

What is Repositioning Family Planning?

A USAID initiative to ensure access to quality family planning services remains a key issue for policy makers and providers to impacting children's health as well as the health of women and men in sub-Saharan Africa.

Resources and political support for family planning programs appear to be diminishing in sub-Saharan Africa despite consistently low rates of contraceptive use, persistent high fertility, and high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity. Recent evidence of reversals in child survival indicators indicate that today as much as ever the lifesaving benefits of birth intervals of 2-3 years need to be more actively promoted. Finally, rising HIV rates across many (although not all) countries on the continent present new challenges and opportunities for the integration of family planning into VCT, PMTCT, and PLWA services.

Accomplishments to Date

With USAID support, advocacy efforts have raised awareness for family planning as a health intervention in different fora and provided assistance to organizations to integrate family planning into their maternal and child health programs.

USAID Plan of Action, FY04

Several Missions have begun repositioning family planning including DRC, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda. Representatives from these Missions, three regional offices, and USAID/W serve as members of a working group to identify and communicate experiences and best practices for repositioning family planning. The Working Group is coordinating efforts to:

1. Ensure programs utilize best practices, address access needs of special groups (women on ARVs, the poor, remote populations), integrate family planning into other sectors, and advocate for policies that support family planning programs.
2. Develop advocacy tools to inform donors and local governments of the impact family planning can have on the health of children, women, and men.
3. Collect information to better inform repositioning efforts.

Highlights from the Field

The DR Congo National Advocacy Conference and the Journalist Workshop were a huge success!!

150 participants and journalists from throughout the country engaged in two days of intense presentations, discussions and group work regarding the four themes of Repositioning Family Planning, Birth Spacing and the effects on maternal mortality, the integration of family planning into primary health care, and the financing of FP programs in the country context. The conference ended with the engagement and commitment from government of DRC and the Minister of Health, himself, who closed the conference and shortly thereafter donned a necklace of "cycle beads" around his neck as a show of his support for family planning.



Minister of Health, DRC photo: Advance Africa

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