

Using evidence to expand choice,
empower women and
involve communities



August 2010

Promoting Gender Equity in Family Planning

At the core of the much anticipated U.S. Global Health Initiative (GHI) is a women- and girl-centered approach that aims to ensure that every individual has access to basic health, education, and other social services, including sexual and reproductive health. The very essence of this approach requires reducing gender inequities. For family planning and reproductive health (FP/RH) professionals worldwide, this is another opportunity to build on and highlight programs that promote gender equity by including men in FP and placing the responsibility of FP/RH in the hands of both women and men.

The Standard Days Method® (SDM) is one FP method that by definition emphasizes the couple perspective, including both men and women in the discussion and responsibility of using a FP method. IRH's new FAM Project Brief titled, "[Standard Days Method®: Building Gender Equity & Engaging Men in FP](#)," reveals research results that support the following five key points:

- SDM use positively impacts the couple relationship by enhancing feelings of love, mutual respect and control of their fertility;
- SDM affects women's empowerment by increasing the ability of women to care for their health, communicate with their partners and decide when to have sex;
- Men participate in SDM use and can use it correctly;
- For correct use, both partners need to understand how the method works and to decide together how to manage the fertile days; and
- Incorporating SDM helps programs engage men (including male religious leaders, CHWs and partners) in family planning, and has been shown to improve condom counseling and use.

To read more, access the brief here: [ENG](#), [SPA](#)

Resources

FAM Project Briefs

- [Monitoring & Evaluating Scale-up: Doing it Right for Sustainable Impact](#) IRH is rigorously monitoring and evaluating the scale up of FAM in five countries - DRC, Guatemala, India, Mali, and Rwanda. Read about IRH's strategy

In This Issue

[Gender Equity](#)

[Resources](#)

[News and Events](#)

[Conferences](#)

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based on WHO's ExpandNet model.

- [The Lactational Amenorrhea Method: An important option for mothers and infants](#) This two-page brief gives an overview of the scientific basis and health benefits of LAM, and provides a summary of IRH's current partnerships with local organizations to strengthen LAM services in India, Guatemala, and Mali. [ENG](#), [FRE](#)
- [The Standard Days Method®: A Modern Family Planning Method](#) Have you ever wondered what makes the SDM a modern method of family planning? This brief gives you six reasons why. [ENG](#), [SPA](#)
- [Partnerships with Faith Based Organizations to Expand Access to Family Planning](#) IRH provides training and other assistance to FBOs seeking to expand the family planning options they currently offer or to integrate family planning into their services for the first time. Read about these partnerships in the DRC, Honduras, India, Kenya, Mali, Rwanda and Timor-Leste.

News and Events

IRH International Staff Meeting, September 16-28th
Each year, IRH staff from around the world gather in Washington for an organization-wide staff meeting. Country representatives from Rwanda, DRC, Mali, Guatemala, and India will be available for meetings with partners. Please contact IRH's Director of Field Programs, Susan Igras (smi6@georgetown.edu), for more information.

Webinar on IRH's work with youth in Rwanda
On September 30, 2010, Marie Mukabatsinda, IRH's Country Representative in Rwanda, will host a virtual session on IRH's experience working with Very Young Adolescents (VYAs) to address early issues relating to sexual and reproductive health such as puberty, fertility, sexuality, self-care, and changing gender and social roles as girls and boys enter puberty and start showing signs of their fertility. Findings from the evaluation of the [My Changing Body](#) curriculum will also be shared. Click [here](#) to listen to the session.

Conferences

IRH will be presenting or exhibiting at the following upcoming conferences. Look for us here:

- September 14-15, 2010; [CORE Group](#); Washington, DC
 - Visit IRH's exhibit table of CORE's fall meeting.
- October 8, 2010; [USAID's Mini University](#); Washington, DC
 - "Leave those Surveys Behind! Innovative Evaluation Methods for Youth Programs"
 - "Mobile Technology for Behavior Change"
- October 13-16, 2010; [Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health](#); Palm Desert, CA
- October 14-15, 2010; [Men, Masculinities, and Family Planning in Africa](#); Los Angeles CA
 - "Engaged and engendered: men, women, and child spacing in Mali"
- November 6-10, 2010; [APHA](#); Denver, CO
 - "When do you know if a new family planning service is really available? Challenges in tracking availability of a new service and new users during scale up from pilot to national level" (11/8, 8:30am)
 - "Strengthening VCT services by addressing stigma and

- discrimination" (11/8, 10:30am)
- o "Integration of family planning with health facility and community-based services: Multi-country data on the extent of Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM) counseling and postpartum family planning" (11/10, 10:30am)
 - o "Shifting Gender Norms in Nepal to Improve Health and Development of Very Young Adolescents" (11/10 12:30pm)
 - November 15-19, 2010; [First Global Symposium on Health Systems Research: Montreaux](#), Switzerland
 - o "A system-based strategy for measuring sustainable universal access: a 5-country family planning study"
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Sincerely,
Your colleagues at IRH

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