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THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES
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ADOLESCENTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES FACE NEW CHALLENGES

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS HOW ADOLESCENCE IS CHANGING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

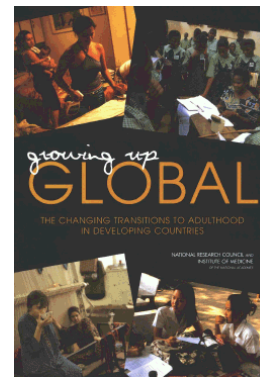
The transition to adulthood is a critical stage of human development during which young people leave childhood behind and take on new roles and responsibilities. It is a period of social, psychological, economic, and biological transitions. The nature and quality of young people's future lives depend on how successfully they negotiate the passage through this critical period.

Concerns about how global forces are altering the transition to adulthood are all the more urgent because of the changing demographic profile of many developing countries. By 2005, the world's population of 10-to 24-year-olds is estimated to be 1.5 billion. Despite dramatic progress in certain areas, many young people still lack adequate schooling and good health—both of which are essential for ensuring their productivity and well-being.

This report examines the changing transition to adulthood in developing countries, with a particular emphasis on gender, and the policy implications of these changes. The study was funded by the United States Agency for International Development and from grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, The Catherine T. and John D. MacArthur Foundation, and the World Bank.

According to the panel's findings, important transformations in young people's lives are under way. In much of the developing world, adolescence is a stage of life that is gaining in significance. The interval between childhood and the assumption of adult roles is lengthening and young people in the developing world have more time and opportunities to acquire the information and skills necessary to become effective participants in decisions about their own lives and futures. However, poverty is still the greatest barrier to making a successful transition to adulthood.

The panel concludes that substantial investments in the health and schooling of young people, if designed and targeted effectively, will position young women and men to participate constructively in shaping their own and their countries' futures. The experts also call for interventions that promote gender equity in citizenship, work, marriage, parenthood, and across all social classes.



[Growing Up Global: The Changing Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries](#)

Cynthia B. Lloyd, *Editor*,
[Panel on Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries](#), National Research Council (2005)

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Other reports of interest:

[Reducing Birth Defects: Meeting the Challenge in the Developing World](#) (2003)

[Working Families and Growing Kids: Caring for Children and Adolescents](#) (2003)

[Community Programs to Promote Youth Development](#) (2002)

[Critical Perspectives on Schooling and Fertility in the Developing World](#) (1999)

[Risks and Opportunities: Synthesis of Studies on Adolescence](#) (1999)

[Reproductive Health in Developing Countries: Expanding Dimensions, Building Solutions](#) (1997)