

ANNEX A

STORY CARDS - SUPPORT

STORY CARDS - CHOICE

ACTIVITY CARDS





Responding to unmet family planning needs



Akouvi talks about family planning with her mother-in-law

SUPPORT 1



Akouvi and Nadège, two married sisters in the village, are talking in Akouvi's kitchen with Yuwa, their little sister.

Nanouba, Akouvi's mother-in-law, and Grace, her sister-in-law, are also there. They are happy to be together chatting because they do not see each other often.

After talking about everything and nothing, Akouvi tells the other women that she is happy to have beautiful healthy children. She explains that she and her husband want to make an effort to take good care of them.

Nanouba, her stepmother, says, "You gave three beautiful healthy children to Kouèchi and I am sure you will give him others. Four like I gave to my husband or five like your mother gave to your father." The younger women, Yuwa and Grace, give each other worried glances. They are not so sure they want five children. They want to know if it is possible to choose when to have children and to determine how many they want.

Akouvi knows that her stepmother is quite traditional

and that she wants many more grandchildren. This is the time to explain certain things even if Akouvi fears her reaction. She starts with a little hesitation, "Kouèchi and I have chosen to use family planning. This will allow us to have the number of children we want, when we want them, and also to wait until a child is older before giving him or her a little brother or sister. We talked about it and we made this decision together. We want Elias, our youngest, to grow strong and healthy first before we have another child."

Nadège also speaks. She says, "Gossou and I have been using a method for the past two years so that I do not fall pregnant. Until now, I was afraid to talk about this with other women, even my own sisters." She continues, "I learned about them by listening to the words of songs that address this topic. I knew of the importance of spacing births. There is a lot of support for family planning in the village, but people still think that it is shameful to talk about the use of these methods to avoid pregnancy. It is difficult to know who will support us. We do not want to hide anything, but there should not be a sense of shame about using these methods to avoid getting pregnant." In the end, Akouvi says, "Kouèchi and I ask for your support in this decision that we have taken."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In your opinion, why was Nadège afraid of telling other women that she is using a form of family planning?
2. Do you think that support from your own family would be important if you decide to use family planning? Why?
3. Why is talking about family planning important for the young women in this story?

Call to action!

🔊 Read the following text out loud :

Suppose you want to start using a family planning method that allows for the number of children you want, when you want to have them. Who in your family could support you in your decision? Try having a discussion with someone in your family who could participate in a conversation about these things. Can you have such a discussion with a non-married woman?



Responding to unmet family planning needs



Kouèchi can be a real man and practice family planning

SUPPORT 2



Kouèchi, Akouvi's husband, and Gossou, Nadège's husband, sit in their favorite meeting spot under a tree playing Dominos with their friends Charles and Thierry. They talk about their problems in working the field, and how hard it is to sell their corn in the village. They are having trouble providing for their families because of the lack of money.

At today's meeting of the association of corn producers, Thierry, a father of four, felt targeted when he was told that a good father should take care of his family.

Charles, who is married but does not have children yet, asks Thierry how to be a good father. Kouèchi and Gossou give their opinion.

Thierry is annoyed because someone talked about family planning as a means to better meet the needs of the family and be a good father. He does not agree, and does not understand how using family planning could make him a better father. He believes he will never be a well-respected man until he has several children. In addition, the other villagers will think that his wife can control him.

Kouèchi tells his friends that his wife and he decided to use family planning to space the birth of their next child. They talked to Gossou and his wife, who have been using family planning for over two years.

"It is true" answers Gossou, "we hid it from people for a while, but when Akouvi and Kouèchi talked about it, we also confessed about ourselves and encouraged them. I hope that you, my friends, will agree with the choice we made. We did not want you to hear from someone else."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Would you tell your friends if you decided to use family planning to avoid becoming pregnant? Explain.
2. What should the ideal man do to take care of his family?
3. What should the ideal woman do to take care of her family?
4. Can men play the role of women and women play the role of men?

Call to action!

- 🔊 Read the following text out loud :
Try to have a discussion with friends about what makes an ideal man or woman, and how these ideas impact what you do in life.



Responding to unmet family planning needs





Nanouba gets angry

She wants many more grandchildren

SUPPORT 3



After deciding with her husband to plan the births of their children, Akouvi informs her family and asks for their blessing.

