

PRB'S YOUTH FAMILY PLANNING POLICY SCORECARD

OVERVIEW OF 2019 UPDATES

Governments around the world have made great strides in creating formal laws and policies that support young people's health and human rights, including access to sexual and reproductive health. PRB's 2019 update to its *Youth Family Planning Policy Scorecard* provides new review and analysis of relevant policies documenting 16 countries' commitments across eight indicators of youth-friendly family planning (FP) services. Several countries have received updated ratings in one or more policy environment indicators based on documents newly developed or discovered between May 2018 and May 2019.

IMPROVED POLICY ENVIRONMENTS

The most significant changes to any country's policy environment occurred in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, where a revised "Law Addressing Fundamental Principles Relating to the Organization of Public Health" was signed in December 2018. The law creates a new political environment favorable to youth FP while simultaneously repealing a regressive colonial law. Its new provisions support youth access to FP services without spousal consent, but still require parental consent. The law also protects women's ability to choose to use FP even if her spouse objects, but it does not explicitly prohibit marital status as a criterion for provision or refusal of FP services. It also introduces language that supports youth access to FP services regardless of age.

Similarly, the new "Operational Plan for Family Planning" in **Niger** and the "Manual of Standards for Family Planning Services" in **Sindh**, Pakistan, improved the policy environment around youth FP in these countries. The Plan identifies youth as a priority population, and highlights the government's commitment to increasing the availability of FP service points tailored to their needs and building the capacity of providers to deliver youth-friendly services. The Manual introduces language to protect the privacy and confidentiality of youth FP services.

LESS SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

While new policies often improve the policy environment for youth FP, the Scorecard's 2019 version identifies for the first time an older policy that reflects a less supportive policy environment in **Mali**. The 2011 "Persons and Family Code" states that wives must obey their husbands—identified as the head of the family—contradicting another policy and potentially affecting women's empowerment to make independent decisions about their health care.

ONGOING POLICYMAKING

This year's Scorecard update identifies new sexual and reproductive health policies and laws in 13 of the 16 included countries. Often, their wording reinforces positive language contained in other policy documents, such as in **Burkina Faso** and **Tanzania**, where new policies confirm free FP and ensure access without provider authorization, respectively. In other cases, new policies reinforce a policy environment that inhibits youth's access to FP. In **Uganda**, the "National Sexuality Education Framework" introduced in 2018 continues to promote abstinence-only education and discourage sexuality education among youth, as did a previous policy.

To recognize ongoing progress toward supportive policies and laws, the 2019 Scorecard also identifies policy documents that are in development but not reviewed in PRB's analysis because they are not yet final. Such policies and laws have been identified in **Côte d'Ivoire**, the **DRC**, **Kenya**, **Nigeria**, **Senegal**, **Sindh** (Pakistan), **Tanzania**, **Togo**, and **Uganda**, and provide a promising outlook for youth FP policy environments in the coming years.

[Explore the Scorecard.](#)