

Improve Provision of Youth-Friendly Health Services in Mayuge District

Young people make up the majority of Mayuge District's population. With access to youth-friendly health services, including family planning for pregnancy prevention, they can lead healthy and productive lives that contribute to Mayuge's society and economy.

Yet, negative health care provider attitudes and privacy concerns often deter youth in Mayuge District from seeking these services, putting their futures and the district's future at risk.

What Are Youth-Friendly Services?

Youth-friendly health services provide a comfortable, appropriate, and nonthreatening setting to attract young people and support their diverse health needs. Youth-friendly facilities offer:



Policies that protect youth confidentiality and privacy.



Affordable fees.



Hours and locations convenient for young people.



Providers trained to communicate with youth in a nonjudgmental manner.



Youth participation in the development of facility policies and implementing services.

Through the *Uganda Family Planning Costed Implementation Plan, 2015-2020*, and the *Uganda FP2020 Revitalized Commitment 2017*, the Government of Uganda has committed to ensuring that young people have access to youth-friendly family planning services.

Are Services Youth-Friendly in Mayuge District?

Research with youth and stakeholders in Mayuge District reveals that young people are not always comfortable going to clinics to access family planning because health care providers are judgmental and do not protect their privacy.



“Some health workers say, ‘you are young, why have you come for family planning?’ And you really feel small and yet you want the method.”

YOUNG WOMAN, AGE 18 TO 24, MAYUGE

“When [you know] health workers are not friendly, even though I am going for medication, I don’t go when they are there.”

YOUNG WOMAN, AGE 18 TO 24, MAYUGE

“They are not friendly at all, they are very harsh. Some health worker told me, ‘you, boy, I am tired of you, you come for condoms every day.’”

YOUNG MAN, AGE 15 TO 17, MAYUGE

“When you go to a facility, the health workers are harsh on [young women] and tell them that they are still young and say, “why did you get pregnant?” ...These providers are not open.”

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION, MAYUGE



Nearly **21 percent** of women ages 15 to 19 in Busoga Region have had a live birth or are pregnant with their first child.

Why Should We Improve Youth-Friendly Services in Mayuge District?

When young people can access services in a supportive environment, they have:

Improved knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and contraceptive services.

Greater access to and demand for contraceptive services.

Increased protection from HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Increased satisfaction with contraceptive use among young people.

Reduction in unintended pregnancies.

Mayuge District can train its health care providers with a manual from the Ministry of Health on how to treat young people and build youth-friendly services. By doing so, it can help Uganda meet its commitments to improve youth-friendly contraceptive services and improve young people's reproductive health.

What Should Policymakers in Mayuge District Do?

- Prioritize funding for public-sector health care providers' training on youth-friendly services, especially at the health system's lower levels, in the 2020-2021 budget.
- Include youth-friendly training in health care providers' existing refresher trainings.
- Educate communities on the importance of making health facilities youth-friendly.

Investments in family planning lead to a better-educated, healthier population and improved development for all youth in Mayuge District.



NOTES

Focus group discussions with youth and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders conducted in Kampala, Kabale, and Mayuge districts in 2018 assessed gaps between policy commitments made in *The National Policy Guidelines and Service Standards for Reproductive Health Services; Health Sector Strategic Plan III, 2010/11-2014/15; National Adolescent Health Strategy, 2011-2015; National Sexuality Education Framework, 2018; Uganda Family Planning Costed Implementation Plan, 2015-2020*, and the implementation of youth-friendly family planning services. Selected challenges identified at the national and Mayuge District level are presented here.

SOURCES

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