Her mother-in-law Nanouba is angry. She does not like to see her son diminish himself by doing what his wife tells him. The villagers will think her son is weak, that his wife has imposed the use of this kind of method. They will make fun of him. A good wife should always listen to and respect the opinions and decisions of her husband.

Nanouba says, "You take good care of your children. Why would that change if you had another?"

Akouvi explains, "The birth of my last son tired me. I talked with Kouèchi and we decided to wait a few years before having another child so that I have the time and strength to take care of my children and husband. That is the duty of a good wife."

Nadège adds, "I felt the same fatigue after the birth of my last child." Both speak of the difficulties they have in raising their children. Grace, Akouvi's sister-in-law, asks how a method to prevent pregnancy can change that.

Nanouba says she heard that these methods are dangerous and make it so that women can no longer have children. "No", replies Akouvi "methods like the pill and condoms do not make women infertile."

Nanouba exclaims, "But you will not be able to get pregnant quickly."

Akouvi says, "If I stop the contraceptive method, I can get pregnant quickly once my body is ready. One of my friends who did the same thing to avoid getting pregnant until her baby got a little older just had a beautiful baby girl."

Nanouba is dissatisfied because she believes that God decides when a couple should have children and she wants many grandchildren in order to gain the villagers' respect and show them that her son was raised well.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. If you were Akouvi, what would you do to change Nanouba's opinion on using family planning?
2. Why do you think that using family planning makes Akouvi a good wife? A good mother?
3. How could the use of family planning change the life of a family? Explain.

Call to action!

🔊 Read the following text out loud :

If you want to use a family planning method for your family, to whom would you mention it? How would you ask for their support? Practice requesting support from someone.



Responding to unmet family planning needs



Kouèchi's friends do not help

SUPPORT 4



Kouèchi and his friends Gossou, Charles and Thierry sit in their favorite meeting spot under a tree playing Dominos. Kouèchi and Gossou think that using family planning can help them take better care of their family because it means fewer people to provide for and more time to save money between births. Charles and Thierry are shocked by this news.

Charles does not have children yet and for him these methods are dangerous. He says, "I have heard that it prevents our wives from having children." "No" says Kouèchi, "methods such as the pill or injections can disrupt a woman's period or lead to weight gain, but she can become pregnant quickly when she stops using them, usually after a few months. All these methods allow us to space births while having sex freely." Laughter erupts under the tree, showing that

other people are listening. Kouèchi feels embarrassed. He wonders what people will think of him.

A man says, laughing, "You want to keep your wife beautiful and strong so that she can satisfy you! Nobody wants a weak wife."

Kouèchi recounts his conversation with his wife. Thierry and Charles are surprised. "You talk about these things with your wife?" Gossou tells them, "I advised him to talk to his wife." They begin to make fun of Kouèchi and Gossou, saying they are lesser men to talk to their wives about such things. Gossou says, "And you? You do not talk about it with them?" Thierry becomes angry. "We are the men, we bring home money, we decide and they do what we say." He gets up and leaves.

Kouèchi is unsure about himself. What will others think of him? He thinks to himself, "I must be a real man, but I really like the idea of spacing births. But what if this man who courts my wife at the market manages to conquer her? She could have sex with him without fear of getting pregnant and I would never know!"

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How does encouragement from Akouvi to adopt family planning help Kouèchi to be a good husband?
2. Do the men in your community talk to their wives about such things? Why or why not?
3. Does the fact that a husband discusses family planning with his wife make him less of a man? Why or why not?

Call to action!

-  Read the following text out loud :
Think of a friend you enjoy talking with and try to talk to him or her about family planning this week.



Responding to unmet family planning needs



Nanouba realizes that family planning could help her family

SUPPORT 5



Akouvi and Nadège spoke of their decision to use family planning to Nanouba, Akouvi's mother-in-law, who left, upset, to speak with her friends. Grace, Akouvi's sister-in-law, asks after the departure of her mother: "Are the modern methods you mentioned really safe?" "Yes" answers Nadège, "they are effective. Some may have drawbacks for some women, but all in all, they are completely safe." Nadège says, "I just gained a little weight." Her sister Yuwa laughs and says "And I thought it was because your husband Gossou became rich!" Nadège answers, "Gossou and I are going to try to have our third child. We have saved enough money and our oldest will soon go to school. We are ready now."

