Why are data on adolescent fertility important at both a national and municipal level?

With Nepal's devolution of authority to the municipal level, the need for the municipal-level estimates of adolescent fertility is more critical today than ever before.

- High rates of adolescent fertility can result in girls stopping their education early and missing employment opportunities.
- With the risk of mortality higher for newborns and infants born to adolescent mothers than those born to older mothers,
- By investing in family planning policies and programs to reduce adolescent fertility, Nepal can improve young women's economic development.
- Estimates of adolescent fertility at the national or provincial level can mask important geographic variation in patterns and trends.

Municipal-level estimates on adolescent fertility help decisionmakers monitor trends and compare municipal-level interventions are needed.

Identifying and flagging locations where adolescent fertility is stagnating at a high-level or increasing help decisionmakers determine where adolescent girls may need improved access to family planning and other services and where targeted interventions are needed.

- Economic participation in the labor force, advance adolescent girls' health and well-being, and contribute to Nepal's social and economic development.
- Adolescents are in a window of opportunity to learn about family planning, including what it is, the benefits, and how to access it.

• High rates of adolescent fertility can lead to higher neonatal and infant mortality.
These data can be used to examine:

- How can stakeholders explore and interpret these municipal-level adolescent fertility estimates?

The Adolescent Fertility Priority Municipalities maps specifically highlight municipalities that have high adolescent fertility that is stagnant or increasing and an estimated 1,000 or more births to adolescent girls from 2011 to 2016. The Adolescent Fertility Data Insights map is replicated to show the 2016 adolescent fertility rate and the percent change in adolescent fertility from 2011 to 2016 at the national level for married adolescent girls ages 15-19.

Policymakers should focus efforts and resources on municipalities with high adolescent fertility that is stagnant or increasing, as well as a large absolute number of births to adolescent girls. Targeted interventions could include:

- Reducing rates of child marriage and increasing the average age at marriage by enforcing laws on minimum age at marriage.
- Encouraging adolescent mothers to space their second pregnancy through correct and consistent use of voluntary family planning.
- Providing adolescent-friendly, confidential family planning services to all adolescent girls who need contraception, regardless of marital status.
- Supporting programs to help newly married adolescent girls stay in school through secondary level, even when they are married.
- Recognize where more research is needed to identify factors related to changes in adolescent fertility.

Decisionmakers across municipalities and provinces can also use the data to identify similar districts or municipalities with high adolescent fertility rates and apply lessons learned from districts or municipalities that have experienced declines in adolescent fertility. When looking at the adolescent fertility rate for 2016 across municipalities, decisionmakers can determine which geographic areas are experiencing high adolescent fertility that may benefit from additional in-depth studies.
These data highlight the need for additional research and data collection on adolescent fertility: What are the remaining gaps in knowledge or information that still need to be addressed?

While a recent 2019 Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey reported a national adolescent fertility rate substantially lower than the 2016 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) estimate, differences in the sampling and methodology from the 2016 DHS—such as sampling from enumeration areas rather than wards for the primary sampling unit in rural areas and oversampling households with young children—indicate that additional research and data collection will need to be done to validate this estimate, including seeing if the next Nepal DHS shows similar declines in adolescent fertility since 2016.