

# **Make Your Case: An Overview of Evidence- based Advocacy Briefs**



**A CENTURY OF SAVING LIVES  
MILLIONS AT A TIME**

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# Purpose of an Advocacy Brief

- Communicate with non-specialists
- Analyze a policy issue and opportunity
- Inform the issue with evidence
- Build consensus and enlist others
- Sharpen your argument and ask



# Briefs can inform and/or influence

An effective advocacy brief will...

- Provide enough **BACKGROUND** for the policymaker to understand the problem
- **CONVINCE** the policymaker that solving the problem is important and urgent
- Provide **EVIDENCE** to support action
- Incite the policymaker to make a decision with a clear, actionable **ASK**



# Data that support or emphasize the main message are essential

- Present only information that is relevant to the decision-maker
- Use graphics such as charts, figures, and tables to show the data visually, but make sure graphics have clear titles and the messages are easily discerned
- Define technical terms in a way that is understandable to the average reader



# Ways to Use Data

- **Raise/Maintain Awareness:** Used to communicate that a problem exists, why it exists and how many are affected
- **Cause and Effect:** Used to show or refute association or cause-and-effect relationship
- **Provide Contextual Information:** Used to improve understanding of an issue, usually with some type of comparison to an overall population
- **Predict:** Used to communicate projected or expected effects of a policy/program
- **Evaluate:** Used to communicate observed impacts of a policy/program



# Formatting and Style

- Write short, succinct sentences
- Lay out your text in an electronic and printer-friendly format
- Consider bulleted lists and tables, use **boldface text** to highlight important words or phrases
- Select photos strategically to convey a message and put a “human face” on the topic

*Use boxes or sidebars to present various types of information that do not fit well in the flow of text*



# Attribution

- Provide references for evidence—but not so many that it begins to look like an academic report
- Make the organizational source of the brief clear through attribution or inclusion of a logo(s)
- Include a “for further information” section along with the name of a person to contact



*Incite the policymaker to make a  
decision with a clear, actionable  
ASK*





# Think SMART

<b>S</b> pecific	indicates what will be achieved and by what means
<b>M</b> easurable	framed with quantitative or qualitative descriptors
<b>A</b> ttainable	is within reach
<b>R</b> elevant	contributes to the overall goal of securing a policy or advocacy objective
<b>T</b> ime-bound	sets a specific date for achievement





## INVEST IN THE FUTURE OF INDIA

# FAMILY PLANNING AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

### REVITALIZE INDIA'S WORKFORCE AND THE ECONOMY



Leading economists report that investments in family planning generate higher social, economic, and environmental returns than nearly all other development priorities.<sup>1</sup>



## 500 BILLION

Early childbearing negatively impacts girls' education and future workforce opportunities. If adolescent girls in India delayed childbearing until their twenties, the nation's economic productivity would increase by more than **500 billion rupees**.<sup>2</sup>

## ADVANCE THE HEALTH OF INDIA'S WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Voluntary family planning allows women and their families to choose when they would like to have children. Adequately planning for and spacing births saves the lives of mothers and infants and improves child nutrition, especially if women delay pregnancy until their early twenties.<sup>4</sup>

IN 2016, FAMILY PLANNING IN INDIA RESULTED IN:

**43,000**  
LIVES SAVED

**38 MILLION**  
UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES  
AVERTED



**Fifty-two million** women in India want to delay or prevent pregnancy, but are not using modern contraception.



Every five minutes in 2016, **125 pregnancies** occurred that were unplanned or mistimed.<sup>5</sup>



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## INVEST IN FAMILY PLANNING TODAY!

- Include family planning in health care activities under corporate social responsibility policies and programs.
- Fund family planning interventions at the community level.
- Promote and provide access to family planning counseling, commodities, and services in your workplace.
- Strengthen the government health system by filling gaps such as equipment, commodities, and human resources.

**JOIN THE RANKS OF MANY OTHER INDIAN CORPORATIONS COMMITTED  
TO SAVING THE LIVES OF WOMEN, THEIR FAMILIES, AND OUR NATION.**



1 Hans-Peter Kohler and Jere R. Behrman, *Benefits and Costs of the Population and Demography Targets for the Post-2015 Development Agenda* Population and Demography Assessment Paper (Copenhagen: Copenhagen Consensus Center, 2015).

2 UNFPA, "Population and Poverty," (2014), accessed at [www.unfpa.org/resources/population-and-poverty](http://www.unfpa.org/resources/population-and-poverty), on Jan. 16, 2017.

3 Guttmacher Institute, *Adding It Up: Investing in Sexual and Reproductive Health* (2014), accessed at [www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/adding-it-investing-sexual-and-reproductive-health](http://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/adding-it-investing-sexual-and-reproductive-health), on Jan. 16, 2017; and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "Developing an Education Sector Response to Early and Unintended Pregnancy," (2014), accessed at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002305/230510E.pdf>, on April 5, 2017; and John Cleland et al., "Family Planning: The Unfinished Agenda," *Lancet* 368, no. 9549 (2006): 1810-27.

4 Margaret E. Greene and Tom Merrick, *The Case for Investing in Research to Increase Access to and Use of Contraception Among Adolescents* (Seattle: Alliance for Reproductive, Maternal, and Newborn Health, 2015).

5 Family Planning 2020, "FP220 Momentum at the Midpoint: 2015-2016," (2016), accessed at <http://progress.familyplanning2020.org/>, on Jan. 9, 2017.



