

CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS FAVOR INTERNATIONAL FAMILY PLANNING

Executive Summary | Results from a member survey

Christian Connections for International Health (CCIH) is a global network of 160 diverse Christian organizations. In May 2008 CCIH conducted a member survey* to better understand the views and activities of its members, and to advance reproductive health in keeping with member views. The results verified that CCIH members have positive views of family planning (FP) as an essential component of comprehensive health care.

Sixty-seven of 92 organizations responded, documenting that CCIH members are active in 151 countries, have combined annual incomes of over \$3.4 billion, and are often self-sustaining—some have been present for over 100 years in countries where they serve. Faith-based organizations (FBOs) provide 30-50% of health services in many African countries (African Christian Health Associations Platform, 2011).

- All support FP when understood as enabling individuals to achieve their desired number and spacing of children, and not including abortion.
- More than half of members surveyed currently provide FP methods or information.
- Members in Africa see major unmet needs for FP.
- FBO networks definitely want to do more to meet these needs, but lack resources.
- Among those providing comprehensive health services, 70-85% want to integrate FP into their work, offering FP within HIV/AIDS testing and care services, prevention of maternal-to-child transmission (PMTCT) programs, and child health and maternity care.
- Family planning should be provided in the context of comprehensive health care.
- To be more effective, members have requested assistance with:
 - Contraceptive supplies (shortfalls are common)
 - Capacity building for family planning information, services and evaluation
 - Educational materials



“You can’t have a maternal health program without family planning.”
- Respondent



CCIH recommendations for organizations to partner with FBOs include:

- Recognize that FBOs want to strengthen FP.
- Support access to FP supplies and simplified cost-efficient training and services.
- Consider partnerships where FBOs have special strengths or experience, such as FP through churches and FBO-supported community health workers.
- Understand and respect diverse FBO approaches to FP.
- Realize that terminology is important. For many FBOs. Agree on acceptable language.
- Work with religious leaders and their constituents to effectively expand FP programs.
- Provide capacity building for FP methods to FBOs in the field sharing the evidence that FP reduces abortion - an important basis for common ground among secular and religious organizations.

As a membership organization, CCIH will continue its efforts to assist members in connecting with each other and with secular organizations to better meet the family planning and reproductive health needs in the countries where they work. CCIH will work with religious leaders, donors, secular groups and policy-makers to increase understanding of FBOs’ views and to utilize untapped potential in order to strengthen access to family planning, especially in rural and underserved areas.

http://www.ccih.org/doclibrary/ccih_fp_survey_revised_2012_January.pdf