

ZAMBIA

COORDINATED ADVOCACY BRINGS CHANGE IN FAMILY PLANNING

Challenge

In Zambia, matters relating to Family planning are handled by the Family Planning Technical Working (FPTWG) which supports and complements the efforts of the Ministry of Health. In 2012, Zambia made commitments to scale up FP services by 2020. While the progress has been great on some fronts, still others have fallen short, with only a year remaining to the passing of the commitment period. There is now more than ever greater need to accelerate the achievement of these commitments.

Why CSOs Are Best Placed to Advocate for the Scaling up of FP services in Zambia

Civil Society organizations work closely with the Government of Zambia through the Ministry of Health to provide FP services to the nation. The organizations have presence in all provinces in Zambia and run different programs which include, but are not limited to FP service delivery. The FP services include provision of pre- and postnatal FP, FP commodity distribution, including short and long acting contraceptives, commodity security, financing for FP, and policy development. The CSOs also advocate for scaled up FP services, and include Religious and Traditional Leaders as advocates and FP Champions, as well as task shifting to community-based distributors to administer injectable contraceptives.

The CSOs gather once every month to discuss current developments in FP and learn about partner activities at the national FP TWG. The TWG is chaired by the MOH and attended by cooperating partners, including UNFPA. This enables CSOs to ask for support from other CSOs as necessary when they implement their work.



FP TWG members at the FP Advocacy Strategy Development Meeting.



“... the family planning technical working group is one of the most effective TWGs we have right now...”

Dr. Kennedy Malama
Permanent Secretary, Technical Services, Zambian Ministry of Health

LOCATION

Lusaka, Zambia.

KEY PLAYERS

Organizations working in family planning advocacy and service delivery who belong to Zambia's FP TWG.

STRATEGY & APPROACH

The Churches Health Association of Zambia's (CHAZ) approach was to build the capacities of the CSOs in FP advocacy so they could advocate effectively to the government. The FP TWG Advocacy Sub-Committee also developed an advocacy strategy with focus areas directly linked to the achievement of Zambia's 8-year scale up plan.





“...The Ministry of Health values its partnership with the Churches Health Association of Zambia. The church is doing a lot in delivering health services in places that are hard to reach...”

-Dr. Chitalu Chilufya, Minister of Health

TACTICS

CHAZ was nominated to lead the advocacy efforts of the FP TWG and asked to put together an advocacy team (or sub-committee). With support from UNFPA, CHAZ and FP TWG partners got together and developed an advocacy communication strategy that included the advocacy work of all TWG members. The advocacy sub-committee based its strategy on the 8-year scale up plan and included commodities, FP financing and task shifting and included all the work of all advocacy sub-committee members.

The sub-committee presented the strategy to the main TWG and gave them an opportunity to comment and suggest changes. Based on the planned advocacy activities of TWG members, CHAZ developed a tracking tool for all TWG members to share their upcoming activities, indicating where they would like support from other members. The tool helps FP TWG members coordinate their work with others, taking advantage of synergies and strengths of the various partners.

OUTCOMES

The advocacy efforts of the FP TWG are now more coordinated, members are able to present their activity plans and the rest of the TWG can contribute in implementation or formation of strategies. As a result of this increased advocacy capacity, the FP TWG was successful in its campaign for task shifting and the introduction of DMPA SC SI (Subcutaneous depot medroxyprogesterone acetate). The members of the advocacy sub-committee were instrumental in supporting PATH as it conducted consultations on the feasibility of DMPA SC in Zambia and in task shifting policy implementation. The advocacy sub-committee has also been successful in advocating for increased financing for FP and commodity security to the MOH.

IMPACT

Following the development of the FP TWG advocacy sub-committee, the TWG has continued advocating to scale up FP services in Zambia, leading to a number of successes:

- The government committed to making investments in RMNCH at the facility level.
- The government committed to increase domestic funding of FP and to invest \$1,500,000 towards FP by 2020.
- The government committed to ensuring that task shifting is actualized and that DMPA is available at service delivery points.
- The government put out a red alert on maternal and prenatal mortality and has committed to reducing the incidences.

NEXT STEPS

The TWG intends to continue its advocacy to ensure that FP is provided to all in Zambia. At the Mid-term Evaluation Framework and M&E framework launch in July 2019, the MOH committed itself to ensuring that teen pregnancies are reduced, the maternal contraceptive prevalence rate is increased and the maternal mortality rate is reduced. The advocacy sub-committee will intensify its advocacy to ensure that these commitments made by the government are achieved. The sub-committee will also focus more on advocacy for DMPA and task shifting.

LESSONS LEARNED

Organizations have a comparative advantage working together. Each organization brings a vast network and great experience to the table, and where an element is missing, there will be an organization to provide it. Some organizations have limited budgets but great advocacy experience, while others may have limited manpower and larger budgets. The advocacy sub-committee has shown that organizations with a common interest can achieve more by working together. The FP TWG is seen by the MOH as one of, if not the most, productive TWG because of the unity among the groups.

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