

# FACTORS INFLUENCING FULL ACCESS AND CHOICE OF CONTRACEPTION AMONG YOUNG WOMEN IN WEST POKOT



## KEY FINDINGS:

- 16% of adolescents and youth 15-24 years are using modern contraceptive methods compared to a national average of 27%.
- Both socio-cultural barriers, such as myths and misconceptions and fear of side-effects, as well as service delivery limitations, such as long distances to service delivery points and costs of services, prevent young people in the county from accessing and using a wide range of contraceptive methods.
- 50% of young women age 15-24 in West Pokot using modern contraception jointly made the decision to use the contraception method with their husband or partners, 42% mainly made this decision on their own, while 8% had the decision made by their husband or partner.

## KEY ACTION ITEMS:

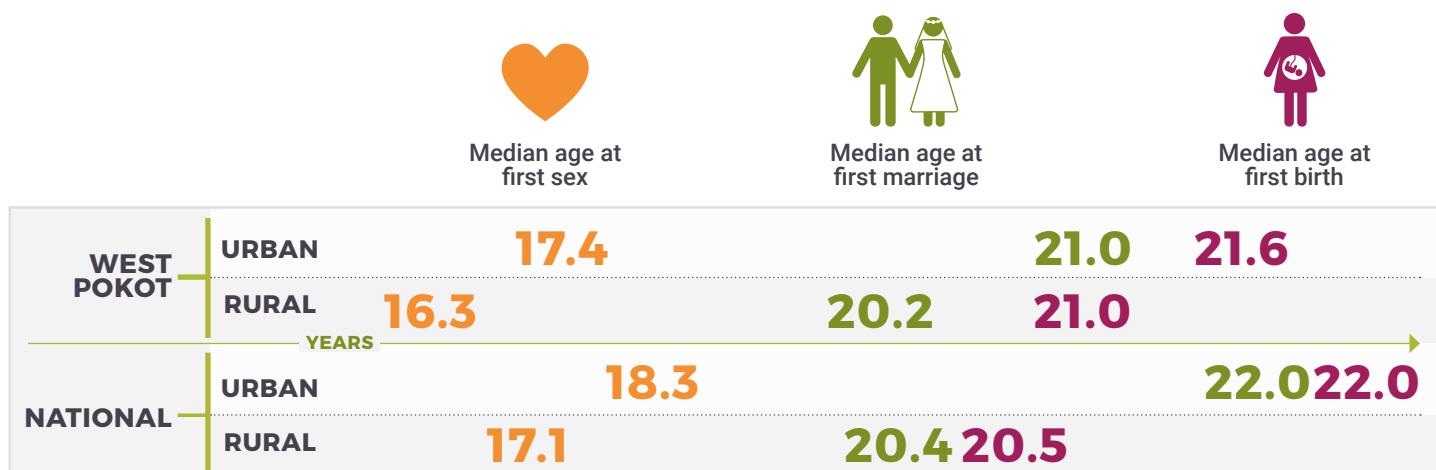
- Stakeholders seeking to improve access and use of modern family planning methods for adolescents and youth in West Pokot County should enhance efforts to provide them with fact-based information that address the prevalent barrier of myths and misconceptions against use of various modern contraceptive methods.
- The number of family planning service delivery points should be increased and health facilities providing family planning services should provide access to a wide range of contraceptive methods including long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCS) to the women who need them, including adolescents and youth.
- Stakeholders in both the county government and their partners should enhance efforts to involve more men in family planning programming including family planning outreach initiatives since they are key partners in the decision-making process to use modern contraceptives.

**BACKGROUND:** Use of modern contraceptives among adolescents and youth in West Pokot County is much lower than the national average for Kenya. Understanding the reasons for low uptake of contraceptives among young women in the county will help policymakers and program implementers to ensure that all women, including adolescents and youth, have access to a full range of contraceptive methods to achieve their reproductive goals.

**METHODS:** In 2018, the Full Access, Full Choice project convened key family planning stakeholders, from government and NGOs, to identify county-specific program priorities and evidence gaps in adolescent and youth family planning research. This brief is in response to a learning agenda that was developed and informed by a set of study questions advanced by stakeholders from the public sector and non-governmental organizations in West Pokot County. In this brief, we address two related key questions identified among their priorities: **(i) What are the barriers to the provision of a range of contraceptive methods to adolescents and youth? and (ii) Who influences the decisions of adolescents and youth on whether or not to use a contraceptive?**

We present quantitative and qualitative evidence from the Performance Monitoring for Action (PMA) Phase 1 Baseline Survey 2019, the 2015 Kenya National Adolescent and Youth Survey (NAYS) that was implemented by the Kenya National Council for Population and Development (NCPD), and the Kenya Harmonized Health Facility Assessment (KHFA) 2018/2019.

