

Using evidence to expand choice,  
empower women and  
involve communities



Institute for Reproductive Health E-blast

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## What is social diffusion?

The spread of ideas and practices through social interactions can facilitate behavior change. This phenomenon is known as social diffusion, and its effects have the potential to accelerate social change. In the case of family planning, social diffusion can play an important role in changing attitudes towards family planning and creating demand for family planning services. IRH is exploring this phenomenon in several countries.

### Studying the Power of Social Networks

Under the USAID-funded [Terikunda Jekulu Project](#),



IRH is studying the power of social networks in creating favorable attitudes and information sharing relating to fertility and family

planning use. By understanding the social context in which reproductive health decisions are made, IRH and partners (ASDAP, CARE, and CEDPA) are designing and testing interventions targeting social groups, key opinion leaders, and well-connected individuals within social networks to catalyze discussions related to planning births and using modern family planning options. How much do you know about the power of social networks? [See what social networks look like in Mali and take our online quiz!](#)

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Institute for Reproductive Health  
4301 Connecticut Ave NW  
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Washington, DC 20008

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## Working with Women's Groups

In Mali, women's networks are playing a key role in disseminating family planning information and connecting people to health facilities. IRH,



through the USAID-funded [FAM Project](#), has partnered with COFEMALI, a coalition of women's savings and loans associations, to train women leaders on family planning. In just three months after the leaders were trained, family planning information reached over 2000 households, and method use grew 22% in activity areas. Read more about social diffusion with COFEMALI. [ENG](#), [FRE](#)

## Each One Invites Three

Under the USAID-funded [FAM Project](#) in Rwanda, Mali and Guatemala, IRH is implementing a new activity called "Each one invites three."



This approach relies on social diffusion of family planning information through satisfied family planning users. These users are asked to talk with their friends and family about family planning and give invitation cards to three individuals in their social network who are not yet using family planning. The invitation cards include family planning messages and an invitation for the individual to speak with her or his service provider about an appropriate method.

The strategy was previously implemented in Madagascar from July 2007 to January 2008 with the support of the Santé Net Project. Reaching 47 districts in the country, results from the final evaluation in 2008 demonstrated significant increases in the contraceptive prevalence rates in the targeted districts. The evaluation also concluded that family planning invitation cards, supported by related

activities, encouraged women and couples to go to health centers and inquire about family planning which is an important step towards adoption of a family planning method.

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