Grace and Yuwa ask more questions about married life and how to speak to their husbands

about the subject of children. Yuwa is very interested because she is afraid that she will be married to an older man.

Meanwhile, Nanouba meets with her friends at the market. She recounts to them what her daughter-in-law told her. Ami, her best friend, calms her and explains that if Akouvi uses an effective method that allows her to space their births, it means that life will be easier for Nanouba. She will not have to watch Akouvi's children as often because Akouvi is sick or pregnant. She also says that Kouèchi will have more time to work the field and earn a lot of money to take care of his parents in their old age. Nanouba starts to better understand the value of family planning and asks questions about the benefits of modern methods. In the end, she says, "I think that this discussion could be useful for my other daughters and daughters-in-law." The women discuss how to start talking about these things with their sons to help their daughters-in-law.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

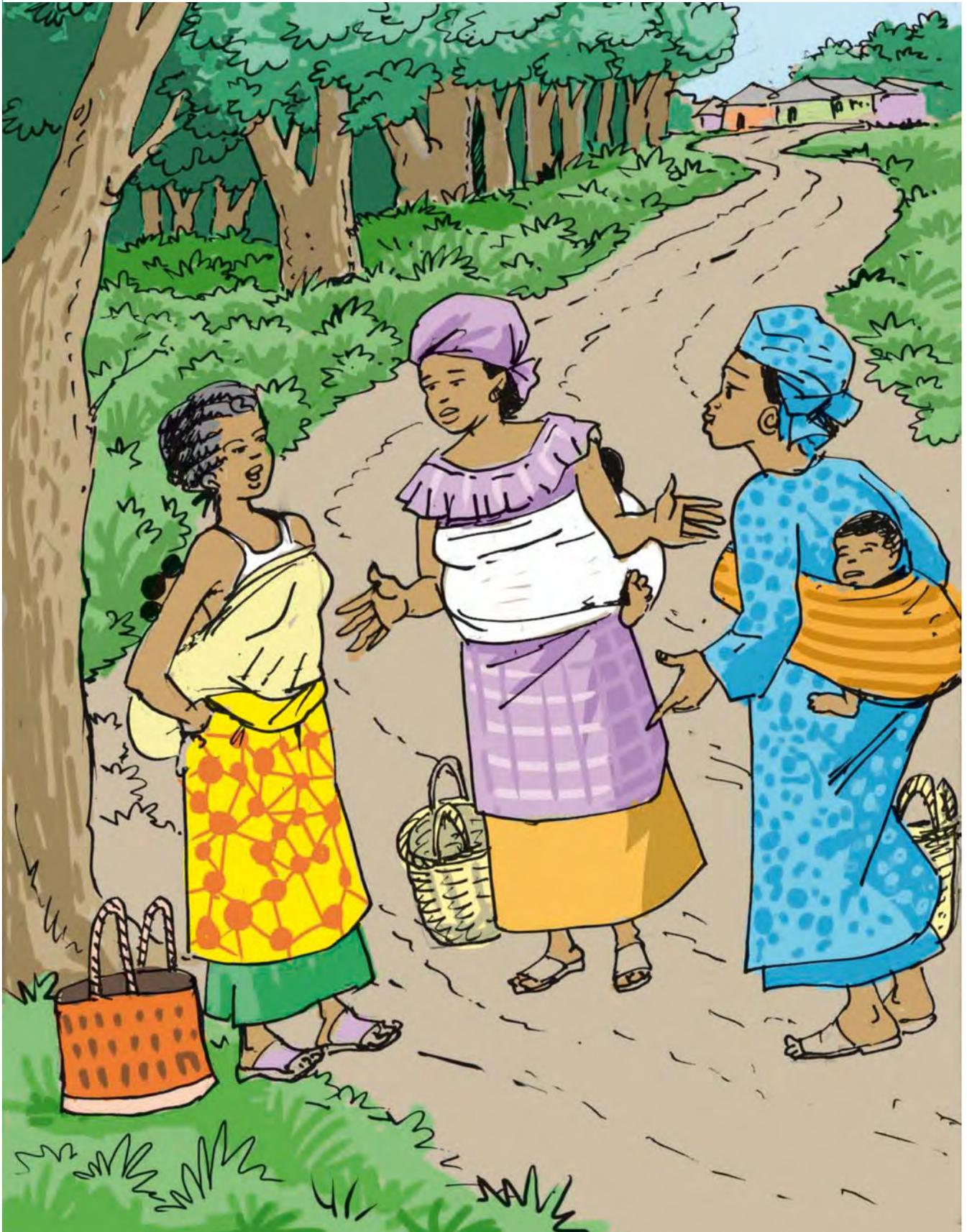
1. Do mothers-in-law discuss with their sons or daughters about the family's well being? Why or why not?
2. Do you think younger girls should listen and participate in conversations about family planning? Why?
3. How do families like those in the story differ from the rest of the community in the way that they accept family planning?

