

Access Report

Bulletin Of The Expanded Access To Sexual And Reproductive Health Information And Services For Youth In Northern Nigeria” Project

2002 - 2003

Reaching Young People in Northern Nigeria



Youth aged 15-24 years account for the majority of unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion complications and sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS. Unfortunately, because of the relative recency of efforts to provide sexual and reproductive health services to young people, there is a dire lack of the skilled providers, as well as youth-friendly facilities with the capacity to offer these services in Nigeria as a whole. These needs are disproportionately greater in Northern Nigeria where hundreds of

thousands of youth are exposed to higher levels of maternal mortality, lower age at marriage and lower access to modern family planning methods, in addition to being faced with the challenges posed to young people by the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic in the country.

To complement Action Health Incorporated's (AHI) initial efforts supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2000-2001 as part of the Nigerian HIV/AIDS Emergency Action Plan (HEAP) to facilitate the establishment of youth friendly health services in six states with the highest HIV/AIDS seroprevalence rates in Nigeria, AHI initiated the "**Expanded Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for Youth in Northern Nigeria Project**" in 2002 with support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

The overall goal of this initiative is to develop interventions that will enable young people have greater access to sexual and reproductive health information and services in Northern Nigeria. The project is designed to utilize the strategies and related activities of advocacy and social mobilization, capacity building and training, as well as collaboration and networking with partner organizations based in four Northern Nigeria States – Kaduna, Nassarawa, Bauchi and Borno.

As part of the preliminary activities undertaken, AHI and its partner NGOs conducted a Baseline Needs Assessment in the four

The publication *Programming for Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health in Northern Nigeria: Understanding Contexts and Challenges* is a report of this needs assessment. It documents findings with regard to a range of sexual and reproductive health issues among adolescents, their parents, community and opinion leaders and other stakeholders who were interviewed during the baseline survey. The report also makes use of secondary data from the 1999 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (1999 NDHS).

Among a host of others sources, the Baseline Needs Assessment exercise helped to provide answers to questions, which were crucial in the design and implementation of the intervention programme for adolescents sexual and reproductive health in Northern Nigeria.

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