



## **NCD Child is a global multi-stakeholder coalition, championing the rights and needs of children, adolescents, and young people living with or at risk of developing non-communicable diseases.**



**Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)** are one of the biggest health and development challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. NCDs primarily include cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes. Unintentional and intentional injury, mental health conditions, and the environment also contribute to the growing number of NCDs in young people.

Historically, NCDs have been characterized as a problem of adulthood, but **children, adolescents, and young people** are at increasing risk as well. Prioritizing NCD prevention, treatment, and management early in life is a human rights issue and a priority for health and sustainable human development.

**NCDs are often preventable** with effective interventions addressing risk factors like tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity, injury, and harmful use of alcohol or other drugs. Many of these behaviors and risk factors begin during childhood and adolescence.

**NCDs routinely lead to further complications** for individuals and families. Children, adolescents, and young people with special needs require access to specialized, consistent health care and other services to fully participate in society. Many young people and families are burdened with the physical and economic task of caring for relatives living with NCDs.

**A life-course approach**, which includes intervention at an early age, is required to address the growing societal and economic burden of NCDs. Young people must be engaged in policy making and implementation to ensure targets are supportive of the unique needs of the next generation.

### **By the Numbers**

**41**

million deaths attributed to NCDs each year

**85%**

of all premature NCD deaths occur in low and middle income countries

**42%**

of the world's population is under age 25

**1/2**

of NCD-related deaths each year are associated with behaviors beginning in adolescence

**2.1**

billion children affected by NCDs in 2017

**To do justice by our duty as the voice of all those who have been affected by NCDs, and to protect the lives of all those who will be affected by them in the coming years, we need to ensure that NCDs receive a new label marked 'urgent action required now.'**

**HRH Princess Dina Mired of Jordan,  
Union of International Cancer Control**

## Mission: Advocacy, Awareness, Communication, and Collaboration

NCD Child actively engages and collaborates with governments, foundations, multilateral and non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector, and academic institutions to promote awareness, education, prevention, and treatment of NCDs in children, adolescents, and young people.

## Rationale: Focus on Young People

- Risk factors, like tobacco use, alcohol intake, physical inactivity, and unhealthy diets, often begin during adolescence; additional attention and sustained investment is needed during childhood and adolescence to prevent these behaviors
- Addressing NCD risks and management in children, adolescents, and young people is a human right, as well as a priority for health and sustainable human development
- Childhood and adolescence represent an “age of opportunity” for prevention and control, early detection, treatment, and care for NCDs
- The international development community cannot promote sustainable development without addressing the impact of NCDs on children, adolescents, and young people

## Opportunity: Strategic Investments in Early Life Interventions

- Begin prevention early—a healthy start to life matters for a lifetime
- Create enabling environments and supportive communities for healthy behavior
- Integrate NCD risk assessments and interventions in the reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health continuum of care
- Ensure health systems work for children, adolescents, and young people; ensure treatment options are affordable and accessible to all; and close the data information gap on children and adolescents
- Institutionalize programs for youth participation in NCD policy and program development

## Action: NCD Child as a Platform for Advocacy

- Advocate for a life-course approach to the prevention and control of NCDs in national and global development agendas including the WHO Global NCD Action Plan 2013-2020 and the Sustainable Development Goals
- Participate in high-level UN and WHO meetings to ensure the presence of youth voices
- Facilitate advocacy trainings to engage young people, civil society, and clinicians in national NCD plans
- Communicate the need to include young people both in policy-making and policy targets, via website, social media, and other publications
- Provide a platform for young people to be involved in the core activities and dialogue for NCD Child's priority issues



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