Call to action!

-  Read the following text out loud :
Choose several people from among your friends and family that support family planning, and encourage them to talk with other people about the benefits of family planning.



Responding to unmet family planning needs



Women in the village run the risk of pregnancy but don't know it

SUPPORT 6



Three women, Julie, Fifonsi, and Ananou, their children on their back, are on the way to the market. They chat while walking.

Fifonsi says to the others, "Let us stop under this tree for a little talk. Julie, what is your secret? I see that your child is almost one and a half years old. How do you and your husband manage to avoid an unwanted pregnancy?"

Julie shakes her head and breathes deeply. "Do you not see my difficulty? My husband is not here anymore. He rarely comes to the village; so we rarely have the opportunity to have sex."

Fifonsi responds, "I am sorry for your difficulties. I do not have that problem. I regularly make love to my husband, but I cannot get pregnant at the moment because my periods have not returned since the birth of my daughter Ahouefa. In addition, I use the traditional belt method."

Ananou says, "I decided with my husband to have a total of four children, each three years apart. Moreover, we know that I can get pregnant easily, although I continue to breastfeed my baby and I also have not seen my period return. Because of this, my husband accompanied me to talk about our possible choices with the midwife, and I am using pills. The midwife also explained to us that traditional methods are not as safe as the modern methods available in health centers."

She continues, "You two are taking unnecessary risks. With the cost of living today, it is important for us women to talk with our husbands in order to make responsible decisions about family planning. Julie, what would you do if a pregnancy occurred, perhaps with sickness? You are weak, and you cannot even work to repay your micro credit. And you Fifonsi, using the belt, if you fall pregnant before your periods resume, what will you do?"

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Why are Julie and Fifonsi at risk?
2. If you were in Julie's place - you want to have sex with your husband when he returns from a trip without getting pregnant - what would you do to ensure you do not get pregnant?
3. Can you talk to your husband about how you might want to space the births of your children? Why? Or why not?

Call to action!

 Read the following text out loud :

Go talk to your husband and other friends about the risks a woman faces if she uses a traditional method or if she gave birth but doesn't have her period yet.



Responding to unmet family planning needs



Rumors about how family planning can kill

SUPPORT 7



Afi, the wife of Edah, receives a visit from her friend Akoko, who came to ask her about a problem.

"Hello Afi!" greets Akoko.

"Hello Akoko" says Afi. "How are you?" Then, seeing the worried face of her friend, Afi shouts, "Eehh! Is something

wrong? What is going on?"

Akoko responds, "I have been using injectable methods for four months, and I noticed certain changes that scare me. I even had my period twice this month with lots of blood for several days. All this scares me. Maybe my body is not functioning properly. What if I cannot have more children? I only have three."

Afi says, "Me too, I had strange periods and a lot of blood during the first five months I used family planning methods, but I have not had any problems since the seventh month, and I have been using this method for two years."

Edah, Afi's husband was nearby and heard

everything. He says, "Oh! Family planning methods cause problems for women? So that is why Afi told me when she started using family planning that she was not ready for sex?"

"I suggested that she discontinue the modern methods and use a traditional one like the ring or belt that work well and do not create problems for women. But Afi reassured me. She said that it is normal for small problems to occur at the beginning, and that it is manageable."

