Northern Nigeria: EMERGING INSIGHTS for Design
The insights are majorly divided into three Categories:

- The Adolescents' World
- Sex and Pregnancy
- Barriers to Contraception

These categories reflect broadly the direction of the insights gotten from the respondents.
NORTH TRAJECTORIES
The ideal trajectory for an adolescent girl in the north includes finishing secondary school, and then getting married and having a family.

In reality, early marriage and childbearing is common, often due to parental concern with morality. In addition, many girls undergo abortion to protect her and her family’s reputation and complete school.
The ideal trajectory

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FOCUS ON SCHOOL & MAINTAIN ABSTINENCE

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WORK, LEARN A TRADE, RETURN TO SECONDARY SCHOOL, ATTEND POST-SECONDARY SCHOOL, OR CARE FOR FAMILY FULL TIME

GRADUATE SECONDARY SCHOOL

GUIDED COURTSHIP

GET MARRIED

HAVE FIRST CHILD

HAVE SECOND CHILD
For girls who do not go to school, marriage is usually arranged in adolescence.
When a girl is discovered to be sexually active, her parents may arrange an early marriage.
Pregnancy leads to many paths.
The Adolescent’s World
In general, adolescent girls want to finish school, learn a trade, and then get married and have children. Parents also see this as ideal, but believe early marriage protects moral standards.
“If a girl marries, even without education, at least you have given her out.”

— MOTHER, IGABI
Girls dream of finishing school to prepare themselves for their futures.

“My dream is to become a nurse to help the sick.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, CHIKUN

“If my parents agree, I will like to further my education before getting married.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“I want to go to school. Even if I do not work, I will help my children with their school work.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“Finishing school is important, after which marriage should follow.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI
Parents also prefer girls to finish school, but marriage is more important.

“My parents decided to get me married, but I wanted to further my education.”
— MARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“Any girl that is not married at the age of 20 is considered a leftover.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“Most parents in this community do not allow their daughters to go past secondary school.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“22 years is okay for a girl to marry, then she would have finished secondary school.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI
Parents hope to marry girls off before they become sexually active to avoid shame on the family.

“Anytime my girl is 14, I marry her off so she doesn’t get into problems.”
— MOTHER, IGABI

“The most important thing is to get married right now, as it will help me not to follow boys.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“Some parents marry off the adolescent girl as a means of security—to avoid pregnancy outside marriage and promiscuity.”
— MARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“Once a girl gives birth before marriage, she becomes second hand.”
— COMMUNITY INFLUENCER, CHIKUN
How might we help adolescents achieve their vision for their future?

BRAINSTORM CONSIDERATIONS

How might we:
- Promote and emphasize the benefits of contraception for married women and their families after their first child?
- Position contraception as a way to help married and unmarried girls finish secondary school?
- Create opportunities for SRH counseling and education for unmarried girls?
- Create a win-win platform valued by parents and girls because it enables girls to marry and stay in school?
Despite adolescent girls' trust of their mothers, there is limited or unclear discussion of SRH issues among parents and adolescents.
“Not all mothers feel comfortable or free to talk to their adolescents about sex or sexuality due to culture and religion.”

— PROVIDER, IGABI
Adolescents trust their mothers more than anyone.

“I trust my mother most because she will tell me what is good.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“My mother is the most trusted person to talk to about sex issues.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“Many mothers are aware of their daughters’ sexual relationship with boys.”
— MALE PARTNER, CHIKUN

“But mother is more than father, as she will know before father anything about the girls.”
— MOTHER, CHIKUN
Adolescents and parents are hesitant to discuss SRH with each other.

“Some fathers are very harsh and that drives adolescent girls from them. They cannot discuss together.”
— FATHER, CHIKUN

“Parents feel shy about sex education and they don’t teach in detail or communicate the right thing.”
— PROVIDER, CHIKUN

“Parents will be shy to talk to their children about reproductive health and sexual health.”
— PROVIDER, CHIKUN

“All the topics should be discussed with young girls from a professional point of view, but with my own children, I cannot.”
— PROVIDER, CHIKUN
Adults believe family members and teachers are appropriate sources for SRH education, but they are not providing it.

