


FOCUS ON:



Family Planning and Reproductive Health





The Zambia Integrated Systems Strengthening Program (ZISSP): Frontline healthcare worker counsels a mother on family planning, newborn care, and maternal health during an outreach session in rural Zambia under the USAID-funded ZISSP project.

Bold Solutions in Family Planning and Reproductive Health

Remarkable improvements in modern contraceptive use are being seen in the developing world. In 2014, use of modern contraceptives prevented an estimated 231 million unintended pregnancies, 38 million unsafe abortions and 100,000 maternal deaths. There is also increasing political will and government commitment for family planning (FP) and reproductive health (RH) programs.

Despite improvements, more progress needs to be made. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 225 million women continue to have unmet need for contraception in many countries, modern contraceptive prevalence rates (MCPR) remain stagnant.

Abt Associates is therefore continuing to deliver bold thinking and innovative solutions to increase the number of women, youth and families accessing FP and RH information, services and supplies.

Technical Expertise

Abt Associates' expertise is deep and broad. We thoroughly understand the complexities of the public and private health sectors and work with a wide range of partners including governments, corporations and civil society organizations to ensure that unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and maternal deaths are averted through a wide array of tailored approaches.

Areas of Expertise

- Costing and health financing
- Commodity logistics and management
- Digital technologies
- Evidenced-based FP/RH clinical standards
- New product introduction
- Policy and strategy development
- Private sector engagement
- Research, monitoring and evaluation
- Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC)
- Total Market Approach

Ensuring Critical Health Service Delivery

Abt experts are committed to designing and implementing programs that offer the most value as well as the strongest results. What makes Abt unique is our proven ability to link our public and private sector and health systems strengthening work to the improvement of delivering FP/RH services for poor and vulnerable populations. We are:

- **A global thought leader on health systems strengthening (HSS) for over twenty-five years, tackling design and implementation weaknesses of critical systems needed to deliver FP/RH services.**
 - We support sustained improvements in FP/RH service delivery through evidence-based guidelines, training and capacity building, human resource management and supportive supervision.
 - We work with governments to improve resource tracking methods and health financing strategies to strengthen accountability and reduce financial barriers to accessing FP/RH products and services.
- **A leader in private sector engagement for increasing access to and delivery of high-quality family planning services and products.**
 - We support and strengthen NGOs and for-profit entities to increase availability, improve quality, and expand coverage of essential health products and services.
 - We are a thought leader in the development, implementation and evaluation of total market approaches (TMA) – a strategic approach to leveraging the comparative advantages of different sectors to achieve universal access to FP/RH products and services.
 - We facilitate effective public-private partnerships to increase the availability and use of proven FP products and services especially within market-based approaches and private contracting mechanisms.
- **A designer and implementer of effective needs-based, culturally-sensitive SBCC programs to increase knowledge, shift attitudes, promote healthier behaviors and social norms, and ultimately improve FP/RH outcomes.**
- **Committed to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 3/Indicator 7:** *“By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programs.”*



Scaling Up Family Planning (SUFP) Project: SUFP Deputy Director of Technical Services Ethel Kopulande shows her commitment to expanding Family Planning services to the most underserved areas in Zambia. The UKAid funded program is in its fourth and final year of implementation and expects to reach well over 200,000 new users of contraception by the end of the project in February 2016.



Mahila Goshti: Outreach workers counseling women on family planning in community meetings termed Mahila Goshti in India. Photo Credit: Devika Varghese

Innovative Solutions

Abt applies innovative solutions to tackle the biggest challenges in effective FP/RH programming. We believe that the best solutions come from those closest to the problem and therefore, we work closely with our public and private sector partners to design cutting-edge, meaningful programs. The following are some examples:

- Harnessing business innovations by social entrepreneurs to increase access to family planning:** Abt's Strengthening Health Outcomes through the Private Sector (SHOPS) Project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), designed and launched the Health Enterprise Fund which provides grants, technical assistance, and facilitates connections with investors for entrepreneurs with innovative business models for reaching the poor and underserved with health products, information and services.

Sixteen enterprises in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Nigeria were selected to receive funding through a competitive, multi-stage process. Businesses range from low-cost primary care service providers in urban slums delivering FP services to local manufacturers of sanitary napkins, looking to improve reproductive health education for young women and girls.

- Overcoming barriers to acceptance of injectable contraceptives in India:** Though Depot medroxyprogesterone acetate (DMPA), a three-month injectable contraceptive, is a safe and reversible contraceptive method used by millions of women worldwide and approved for use in India, opposition from women's and health activist groups halted the inclusion of DMPA in the national family planning group of resources provided in public sector facilities.

With funding from USAID as well as The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Packard Foundation, Abt's Dimpa program created a network of private providers able to provide DMPA to their clients. What started as a three town pilot grew to over 2,200 clinics across 108 towns of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The program formed partnerships for product supply and helped to introduce DMPA at multiple price points. With a ready supply of DMPA, the program worked to create demand for DMPA through the Dimpa network and the airing of ad campaigns.

To ensure DMPA continuation, the program created a telephone-based Care-line, connecting users with family planning counselors to address concerns around side effects. Over the 12 year implementation of the program from 2002 to 2015, awareness of DMPA among women rose from 44 to 76 percent, annual sales of DMPA increased from 58,000 to 634,000 vials and continuation rates in the program areas increased to 38 percent compared to the national average of 23 percent. As a result, the Drugs Controller General of India recently recommended inclusion of DMPA in the national FP program – a major win for expanding choice in India.

- **Addressing long standing sociocultural barriers to family planning in Jordan:** The Jordan Communication, Advocacy and Policy Activity (J-CAP) funded by USAID, is contributing to changing the behavior of families in Jordan to increase the acceptability of, demand for, and use of family planning and reproductive health services as a key component of national development.

The project (2014-2019) encompasses an evidence-based and innovative approach with the goal to address local and long-standing socio-cultural barriers to family planning through innovative strategies tailored to the Jordanian culture. Interventions emphasize the integration of female empowerment and male engagement and look to engage youth as well as educate the large Syrian refugee population.

Two key activities include: 1.) Modified home visits which are reaching 60,000 married women of reproductive age, resulting in over 7,000 new modern contraceptive method acceptors and 2.) Family planning champions in government and at the community level who are working with youth and other vulnerable groups to expand awareness of and demand for family planning services.



FP Counseling: Outreach workers counseling women on family planning in small group meetings in India.
Photo Credit: Devika Varghes

About Abt Associates

Abt Associates is a mission-driven, global leader in research, evaluation and implementing programs in the fields of **health, social and environmental policy**, and **international development**. Known for its rigorous approach to solving complex challenges, Abt Associates is regularly ranked as one of the top 20 global research firms and was named one of the 40 international development innovators. The company has multiple offices in the U.S. and program offices in more than 60 countries.

LEARN MORE

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SELECTED CLIENTS

- USAID
- DFID
- DFAT/Australia
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- AstraZeneca
- Medtronic Foundation



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