

# PRB'S YOUTH FAMILY PLANNING POLICY SCORECARD

## OVERVIEW OF MARCH 2022 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 March 2022 update to its *Youth Family Planning Policy Scorecard* provides new review and analysis of relevant policies documenting 28 countries' commitments across eight indicators of youth-friendly family planning (FP) services, as well as an updated methodology and new policy change-over-time snapshots. Several countries have received updated analyses in one or more policy environment indicators based on documents newly developed or discovered between April 2021 and March 2022.

## LITERATURE REVIEW REFRESH & UPDATED METHODOLOGY

To ensure that the Scorecard methodology still correctly accounts for all programs and policies that lead to increased contraceptive use among youth, the March 2022 edition includes an updated literature review. The review, conducted in the fall of 2021, includes new studies published since the methodology was first established in 2016. Four additional studies were identified as providing additional, relevant information to the existing methodology.

Two studies—one from India and one from Malawi—showed that gender-synchronized approaches to and male engagement in family planning led to increased contraceptive use among young married couples and partners. Evidence from a separate multi-country study in 2020 demonstrated that providing free short- and long-term contraceptives was associated with an increased likelihood of contraceptive use. And a fourth study from Ethiopia showed that training providers who work in youth-friendly services to offer a full range of methods resulted in an increased adoption of long-acting reversible contraceptives.

The existing Scorecard methodology was updated to reflect these four studies. While the studies provided additional context, they did not alter the methods by which the Scorecard team measures policy strength.

## POLICY CHANGE OVER TIME SNAPSHOT

The March 2022 edition of the Scorecard introduces a new series of snapshots illustrating countries' policy change over time, available as downloadable graphics. Each snapshot shows how a country's policy has changed annually since 2017 based on three criteria: 1) development of a new policy, 2) inclusion of additional policies previously unidentified in the analysis, or 3) a

reinterpretation of the Scorecard's methodology. The snapshots allow users to visualize a country's policy changes quickly before diving into the full analysis to find out more.

## ONGOING POLICYMAKING

Previous Scorecard updates identified new sexual and reproductive health policies and laws, including a recent surge of new national FP costed implementation plans that created a roadmap for countries to achieve their family planning goals. In this year's update, the Scorecard includes policy documents published since 2020. Their publication shows that governments are slowly beginning to address the gap in policymaking that occurred early in the coronavirus pandemic when policy development was not a high priority and youth FP policies and strategies expired.

While the analyses in this edition included updates to almost every country, four countries saw significant improvement in their policy environment to warrant an indicator change. In Ethiopia and Madagascar, national FP guidelines and training manuals for youth-friendly service providers meant an improved environment for parental and spousal consent. In Haiti, the Scorecard team located an old policy that establishes the rights of adolescents and youth to use FP services without provider bias, shifting the policy environment from gray to yellow. And in Malawi, a newly identified youth-costed implementation plan resulted in Malawi being categorized as supportive of comprehensive sexuality education, but with some room for improvement.

To recognize ongoing progress toward supportive policies and laws, the March 2022 Scorecard identifies policy documents that are in development but not reviewed in PRB's analysis because they are not yet final and takes note of policy documents that have been identified in name but not located. Draft policies and laws have been identified in **Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Sindh** (Pakistan), **Tanzania, Togo**, and **Uganda**, and provide a promising outlook for youth FP policy environments in the coming years.

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