

ADOLESCENT GIRLS' HEALTH AND PROTECTION IN PERU



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OVERVIEW

The overall objective of the Adolescent Girls' Health and Protection project in Peru is to improve the capacity of services in Ucayali and Huancavelica to respond promptly to the health needs of the adolescent population and to prevent all types of violence in schools and other services. Adolescents, especially teenage girls, must have opportunities to empower themselves and develop the self-confidence and autonomy necessary to take control of their lives and bodies and defend their rights. This project works to enable those opportunities.

Huancavelica is located in the highlands of Peru, a region with a significant proportion of the population living in rural areas (69.5%). In comparison, Ucayali is located in the Peruvian Amazon with a rural population of 18.9%. Both regions have everyday needs but differ in magnitude: Ucayali has a higher percentage of adolescent pregnancy (25.1%) than Huancavelica (9.7%) and the national average (12.7%). Concerning violence in schools, 14% of the cases refer to some form of sexual violence, where 80% of the victims are girls and 70% of the aggressors are adults who work in educational institutions.

The extended emergency state in Peru, due to COVID-19, made it necessary to reformulate strategies and interventions to address new challenges, such as the reopening of schools after two years, new types of violence resulting from the intensive use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), and the loss of family members. Bearing in mind that COVID-19 and its effects will be long-lasting, UNICEF, in collaboration with subnational child protection, education, and health authorities and the implementing partners, reviewed and adjusted the project work plan and implementation methods.

The adolescent population in both regions had limited access to comprehensive health care before the pandemic in 2019: 23,863 adolescents received some form of health care in Huancavelica and 34,458 in Ucayali. The pandemic reduced these figures by 44% in Huancavelica and 40% in Ucayali in 2020. However, thanks to the technical assistance provided by UNICEF and other stakeholders, the statistics have improved: this year, 27,774 adolescents have received some form of health care in Huancavelica and 66,766 in Ucayali.

COVID-19 IN PERU*

Peru has reported nearly 4.2 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 and has the highest number of deaths per capita: 666, and one of the highest mortality rates in the world: 5.2%.

Although vaccination efforts started slowly, they gained momentum in 2022 with 492,531 doses administered to adults and minors in Ucayali, reaching coverage of 87% in adults and 39% in minors. In Huancavelica, 368,774 vaccines were administered to adults and minors, reaching ranges of 92% and 43% respectively.

The pandemic has affected both regions due to poor connectivity, a weak health system, a lack of medicinal oxygen, and isolation, particularly for rural and indigenous populations. Response measures to COVID-19 (including self-isolation, social distancing, community lockdowns) limited access to education, preventive health and protection services, and the capability of these services to respond.

*As of 19 November 2022

ACHIEVEMENTS AND RESULTS

82,779 adolescent health screenings (46,543 girls) were carried out in UNICEF-supported districts in Huancavelica and Ucayali.

309 health providers completed trainings to provide comprehensive adolescent health care.

284 schools implemented violence prevention protocols across the two districts.

13,830 teachers have been trained on positive discipline and development of socio-emotional skills.



In 2022, 37,426 adolescents (20,629 girls) received health care in the districts prioritized by UNICEF in Ucayali and Huancavelica.

Standards and laws establishing guidelines for comprehensive mental health care for children and adolescents who are victims of sexual violence were developed and officially approved by the Peruvian state at the national level.

Organizations of adolescents and young people from different regions of the country are being empowered about mental health, the right to access health services and the prevention of all types of violence through the self-production of communication material and its dissemination on social networks as part of the national campaign called “*Suelta la Lengua*” (Speak Out).



Collaboration between the health and education sectors promoted adolescent health in 10 educational institutions in Huancavelica and Ucayali, benefiting 3,029 students.

In 2022, 60 psychologists strengthened their skills and are better prepared to respond effectively to any call from children, adolescents and their caregivers on mental health issues.



The In-Service Training Programme on Comprehensive Adolescent Health Care lasted approximately 10 months and was implemented in four regions of the country, including Huancavelica and Ucayali. 112 technical and professional health personnel were certified, of which 27 were from Huancavelica and 14 from Ucayali.



The Comprehensive Sex Education Course has 32 participants in Ucayali, which will benefit approximately 3,000 secondary school students from four educational institutions in Ucayali.



The Comprehensive Programme for the Prevention of Violence in Schools began in 26 schools in Ucayali and Huancavelica, directly impacting 237 teachers and principals, 4,637 girl students, and 2,563 boys during 2022.

13,830 teachers were trained to apply better school policies to prevent violence and improve the school environment in their classrooms with positive discipline strategies and the development of socio-emotional skills.



A communication campaign to raise awareness about violence in schools and encourage the reporting of cases reached 150,000 views on social media and 1,417 students directly in Huancavelica and Ucayali.



Detailed protocols are in place to address school violence between students and adult school staff. These protocols have been widely disseminated in the target regions. There is also a user-friendly mobile application for students to report violence cases.

