



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**Maternal and Child  
Survival Program**



Photo: Kate Holt/MCSP and Jhpiego

## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

According to the World Health Organization (WHO)'s world population estimates, 214 million women in developing countries currently wish to delay or prevent pregnancy, yet do not use contraceptives. The reasons for non-use are complex, involving social, cultural, and economic barriers, fears about side effects, and lack of access to a trusted provider. Greater access to family planning (FP) will be vital to achieving global goals in maternal health and child survival.

USAID's flagship Maternal and Child Survival Program (MCSP) has supported FP interventions in 20 countries. In facilities and countries where the Program works, more than 665,000 clients accepted an FP method, including during a maternal, neonatal or child health visit. Our strategic approach for FP centers on accelerating achievements toward Family Planning 2020 and Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths goals by preventing unintended pregnancies, particularly those associated with poorer health outcomes. This includes pregnancies occurring too soon after a birth, among high-parity women, and among older or adolescent mothers.

Pregnancies in youth and adolescents, for example, are linked with more adverse outcomes for both mothers and infants, including preterm birth, low birth weight, and perinatal and neonatal mortality. Moreover, rapid repeat pregnancies are more common in adolescents, making this population a key priority for MCSP.

Program key strategies include:

- Strengthening and scaling up postpartum FP (PPFP) and integration of FP along the maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) continuum of care;

### KEY FACTS

- More than half of sexually active women aged 15-19 who want to avoid pregnancy have an unmet need for modern contraception, a higher level of unmet need than any other age group (USAID)
- If all women waited 36 months to conceive again, 26% of under-five deaths would be averted (Rutstein/Winter)
- In addition to the above, if women only gave birth between the ages of 18 and 39 and had no more than three children, child mortality would be reduced by 30% (Rutstein/Winter)

- Expanding method choice — including long-acting reversible and permanent methods — in FP and PPFP settings; and
- Reaching girls, their partners, and gatekeepers, whether they are mothers already or not, with appropriately targeted FP information and services (and MNCH care).

MCSP provides leadership to expand access to high-quality contraceptive services and serves as a global convening authority for documentation of best practices in FP/reproductive health programs. We advocate for and generate evidence around successful models that ensure every contact with a woman triggers a conversation about her reproductive intentions. At both health facility and community levels — in the context of care-seeking for herself or for her child — the aim is to link women to contraceptive services whenever an unmet need is identified.

To address the global objective of closing innovation gaps, the Program works on designing and field testing a number of innovations in relations to FP service delivery. These include:

- Testing new ways to capture PPFP counseling and uptake data, especially in contexts where the health information system does not capture key indicators and we cannot add supplemental registers;
- Learning around potential of hormonal intrauterine devices to contribute to improved access and use of contraception overall;
- Designing and field testing program models for engaging first-time, young parents grounded in rigorous formative research; and
- Designing and assessing models of integrated service delivery for FP and either immunizations services or nutrition services or both.



**Photo:** A midwife in Nigeria counsels a client on family planning (Karen Kasmauski/MCSP)

## ABOUT MCSP

The Maternal and Child Survival Program (MCSP) is a global, USAID Cooperative Agreement to introduce and support high-impact health interventions with a focus on 25 high-priority countries with the ultimate goal of ending preventable child and maternal deaths within a generation. The Program is focused on ensuring that all women, newborns and children most in need have equitable access to quality health care services to save lives.

MCSP supports programming in maternal, newborn and child health, immunization, family planning and reproductive health, nutrition, health systems strengthening, water/sanitation/hygiene, malaria, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and pediatric HIV care and treatment.

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