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# SAMPLE BRIEF

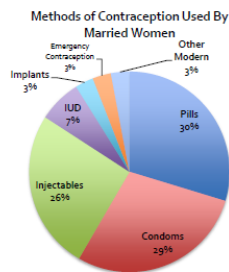
## Expanding Access to Long-Acting Contraceptives in Lagos State Through Quality Counseling and Services

June 2015

### FAMILY PLANNING SAVES LIVES

Family planning and reproductive health services save lives by allowing women to decide the timing and spacing of their children. This lowers maternal mortality, increases the chances of children's survival, and saves government funds [1].

Among the most effective methods of family planning are long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs), such as the IUD and implant. However, these methods are the hardest to access. The government recently introduced its LARC Strategy, which seeks to ensure that all women who want implants or IUDs are able to safely and freely obtain quality counseling, insertion and removal services through public health sector providers [2].



Johns Hopkins University  
Bloomberg School of Public Health  
PMA & Methods Group Institute for Population and Reproductive Health

### Lagos by the Numbers

- 3.4: average number of children a woman in Lagos will have in her lifetime
- 19: percent of married women who currently use a modern method of family planning
- 27: percent of married women who have an unmet need for contraception
- 10: percent of modern method users who are using IUDs or implants

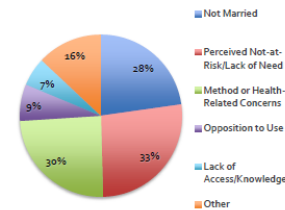
Source: PMA2014/Lagos

### UNMET NEED FOR FAMILY PLANNING IN LAGOS

Despite the widely acclaimed benefits of family planning, only 1 in 5 married women in Lagos are using any modern method of family planning, and 1 in 4 do not have access to the family planning supplies and services they need [3].

Among women in Lagos who do use family planning, the majority rely on short-term methods, such as the pill, injectables, and condoms. These methods are less effective at preventing unintended pregnancy than LARCs, which are very effective for many years [3]. This reliance on shorter-term and less-effective methods leaves women at risk of unintended pregnancy.

### Reasons Women Are Not Using Contraception\*



\*women were allowed to select more than one option

Source: PMA2014/Lagos

### WOMEN NEED FAMILY PLANNING COUNSELING

Recent data show that public facilities in Lagos do have LARCs in stock. However, 60% of women who visited a health facility for their own or their children's care in the last year did not receive any counseling about family planning from their health provider. Given the high proportion of non-users of FP who have health concerns or are worried about method-related side-effects, provider counseling is especially important [3]. This lack of information may explain the reliance on less-effective short-term methods.

### MEDICAL OFFICERS OF HEALTH CAN IMPROVE COUNSELING & SERVICES

To help Lagos state meet the aims of the national LARC Strategy and help more women access family planning—including LARCs—LGA and LCDA Medical Officers of Health can:

- Ensure high quality family planning counseling and services through regular scheduled and unscheduled monitoring of providers
- Organize refresher trainings on provision of LARCs, in accordance with the national LARC Strategy.
- Make local health funds available to implement training on FP counseling and ongoing supportive supervision.

### REFERENCES

1. Rhonda Smith, et al. 2009. "Family Planning Saves Lives." Population Reference Bureau. <http://www.prb.org/pdf/familyplanningsaveslives.pdf>
2. Nigeria Federal Ministry of Health. 2014. "Increasing Access to Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives in Nigeria: National Strategy and Implementation Plan (2013-2015)."
3. Performance Monitoring and Accountability 2020 (PMA2020) Project, Centre for Population and Reproductive Health at the University of Ibadan (CPRH), the Centre for Research, Evaluation Resources and Development (CERED), the Population and Reproductive Health Program (PRHP) at the Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, and Bayero University Kano (BUK). 2014. Lagos, Baltimore, MD: PMA2020, Bill & Melinda Gates Institute for Population and Reproductive Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

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# Instructions

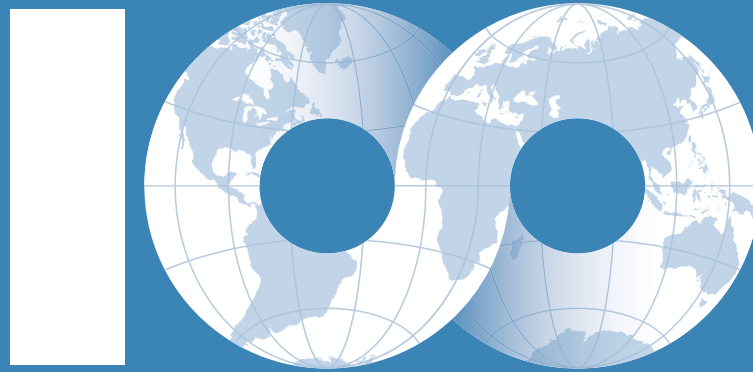
- Make Your Case: Draft a new, 1-page (front and back) advocacy brief using the blank template provided, including:
  - Title
  - Executive summary
  - Context
  - Key messages (rational, ethical, emotional, etc)
  - Call to action/SMART asks
  - Collaborating organizations
  - Contact information



# Peer Review: How Will You Be Evaluated?

- Background
  - Use of evidence, urgency, and a clear, actionable ask
- Strength of Arguments
  - Rational, emotional and ethical
- Formatting
  - Ease of reading and comprehension





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