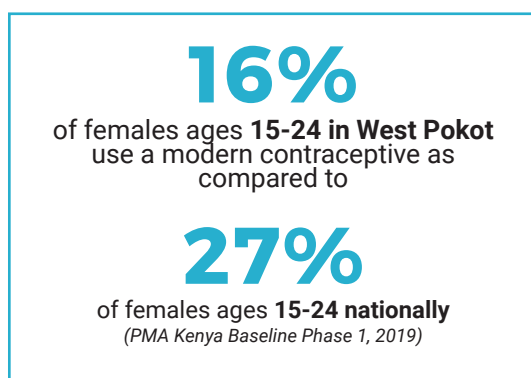
## KEY LIFE TRANSITIONS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN WEST POKOT COUNTY



Women in rural West Pokot have sex for the first time, get married and give birth at a slightly earlier age than their urban counterparts. Although a similar pattern is observed nationally, the median ages at first sex, first marriage and first birth for West Pokot are all earlier than the national average.

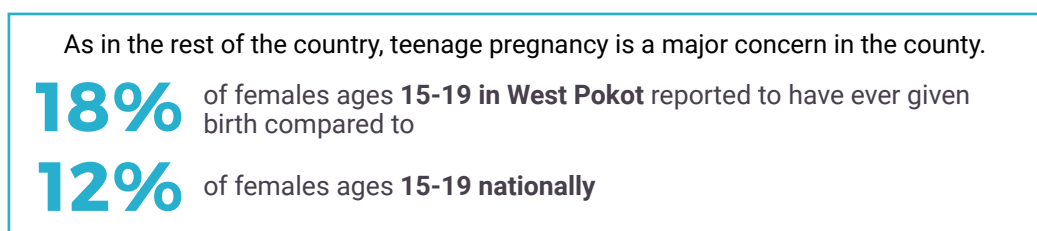
(PMA Kenya Baseline Phase 1, 2019)

## MODERN USE OF CONTRACEPTION AND UNMET NEED



The low use of modern contraception in part reflects the *unmet need* within this age group. Unmet need measures the percentage of women who would like to prevent or postpone getting pregnant but are not using a contraceptive method.

In West Pokot, 2 out of every 10 (22%) young women age 15-24 have unmet need. This is double the national average of 11 percent for the same age group.



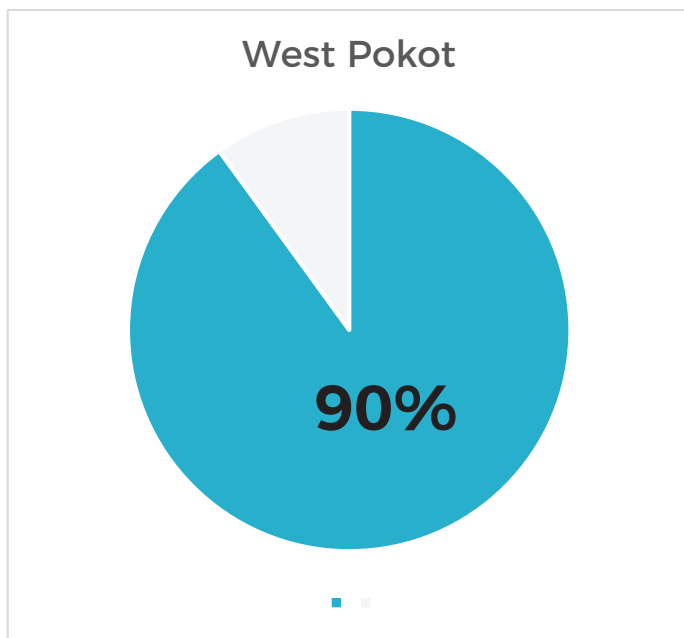
(PMA Kenya Baseline Phase 1, 2019)

## BARRIERS TO ACCESS AND USE OF MODERN CONTRACEPTIVES AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES FOR ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

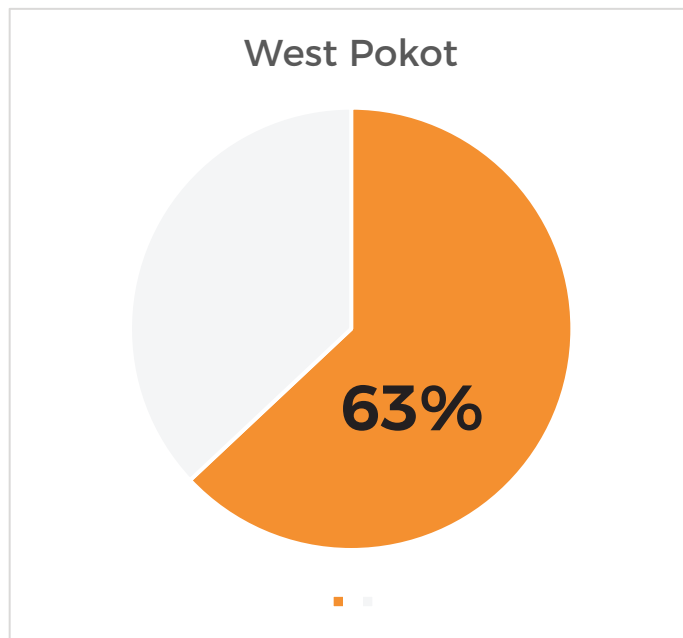
An assessment conducted by the Kenya National Council for Population and Development (NCPD) in 2015 in all 47 counties in Kenya identified both socio-cultural influences and service delivery limitations as key challenges for adolescents and youth to access family planning and sexual and reproductive health information and services in West Pokot County.

