



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



NEPAL FACT SHEET FERTILITY AWARENESS FOR COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION (FACT) PROJECT

Nepal's Demographic and Health Survey 2011 (NDHS) showed that, although women report almost universal knowledge of family planning methods (99 percent of women are aware of at least one method of family planning), there is a high level of unmet need for family planning (27 percent). NDHS also showed that only 25 percent of women can correctly identify the time of month in which they are most likely to become pregnant—also known as their 'fertile window.' Moreover, hard-to-reach populations have particularly low levels of contraceptive use. New approaches are needed to reach these groups. Janajatis, Dalits, and Muslims tend to experience higher total fertility rates and lower contraceptive prevalence rates than the national average. Additionally, 21 percent of births occur with suboptimal spacing—that is, less than two years after the mother's previous birth—increasing the risk of child and maternal complications and deaths. Adolescent pregnancy, which carries higher risks to both mothers and babies, is also high; by age 19, 39 percent of women have given birth.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The USAID-supported Fertility Awareness for Community Transformation (FACT) Project is a five-year (2013-2018), global research, intervention, and technical assistance project that is developing and testing unique interventions in Nepal, India, Rwanda, and Uganda.

The FACT project seeks to:

- Improve women’s and men’s understanding of the risk of pregnancy at different times during a woman’s life
- Increase understanding of how family planning methods work to counter concerns, myths, and misperceptions
- Expand access to the Standard Days Method® (SDM)ⁱ, which may be more acceptable to hard-to-reach groups

INTERVENTIONS AND PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

In Nepal, the FACT approach includes taking two related but unique strategies to increase fertility awareness and family planning use. Both solutions will be guided by key stakeholders, service providers, and the communities in need through a research-based approach whose activities can easily be scaled up.

Approach 1: Community Mobilization through Existing Networks. This intervention aims to increase fertility awareness to improve family planning use and will include the following activities to assess its effectiveness:

- Situation assessments
- Formative research to inform the intervention design
- Intervention design workshop
- Concept developing and proof of concept testing
- Piloting of solution, monitoring and evaluation

Approach 2: Roving Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) and Standard Days Methods (SDM) Integration. This approach will test the deployment of Roving ANMs to share family planning methods with difficult-to-reach and underserved groups, such as Muslims and the urban poor in Rupandehi district. It will also test the feasibility and cultural acceptability of both SDM and CycleBeads®ⁱⁱ among hard-to-reach groups. The following interventions will be used to research this approach:

- Formative research
- Capacity building – materials adaptation/preparation and training.
- Hold intervention planning meeting with findings from formative research.
- Piloting of approach

ⁱ Standard Days Method® (SDM) is a natural modern family planning method based on the knowledge of the days in a woman’s menstrual cycle when she is likely to become pregnant (fertile days). SDM uses CycleBeads to help a woman track which day of her menstrual cycle she is on and whether she is likely to get pregnant that day. Those women who have menstrual cycles between 26 and 32 days long consider days 8 through 19 as the fertile days of the cycle. To prevent pregnancy, couples use condoms or do not have sex during those fertile days.

ⁱⁱ CycleBeads® is a string of 32 color-coded beads, with each bead representing a day of a woman’s menstrual cycle. This tool helps women track their cycle to know when they are fertile and monitor cycle length. It has proven to be an important factor in gaining men’s support to use the method, as it helps them to literally see when the woman is on a fertile day.