The Challenges that Youth face in Rwanda

Although life expectancy has increased between 1990 and the present, (from 50.8 to 69.3 years for females; 47.5 to 66 years for males), many Rwandans still encounter poor health outcomes. In 2016, lower respiratory infections were the leading causes of death among Rwandan people of different ages, followed by tuberculosis, diarrheal diseases and HIV/AIDS. Other major challenges facing young Rwandans are shown below.

HIV/AIDS PREVALENCE

The HIV prevalence rate among the population aged 15 to 49 was at 3.6% for females and 2.2% for males. HIV prevalence among young girls age 15 to 24 at 1.3% is twice as high as for their male counterparts that is at 0.6%.

ADOLESCENT CHILDBEARING

The teenage fertility rate has increased from 40 to 44 births per 1,000 girls age 15-19 while the proportion of women age 15-19 who had started child bearing increased from 6% to 7.3% between 2010 and 2015.

NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Rwanda is facing an increasing disease burden from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) including cancers, cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory diseases, diabetes, and kidney diseases.

Recommendations for Priority Investments

- Prevention of new HIV infections among youth and treatment of those who are infected to improve human capital.
- Good nutrition and promoting active life-styles to prevent overweight/obesity epidemic among youth.
- Universal access to contraception to address the high unmet need, especially among those living in rural areas, urban slums, and among the youth.
- Child survival programmes such as immunisation programmes and efforts to eradicate malaria, to improve human capital and to accelerate fertility decline.

Data Sources