“Teachers are also most responsible to talk to adolescent girls about SRH and pregnancy, as there are some things parents cannot tell their children.”
— COMMUNITY INFLUENCER, CHIKUN

“It is important that religious leaders are involved because they are trusted by the community and can provide guidance.”
— PROVIDER, CHIKUN

“Fathers are also shy to talk to their children about such things.”
— PROVIDER, IGABI

“There should be improvement of sex education in schools, mosques, churches, and homes.”
— COMMUNITY INFLUENCER, CHIKUN
How might we build on adolescents’ trust for their mothers to enable informed, comfortable discussions on SRH?
Access to technology—especially phones—connects adolescents to the outside world and provides privacy, but exposes them to sexual content at a young age. This access scares adults because it feels outside their control.
“Through WhatsApp boys communicate with girls without their parents knowing.”

— COMMUNITY INFLUENCER, IGABI
ON TECHNOLOGY:

Phones are a common source of sexual exposure for girls and boys.

“Boys here use social media to watch and see stuffs [pornography and nude pictures] and want to try it out.”

— BOY, CHIKUN

“Phone use exposes girls to contraceptives and pornography in the community.”

— PROVIDER, IGABI

“My friends use sex chats to get girls to bed.”

— BOY, CHIKUN

“Cell phones are used to download pornography.”

— FATHER, CHIKUN
Phones allow girls and boys to discuss relationships and sex without parental interference.

“My phone is my privacy.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, CHIKUN

“Girls know more than their parents. This info they learn through social media.”
— MOTHER, IGABI

“If my mum is not at home, I get information through my phone.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, CHIKUN

“Phones are used to organize meetings and hook-ups between girls and men. A girl may have three men.”
— MOTHER, IGABI
ON TECHNOLOGY:

Parents want to protect their children from exposure to sex via phones.

“The use of phones makes some girls get involved in bad things.”
— FATHER, IGABI

“GSM has made it worse, now the girls will just receive a call and disappear.”
— FATHER, IGABI

“GSM phones make boys call girls; that is why I don’t allow them to have it.”
— FATHER, IGABI

“I’m not supposed to give her a phone because she will talk with the boyfriend.”
— FATHER, CHIKUN
How might we maximize the positive potential and limit the negative impact of technology on adolescents’ SRH knowledge?

BRAINSTORM CONSIDERATIONS

How might we:
- Leverage the digital platforms used by adolescents to create a private, enjoyable SRH learning experience?
- Increase parents’ comfort with adolescents’ use of technology?
Sex & Pregnancy
Getting money to meet their personal and their parents' needs is a major driver of sexual activities amongst adolescent girls.
“If you don’t provide for a girl, she will sleep with men to get it.”

— BOY, CHIKUN
Money motivates girls to seek sexual relationships.

“Girls turn to sex as a result of poverty and hunger.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“Some girls sell their body just to get money to buy a phone.”
— MALE PARTNER, IGABI

“Girls here sell their bodies in exchange for a meal.”
— BOY, CHIKUN

“Adolescent girls love money. That is what is pushing them into early sexual life and making them pregnant.”
— COMMUNITY INFLUENCER, CHIKUN
Men promise marriage in exchange for sex—and girls often believe it.

“Some big girls go to the men because they want something from the boys or the men promise them marriage.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“Boys promise to provide but they end up deceiving girls.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“Boys pretend they want to marry you and when you give them your body, they run away.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“Some guys come and deceive the girls just to have sex with them.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI
Some parents are financially dependent on their adolescents. This drives adolescents to meet those needs.

