

FAMILY PLANNING

Our strategy

UNFPA believes in a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled. Access to a choice of family planning methods is a fundamental reproductive right for women and young people.

Our work

Improved awareness and knowledge

Understanding the benefits is essential for individuals and couples to use contraception. UNFPA works to improve Cambodian women's, men's, couples' and young people's knowledge and understanding of contraception. In line with government strategies, we support a range of initiatives to increase understanding and use of contraception. These are adapted to various audiences and include media spots on longer term methods, integration of age appropriate information on contraception into comprehensive sexuality education in schools and the Loy9 multi-media youth initiative, peer education with entertainment workers and outreach in rural communities.

Building midwives' capacity to provide contraceptive choices

UNFPA supports in-service training to develop the competency of health providers working at the grassroots level to provide family planning information and services. Recently, midwives have been trained on counselling skills, IUD insertion, implant use and emergency contraception. There are regular refresher trainings to update midwives' skills in this area. UNFPA also supports the Ministry of Health in developing and updating technical guidelines and protocols to guide the public health system in providing contraceptive services.



Photo: UNFPA Cambodia

The Facts :

- Cambodian women are increasingly likely to use contraception. Between 2005 and 2010 the proportion of married women using modern contraception increased from 27% to 35%.
- Many women who want to space or limit their family are still not using contraception. The unmet need for contraception remains high at 17%.
- Most married women know something about contraception – more than 95% have heard of the pill, condom, IUD and injectables.
- Use of contraception in Cambodia varies with location, education level and income.
- Short-term methods of contraception remain the most popular and there is potential to further promote the usefulness of longer-term methods such as IUDs and implants.
- Concerns and misconceptions about side-effects lead many women to give up modern methods of contraception.
- New contraceptive methods are being introduced and are increasingly being made available, but some women, such as those who are young, unmarried or marginalised, still lack access to contraception.

(Cambodia Demographic and Health Surveys, 2005 and 2010)



Photo: UNFPA Cambodia

A secure supply of commodities

UNFPA provides technical support to the Ministry of Health through the Contraceptive Security Working Group, a coordinating body responsible for forecasting contraceptive needs and making sure there is a constant and regular supply of family planning methods to health facilities. UNFPA is currently responsible for procuring all contraceptives for the public sector in Cambodia, with support from the Australian Government. These efforts have resulted in consistent and sufficient stocks of contraceptives at the national level and in health facilities.

Ensuring nationwide coverage

With the increase in the number of trained midwives, health staff, and health facilities, along with a secured commodity supply, all health centres in Cambodia are currently providing at least three contraceptive methods. Almost all referral hospitals are now providing family planning services and information. In addition, community-based distribution programmes of contraceptives ensure availability in remote locations.

Public awareness and mass media intervention

Increased utilization of modern contraceptives among couples contributes to reducing maternal mortality where Cambodia is committed to reaching the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goal 5 by 2015. UNFPA has been supporting community promotion campaigns and mass media interventions and the roll-out of training to health staff have been successful in raising the rate of contraceptive use. Nationwide mass media campaigns that broadcast correct messages to eliminate misconceptions about using modern contraceptives, in particular the long-term methods among middle age couples, is an effective way of raising awareness.

Increasing family planning choices through community-based distribution (CBD) of contraceptives

In addition to its on-going support to the Ministry of Health UNFPA also supports a project with RHAC to provide contraceptives through community-based distribution (CBD) and to widen women's contraceptive choices with a focus on long-term methods. The project trained women from the community to become CBD agents. They provide counselling and refer women for services to health facilities. The project also supports transport and user fees for IUD users. In the first four months of the project, the number of family planning users increased noticeably, including a significant increase in IUD users. This experience confirms that with proper counselling, service availability and once financial barriers no longer exist, people are much more likely to use contraception.

CASE STUDY - A modern method makes for a better living

Ms. San Sok Nim, aged 33, and her husband, Nov Samorn, aged 34, live in Dang Hith village, Takeo Province. She has one son, aged 9, and two daughters, aged 7 and 3. Previously, she had never used any contraceptives due to the fear of the side effects.

In August 2013, she learned about contraceptives, their side effects, and the different contraceptive methods available, in particular the IUD from RHAC staff and the Village Health Support Group (VHSG) in her village. She was interested in the IUD method and sought more detailed information. The VHSG told her about the free IUD services available at Chmapar health centre, which she visited. After this, she went home and discussed her options with her husband. Since then she has started using an IUD.

Though, in the beginning she experienced some side effects such as small blood clots and spotting during the interval-period and slight pain, those symptoms disappeared a few days later. Now she is happy that she can do her chores as usual, contribute to the family income, and look after her children. She and her husband are no longer worried about unwanted pregnancies.



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