

# Jordan

## HEALTHY BIRTH SPACING SAVES LIVES

### CALL TO ACTION

- ▣ Raise awareness of the benefits of healthy birth spacing among healthcare providers and the community.
- ▣ Ensure access to modern contraceptives for all families.
- ▣ Counsel families on the importance of birth spacing for improving maternal and infant health.



Higher Population Council





Photo by Mohammad Khawaja

Healthy birth spacing reduces the risk of illness and saves the lives of mothers, newborns, infants, and children. Moreover, it represents a path to achieving Jordan's goals related to population growth.

The World Health Organization recommends that couples wait at least 2 years after a birth before attempting another pregnancy.

Giving birth approximately 3 years after the previous birth would save 100,000 infant lives between 2010 and 2040.<sup>1</sup>

1 Projections using the DemProj Model of the Spectrum System of Policy Models.

## 1 ...

### Birth Spacing in Jordan

Nearly one-third of all births occur less than two years after a previous birth, and more than 58 percent occur less than three years after a previous birth.<sup>2</sup> Although these percentages have declined over the past 20 years, they remain extremely high.

If current birth spacing patterns continue, many lives could be lost; between 2010 and 2040, the total number of deaths among infants (5 weeks to 1 year old) could reach 211,000.<sup>3</sup>

2 Jordan Population and Family Health Survey 2009.

3 Projections using the DemProj Model of the Spectrum System of Policy Models.

## 2 ...

### Impact of Inadequate Birth Spacing

Births spaced too close together can increase the risk of illness and death for newborns, infants, children, and mothers:

- Newborns can be born too soon, too small, or with a low birth weight
- Infants and children are more likely to die before they reach age 5
- Mothers have a higher risk of dying in childbirth

Healthy birth spacing can help prevent illness and death. Births spaced three years apart instead of two years apart could lower the risk of an infant dying by 38 percent.<sup>4</sup>

4 Rutstein, S. 2005. Effects of preceding birth intervals on neonatal, infant, and under-five years mortality and nutritional status in developing countries.

## 3 ...

### What Can Be Done

- Support informed decision making related to family planning programs.
- Integrate and provide family planning services to help mothers adequately space their births.
- Ensure policies for counseling couples, wives, husbands, mothers-in-law, and children about the benefits of healthy birth spacing and the consequences of births spaced too close together.
- Train healthcare providers to counsel women and couples on the benefits of healthy birth spacing and modern family planning services.