

Using evidence to expand choice,  
empower women and  
involve communities



## January 2011

Under the FAM Project, the Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH) has been exploring direct-to-consumer approaches for offering fertility awareness-based methods (FAM) of family planning, specifically the Standard Days Method® (SDM). SDM is uniquely suited to direct-to-consumer approaches, particularly because, as a knowledge-based method, SDM does not require a client to visit a provider. Further, direct-to-consumer approaches supplement multi-sector scale up, which can increase access, demand and use of family planning in a resource efficient manner. Our direct-to-consumer initiatives and partnerships include:

**User Card Study with C-Change at AED, Benin (2010-present):** The purpose of this study is to develop and launch the distribution of a paper-based image of CycleBeads, with the intention of increasing demand for and awareness of SDM through mass distribution. This study is taking place in Benin, where IRH worked from 2002 to 2007 to introduce SDM into private and public sector programs. IRH has finalized the paper-based tool, which is designed for women and couples to be able to understand how to use the SDM by reading the tool, and to "try it out" by keeping track of their cycles on the CycleBeads illustrations. If a woman likes the method, she can visit her provider or a pharmacy to acquire CycleBeads. Two phases remain in the study: 1) a small scale field-test of the tool to make sure it is well understood (underway); and 2) a test of the uptake of the tool in a direct-to-consumer approach which C-Change will lead.

**CycleBeads Boutique Sales with PSI, Mali (2009-present):** In rural areas of Mali, small stores or "boutiques" provide access to household supplies and can also be a source of family planning methods. Offering CycleBeads through these boutiques may increase access to SDM in Mali. IRH worked in collaboration with PSI Mali to develop and test a specifically designed CycleBeads insert that potential users can apply to teach themselves how to use CycleBeads without the assistance of a health provider. In Phase 1 of the research, we revised the package insert explaining how to use SDM without provider assistance and assessed potential users' understanding of the insert. Our findings revealed that most Malian

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men and women, with at least some primary education, were able to read and understand the concepts presented. Future direct-to-consumer approaches should target men and women with at least some primary level of education, as it is critical that users are able to read and understand the text that is used to explain how to use the SDM/CycleBeads. The next step will be to design Phase II of the study and generate demand through activities like local radio spots targeted to Malians with basic literacy skills. In this phase, we will study the uptake of CycleBeads through boutiques and ascertain correct use of the method with the revised instructional insert.

#### **Magazine Tear-Out & Internet Sales, India (2010-present):**

Developing an effective strategy to reach couples with information about SDM through mass media channels such as magazines could represent a major breakthrough in expanding access to those not reached by regular service delivery channels. The readership of magazines among women in Indian urban centers is rapidly increasing, with particular interest in lifestyle issues such as health, family and housekeeping. The purpose of this project is to determine if bringing SDM to consumers through magazine advertisements results in increased awareness and use of the method. IRH will collaborate with Street Life Advertising Agency, based in Delhi, to conduct an advertising campaign for SDM and CycleBeads in women's magazines and through social media/internet sites. The actual magazine advertisement will contain a paper version of CycleBeads that women can tear out and use for two cycles. It will also feature information on how to purchase CycleBeads. The campaign will be supplemented by some internet and retail promotion activities as well as a helpline where users can call with questions. The campaign is expected to launch in early 2011.

#### **CycleTel™, a Mobile Health (mHealth) Application, India (2009-present):**

IRH has developed a mobile health application that will offer a family planning option directly to a user's mobile phone via SMS messages. The application, CycleTel™, interacts with an end-user over time to support SDM use. IRH has completed proof-of-concept testing in Lucknow, India, which indicated that a need and demand exists for this service, and also informed product design. Currently, IRH has partnered with ThoughtWorks Inc., a US-based software company with offices in India, to develop an automated technology platform to run CycleTel. The technology will be ready in March 2011 to be tested with a sample of women in New Delhi, India. Additionally, IRH is exploring partnerships to bring CycleTel to other countries. A brief that describes CycleTel in more detail is available [here](#).

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## **News & Events**

### **iCycleBeads™ Reaches #12 on Apple's "What's Hot Apps" Chart**

After last month's launch of iCycleBeads, a new iPhone app based on SDM, the app has already climbed to #12 in the Healthcare and Fitness section of Apple's "What's Hot Apps" Chart. iCycleBeads was developed by CycleTechnologies, the licensed manufacturer of

CycleBeads®. For more information, follow the links below.

See it in the Apple iTunes app store [here](#).

For more information about SDM [click here](#).

To read the press release about this innovative new way to use SDM [click here](#).



Sincerely,  
Your colleagues at IRH

Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University  
4301 Connecticut Ave NW Suite 310  
Washington, District of Columbia 20008

Tel. 202-687-1392 Fax 202-537-7450

[www.irh.org](http://www.irh.org)

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Institute for Reproductive Health | 4301 Connecticut Ave NW Suite 310 | Washington | DC | 20008