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

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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