

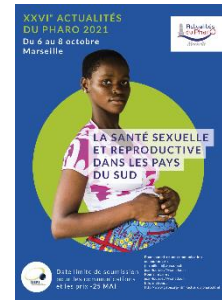
Actualités du Pharo 2021 – Session 5

Promoting the sexual and reproductive health and rights of youth and adolescents in Niger

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In Niger, where nearly 70% of the population is under 25 years of age, improving the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and youth (ASRH) is an important issue. The country is characterised by low contraceptive prevalence, a high rate of early pregnancy and a higher incidence of HIV among young people than in the general population. Unfavourable socio-cultural representations concerning the sexuality of young people and adolescents contribute to hindering access to information and services for these groups. The service offer is not very well adapted and suffers from a lack of resources and training for carers. The Healthy Youth and Adolescents project implemented in Niamey and Maradi by Solthis in partnership with Lafia Matassa and Équilibre et Population, aims to improve access to quality SRH services for adolescents and young people and to strengthen their capacity to act.

A participatory diagnosis was used to develop the actions to be implemented with the caregivers and users. A baseline study of 841 young people and adolescents confirmed the low use of services and limited knowledge of SRH among adolescents and young people. Only 2.97% of the respondents had attended a centre in the previous year. The main barriers mentioned were poor reception and lack of confidentiality. A quality score defined with the health authorities and used in the health facilities allowed a better understanding of the issues related to organisation, practices and the care relationship and revealed a basic average score of 52/100.

In response to these findings, the project is implementing various actions to improve the quality of services, the use of care and access to information: exchange workshops on representations in relation to ASRH, awareness-raising on gender inequalities, strengthening the skills of carers in a global approach to the continuum of care in SRH, community strategy and involvement of adolescents and young people. The first trainings focused on the rights-based approach, the characteristics of appropriate ASRH services, contraception and the response to gender-based violence among adolescents and youth.

The project is running for 3 years, the first actions have led to a 6% increase in the quality score in the structures supported in Niamey. In particular, improvements have been observed in care practices and the reception of users.