at creating a better understanding of what sexuality, gender, family and having children mean to adolescents living in rapidly changing urban and rural contexts.

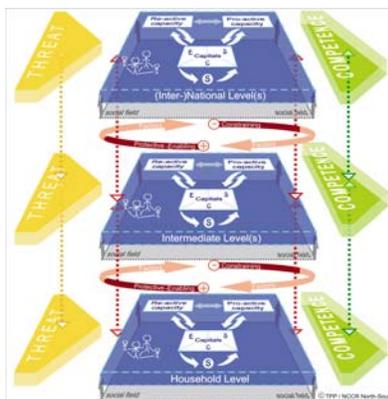
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## A new approach: Sexual and Reproductive Resilience

In the past sexual and reproductive health research focused mainly on risk and vulnerability of individuals. The concept of 'Sexual and Reproductive Resilience' is a new way of looking at sexual and reproductive health. It shifts the perspective from a deficit- to a strength-based approach.

**Sexual and Reproductive Resilience:** assesses capacities and identifies competences needed at household, community and other levels of society to overcome sexual and reproductive health risks.

Figure 2: Multi-Layered Social Resilience Framework<sup>2</sup>



## Methodology

Using a mixed methods approach this project focuses on female adolescents (10-19 years) in urban and rural areas in Ghana (Accra: Fanteakwa District) and Tanzania (Dar es Salaam; Mtwara Region).

- Quantitative methods: Questionnaires (total of 2000 female adolescents).
- Qualitative and participatory methods: Among others a sub-sample of a total of 80 female adolescents were regularly visited and interviewed over the course of 6 months.

## Significance for research, policy and practice

- Many participants in this study defy stereotypes of teenagers especially teenage mothers. They have skills and competencies that support resilience.
- Due to societal changes parents are now increasingly approached, however, they do not contribute to resilience, as they are often overwhelmed with their new roles and do not know how to provide sexual education. Need to provide them with sensitive parent-child communication skills on sexual matters.
- Media such as tv, radio or youth magazines are powerful tools to reach youth and contribute significantly to building youth's resilience in dealing with threats related to teenage pregnancy.

## Products

- Website: [www.socialresilience.ch/reproductive-resilience/](http://www.socialresilience.ch/reproductive-resilience/) informs about products and publications
- PAMS Voices of Youth: Development of videos illustrating health realities of youth in Dar es Salaam and Mtwara, Tanzania
- PAMS Youth for Youth: Initiation of youth magazines in Accra, Ghana

Picture 1: Products of RP7: Videos and Youth Magazine



## Project Team

RP co-leaders: Dr. Constanze Pfeiffer, Dr. Collins Ahorlu  
 PhD students: Richard Faustine Sambaiga, Sylvia Adu-Gyamfi,  
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 Raymond Mangulu, Franziska Kissling, Matthias KleeB and Moro Manou Honorine  
 Advisory Board: Prof. Brigit Obrist, Prof. Trudy Harpham, Prof. Fred Krüger, Dr. Kate Molesworth

## References

- <sup>1</sup>WHO (2010). Maps and Graphs. Geneva: World Health Organization
- <sup>2</sup>B. Obrist, C. Pfeiffer and B. Henley (2010). Multi-Layered Social Resilience: A New Approach in Mitigation Research, Progress in Development Studies (PIDS), 10(4), 283-293, 2010