BARRIERS TO FP AND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND SERVICES FOR ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH IN WEST POKOT COUNTY	
<b>Socio-cultural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear and embarrassment around SRH/FP</li> <li>• Fear of side effects</li> <li>• Myths and misconceptions</li> </ul>
<b>Service delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long distances to health facilities lowering access to services</li> <li>• Lack of adolescent and youth-friendly services</li> <li>• Cost of services</li> </ul>

### SERVICE DELIVERY CHALLENGES FOR ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH ARE SUPPORTED BY FINDINGS OF THE KENYA HARMONIZED HEALTH FACILITY ASSESSMENT (KHFA) 2018/2019



Percentage of facilities offering family planning services  
(KHFA 2018/2019)



Percentage of facilities offering family planning services to **adolescents**  
(KHFA 2018/2019)

The KHFA 2018/2019 showed that while 90% of health facilities offered family planning services in West Pokot County, only 63% of the health facilities in the county provided family planning services to adolescents. Sixty percent (60%) provided male condoms to adolescents, forty-six percent (46%) provided oral contraceptives, and very few provided adolescents with other alternatives that included IUCD (14%) and emergency contraceptive pills (13%).

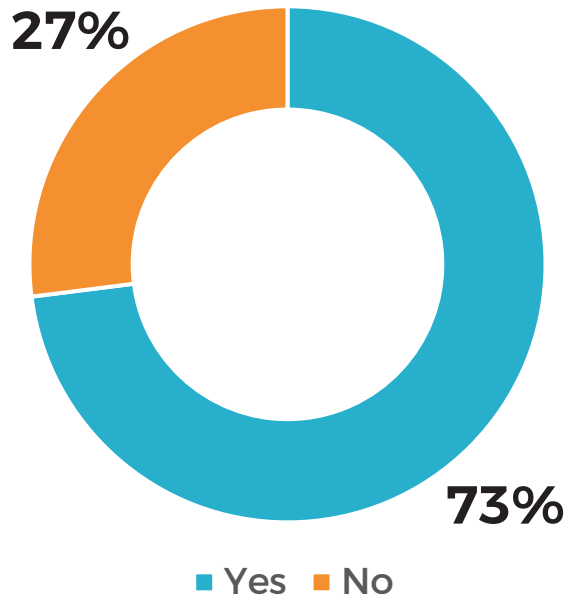
## DECISION TO USE MODERN CONTRACEPTION IS MAINLY MADE BY RESPONDENT AND JOINTLY WITH HER PARTNER

Responding to several questions in the PMA Kenya Baseline Phase 1, 2019 to determine how the decision to use modern contraceptives is arrived at, young women age 15-24 indicated that both they and their partners played an important role. About 7 out of 10 (73%) of the young women age 15-24 currently using a modern method had discussed this decision with their partner before using the method. However, when it comes to actual use, 42% felt it was mainly their decision, while 50% felt it was a joint decision with their partner.

For those currently using a modern method:



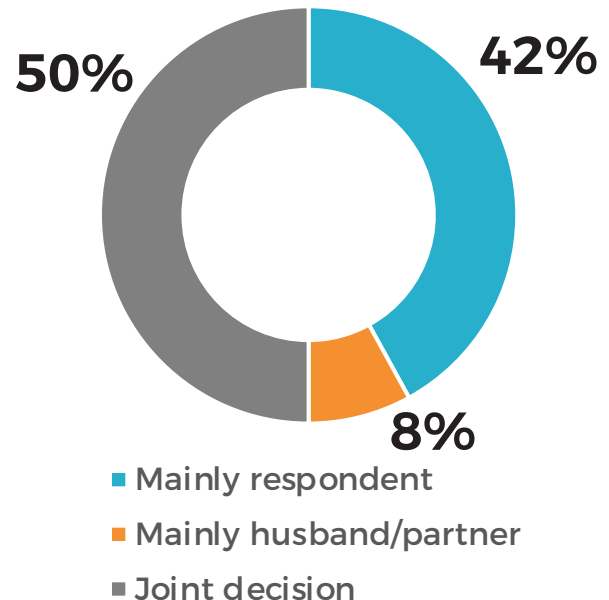
Before you started using this method, had you discussed the decision with your partner?



For those currently using a modern method:



Would you say that using contraception is mainly your decision?



### What is Full Access, Full Choice?

Full Access, Full Choice is four-year, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) supported project implemented by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Carolina Population Center and the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP). The project generates and synthesizes evidence to inform programs and policies to expand contraceptive method choice for youth aged 15-24 at the global and country levels.

For more information, please contact the FAFC team at [fullaccessfullchoice@unc.edu](mailto:fullaccessfullchoice@unc.edu) or the AFIDEP team at [info@afidep.org](mailto:info@afidep.org).