



# World Contraception Day

Factsheet – 26 September 2024

**“A Choice for all. Freedom to plan, power to choose.”**

**World Contraception Day** is observed annually on 26 September to raise awareness about the importance of access to safe and effective contraception. Contraceptives include pills, implants, intrauterine devices, surgical procedures, condoms and other methods that help to prevent unintended pregnancy.

The **Government of Sierra Leone** has made significant commitments to strengthen family planning and access to contraceptives, in line with the FP2030 global partnership, including by expanding access to quality services, transforming harmful gender and social norms, and advancing sustainable financing.

## Access to contraception

- **Safeguards Young People’s Potential:** by enabling adolescents and young people to prevent an unplanned pregnancy or a sexually transmitted infection, contraceptives protect health and continuity of education, helping youth and adolescents to achieve their full potential.
- **Saves Lives:** contraceptives prevent unintended pregnancies, reduce unsafe abortions, and lower maternal and child deaths.
- **Empowers Women:** when women and couples can plan when and how many children to have, women are better able to benefit from educational and employment opportunities to improve their wellbeing and that of their families.
- **Brings Economic Benefits:** access to contraceptives strengthens economic security for women and their families, increases national productivity, lowers health care costs, and reduces poverty.



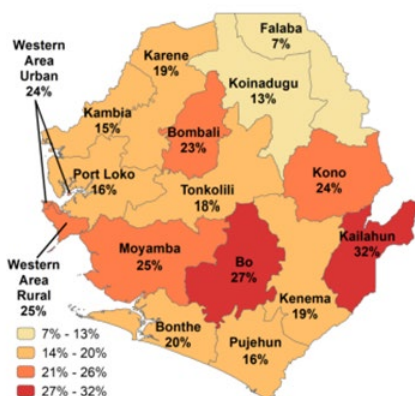
## The Investment Case for Family Planning

- An analysis conducted by UNFPA and the Ministry of Health in 2024, shows that **every \$1 invested in family planning can yield up to a \$10 return.**
- An increase in annual spending on family planning from the current \$5 million to \$11 million would increase the modern contraceptive prevalence rate to nearly 50% (compared to 29% currently) – potentially generating an additional **\$638 million in economic output**, and preventing 3.1 million unintended pregnancies, 1 million unsafe abortions, and 10,000 maternal deaths (2024–2030).

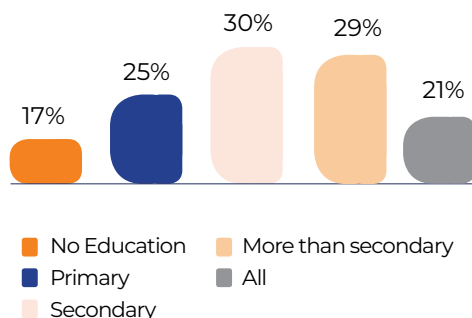
## Use of Contraception in Sierra Leone

- **In 2023, 640,000 women** used a modern method of contraception, preventing an estimated 240,000 unintended pregnancies, 87,000 unsafe abortions and 770 maternal deaths.
- **Use of modern contraceptives** increased from 8% in 2008 to **24% in 2019**. However progress is slowing and has not yet reached the national target of 34%.
- **There is a high unmet need** for family planning, especially among married adolescent girls, with almost 30% of married girls aged 15-19 wanting to delay childbearing but not using any method of contraception.
- **Access to contraceptives varies across districts** and educational backgrounds.

Contraceptive Use by District  
(Married Women, DHS 2019)



Contraceptive Use by Education (Married Women, DHS 2019)



## Key Barriers to Demand for Contraception in Sierra Leone

- **Gender and Social Norms:** Gender inequality, harmful social norms, and power imbalances in relationships can limit the ability of women and adolescent girls to access contraceptives.
- **Lack of Information:** 80% of rural women and 60% of urban women report having no recent exposure to messages on family planning.
- **Myths and Misconceptions:** harmful narratives and misinformation about contraception hinder uptake of family planning services.
- **High Discontinuation:** About 35% of women and adolescent girls who begin using contraceptives, discontinue their use within 12 months citing reasons such as side effects and health concerns, among others.
- **Inadequate Access to Youth-Friendly Services:** limited availability of information and services that are adolescent- and youth-friendly limit their uptake of contraception.

## UNFPA Supplies Partnership

The UNFPA Supplies Partnership delivers a choice of modern contraceptives and life-saving maternal health medicines into the hands of adolescents and women who need them most.

- UNFPA has supported the following **investments in Sierra Leone:**
- UNFPA has invested **\$13.8 million in contraceptive supplies** from 2019 to 2023.
- UNFPA has provided an additional **\$1.8 million for health systems strengthening** from 2019 to 2023.
- UNFPA supplied **90% of the public sector contraceptive needs** in 2023.
- The Government of Sierra Leone and UNFPA have signed a **Supplies Partnership Compact** to gradually increase domestic financing for reproductive health supplies.