

PSI AT SBCC 2026

POWER OF CONNECTION

SUPPORTING CONTINUED CONTRACEPTIVE USE AMONG MARRIED
ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA



AUTHORS

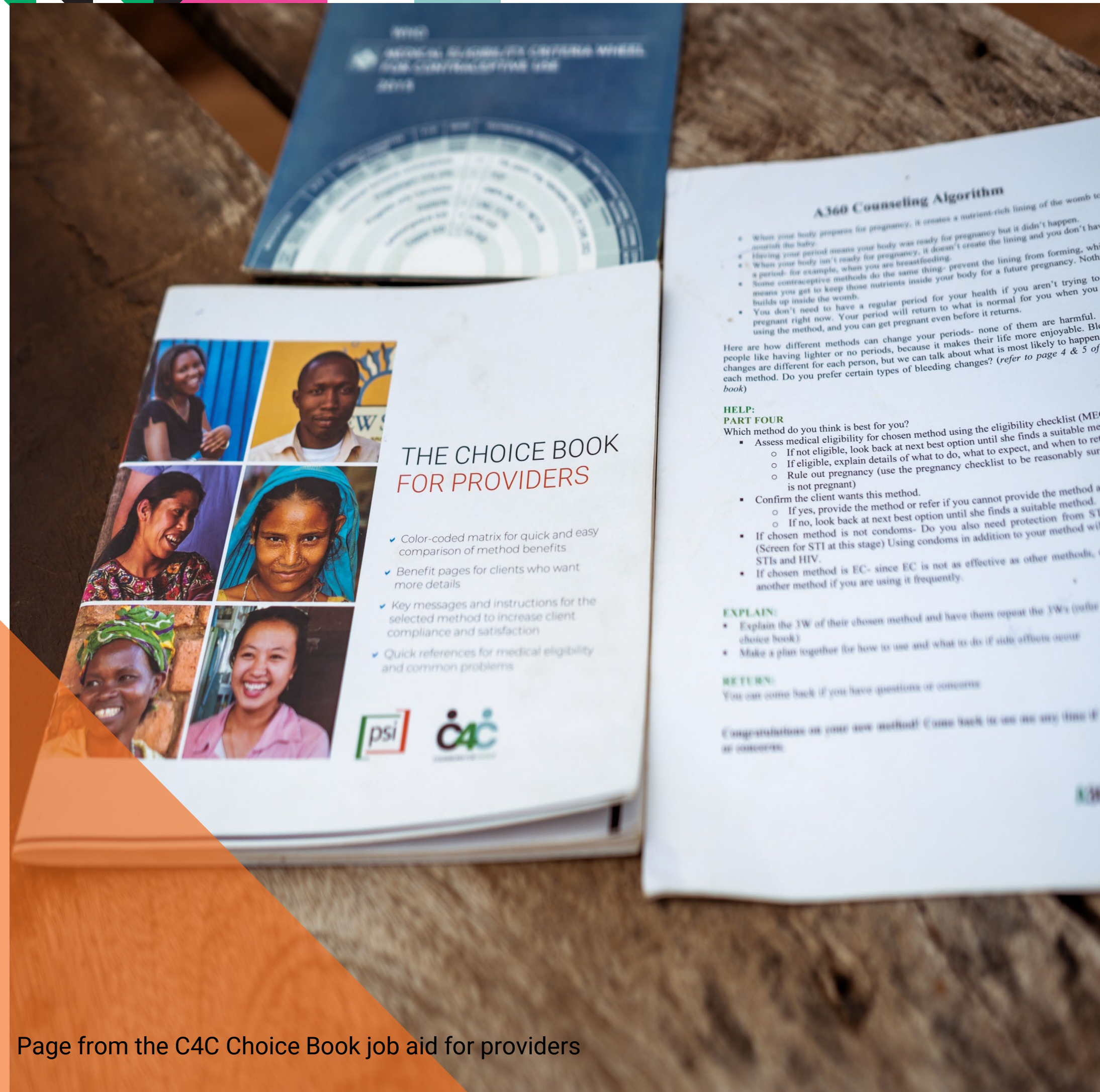
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Page from the C4C Choice Book job aid for providers

AGENDA

- Background
- The Intervention
- Results
- Implication for the Field
- Conclusion

BACKGROUND

THE GAP

Adolescent contraceptive continuation remains poorly understood, especially among married girls in contexts of early marriage and high fertility norms.

