# YOUTH FRIENDLY SERVICES IN SAMBURU COUNTY

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# SAMBURU COUNTY POLICY BRIEF

2021



#### INTRODUCTION

Samburu County is characterized by a 70% populace of illiterates[1]. Their influence on the political, economic, and social development of Samburu county has been barred by information inaccessibility, misconceptions, and bias which have muscled political manipulation. Samburu county youth have not been spared, despite making up the majority of the population in the effect of 51%. The complexity of young persons' health in the global arena has intensified responses leading to special care for young people in health facilities. Young people need the uncertainty about their health addressed tolerably by first eliminating the trauma caused by the distress to openly discuss their health experiences with caregivers who mostly are the age of their parents<sup>[2]</sup>. The youth in Samburu County have habitually endorsed indigenous plants for treatment as they can't pluck up the courage to be treated by a nurse, sometimes of the opposite gender, therefore, compromising the propensity to provide relevant information about their actual health problems[3]. Young people's sexual health in Samburu continues to be at high risk as the uncertainties have resulted in huge setbacks recorded by the number of cases of teen pregnancies ranging between 26% and 48% of the 2.3% total HIV/AIDs prevalence in the county[4]. Culture has also lagged the premeditated efforts to end HIV/AIDs as the Morans (circumcised warriors) have been bestowed sexual privileges endorsed by the culture i.e. child-beading. Sexually transmitted infections affect an estimated 46% of the youth every year and only a few are treated via sophisticated methods in health facilities[5]. The county government of Samburu has so far established only two nonfunctional youth-friendly centers with a group of caregivers on YFS across the county.services[1] has also affected them since the Samburu society has a very conservative culture where sex is almost forbidden talk. The development of suitable guidelines to inform action by the county government and to increase social accountability among the youth will effectively influence improvement in health-related disparities young people face. This will also be realized by adequate funding by the county government, information provision on YFS, and actual implementation of activities proposed by youth.

[1] Exploring the factors impacting on access and acceptance of sexual and reproductive health services provided by adolescent-friendly health services in Nepal 2019-https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6687105/

[1] Statement by Hon. Irene Leshore on illiteracy in Samburu County2017 http://samburuassembly.go.ke/index.php/statements/37-hon-irene-leshore-on-illiteracy

[2] Trauma-Informed Care in Paediatrics: A Developmental Perspective in Twelve Cases withNarratives-2019-https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6907915/
[3]Samburu residents turn to herbs as county referral hospital runs out of drugs-2018- https://radiojambo.co.ke/samburu-residents-turn-herbs-county-referral-hospital-

runs-drugs/

[4] Antitubercular and Phytochemical Investigation of Methanol Extracts of Medicinal Plants Used by the Samburu Community in Kenya 2010-https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Nine-medicinalplants-used-by-the-Samburu-Community-of-Kenya-to-treat-respiratory-tract\_tbl1\_267260474

[5] Disease Control Priorities in Developing Countries. 2nd edition-https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK11734/

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### CONTEXT

Youth in Samburu County face significant challenges when seeking youth-friendly services. These include; non-functional youth-friendly centers. The addition of the YFCs is important due to the fact that this will enhance the ease of access and availability of these services. Further, there are very few youth-friendly service providers; the negative attitude that many service providers have towards the youth is also a major constraint to service provision.

There is also a limited number of appropriate channels of communication to reach the youth. As such, civic education is needed for both the Morans (A member of the warrior group of the Maasai people of East Africa, which comprises the younger unmarried males.) and the shanga girls (Young girls between the age of 8 to 15 years who have not had the opportunity to enroll in school).

From the desk review research conducted in May 2020, it was found that due to the lack of understanding of youth issues by service providers, continued provision of training to the health care providers is recommended. Ignorance among the youth as relates to SRHR education is also a key issue and sensitization forums are recommended to empower young people pro-active in their health needs.

Cultural events like mass initiation and lororas (Samburu initiation villages) are hotspots for youth to engage in unprotected sexual intercourse that often leads to teenage pregnancies and the spread of STIs.

