

Using evidence to expand choice,  
empower women and  
involve communities



Institute for Reproductive Health E-blast

April 2012

## FBOs expand access to family planning in Kenya

Faith-based organizations (FBOs) and religious leaders have significant potential to influence the achievement of key global health goals, including increased access to family planning and reproductive health, yet they are sometimes viewed as barriers rather than partners. One year ago, IRH hosted a consultation at Georgetown University on Faith, Family Planning and Family Well-Being that drew participants from around the world to openly discuss commonly held stereotypes and seek opportunities for partnership with FBOs interested in improving family planning services (see sidebar for resources).

IRH has worked on a number of initiatives with FBOs since the consultation, demonstrating discourse in action. One such partnership with the Christian Health Association of Kenya (CHAK) has introduced family planning at the community level for the first time in project areas located in Eastern Kenya with support from the World Bank.

### Building Community Health Worker Capacity in Family Planning

Under this project, 67 CHAK-affiliated community health workers (CHWs) were trained using the new World Health Organization (WHO) counseling tool, "[A guide to family planning for health workers and their clients](#)," which was adapted for the Kenyan context. This tool is based on the WHO



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## Resources

Consultation on Faith, Family Planning and Family Well-being | [Website](#) | [Report](#) |

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Love, Children & Family Planning, Seven discussion guides for Christian small groups | [Print Version](#) | [Electronic Version](#) | [How to](#)



Medical Eligibility Criteria and provides essential family planning information in a simple and concise manner through a flipchart. To complement this tool, a training curriculum was developed for community-based family planning provision of pills, condoms, the Standard Days Method®/ CycleBeads®, and the Lactational Amenorrhea Method as well as referrals for other locally available methods. The curriculum gives particular attention to the importance of supportive supervision for CHWs.

### Working with Religious Leaders

The project also focuses on mobilizing Christian religious leaders to improve community awareness of the contributions of family planning to healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies. A Bible study discussion guide, produced by IRH and Christian Connections for International Health, is currently being used with religious leaders and their congregations to encourage a supportive environment for community-based family planning services. Development of the guide was a cooperative effort of Christian health workers, pastors, church leaders, youth, and members of churches in DR Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and the United States (see sidebar).

### Project Results

Service statistics from CHAK facilities show that after initiation of community-based distribution of family planning, use of pills has more than tripled as compared to the previous year, and uptake of CycleBeads--which was added to the method mix for the first time--is high. Use of implants and injectables also increased, indicating that the CHWs are referring clients to health facilities for methods they are not able to provide at the community level.



## Announcements

### New CHW brief by USAID

USAID has produced a brief titled, [\*Community Health Workers: Bringing family planning services to where people live and work\*](#), as part of their promotion of High Impact Practices (HIP) in family planning. According to USAID, provision of fertility awareness-based methods like SDM

[use the guide](#)

A capacity building strategy based on the Kenya experience is being developed for use by other Christian Health Associations and church-based health networks. These materials are forthcoming.

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and LAM at the community level are proven to positively impact service utilization, including contraceptive use and continuation.