



September 2011

Under the FAM Project, IRH has been working with the Guatemalan Ministry of Health (MOH) and local partners to scale up an innovation in family planning at the central and community levels of the national family planning program using the [ExpandNet](#) model. This model emphasizes the importance of strategic and systematic approaches to increase the impact of tested innovations like the Standard Days Method® (SDM) and includes implementing well-defined vertical (e.g., political-level advocacy) and horizontal (e.g., expansion of services) scale-up strategies. IRH and the MOH have witnessed how pursuing the scale up process for SDM intrinsically led to health systems strengthening in Guatemala.

Since sustainable scale up relies on strong partnerships, IRH and the MOH have been working closely for over three years to bring together organizations from different sectors to both integrate SDM and expand access to family planning options. Through this process, the MOH identified areas for improvement in the implementation of the national family planning strategy and pursued the following activities:



- The MOH's Sexual and Reproductive Health Department joined with local partners and other departments to form the Family Planning Resource Team which collaborates on strengthening service delivery at the community level. An example of the Resource Team's work includes a new effort to institutionalize continuous education for service providers in order to address issues related to staff turn-over.
- Linkages were created between the division responsible for health information systems and service delivery which is helping standardize reporting forms across health districts.
- Scale up of SDM led the MOH to operationalize a mandate allowing community based family planning provision. Traditional birth attendants were previously seen as ill-equipped to provide family planning methods, but with IRH's assistance in developing and conducting training in family planning, the MOH has expanded community-based method provision to not only SDM and the Lactational Amenorrhea Method but pills and condoms as well.

IRH and partners celebrated these achievements at a ceremony held in August 2011 hosted by the MOH. At this ceremony, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between IRH and the MOH, and an agreement was also signed by the Family Planning Resource Team recognizing their role in expanding family planning services in Guatemala. You can find more information about this event from the media's perspective [here](#).

To learn more about how IRH's USAID-funded FAM Project contributes to health systems strengthening globally, read our project brief. [ENG](#), [FRE](#), [SPA](#)

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Upcoming Events

Come visit IRH's exhibit or hear us present at the following upcoming events:

- [CORE Group Fall Meeting](#), Oct. 13-14, 2011, Washington, DC
- [APHA](#), Oct 29 - Nov. 2, 2011, Washington, DC
 - Presentation: "CycleTel™ in India: Effective Family Planning on Mobile Phones"
 - Poster: "Can a Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM) User Card improve knowledge, use and recording of LAM users in Guatemala?"
 - Come visit our exhibit, #2036!
- [American Evaluation Association Conference, Evaluation 2011](#), Nov. 2-5, 2011, Anaheim, California
 - Presentation: "Using most significant change methodology to evaluate the impact of scaling up of a health innovation in four countries"
- [Global Missions Health Conference](#), Nov. 10-12, 2011, Louisville, Kentucky
 - IRH is co-sponsoring an exhibit on Family Planning for Christians with our partner Christian Connections for International Health.
- [2011 International Conference on Family Planning](#), Nov. 29-Dec. 2, 2011 in Dakar, Senegal
 - Learn more about IRH's work during the conference by attending our oral presentations, posters, panels, and exhibit. More info coming soon.
 - IRH will host 2 auxiliary sessions:
 - [Bringing New People to Family Planning: The Broader Impact of Fertility Awareness Methods](#) (Monday, November 28, 2011)
 - [Technical Consultation on Very Young Adolescents](#) (Saturday, December 3, 2011) [see announcement below]

Announcements

[Technical Consultation on Very Young Adolescents \(VYAs\) in Dakar](#)

IRH and Save the Children will host a Technical Consultation on VYAs following the International Family Planning Conference in Dakar, Senegal. The consultation will explore 1) Why Very Young Adolescents and Sexual and Reproductive Health? 2) Can working with VYAs help us achieve MDG Goals of promoting gender equity and empowering women, reducing child mortality, and improving maternal health? 3) What works? What doesn't? RSVP for this auxiliary session and contact Beth Utterson, boutterson@savechildren.org. This consultation is free. Space is limited, so register early!

[Youth invited to attend Dakar conference](#)

The 2011 International Conference on Family Planning will include a theme focused on adolescents and youth, and they are urging participating organizations to bring young people between the ages of 18 and 25 to the conference to learn about research and best practices relevant to young people. Among other things, youth participants will be invited to take part in pre-conference, skills building activities to help them make the most of their experience. The organizers of the youth theme are currently seeking young people with previous experience in the field of family planning or adolescent sexual and reproductive health to serve as moderators and/or speakers at youth focused sessions at the conference. Young people who are selected to participate as speakers will have conference registration costs and travel covered, and will play an essential role in providing a youth perspective to the

program. The deadline for nominations is September 16, 2011. To be eligible for consideration, speakers must be nominated by an organization familiar with the young person's experience as well as their public speaking ability. For more information or to submit nominations, contact youth@fpconference2011.org.

[Family Planning as a Pro-Life Cause](#)

Last month, CARE International sponsored a trip to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for US Congressmen to learn about the vital and positive impact of US foreign aid on health. Among this visiting team was Washington Post contributor, Michael Gerson, who published his reactions in an article titled, *Family planning as a pro-life cause*. In this article, Gerson highlights the importance of access to voluntary family planning so women can space their births because in DRC "the complications of childbirth are as dangerous as the militias in the countryside."

Sincerely,
Your colleagues at IRH

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