



# HEALTH POLICY PLUS

## *Family Planning and Reproductive Health*

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Health Policy Plus (HP+), a five-year project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), supports voluntary family planning and reproductive health for women and girls in low-resource countries to help accelerate countries' progress toward global commitments, such as Family Planning 2020 (FP2020) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). HP+ supports family planning policies, mobilization of domestic resources, and greater accountability on the part of governments, while placing an emphasis on the vital role that fertility and population dynamics play in achieving economic growth. HP+ works with policymakers and stakeholders to translate countries' commitments into actionable policies and plans, and promotes evidence-based decision-making.



## Policy

Policies are most effective when they are country-led, reflect priority needs and best practices, and are adequately financed. HP+ engages a wide array of stakeholders in its policy activities to ensure that they are inclusive of all voices throughout the process—from generating evidence to justify policy changes, to disseminating policy changes to key audiences, and implementing the policy to achieve desired results. HP+ provides technical assistance to country stakeholders for the development of strategic plans that increase availability, access, and affordability of family planning for women. Policy-related activities implemented by HP+ include:

- Bolstering governments' capacities to develop and implement broad, inclusive, and country-specific costed implementation plans (CIPs) for family planning.
- Identifying and analyzing policy and financial needs to advance provision of family planning commodities and services, especially to poor and vulnerable women and girls.
- Supporting countries to make evidence-based decisions about the introduction and expansion of new contraceptive methods.
- Conducting analyses to deepen understanding of the policy environment related to gender-based violence and working with stakeholders to support more effective policy implementation.

## Financing

Many low-resource countries continue to rely heavily on external funding for family planning commodities, service delivery, and demand generation. Some of these countries may experience declines in external support in the near term, necessitating meaningful plans to ensure adequate financing for family planning. HP+ prioritizes creative financing mechanisms to mobilize resources for health—especially those related to family planning—in order to influence budget formulation processes and the adoption of sustainable health funding mechanisms in the long term. HP+ is leading an effort with USAID and other implementing partners to strengthen family planning financing in several countries. Activities include:

## SPOTLIGHT:

### Reaching Youth in Malawi

After supporting the Government of Malawi to develop its youth-friendly health services policy and strategy, HP+ is working to support its implementation. To raise awareness of the new policy and strategy, the project has trained youth journalists to conduct radio programs that help the public—especially youth—understand what the policy is about and what they are entitled to receive under the policy. In addition, HP+ is working with parliamentarians and local decision-makers, as well as healthcare providers and staff, to understand the policy and how to respond to the health needs of youth.

### Interactive Roadmap for Decision Making

HP+ is developing a website to provide learning and guide decisions on family planning financing for 13 priority countries. A novel feature of the site will be an interactive roadmap that allows users to identify relevant family planning financing options based on a particular country's financing and family planning context. The site will provide data on countries' family planning landscapes (e.g., percentage of unmet need), as well as current financing and macroeconomic profiles, including data on each country's health and family planning spending by the government and donors, and the current enabling environment for broad health financing reform. Through this country-specific roadmap, users will be able to make informed, data-driven financing decisions that can strengthen advancement toward global family planning commitments.

- Guiding government actions to estimate and understand the cost of scaling up family planning services.
- Supporting countries to incorporate family planning into universal health coverage initiatives.
- Engaging the private sector to more actively participate in family planning service delivery and health systems strengthening.
- Supporting USAID-led efforts to mobilize domestic resources for family planning to secure sustainable, equitable programming.

### Stewardship, Accountability, and Transparency

Principles of accountability, transparency, participation, and inclusion are entrenched in all of HP+’s work. The project strives to reaffirm trust between government and civil society by bridging gaps in communication and partnerships, and foster multisectoral commitments to FP2020. HP+ also works to build local capacity so that this type of work can be sustained in the future. Examples of activities that increase stewardship, accountability, and transparency include:

- Strengthening the capacity of women leaders to work across sectors and foster greater accountability for FP2020 commitments.

### SPOTLIGHT:

#### Raising Awareness of the Family Planning Policy Environment in Madagascar

Population growth, reproductive health, maternal and child health, and family planning in Madagascar are critical issues that need to be addressed to advance well-being and reduce poverty in the country. HP+ recently completed a study on the extent to which the country’s legal environment enables or impedes its provision of family planning and reproductive health services for women and youth. The resulting report has helped improve understanding of the legal and policy context for family planning. It also provided recommendations for the HP+ Madagascar team, government partners, and USAID/Madagascar as they move forward to improve the enabling environment for equitable and sustainable health services, supplies, and delivery systems.



- Implementing new systems and structures to ensure that increased local government accountability measures are met with positive and productive citizen engagement.
- Empowering and engaging civil society in participatory processes for policy advocacy, implementation, and monitoring.

## Global Leadership and Advocacy

HP+ promotes sustainability, scalability, and accountability for commitments to the SDGs and other development goals at the global, national, and subnational levels. To achieve this, HP+ works with countries to generate and synthesize evidence, make best practices widely available, build capacities to apply data, and transfer knowledge for advocacy. Specifically, HP+:

- Models the links between family planning and attainment of SDG goals to generate data and inform advocacy messages.
- Leverages family planning-specific communication and transparency initiatives to improve health outcomes through improved family planning budgeting, spending, programming, and education.
- Fosters investment in reproductive health programs for youth to achieve better health outcomes for women and children, and accelerate economic growth.

## SPOTLIGHT:

### Pakistan's Women Leaders Advocate for Youth Family Planning Services

Participants in HP+'s Women's Leadership initiative in Pakistan have had success in contributing to expanding outreach and access to family planning services for youth. Collectively, the women advocated for the inclusion of youth-specific indicators to monitor the Sindh Province Costed Implementation Plan for Family Planning and developed youth-specific guidelines for Pakistan's Manual of Standards for Family Planning Services. They provided recommendations to Sindh province's FP2020 working group and to the government—the latter of which ensured the funding and operationalizing of critical youth-friendly activities.

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