“Inability of her parents to provide food worries her, as it can make a girl go out and beg.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“Parents don’t always provide, so the children end up stealing and prostituting.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“Where I live, parents ask girls to bring money for them. Even boys are asked to bring money; they can ask the boys to carry guns.”
— PROVIDER, CHIKUN

“Some parents talk children into telling them how other girls at their age bring things and items home.”
— PROVIDER, CHIKUN
How might we create ways for girls to meet personal and familial financial needs other than through transactional sex?
Girls feel vulnerable and powerless due to a lack of strong structures addressing sexual violence in their community.
“Rape cases are reported, but the authorities are not doing anything about it.”

— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI
A girl’s perception of the spaces in her community

Unsafe Spaces
- Parties
- Police
- Streets
- Parents’ Shop
- Unfinished Buildings
- Bars
- School

Safe Spaces
- Night
- Home
- Motor Parks
- Church / Mosque

A girl’s perception of the spaces in her community
Girls who are victims of sexual violence are often blamed for causing it.

“Girls get raped for hawking, going out after 7pm, when they go to boys for money.”

— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“If you compose yourself by dressing decently, no one will harass you.”

— PROVIDER, IGABI

“Some girls follow boys to their homes and this may lead to rape.”

— MOTHER, CHIKUN

“The girls do not dress well in this community.”

— BOY, CHIKUN
There are no consequences for men who commit rape.

“Girls are taken to the hospital when raped but parents don’t do anything after that.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“A guy raped a girl and he was released without being punished by the authorities.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“Rape cases are reported to the police, but nothing comes out of it.”
— COMMUNITY INFLUENCER, IGABI

“There are no consequences for men who commit rape.”

“Many guys are into rape cases but nothing is done to them by the authorities, you will see them walking freely.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI
How might we leverage the acceptability of talking about sexual violence as a pathway to discussing contraception?

BRAINSTORM CONSIDERATIONS

How might we:
- Develop a safety network for girls that links to youth-friendly providers?
- Amplify the conversation about sexual violence more publicly?
Girls who get pregnant often resort to unsafe abortions because of the shame of pregnancy outside marriage.
“Some girls abort the pregnancy to avoid shame.”

— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI
Adolescents experience shame when pregnancy occurs outside of marriage.

“If you go to your husband’s house with pregnancy, the shame is on the family.”
— MOTHER, IGABI

“If a girl gets pregnant before marriage, it will cripple her life and the parents will be shamed by society.”
— MOTHER, IGABI

“Some parents secretly abort pregnancy of their daughters to avoid disgrace and shame.”
— FATHER, CHIKUN

“Some girls get pregnant before marriage which embarrasses their parents.”
— MARRIED GIRL, IGABI
Abortion is a common practice among adolescent girls.

“The rate of abortion is more than the ones who keep the pregnancies.”
— MALE PARTNER, CHIKUN

“Most adolescents get pregnant and some have aborted two or more times.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, CHIKUN

“Many girls are tested pregnant positive, but few give birth—I only know two. Most abort.”
— PROVIDER, IGABI

“Some girls get pregnant and abort the pregnancy. They take drugs, fall sick, and all of a sudden lose the pregnancy.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI
Girls think they know various ways to abort a pregnancy; however, many of them are misinformed.

“There is a high rate of abortion and they do it through D&C, salt water, herbs and hot water.”
— MALE PARTNER, CHIKUN

“Flagyl and lipton, or potash and neem and salt, are used for abortion.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, CHIKUN

“They get misoprostol from chemists for abortion.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, CHIKUN

“Traditional healers give them concoctions for abortions.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, CHIKUN
Parents and providers are concerned about health risks from abortion.

“Some girls use traditional medicine to abort pregnancy, which can destroy all her eggs, plus she won’t be able to give birth again.”

— MOTHER, CHIKUN

“Some girls use traditional herbs for abortion, and lose their lives in the process.”

— MALE PARTNER, CHIKUN

“Health workers should not talk of abortion. It is not good; they may meet a quack who will damage their uterus and fallopian tubes.”

