

# 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 health of mothers, children, and families.

## Global Statistics

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), **252 million** women across the globe become pregnant each year:

- **121 million** of these pregnancies are unintended
- **73.3 million** women and girls have induced abortions and about **25 million** of those are performed by someone without adequate training or in unhygienic conditions
- As a result, **47,000** women die each year, another **7 million** women are admitted to hospitals with complications, and another **3 million** suffer complications but do not receive care.

## Preventing Abortions

A key strategy to preventing abortions includes preventing 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.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, women in [Pakistan](#) without knowledge of family planning or experience using family planning methods had nearly double the risk of unintended pregnancy.<sup>2</sup> To reduce the number of unintended pregnancies, women need access to effective family planning services and information.

## 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.



*Community Health Workers at the ACK Namasoli Health Center in Kenya trained by the Christian Health Association of Kenya to provide family planning services in their community.*

*Photo Credit: Mona Bormet/CCIH*

## A Christian Global Health Professional Speaks Out

“In the Republic of Georgia, our programs helped 670 primary health care sites add family planning services provided by general practitioners. We have documented fairly dramatic decreases in abortions parallel to increases in family planning utilization.”

**Nancy Pendarvis Harris, MPH**  
*Vice-President Emeritus, John Snow, Inc.*

## What Can Faith-Based Organizations Do?

### Know the Facts

- How family planning methods work.
- 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.

### 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 which has improved maternal and child health worldwide. Fully funding these programs would help avoid abortions and save the lives of women 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.familyplanning2020.org/entities](http://www.familyplanning2020.org/entities)

## Plea from a Christian Doctor

“From a public health perspective, and a Christian perspective, we should be willing to help over 40 million women avoid the social, emotional, and spiritual trauma – and for many, the life-threatening risk – of resorting to an induced abortion.”

**W. Henry Mosley, MD, MPH**  
Professor Emeritus

*Department of Population, Family & Reproductive Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health*



*A health worker at AMOS Health and Hope in Nicaragua counsels a woman on family planning.*

*Photo Credit: AMOS*

<sup>1</sup> Bellizzi, S., Mannava, P., Nagai, M., & Sobel, H. (2020). Reasons for discontinuation of contraception among women with a current unintended pregnancy in 36 low and middle-income countries. *Contraception (Stoneham)*, *101*(1), 26–33. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.contraception.2019.09.006>

<sup>2</sup> Habib, M., Raynes-Greenow, C., Nausheen, S., Soofi, S., Sajid, M., Bhutta, Z., & Black, K. (2017). Prevalence and determinants of unintended pregnancies amongst women attending antenatal clinics in Pakistan. *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*, *17*(1), 156–156. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-017-1339-z>

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