

# THE FUTURE OF CROSS RIVER STATE STARTS TODAY

## Provide Youth-Friendly Family Planning Services to Young People

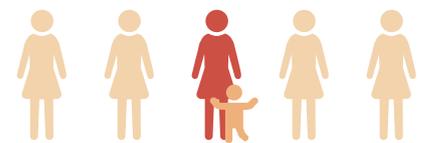
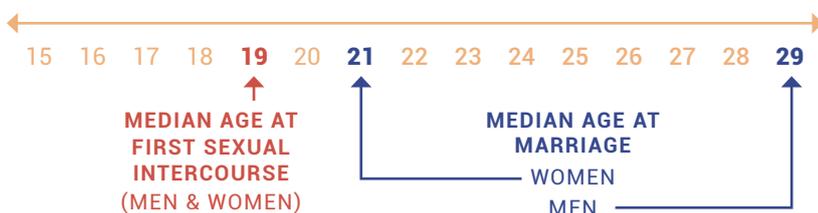


Youth in Cross River State need access to information and services that promote their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) to protect themselves from unintended pregnancy.

Nigeria has made SRHR a national priority through policies and global commitments like its FP2020 commitment updated in 2017. SRHR includes measures to “ensure quality sexual and reproductive health services, **including contraceptive services**, ... and to address sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents.”<sup>1</sup>

To maintain their SRHR, youth need access to accurate information and safe, effective, and affordable family planning methods of their choosing.<sup>2</sup>

BOTH MEN AND WOMEN IN CROSS RIVER TYPICALLY BECOME **SEXUALLY ACTIVE** YEARS BEFORE THEY MARRY.<sup>3</sup>



Almost **one in five** women ages 20 to 24 have a child **before age 18**—one of the highest rates of teenage motherhood in the South-South Zone.<sup>4</sup>

### WHAT ARE YOUTH-FRIENDLY SERVICES?

According to the World Health Organization, youth-friendly services (YFS) are those that are considered accessible, acceptable, appropriate, effective, and equitable for adolescents.<sup>5</sup> YFS, a component of SRHR, make youth feel safe and welcomed by health service providers and support a range of developmental needs as youth transition into adulthood.<sup>6</sup>

### Cross River youth face challenges accessing family planning services, especially in public facilities.

Family planning stakeholders report efforts are underway to improve YFS in Cross River through provider trainings and dedicated youth-friendly facilities. Despite these endeavors, some youth in focus groups report difficulty finding youth-friendly family planning services in the state. And even when these services are available, the stigma youth experience when going to a facility presents multiple barriers, including:



LACK OF CLEAR AND RELIABLE INFORMATION



PROVIDER DISCRIMINATION AND JUDGMENT



DISREGARD FOR YOUTH'S PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY



FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS THAT DO NOT CONSIDER THE NEEDS OF UNMARRIED YOUTH

Youth have more negative experiences when they attempt to seek family planning information or services from public facilities. Youth and family planning stakeholders report that, compared to private facilities or pharmacies, government hospital providers are **more rude**, **spend less time** with youth clients, introduce **more obstacles**, and are **less likely to maintain youth's confidentiality**.

“The chemist will attend to you immediately, unlike in [a] hospital where they will tell you: ‘sit down, okay madam come back tomorrow, we have closed for the day, make sure you come as early as 8.’ By 8... somebody they know will come and they will attend to them first.”

—Female youth, age 18 to 24

Providing youth with family planning information and services aligns with national commitments to YFS and Cross River's commitment to improving reproductive health for all.<sup>7</sup>



## WHAT CAN THE CROSS RIVER STATE MINISTRY OF HEALTH DO TO MAKE PUBLIC FACILITIES FRIENDLIER TO YOUTH SEEKING FAMILY PLANNING INFORMATION AND SERVICES?

In addition to providing existing YFS, by the end of 2020 the Ministry of Health should:

- ✓ Issue a policy directive to all public health facilities to hold a youth sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) day every month for at least one year.
- ✓ Designate a health care provider at each facility who has been trained on youth-friendly family planning services to coordinate the youth SRHR day.



**NOTE:** Between 2018 and 2019, Population Reference Bureau and the International Youth Alliance for Family Planning conducted interviews and discussions with youth and key stakeholders to assess the status of youth-friendly family planning services in Nigeria. This fact sheet presents the results of this research related to gaps in youth-friendly service delivery.

<sup>1</sup> Marleen Temmerman, Rajat Khosla, and Lale Say, "Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: A Global Development, Health, and Human Rights Priority," *The Lancet* 384, no. 9941 (2014): e30-e31.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Population Fund, Sexual & Reproductive Health, accessed at [www.unfpa.org/sexual-reproductive-health](http://www.unfpa.org/sexual-reproductive-health), on May 7, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> National Population Commission (NPC) and ICF International, Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2013 (Abuja, Nigeria, and Rockville, MD: NPC and ICF International, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2017 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2016-17: Survey Finding Report (Abuja, Nigeria: NBS and UNICEF, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> World Health Organization (WHO), *Making Health Services Adolescent Friendly: Developing National Quality Standards for*

*Adolescent-Friendly Health Services* (Geneva: WHO, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> George C. Patton et al., "Global Patterns of Mortality in Young People: A Systematic Analysis of Population Health Data," *Lancet* 374, no. 9693 (2009): 881-92; WHO, *Health for the World's Adolescents: A Second Chance in the Second Decade* (Geneva: WHO, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH), *National Guidelines for the Integration of Adolescent and Youth Friendly Services in Primary Health Care Facilities in Nigeria* (Abuja: FMoH, 2013); Cross River State Ministry of Health, *Cross River State Health Policy* (Calabar, Nigeria: 2013).

<sup>8</sup> Jill Gay et al., High-Impact Practices in Family Planning (HIPs), "Adolescent-Friendly Contraceptive Services: Mainstreaming Adolescent-Friendly Elements into Existing Contraceptive Services," (Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development, 2015), accessed at [www.fphighimpactpractices.org/afcs](http://www.fphighimpactpractices.org/afcs), on April 11, 2019.



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