### KEY FINDINGS

Following a desk review research and focused group discussions conducted in May 2020 by the selected youth advocates in the three sub-counties and at Maralal Referral Hospital in Samburu County, it was found that there are only 2 youth friendly centers in Samburu County. One youth friendly center built in the year 2004 in Maralal referral hospital has now been converted into a physiotherapy center and another one in Samburu East at Swari sub-location is currently non-functional. Budgetary allocations for Health in Samburu County, are currently very low, standing at 14% against the recommended 35%. Allocation to maternal health is highest in the proposed 2020/21 budget at about KES 399M while allocation to FP/RH in the proposed 2020/2021 budget is KES 12M (representing 3% of the Maternal Health Budget). This amount only covers the training of healthcare workers. Furthermore, the allocation to youth-friendly services is still at less than 5% in the proposed 2020/21 budget. It is worthy of note that this allocation has been less than 5% cumulatively across the years. The inadequate allocation of resources to SRHR services has been found to compound to poor SRHR indicators[1]. Such is the case of Samburu County Data from the Samburu County Department of Health in 2019 which shows that 41% of total pregnancies last year were in the adolescent group ages between 15-24 years, although it is not clear whether these are married women or un-married given that early marriage in the county are a common cultural phenomenon. Only 8% of youth and adolescents accessed FP services in 2019 PAGE 1 Most of the youth(approximately, 90%) in Samburu county, between the age of 13-29 years have reported an inability to access contraceptives and other sexual reproductive health services in health centers due to the lack of youth-friendly health officers[2]. Youth have also reported thin health cee lack of confidentiality at the centers when they seek services such as HIV/AIDs testing and contraceptives. Most youth especially those in the most rural areas are not aware of youth-friendly services and contraceptives and most see this as a taboo topic, something that cannot be discussed openly in society. From the focused group discussions conducted in May 2020, most of the teenage pregnancy that resulting in school dropouts are linked to the lack of youth-friendly services and centers.

The county government of Samburu has not allocated a budget for youth sexual reproductive health services. In the year 2019-2020, the allocation was on for AYSRHR was about 2.5 Million Kenya shillings which only went to staff training. There is also a gap in policies that could guide the provision of AYSRH services in Samburu County, which means that with such a gap there will be continuous inadequate AYSRH service provision.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the following is what youth advocates alongside the County government of Samburu need to focus on;

- Increased allocation to youth services to at least 35%. There is an urgent need to include a budget for Youth Friendly Services considering the huge budget allocation to maternal health, create FP as a sub-program to ring-fence the KS 12M proposed allocation in accordance with the County Integrated Development Plan.
- Public health facilities should be youth friendly, i.e. they should provide services that meet the specific health needs of young people in a manner and environment that attracts their interest and sustains their motivation[1]. Increased resource & budget allocations to cater for the inclusion of youth issues in matters pertaining to governance and utilization of services.
- Creation of awareness on the need to abolish harmful cultural practices that expose young girls to sexual abuse. These practices include night dances, beading, FGC, and early/ forced marriages.
- The establishment of youth-friendly centers/corners in all health centers in Samburu County. Youth-friendly services such as contraceptives should always be made available during community socio-cultural gatherings, for instance, during lororas (established big manyattas for cultural events).
- There is a need for well-trained staff on the provision of youth-friendly services in Samburu County. Health care providers should recognize that adolescent youth are equally entitled to basic SRH services.
- Health service providers should also be conversant with the health needs specific to youth, e.g. risks of early pregnancy, their vulnerability to HIV and Aids and other STIs and the unique factors that influence decisions about contraceptive methods during adolescence.
- Proper channels of communication should be put in place in order to ensure that all youth including out-of-school youth and youth living in areas with ongoing armed conflicts are reached, sensitized, and provided with the right information concerning the importance of utilization of YFS.

- The relationship between the service providers and the youth should be enhanced.
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- The identification and recognition of role models among the youth who shall take a lead role in the promotion of youth-friendly services in the county[11].
- The county Government of Samburu, National Governments through CDF, and stakeholders should strive to find a solution in providing secure accommodation for girls in secondary day schools who are exposed to the risk of early pregnancies.

# CONCLUSION; KEY ASKS

1. The Head of the Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for the Department of Health establish a representative (youth inclusive) SRHR technical committee to develop guidelines for the provision of youth-friendly SRHR services by June 2021.

2. The technical committee presents its recommendations for improving youth access to SRHR services to DOH stakeholders by June 2021.

3. The County Director of Health approves and signs the youth-friendly SRHR guidelines by June 2021.

4. Youth-led organizations, the adolescent and youth Coordinator, and Reproductive Health coordinator disseminate guidelines to all public health facilities in Samburu County on the provision of youth-friendly SRHR services by June 2021.

#### MEMBERS OF SAMBURU COUNTY COALITION:

- 1. Peace Museums
- 2. Network Empowering Samburu
- Transformation
- 3. Naretoi Development Initiaive
- 4. Empower Pastoralists Organization of Kenya
- 5. Poro Youth Group

- 6. Samburu Welfare Initiative
- 7. Serian FM
- 8. Sema Sasa
- 9. Bright future foundation
- 10. Barasaloi Drama group
- 11. Samburu Girls Foundation
- 12. Youth empowerment group