— PROVIDER, CHIKUN

“A girl tried to abort her pregnancy at 4 months but she died with the baby due to heavy bleeding.”

— UNMARRIED GIRL, CHIKUN
How might we frame contraception as a safe way to avoid abortion?

**BRAINSTORM CONSIDERATIONS**

How might we:
- Leverage post-abortion care as an entry point for new contraceptive users?
- Position contraception as a way to protect the girl and her family’s reputation?
Barriers to Contraception
Unmarried adolescents face barriers to accessing modern contraception.
“The health workers will not agree to provide single girls with contraceptives.”

— COMMUNITY INFLUENCER, IGABI
Adolescents believe contraception is only for married people.

“Family planning is meant for family people.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“I am not married, why should I care about family planning?”
— BOY, CHIKUN

“If you are not married, why would you go for family planning?”
— MARRIED GIRL, IGABI

“Family planning is for planning the family so girls who are not married shouldn’t do it.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, IGABI
Adolescents don’t trust that providers will keep their visit private and confidential.

“They don’t like to go to hospitals to get contraceptives because the workers might know them.”
— COMMUNITY INFLUENCER, IGABI

“They don’t like to go to hospitals to get contraceptives because the workers might know them.”
— COMMUNITY INFLUENCER, IGABI

“Many boys do not trust community health workers because they carry news to people.”
— BOY, IGABI

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— BOY, IGABI

“Girls will not patronize PHCs because of familiarity issues at the facilities.”
— PROVIDER, IGABI

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“Nurses cannot keep secrets, so I don’t trust them.”
— BOY, IGABI

“Nurses cannot keep secrets, so I don’t trust them.”
— BOY, IGABI
Adolescents believe providers only serve married people.

“They ask if you are married in the hospital before attending to you.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, CHIKUN

“She asks if you are married before attending to you.”
— MOTHER, CHIKUN

“The healthcare providers usually ask the girls to bring their husbands before giving family planning to them.”
— BOYL, IGABI

“They ask if you are married when they go for contraception.”
— UNMARRIED GIRL, CHIKUN

“The hospitals here do not give condoms to girls except the married ones.”
— BOYL, IGABI
There is a misconception that the use of contraception leads to infertility and promiscuity.

“The use of contraception promotes sexual promiscuity among unmarried girls.”
— PROVIDER, IGABI

“Contraception causes barrenness.”
— BOY, CHIKUN

“The girl will be toad–jumping if contracepted—from one man to another.”
— FATHER, CHIKUN

“Condoms encourage our girls to be promiscuous.”
— MOTHER, CHIKUN
Adolescents resort to condoms and traditional methods to prevent pregnancy.

“The majority [of adolescents] do not know about contraception except condoms.”
— BOY, CHIKUN

“Alcohol will wash her system after sex.”
— BOY, IGBAI

“I use condoms so that she will not get pregnant.”
— BOY, CHIKUN

“Some of my friends use herbs and other substances to prevent pregnancy.”
— MALE PARTNER, CHIKUN
How might we build on existing & accepted practices to encourage support for modern contraception?

BRAINSTORM CONSIDERATIONS

How might we:

- Dispel misconceptions about contraception, such as infertility, promiscuity, and only for married women?
- Leverage use of traditional methods and providers to encourage use of modern methods?
Providers' personal beliefs, coupled with limited knowledge, often prevent them from providing modern contraceptives, unless an adolescent is accompanied by a parent.
“We do counsel the girls and advise them to come with their parents and they don’t come back again, they go to shops.”

— PROVIDER, CHIKUN
Providers are willing to provide services to adolescents if their parents bring them.

“There was a father who took his daughter to the clinic for FP because he said the daughter aborted every 3–4 months. He was advised by a health worker.”

— COMMUNITY INFLUENCER, CHIKUN

“About four parents have brought their children to me to access contraceptives. I gave them long-acting contraceptives.”

