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## CASE STUDY

### Partnerships for Better Family Planning Access

#### *Nigeria Youth-Powered Ecosystem to Advance Urban Adolescent Health*

*Nigeria Youth-Powered Ecosystem to Advance Urban Adolescent Health (YPE4AH) is a USAID-funded program that supports adolescent family planning, reproductive health and life-skills. The program uses adolescent run "hubs" to deliver services and education to disadvantaged teenagers in Lagos and Kano state.*

Across Nigeria, many adolescents face physical, social, and economic barriers that hinder their reproductive health. Limited health services, poor job opportunities, and lack of social support increase unhealthy sexual behaviors among adolescents, especially those who are poor, out-of-school, and living in urban areas. As a result, nearly one-third of adolescents face an unintended pregnancy and nearly 1 in 5 children are born to a teen parent.



*"Youth Hubs are in essence, additional outlets to the existing pool of the Lagos State Government for improving access to reliable information, skilled and trusted services to our young people.*

*This will go a long way to improve their health and well-being."*

**Dr Folashade Oludara**  
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To compound the issue, many teens avoid sexual health services in public health clinics because of biases and confidentiality and privacy issues. During DAI's project research in 2020, respondents confirmed cultural stigmas around contraception. One teen noted: "[Contraception] is not accessible for 18 year-olds...like condoms, you can't just go and ask, and they will give it to you. They will ask you what you want to use it for, who do you want to use it for or things like that." Another reported: "I can't trust [health providers] because if you ask them about [contraception], they will start judging you that you have started having sex." Others reported health care providers threatened to inform parents about contraception use.

As a result, many teens seek services in non-traditional or private health centers where care is confidential but not free. However, the cost of contraception can further deter its use, causing teens to resort to traditional methods, such as withdrawal or harmful substances. To tackle these issues the project has created youth centers, dubbed TEENSMATA Youth Hubs, which are safe, engaging spaces for teens that provide games, leisure activities, life skills, job training and sexual health education. The Youth Hubs also link up with public health providers so teens can access domestic violence or substance abuse information and services.

To improve contraception access, DAI encouraged the Lagos State health ministry to allow the project's Hubs to provide contraception directly to youth. The Hubs would act as public health facilities, receive family planning products from the state's supply chain, and be able to provide contraception to teens, confidentially, for free. Additionally, the Hubs would have long-term access to contraception products, making them sustainable, public health vehicles after the project's closure.

After DAI helped develop a suitable stocking and supply chain process, the ministry agreed to partner with the centers and will begin providing them with contraception in the coming months. The government will supply contraception to four TEENSMATA Youth Hubs and project staff anticipate some 2000-2500 teens will access contraception in the hubs in next 6 months, reducing unintended pregnancy and maternal mortality.

Dr Folashade Oludara, Director, Family Health and Nutrition, Lagos State Ministry of Health, said: "We are glad to provide free contraceptive methods to the USAID TEENSMATA Youth Hubs and utilize them as an outlet for providing services in a confidential and safe place for our adolescents who may not ordinarily visit some of the government centers." DAI is also working with the ministries to train public healthcare providers within facilities to provide teen-friendly services, respect patient confidentiality and ignore traditional stigmas against youth accessing contraception. The government is committed to improving adolescent programming and has promised to continue support to the USAID TEENSMATA Youth Hubs when the project ends.