of progress in reforming the laws, policies, and programs that hinder the exercise of several of these individuals' human rights and freedoms—including their right to health and their right to live a life free of violence. In addition, the civil society organizations involved in defending LGBTI persons—due to their limited resources in terms of staff, capacities, and funding—are ill-equipped to respond to allegations of human rights violations in the context of health.

Policies and procedures on admissions, retention, and review processes on health services inconsistent with human rights standards

There are inadequate enforcement mechanisms for identifying, investigating, prosecuting, penalizing, and monitoring violations of the human rights of groups in situations of vulnerability such as LGBTI groups. This has serious repercussions on the physical and mental health of young people and others in situations of vulnerability. Countries lack mechanisms to monitor implementation of international and regional human rights standards and to examine the impact of laws, policies, and programs on young people’s health.

Targets for Action in Public Health

This project identified a number of actions that PAHO Member States and other relevant stakeholders can take to promote and protect young people’s human rights and fundamental freedoms. The actions can be summarized as follows:

• Among health workers and prison staff, introduce measures to raise awareness of international and regional instruments and standards relating to the right to health of young people, women, children, LGBTI persons, and people living with HIV.

• Provide young people with information on sexual and reproductive health and STI prevention, in accordance with international and regional human rights instruments and standards, and ensure that procedures designed to safeguard informed consent, the right to privacy, and freedom of expression.

• Issue and enforce laws prohibiting discrimination with respect to women, children, young people, LGBTI persons, and other groups in situations of vulnerability, including prisoners (persons deprived of liberty), sex workers, and drug users.

• Ensure mechanisms for protecting young people against human rights violations, as well as for monitoring and monitoring these violations and for enforcing the law to avoid discrimination and related violations against young people, women, children, and LGBTI groups, and ensure that these persons responsible for murder and/or acts of violence and discrimination are attacked by legal procedures and sanctioned.

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For more information:

Please see the PAHO Human Rights and Health website.

Cover image: Kite painting by David Goldstein.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This technical document is the result of 11 training workshops conducted in collaboration with the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Guatemala. Through these workshops, PAHO and the Ministry of Women, Children, Adolescents and Youth (MINAPA) conducted human rights capacity-building exercises in the Americas.

The workshops were organized to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience about the impact of human rights violations on the health and well-being of young people. The ultimate objective of the workshops was to advance the right to young people’s enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health (‘right to health’) as well as other related human rights and fundamental freedoms.

This document is based on first-hand experiences from 11 human rights capacity-building workshops held in participatory groups from 11 countries between 2008 and 2010. The workshops included an average of 35 participants per workshop.

Participants included staff from governmental agencies (ministries of health, labor, education, and finance) and civil society (including media, LGBTI groups, and youth associations) as well as judges, legislators, and congressional delegates, police officers, and union members, so that they can deal effectively with situations of violence and discrimination.

Many of the workshops reported experiences useful in a variety of other capacities in their context. This document reflects three years of intense work in the Americas. We hope that it can serve as an inspiration to advocates, public health specialists, legislators, and civil society organizations in opening dialogues and leading to significant improvements in young people’s health. In particular, the document seeks to formulate, review, and—if necessary—reform national health plans, policies, and legislation, by incorporating the international human rights instruments applicable in each case—especially those related to protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the Americas.

The observations and recommendations made at each of the workshops have been organized and analyzed by topic, trend, and public health measures. The information is derived from the reports and observations grouped according to five main findings. This section includes the summary of findings and needs.

1 The Need for Conscious-Raising and Training

Following each national and sub-regional workshop, a questionnaire on the current picture of the right to health was developed by the workshop facilitators. The questions were designed to provide useful data for further research and to support the development of improved policies.

2 The Need for-Pertaining to Young People’s Health in Latin America and Caribbean Countries of the Americas

3 Improved Access to Quality Health Services

4 Fostering Respect for Human Rights

5 Conclusion

The ultimate objectives of the workshops were to advance the right to young people’s enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health (‘right to health’) as well as other related human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the Americas. Special consideration was given to young people’s right to sexual and reproductive health and the application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Person with Disabilities (CRPD).

For the workshops reports were organized as a series of key observations and recommendations, grouped according to five main findings. The sections include the summary of findings and needs.

The Need for Conscious-Raising and Training

In accordance with this Resolution, and to develop and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms not only of young people, but also of other groups in situation of vulnerability such as women, children, LGBTI people, and people living with HIV, PAHO conducted 11 human rights capacity-building workshops. Each of these workshops was attended by an average of 35 participants from youth groups, women’s groups, and civil society organizations.

These capacity-building programs introduced relevant human rights concepts, principles, norms, and international human rights law and human rights instruments.

These workshops reflect three phases of human rights learning for young people in the Americas. The first phase was focused on awareness and sensitization for young people, public health specialists, legislators, and civil society organizations in opening dialogues and leading to significant improvements in young people’s health. This phase focused on the need to broaden the scope of measures to protect the right to health and other related human rights and fundamental freedoms.

There are high levels of discrimination and violence against children, adolescents, LGBTI people, and people living with HIV. There is a need to strengthen the capacity of magistrates, public health personnel, prison staff, and other groups in situations of vulnerability to safeguard informed consent.

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