Programs often focus on initial uptake, missing the behavioural and relational factors that sustain use.

THE CONTEXT

In Northern Nigeria, silence around contraception intersects with limited youth-responsive services and strong gendered expectations. Against this backdrop, communication (between providers, partners, peers, and systems), becomes both a barrier and a pathway to agency.

THE QUESTION

This study sought to understand:

- What drives continued contraceptive use among married adolescents in restrictive environments?
- How do communication quality, trust, and social support networks influence sustained use?

By grounding evidence in girls lived experiences, this research redefines “knowledge” as co-produced, relational, and deeply human. It highlights that continuation is not just a clinical outcome, but a social and communicative one, anchored in connection, dignity, and respect.

THE INTERVENTION



Who

1,101 married girls aged 15–19 across 30 primary healthcare facilities in Kaduna and Nasarawa states



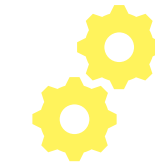
Design

Longitudinal cohort study over 14 months — tracking social & behavioural determinants of sustained use



Gap It Fills

Continued use is rarely documented, so this study asks why girls stay on a method, not just whether they started



What

Participants received:

- Voluntary counselling emphasizing method choice, side-effect communication, and client autonomy from trained providers
- Support from peer educators and community platforms like *Matasan Matan Arewa Life Family and Health (LFH)* classes.
- Routinized follow up to troubleshoot concerns



