



— UNESCO CHAIR —  
**Global Health  
& Education**

# Navigating Adolescent Health and Well-Being in the Digital Age



# Changing world for adolescents

## Global megatrends

- Change in planetary ecosystems
- Digital technologies
- Urbanisation
- Nutrition transition
- Globalized commercial interests
- Demographic changes
- War and conflict
- Inequalities

Children and  
young people  
Most affected

Children and  
young people  
Key agent of  
response

# Navigating Adolescent Health and Well-Being in the Digital Age





# Using the transformative power of formal, non formal and informal learning

## The example of sexuality and reproductive health

What source of information young people use for sex education?

- 31% Friends and peers
- 20% Digital spaces
- 25% School based education

*93% of young people aged 15-24 have regularly searched for information about bodies, sex and relationships on social media*



# The Digital Landscape for Adolescents

- Technology and digital media use integral to modern adolescence
- Unprecedented levels of mobile device ownership and social media usage
- Adolescents labeled as "digital natives" due to lifelong exposure to digital technology
- Transformation of social interactions, learning, and entertainment

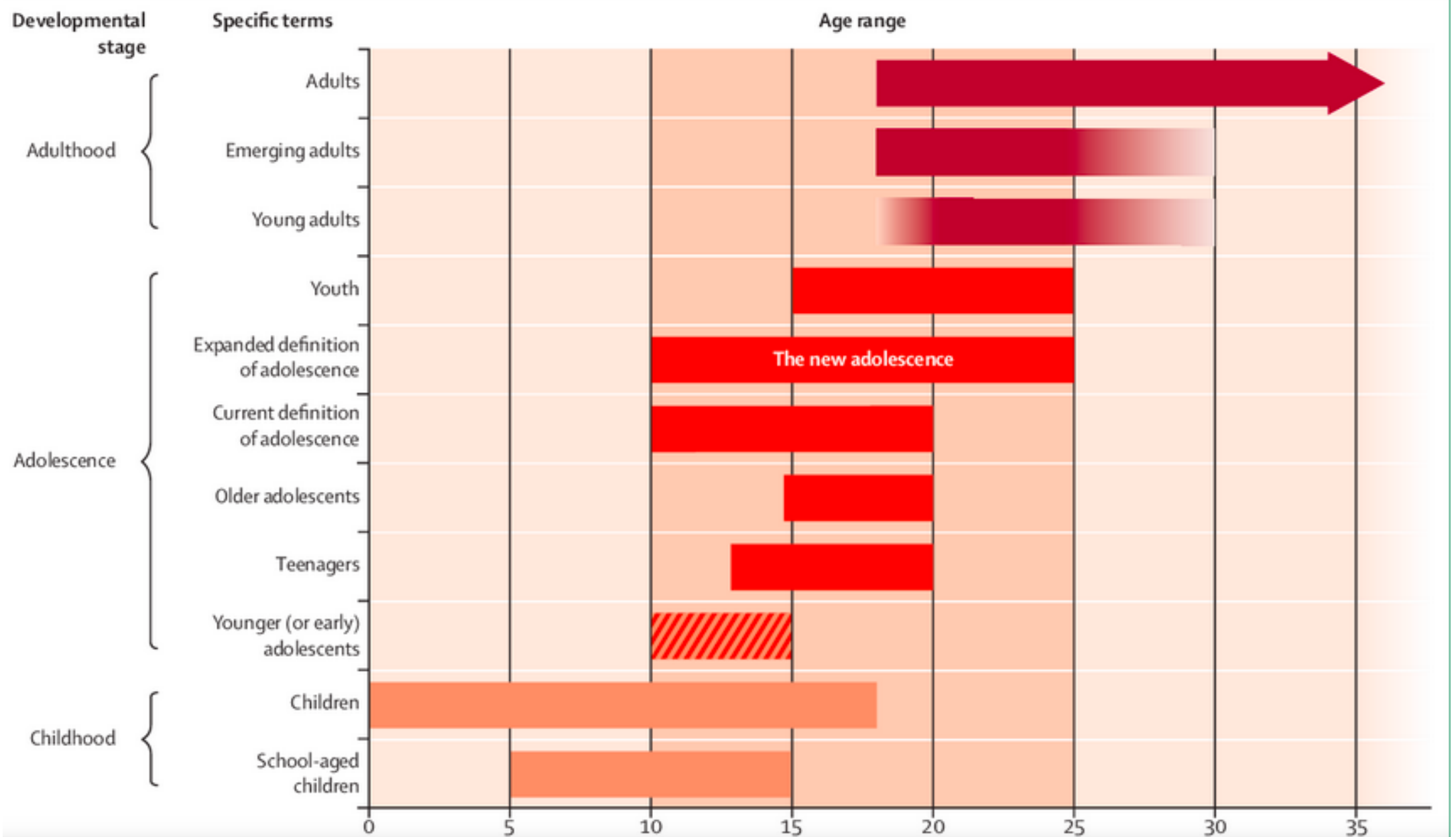
It's neither good nor bad, it is simply what it is and we have to make the best of it! Together with the adolescents!

