FAMILY PLANNING

IntraHealth International believes that everyone has a fundamental human right to plan the number, timing, and spacing of their children. Over four decades, we’ve worked with countries around the world to fulfill this right through high-quality family planning and reproductive health (FP/RH) information, counseling, and services. This enables communities, health workers, and health systems to ensure that current and future family planning clients can make informed, voluntary choices about the methods best suited to their reproductive intentions, from a broad range of regularly available, accessible, and affordable modern method options.

In 2019 alone, our programs provided 1,533,132 years of protection from unplanned pregnancies to couples through contraceptives, including for 658,229 new users of family planning. We averted 9,755 child deaths and 600,423 unplanned pregnancies by expanding access to contraceptives.

OUR APPROACHES IN ACTION

Our competencies and approaches include:

- ** Expanding the roles of health workers** to deliver appropriate FP/RH information, counseling, and services, including through task-shifting.

- **Increasing the range of available family planning methods**, including long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs) and permanent methods, at all levels of the health system, from hospitals to communities.

- **Strengthening the systems** for planning, education, training, management, and supply chains that help health workers provide high-quality FP/RH services.

- **Integrating family planning with other services**, such as immunization, postpartum care, obstetric fistula repair, post-abortion care, and HIV prevention, care, and treatment.

- **Improving the quality** of FP/RH service delivery by applying IntraHealth’s Optimizing Performance and Quality tools for health workers and facilities.

- **Expanding access to family planning for young people** through policy reform, youth-friendly services, and empowering youth as advocates for comprehensive sexuality education and family planning.

- **Increasing constructive male engagement** in FP/RH as supportive partners and method users and in roles as policy-makers and program leaders.

- **Engaging with communities**, national and local governments, religious leaders, journalists, and civil society through advocacy, public campaigns, and social media.

- **Applying efficient, cost-effective digital health solutions** for health worker education, training, mentorship, and supportive supervision.

- **Applying principles of behavioral science and user-centered design** for FP/RH service quality and integration.
Francophone West Africa: IntraHealth manages the Ouagadougou Partnership Coordination Unit, which supports the nine francophone West African member countries that pledged to expand use of modern contraceptives in the region by an additional 2.2 million women by 2020. We’ve helped launch civil society coalitions across Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Togo to advocate for family planning and demand government accountability in meeting family planning commitments. As part of this work, we’ve trained and deployed 270+ family planning youth ambassadors. And through The Challenge Initiative (TCI), IntraHealth serves as the francophone West Africa accelerator hub for TCI’s groundbreaking program to scale up urban FP/RH services. Through a demand-driven model of donor-municipality partnership, we’ve engaged local officials from seven cities in five countries serving 1.5 million women of reproductive age to commit sizable resources to boost FP/RH services.

Mali: By integrating family planning and services for obstetric fistula, we helped increase family planning acceptance among clients in Mali from 12% to 78% between 2014 and 2019.

Rwanda: Through the USAID Ingobyi project, we’re improving the quality, equity, and accessibility of integrated FP/RH, malaria, and maternal, newborn, and child health services.

Senegal: In Senegal, we work to expand access to family planning to new users, strengthen health workers’ skills (including in postpartum family planning), expand contraceptive method mix and opportunities for self-care (such as through the self-injectable Sayana Press), and expand integration of family planning with vaccinations. We trained health workers at 23 service delivery sites in postpartum family planning in 2020 and at 28 facilities in Sayana Press. The IntraHealth-led Neema project works in synergy with other government partners to maintain access to and use of essential services (such as for nutrition and reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health) to prevent malnutrition and unplanned pregnancies even amid the COVID-19 pandemic. We also work with religious leaders, journalists, and civil society to overcome negative perceptions of family planning.

South Sudan: In South Sudan, we’ve helped integrate family planning with existing HIV services in three states, reaching almost 4,000 clients with modern contraception. We also helped develop the country’s first national family planning curricula for community health workers.

Uganda: IntraHealth improved access to family planning by integrating services—including those for LARCs and permanent methods—into mobile outreach camps that serve rural areas in Uganda. We provided family planning services to 240,886 women in the second quarter of 2020 alone, including 130,041 new users. We trained 32 community activists who then conducted door-to-door visits to 3,909 community members with messages about preventing violence against women and HIV, and promoted referrals for gender-based violence in response to the increased need since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bangladesh: IntraHealth serves as a core partner on the Accelerating Universal Access to Family Planning (AUAFP) Activity by leading support to government partners to increase use of family planning services as part of universal health coverage. We’ve trained 526 family planning service providers in Bangladesh so far and implemented mentoring approaches to support 250+ family planning trainers.

Funding for the work above comes from the US Agency for International Development, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.