PRIME PAGES

Knitting Together

Young Mothers' Clubs Bring RH Services to Adolescents

PRIME II's work during 2001 has taken place in the context of El Salvador's recovery from a devastating earthquake. Despite the impact of this catastrophe on the pace of implementation, a pilot program for postpartum adolescents shows significant results and improvement in use of prenatal care, birth spacing awareness, and client satisfaction with services, presenting promising opportunities for replication to reach greater numbers of Salvadoran youth. Key to this scale-up will be a cadre of primary providers trained in family planning service delivery with PRIME TA. The results of a national survey conducted by PRIME demonstrate the vital role of these providers in improving FP/RH services in underserved rural areas.

Background

PRIME's collaboration with the MOH since 1997 through the APSISA and SALSA programs has focused on the front-line role of the MOH's health promoters in providing basic services, referrals, and house-to-house outreach. These promoters also coordinate the work of traditional birth attendants (*parteras*). PRIME-assisted training of promoters and *parteras* emphasizes birth spacing, contraceptive education and method administration, side effects management, and referrals. Responding to El Salvador's high birth rate for young women, a significant component of PRIME II's TA in 2000-01 has focused on adolescent reproductive health. PRIME II is working with promoters to build peer education programs among teen leaders and to encourage referrals of pregnant adolescents to regional hospitals. In maternity hospitals in three departments with the country's highest rates of adolescent pregnancy, a pilot project is fostering adolescent-friendly services through training providers to be more sensitive and responsive to youth issues and concerns. An innovative approach in this effort has been the establishment of clubs in which young mothers receive reproductive and maternal health education while knitting clothes for their babies.

Interventions

- Providing post-earthquake material support to MOH health promoters
- Piloting adolescent outreach in Usulutan, La Paz, and Sonsonate

Reviewing Results in PRIME II

Case Studies from:

- El Salvador
- Uganda
- Kenya
- Bangladesh
- India
- Rwanda
- Ghana
- Benin
- HIV/AIDS Integration
- PI Global Partnerships

PRIME II

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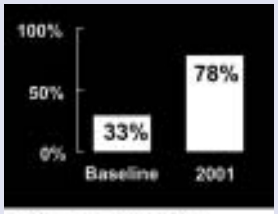
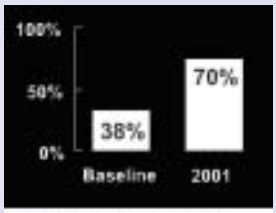
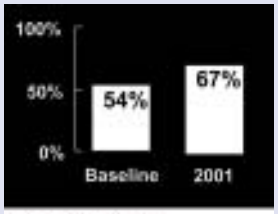
- Ongoing training of *parteras* in PRIME II; 925 as of September 2001. During PRIME all 1,755 MOH promoters were trained in FP/RH service delivery between March and June 1999, along with 1,350 *parteras*, 850 Health Unit physicians and nurses, and 133 department-level staff.



Client Satisfaction
Pilot Hospitals



Plan to Space Births
Sonsonate Adolescents



Prenatal Care
Sonsonate Adolescents

Results

Tapped into El Salvador's rural communities, the promoters are effective agents in promoting FP and other preventive health behaviors. PRIME's survey of a nationally representative sample of 2,044 rural women revealed that 80% of the women knew of health promoters; for women in areas served by MOH promoters, 65% reported at least one visit in the previous three months. Women visited by MOH promoters were more likely to use FP than women who had not been visited (48.5% to 36.5%). In a country with a high rate of sterilization, there is a strong association between promoter visits and use of reversible methods; in areas served by MOH promoters, 5.5 times more women were using oral contraceptives.

Reaching out to adolescents through promoters at the community level and physicians and nurses in the hospitals has paid off in spite of the effects of the earthquake on El Salvador's health care system. While prenatal care visits declined nationally during the six months following the earthquake compared to the same period last year, they increased from 9,848 to 14,324 in the departments where the adolescent outreach is being conducted. The young mothers' clubs have proven effective and popular with adolescents and hospital staff alike; satisfaction with services has risen to 78% from 33% at the three pilot hospitals. Even more encouraging are results from PRIME's pre- and post-intervention random sampling of 114 postpartum adolescents at the regional hospital in Sonsonate. This survey shows use of prenatal care climbing from 54% to 67% and the percentage of young mothers who planned to space their next birth jumping from 38% to 70%.

PRIME II

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