

## CONCEPT NOTE

**Feyiso Bati Wariso**

Lead, National Health Workforce Development & Fellowship Planning

Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI)

**Email:** [feyisobati@ephi.gov.et](mailto:feyisobati@ephi.gov.et) or [fayenurs@gmail.com](mailto:fayenurs@gmail.com)

**Phone:** (+251) 921471045

**Title:** Addressing a Critical Implementation Gap in Adolescent SRH: Reducing Condom Neglect and Unmet Need for Dual Protection in Ethiopia

### 1. Problem Statement & Quantified Evidence

Data from the national IBBS I led reveals a critical failure in adolescent sexual and reproductive health (SRH) service delivery. Among sexually active in-school Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW), **condom use at last sex is dangerously low (17.3%)**, while **emergency contraception is the most common method (41%)**. This stark discrepancy indicates that current Adolescent-Friendly Health Services (AFHS) are failing to implement effective counseling on **dual protection**, leaving AGYW protected from pregnancy but highly vulnerable to HIV and other STIs.

### 2. Implementation Gap and Root Cause Analysis

The problem is not a lack of commodities, but a failure in the *implementation* of evidence-based counseling and education. This is an implementation gap, rooted in:

- **Capability Gaps:** AGYW lack skills in condom negotiation, compounded by provider failure to build this behavioral capability during counseling.
- **Opportunity Barriers:** Judgmental provider attitudes (social opportunity) and lack of confidentiality (physical opportunity) create an unsupportive environment.
- **Motivation Factors:** AGYW's heightened fear of pregnancy versus perceived low risk of STIs reflects imbalanced motivation, while providers may lack motivation to prioritize condom counseling due to unconscious biases.

### 2. Implementation Strategies and Primary Research Question

**Primary IR Question:** What is the feasibility and acceptability of a multi-component implementation strategy designed to reposition condoms as a fundamental tool for dual protection within the AFHS package for in-school AGYW?

**Theoretical Framework:** The selection of these strategies is guided by the **COM-B model of behavior change**, ensuring we systematically address the key barriers of **Capability** (through

skill-building), **Opportunity** (through creating a supportive environment), and Motivation (through values clarification)>

This Implementation Research project will utilize a **mixed-methods approach** to co-design and evaluate the following strategies:

- **a) Educational & Patient-Focused Strategy:** Development and integration of a new module and IEC materials that explicitly build **psychological capability (knowledge)** and **physical capability (skill in negotiation and use)** for AGYW, reframing condoms as the primary tool for dual protection. *(Targets CAPABILITY)*
- **b) Provider-Focused Strategy:** A targeted Values Clarification and Attitude Transformation (VCAT) training for healthcare workers to address unconscious biases and build skills in recommending and normalizing condom use for adolescents. *(Targets MOTIVATION & CAPABILITY)*
- **c) Feedback Loop:** Establishment of a simple, anonymous AGYW feedback mechanism to continuously assess the acceptability and clarity of the new educational messages and promote clinic accountability. *(Targets OPPORTUNITY)*

#### **4. Implementation Outcomes and Path to National Scale**

This study will measure key **implementation outcomes**, including:

- **Feasibility** of integrating the new module into routine AFHS.
- **Acceptability** of the training and messages among providers and AGYW.
- **Fidelity** of the counseling delivery.
- **Adoption** of the strategy by service managers and national curriculum designers.

The ultimate impact is a rigorously tested implementation strategy to correct a critical imbalance in national contraceptive counseling. The findings will be directly integrated into the **national AFHS guideline** and will serve as a core case study for the curriculum of the **World Bank HEPRR-funded national IR fellowship**, ensuring systematic scale-up.

#### **5. Feasibility and Institutional Alignment**

This pilot is highly feasible, as it addresses a precise, data-driven national priority. Crucially, it is aligned with my leadership of the **national health workforce development initiative under the HEPRR project (P1801270)**, which guarantees an immediate, funded pathway for scaling successful strategies and integrating them into the national IR fellowship curriculum.