— PROVIDER, CHIKUN

“The community will accept the concept of contraceptives; the parents need to be more oriented.”

— PROVIDER, CHIKUN

“If she cannot bring her parents then she shouldn’t be given contraceptives.”

— PROVIDER, CHIKUN
The provision of contraceptives by providers is influenced by their personal beliefs.

“If I advise a young person to abstain and she refuses, I will leave them with their God.”
— PROVIDER, CHIKUN

“They asked if we are married in the hospitals or health centres before attending to us.”
— GIRL, CHIKUN

“I don’t give contraceptive injections.”
— PROVIDER, CHIKUN

“Health workers may not agree to sell contraceptive pills to adolescents because of religion.”
— BOY, IGABI
Providers lack knowledge on contraceptive methods.

“I speak based on my perception.”
— PROVIDER, CHIKUN

“CHEWs have access to adolescent girls due to home visits, but [their] knowledge on SRH issues is 50% capacity.”
— PROVIDER, IGABI

“It’s invasive using IUCD, they are not mature enough.”
— PROVIDER, CHIKUN

“Not all contraceptives can be used by everyone, you have to test your blood to know which matches you.”
— PROVIDER, CHIKUN
How might we build a network of providers who are excited and equipped to serve adolescents?

BRAINSTORM CONSIDERATIONS

How might we:
• Increase provider knowledge about modern contraceptives so they can effectively serve adolescent girls?
• Make providers comfortable serving unaccompanied girls?
• Shift the provider mindset about providing contraception to unmarried adolescents from one of aiding and abetting sin to one of making a positive social contribution?
Married women who want to use contraception have to rely on decision makers in their lives, who may or may not support them due to religious barriers or lack of knowledge.
“In our culture here, the men and husbands make family planning decisions for their wives.”

— MALE PARTNER, CHIKUN
Lack of spousal support may hinder contraceptive use, yet some women secretly use contraception.

“If the husband did not agree to contraception, it can cause a crisis in the marriage.”
— PROVIDER, IGABI

“Some of the girls prefer chemists because the health workers ask for their husbands.”
— MALE PARTNER, IGABI

“Some wives use contraception without husband's knowledge or consent.”
— PROVIDER, CHIKUN
Male support encourages the use of contraceptives.

“I will like to use FP so that my wife can be resting. She suffers a lot with pregnancy.”
— MALE PARTNER, IGABI

“We can implant, so when she needs a child we remove it.”
— MALE PARTNER, CHIKUN

“I know she will accept contraceptives if I approve.”
— MALE PARTNER, IGABI

“I like to have few children, so I will use FP with my wife.”
— MALE PARTNER, CHIKUN
Male partners often lack knowledge on contraceptive options.

“I don’t know how to prevent my wife from unwanted pregnancy.”
— MALE PARTNER, IGABI

“I don’t know where to buy contraceptive drugs.”
— MALE PARTNER, IGABI

“There is no other contraceptive methods aside from condoms.”
— MALE PARTNER, CHIKUN

“Male partners do not know other methods of contraception.”
— MALE PARTNER, IGABI
The withdrawal method is the contraceptive method supported by Islam.

“I use the withdrawal method as contraception. This is approved in Islam.”
— MALE PARTNER, IGABI

“It is better to use the withdrawal method than condom in Islam.”
— MALE PARTNER, IGABI

“Contraception is un-Islamic and Allah only approves of the withdrawal method.”
— MALE PARTNER, IGABI

“Withdrawal method is approved by Allah.”
— MALE PARTNER, IGABI
How might we educate married girls and the influencers in their lives about contraception, in order to foster support for contraceptive use?

BRAINSTORM CONSIDERATIONS

How might we:

• Educate pastors and imams on the safety of contraception, so they can aid married couples on healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies?
• Align contraception with existing religious values on familial care?
• Make contraception a joint decision between husbands / in-laws and wives?