



Improving Adolescent and Youth Access to and Use of MNCH/FP/RH Care in Sierra Leone

Marian Pleasant Kargbo, Family Planning 2030 Youth Focal Point, Sierra Leone

Major barriers to accessing RMNCH/FP care in Sierra Leone

- Adolescent often do not know how to access health centers for contraception and child care
- Availability can be limited, and cost of contraceptives in health facilities is high
- Myths around contraceptive use shape adolescent and youth attitudes about contraception
- Provider bias and poor treatment of adolescents
- Friendly centers not friendly in most places
- Adolescents and youth not engaged in designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating health services, programs, and policies

Approaches to addressing these barriers

- Shift from only youth corners or friendly services, to having the whole health system meet the needs of adolescents and youth – including in rural areas.
- Outreach programs should be continuous and not just a one off
- Need for continuous engagement of young people to increase knowledge of the benefits of contraceptives in reducing teenage pregnancy
- The family and community should be supportive to the needs of young people and not be judgmental
- Strong political will is needed to protect and safeguard the reproductive health needs of adolescent and youths
- There should be checks and balance where adolescents and youth can be given the opportunity to assess the health system
- Adolescents and youths should be enlightened to Family Planning Commitments and costed implementation plans