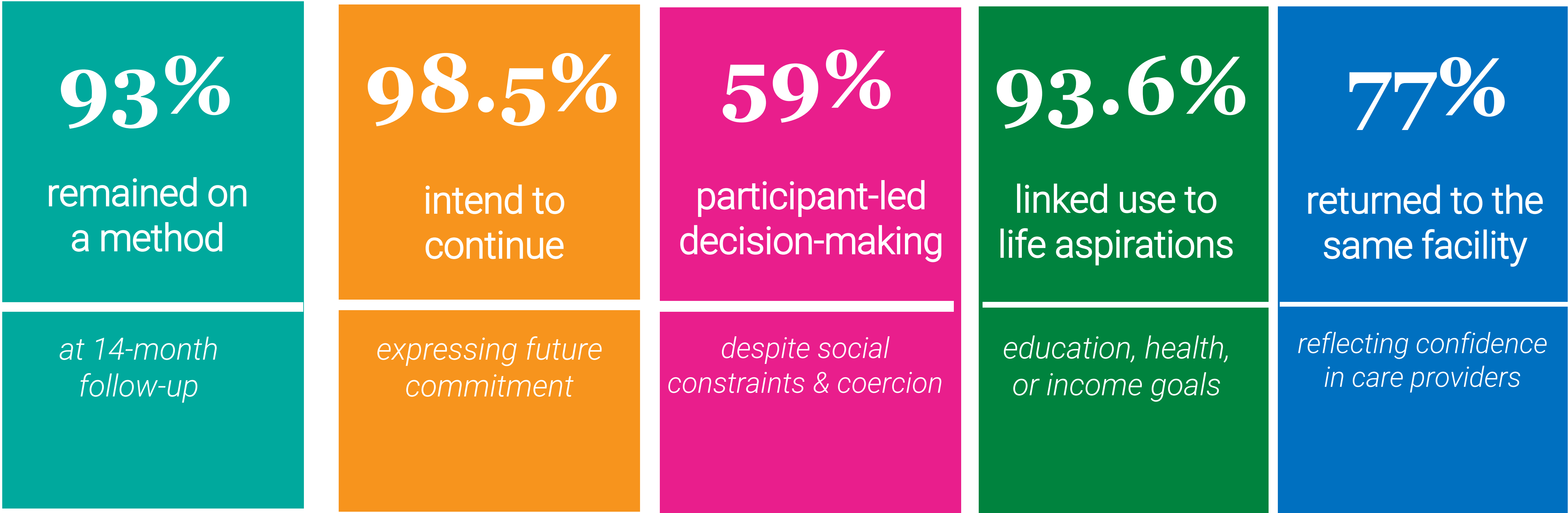
Core Question

Do communication quality, trust, and agency predict continuation, beyond method type or education level?

RESULTS

At enrolment, 99.6% of girls received their preferred method, and 92.4% were counselled on side effects.

14 months · 1,101 girls · Kaduna & Nasarawa States



"She treated me as if my choice mattered."

— participant, continuation study

KEY PREDICTORS

NOT METHOD TYPE. NOT EDUCATION.
THE QUALITY OF COMMUNICATION.

STRONGEST PREDICTOR



Respectful, Empathetic
Counselling

Youth-responsive counselling
was the #1 predictor of
sustained use, outperforming
method type and education
level

ASPIRATIONAL FRAMING



Contraception Linked to Life
Aspirations

Girls described contraception
as a tool to pursue education,
health, and financial stability,
not just family planning

DECISION-MAKING POWER



Agency in Constrained
Contexts

Over half indicated they made
their own decisions about use
despite reproductive coercion,
trust and connection enabled
agency where norms
constrain it

GIRLS' VOICES

AGENCY IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Contraception as a pathway and not a
limit to the lives they want to live.



Education



Health



Financial
Stability



Quality of communication was the #1 predictor of continuation, above method type or education



Girls framed contraception as enabling education, health, and financial stability, which is an act of aspiration



Agency can flourish even in constrained environments when trust and connection are present



Sustained use is not passive compliance, but an act of communication and self-determination



Data rooted in lived experience: when systems listen, young women lead

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD



Invest in Communication Quality

Communication sustains confidence: Anticipating side effects and maintaining follow-up touchpoints convert fear into informed decision-making.



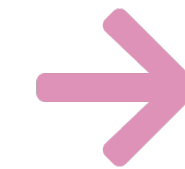
Embed Aspiration in SBCC Messaging

Connection builds commitment. When counselling validates girls' ambitions, contraception becomes a means of empowerment, not control.



Rethink What 'Evidence' Means

Longitudinal, lived-experience data reveals truths that cross-sectional uptake metrics miss — SBCC must centre continuation, not just uptake



Design for Continuation, Not Initiation

93% continuation is achievable — programmes must shift from getting girls to start contraception to sustaining connection over time

- For SBCC practitioners, this evidence urges a paradigm shift—from message delivery to relationship building.
- Continuation metrics should not only count users but capture connection.
- In a world seeking equity and localized action, this study reminds us that when young women are heard, respected, and engaged as co-creators of their reproductive journeys, *communication becomes transformation*.



CONCLUSION:

- Behaviour change begins with listening, not telling.
- Counseling that fosters trust, understanding, and choice empowers girls to make informed health decisions.
- Girls' willingness to return for care, even after discontinuation, is a powerful indicator of trust in responsive health systems.
- Sustainable adolescent health outcomes require placing girls' voices at the center of decision-making.

When girls are heard, they return.

When they return, they continue.

When they continue, healthier futures become possible.

**THE FUTURE OF ADOLESCENT HEALTH DEPENDS NOT ON HOW MUCH
WE COMMUNICATE, BUT ON HOW WELL WE LISTEN.**

OUR TEAM



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QUESTIONS?



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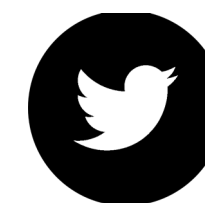
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