

CONCEPT NOTE

Feyiso Bati Wariso

Lead, National Health Workforce Development & Fellowship Planning

Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI)

Email: feyisobati@ephi.gov.et or 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.