

How Faith-Based Organizations Can Help Reduce Abortions



Healthy Timing & Spacing of Pregnancies Reduces Abortions

Effective and affordable services to help women time and space their pregnancies (also known as family planning) reduce the likelihood of abortion by helping to avoid poorly timed, unintended, and dangerous pregnancies. Christian organizations support access to services to plan pregnancies for the health of mothers, children, and families.

Global Statistics

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), each year, there are approximately [121 million](#) unintended pregnancies, with **6 out of every 10** unintended pregnancies ending in induced abortion.



- **73 million** women and girls have induced abortions each year, and 6/10 (61%) of all unintended pregnancies and 3/10 (29%) of all pregnancies end in [induced abortion](#).
- Additionally, **7 million women** are admitted to hospitals with complications from [unsafe abortions](#), and another **3 million** suffer complications but do not receive care.

Preventing Abortions

A key strategy to preventing abortions includes avoiding unintended pregnancies. [A recent WHO study](#) found that across 36 low- and middle-income countries, 56% of women with an unintended pregnancy had not used contraception during the 5-year period before conceiving.

To reduce the number of unintended pregnancies, effective counseling services are needed that inform women on all the different family planning methods and how they work, and allows them to choose their method with respect to their needs and preferences. In addition, health facilities need to have a full range of family planning methods available so a woman can choose what's right for her and have that method available.



Community Health Workers at the ACK Namasoli Health Center in Kenya were trained by the Christian Health Association of Kenya to provide family planning services in their community. Photo: Mona Bormet, CCIH.

What is Family Planning?

The term “**family planning**,” as used by Christian Connections for International Health, means enabling couples to determine the number and timing of pregnancies, including the voluntary use of methods for preventing pregnancy—not including abortion—harmonious with their values and religious beliefs.

What Can Faith-Based Organizations Do?

Know the Facts

- How family planning methods work. [See chart from WHO.](#)
- Access to effective family planning reduces the likelihood of abortion.

Provide Information, Education and Services

- Address sexuality, pregnancy, and family planning with adults and young people holistically, based on current science and scripture [study](#).
- Provide a wide selection of family planning methods aligned with beliefs and values; and maintain high standards of medical practice in all programs.

Involve Communities and Community Leaders

- Use existing structures and groups, such as churches and community health workers, to inform people about family planning and to make information, services, and supplies easily accessible for them.

See impact and lessons learned from [projects CCIH has worked on to engage faith leaders](#) and community health workers in [family planning advocacy and services](#).

Advocate

For organizations and individuals in the U.S., you can advocate for U.S. funding for family planning through the foreign affairs budget. It is a critical, lifesaving investment that continues to improve maternal and child health worldwide. Family Planning programs reduce maternal deaths by nearly 30% annually and save the lives of more than 1.4 million children under the age of five each year. Fully funding these family planning programs would help avoid unintended pregnancies, help women avoid considering abortions, protect their health, and enable them to raise healthy children [across the globe](#).

For faith-based organizations and individuals based outside of the U.S., your country's investment in family planning is critical to improving the health of families and communities. You can advocate for your government to commit investments to family planning. See if your country has made a commitment:

www.fp2030.org/commitment-makers/



Health workers at a Cameroon Baptist Community Health Services (CBCHS) health facility in Yaoundé share FP information with clients. Photo: CBCHS

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