# Adolescent health and well-being

1. Good health and optimum nutrition
2. Connectedness, positive values, and contribution to society
3. Safety and a supportive environment
4. Learning, competence, education, skills, and employability
5. Agency and resilience



# A developmentally appropriate approach



# Adolescent health and well-being

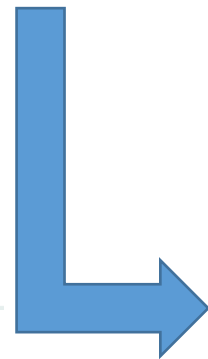


- Creating healthy environments
- Learning for health
- Access to health services

# Adolescent health and well-being

Where do adolescents learn what they know about health?

- Formal
- Non formal
- Informal



Creating the conditions for learning for health and well-being



# Opportunities in the Digital Age

- Enhanced Learning Opportunities
  - Digital tools (e.g., storytelling, concept mapping, gamified quizzes) foster deeper understanding
  - Flexible learning pathways allow personalized education
  - Promotes intercultural competence through global collaboration
- Promoting Physical and Mental Well-being
  - Digital health tools can enhance physical activity
  - Improves digital health literacy for better online health information navigation
  - Supports mental well-being through digital education



Jourdan & Tsai, 2025)

# Opportunities in the Digital Age



- **Connectedness and Support**
  - Online platforms foster peer and family support
  - Enhances professional-young people interactions
  - Facilitates multicultural learning experiences
- **Digital Literacy and Competence**
  - Develops essential digital skills for future success
  - Enhances problem-solving and adaptability
  - Boosts self-efficacy and reduces stress in learning

(Jourdan & Tsai, 2025)

# Challenges in the Digital Age

- **Mental Health Challenges**

- Excessive screen time linked to anxiety, depression, and stress
- Poor perception of online learning ability associated with mental health issues
- Difficulty with online learning skills correlated with depression

- **Physical Health Concerns**

- Increased screen time linked to headaches and insomnia
- Higher stress levels in online education correlated with health complaints



(Jourdan & Tsai, 2025)



# Challenges in the Digital Age

- Digital Divide and Inequities
  - Lack of technological resources or internet connectivity, especially for lower socioeconomic backgrounds
  - Gender and socio-economic status differences in digital learning access
- Disruption of Interpersonal Interactions
  - Reduced face-to-face interactions with teachers and peers
  - Potential hindrance to developing meaningful relationships and collaborative skills
  - Some students report feeling they learn less due to reduced interaction

(Jourdan & Tsai, 2025)



# Strategies for Healthy Digital Practices

**Promoting  
Health and Well-  
Being through  
Digital  
Education**

- **Capacity Building for Educators**  
Digital skills training for educators  
Addressing teacher stress & well-being  
Engaging parents in digital literacy
- **Promoting Digital Literacy**  
Critical thinking & problem-solving skills  
Online safety & privacy awareness  
Combatting misinformation & cyber risks  
Enhancing student self-efficacy & resilience
- **Mental Health Support**  
Implementing screen time guidelines  
Encouraging social connections & offline activities  
Training professionals in mental health promotion  
Strengthening family & community support
- **Ensuring Equitable Access**  
Providing necessary digital resources  
Addressing connectivity & hardware gaps  
Supporting disadvantaged students  
Bridging the digital divide

**Adolescents  
are not the  
“problem”,  
they are a key  
part of the  
solution!**

(Jourdan & Tsai, 2025)

# Design developmentally appropriate policies

- Applying a youth and intergenerational lens
- Supporting young people initiatives
- Invest in the mental health and well-being of children and young people → adolescent clinics and dedicated services.
- Build resilience to better prevent, respond to and protect children and young people from crises
- ...





# Toward a permanent Observatory of the Impact of Digitalisation in Education on Adolescents' Health and Well-being

- Producing and sharing knowledge in the context of educational digitalisation
- The need to step back for a more dispassionate debate on the relationship between education, well-being and digital technologies.
- The need to anticipates a future where education and leisure time digital activities become increasingly intertwined in the lives of young people.

→ In a world where change is the only constant, we must revolutionize our approach to knowledge production, collaborating in real-time with young people and the people involved in their education to stay ahead of the digital curve.



# Conclusion

## *Nothing about them without them*

If one is truly to succeed in leading a person to a specific place, one must first and foremost take care to find him where he is and begin there. ... Anyone who cannot do this is himself under a delusion if he thinks he is able to help someone else.

*Søren Kierkegaard*

« No one educates anyone, no one educates herself or himself, people educate each other through the mediation of the world »

*Paolo Freire*