

SECTOR SUMMARY



FAMILY PLANNING

THE FACTS

- » In developing countries, the risk of prematurity and low birth weight doubles when conception occurs within 6 months of a previous birth.
- » Children born to women younger than 18 years have an excess mortality risk of about 40%.
- » Meeting the need for contraception in developing countries would reduce maternal deaths by about 30%.

Source: The Lancet, Family Planning 2: Contraception and Health, 2012

## World Vision’s approach

World Vision supports the implementation of voluntary family planning programs based on the best medical knowledge and training available, and good medical ethics. The organization works with diverse stakeholders—including community health volunteers, community health workers, and faith leaders—and recognizes that healthy women are the key to healthy children, families, and communities.

World Vision promotes the healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies (HTSP) and encourages the use of voluntary family planning (FP) methods through its integrated child and maternal health programming. World Vision does not recommend, provide, or support abortion. We respect the rights of women and couples to make their own decisions about family size and birth spacing and promote the empowerment of women and girls in all aspects of life, including family planning. HTSP/FP saves women’s and children’s lives, improves long-term prospects for good health, and enhances individuals’ and families’ productivity and well-being. HTSP could prevent as many as one in three maternal and child deaths by enabling women to delay their first pregnancy to at least age 18, space pregnancies by two to five years, protect women from unintended pregnancies, and limit childbearing to a mother’s healthiest years, ages 18-34.

## World Vision’s response

World Vision HTSP programs include three components: advocacy, resource generation, and community mobilization. Advocacy is designed to promote an enabling environment that supports HTSP at all levels, from ministries of health, to religious and civic leaders, fathers, mothers-in-law, and friends. Resource generation trains Ministry of Health staff in improved counseling and service provision and links them directly with trained community health workers, who give household level counseling to pregnant mothers and those with children under age 2, as well as other community members seeking to plan their pregnancies. They all discuss the importance of immediate and exclusive breastfeeding of newborns for at least a full six months, followed by complementary feeding for infants and contraceptive use for mothers to protect them from another pregnancy for at least two years. Community mobilization supports awareness raising and information sharing through street dramas, family planning campaigns, messages at churches or mosques, community dialogues, and games that include HTSP messages. Community health workers help to create informed demand for family planning and increase community mobilization through timed and targeted counseling and heightened male involvement.

## Selected recent projects

» World Vision implemented the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-funded MOMENT project, a Healthy Timing & Spacing of Pregnancy and family planning advocacy program, in the **U.S., CANADA, KENYA and INDIA**. In the U.S. and Canada, World Vision is educating governments to sustain robust global health funding commitments for maternal and child health and family planning. In Kenya and India, grass roots level social accountability and demand creation activities, in addition to collaboration with community health volunteers, men, and faith leaders, led to increased understanding of HTSP and a rise in voluntary use of modern methods of family planning. In Kenya, by endline, contraceptive prevalence rate was 69.5 percent, a 20 percentage point increase from baseline. Through World Vision's Channels of Hope strategy (see box), faith leaders understood the importance and potential impact of timing and spacing of pregnancies on maternal and child health, delivered HTSP messages to their congregations, and promoted support from male spouses. In Kenya, 6,086 women went to a health facility to seek HTSP, FP or MCH services because they were referred by a faith leader—more than half of them decided to use a method of contraception.

» **KENYA:** In Garba Tulla, Kenya, World Vision leads an HTSP project, funded by USAID through the Advancing Partners & Communities (APC) project, implemented by JSI Research & Training Institute in collaboration with FHI360. Through this integrated HTSP project, 80 Muslim religious leaders and 2,532 community health workers and volunteers were trained on HTSP. This project has reached nearly 25,000 community members with FP messages, greatly exceeding the target of 15,000. One-third of total reported FP users are men. To date, over 1,284 women are lactational FP implementers and 11,000 men are condom users. The project has reported that over 7,800 female clients that are receiving FP services are also integrated into maternal, newborn, and child health services and immunization visits at the same time and location.

» **KENYA:** In West Pokot and Isiolo counties, Kenya, World Vision is implementing the Pfizer Foundation-funded Increasing Use of Family Planning and Immunization Services through Program Integration project. It aims to increase the uptake of family planning and immunization by supporting integrated service delivery and community engagement strategies. At the facility level, World Vision is training providers on HTSP

and contraceptive services, providing contraception and immunization through same day, co-located services, and training community health volunteers to counsel and record updates of HTSP/FP and immunization during monthly household visits. At the community level, World Vision is catalyzing Christian and Muslim faith leaders as community advocates for improving HTSP, immunization coverage, and male engagement and also equipping the community leaders to advocate for increased resources from the Ministry of Health. In the first year of the project, the number of women counseled about HTSP/FP rose from 129 to 6,393; the number of women receiving same-day, co-located contraception rose from 7 to 1,468; and the number of children fully immunized increased from 213 to 3,850.

» **KENYA:** With funding from the John Templeton Foundation, World Vision is implementing the HTSP Scale-Up Challenge, which expands HTSP messaging and FP programming to all of Siaya county, Kenya. World Vision will use evidence-based approaches and lessons learned, including a social accountability approach called Citizen Voice and Action, which empowers communities by combining accountability with local advocacy by citizens. The project will include training of faith leaders in the Channels of Hope methodology, integrating HTSP into existing Ministry of Health training of community health volunteers, health workers skills training, and FP logistics strengthening. This project will also demonstrate the role faith-based organizations play within secular/faith communities to increase use of FP. World Vision believes that a multi-dimensional approach to change social norms around FP is a key strategy to link HTSP/FP to healthier moms, children, communities and economic stability.

### CHANNELS OF HOPE

World Vision's Channels of Hope (CoH) approach provides education and training for faith leaders on issues traditionally associated with stigma and marginalization in developing contexts, including HIV and AIDS, gender-based violence, maternal, newborn and child health, and child protection. CoH has helped faith leaders to understand and value HTSP/FP. Congregations learn to talk about maternal and child health services, including immunization, healthy fertility, and methods of contraception to meet their fertility intentions.

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