"Health workers helped us to manage these issues and the midwife explained that Afi could try another method if the problems persisted."

"It is true" Afi added, "but not all women have the same problems. For example my friend Olivia has never had a problem and she has been using family planning for two years. Even the fear of not having children that you mentioned Akoko, people say that, but it is not true."

"The living proof is here in our neighborhood. Look at that lady Assiba coming towards us. She had the child she is carrying on her back after using family planning for five years. When she and her husband decided to have another child they stopped using the method. She got pregnant four months after she stopped using family planning."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What concerns Akoko based on this experience with family planning?
2. How did Afi and her husband Edah manage their difficulties when they began using family planning?
3. What lessons can you draw from Assiba's experience?

Call to action!

🔊 Read the following text out loud :

Find a woman who uses a family planning method, but with whom you have never discussed the topic. Ask about and discuss her experience. Did she have minor problems? How did she manage them?

As a man, discuss your family planning experiences with other men who used such methods with their wives. How did they help their wives manage the situation?

ANNEX A

STORY CARDS - SUPPORT

STORY CARDS - CHOICE

ACTIVITY CARDS





Responding to unmet family planning needs



Akouvi wants to talk to her husband

CHOICE 1



Akouvi, Kouèchi's wife, is a mother of three children. She sits and weeps silently because her health and that of her family frightens her. She wants to wait before having another child, but she does not know how.

Even though she did go to school, she is a smart woman who has a good reputation in the village and in her extended family. People often come to see her to discuss their family problems, but now it is she who wants to talk to someone.

She goes to talk with his sister Nadège, who always has good advice. Akouvi knows that her sister will not tell anyone about what she asks. Nadège has always helped her during difficult times of childbirth, illness and caring for her children. Nadège is the oldest daughter in the family. She is married and has two children.

Nadège sees that Akouvi is unhappy and asks her what's wrong. "You know I love my husband and I am happy with him. You know I love my children and I want to have another child..." says Akouvi, "but my husband Kouèchi does not want to wait and I am almost certain that it is my mother-in-law who is pushing him to have another child immediately." She continues, "Elias, my youngest child, cannot even walk yet and is barely a year old." She stops. "I want to take care of my children. I want to be healthy so I can be a good mother and a good wife" she says. "I am no longer strong. After my first two pregnancies I was stronger than now. I get tired a lot more. I even have problems just sweeping and cooking."

Akouvi continues, "I learned that there are effective methods to keep me from getting pregnant too soon after giving birth. I want to talk with Kouèchi about this, but I do not know what to do. I am afraid that he will get angry with me if I talk to him about that. I do not want him to be angry with me, I love him and I want to do what he wants, but I also want to be healthy, to be able to take good care of us and be a good wife." She stops talking and begins crying again.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Why might it be hard for couples to talk about these issues?
2. Do you feel you can talk with your husband or wife about the use of family planning? Why?
3. Who could help you to have these conversations?

Call to action!

🔊 Read the following text out loud :

Think about what you would do if a friend or family member came to talk to you about their fear of speaking to their spouse about family planning. Try to talk about family planning with a friend this week.



Responding to unmet family planning needs



Kouèchi does not want to talk about family planning with Akouvi

CHOICE 2



Kouèchi is Akouvi's husband. His best friend Gossou is Nadège's husband. They are farmers. In the last story, Akouvi did not know what to do. **She asked Nadège for advice on how to talk to Kouèchi about how not to get**

pregnant too soon after giving birth. Kouèchi and Gossou return from the fields and are standing in front of a vegetable kiosk. Kouèchi says everything is expensive now and it is hard to care of his family.

Kouèchi also tells Gossou that his wife's problem scares him. He sees that she is not as healthy as before. He sees that she cannot perform the housework as before. He wonders what's wrong. He thinks she is pregnant, but he is unsure. **This idea of pregnancy makes him happy. He thinks his father and uncles would be very happy to learn that his wife is pregnant.** He is happy at the thought of celebrating with his friends and hearing the praise of his mother.

Gossou listens to his friend talk about his wife. He knows Kouèchi is often stubborn, especially with regards to his wife and the respect that she owes him. Gossou raises other questions about Akouvi's health. He asks the age of their youngest child Elias and if he can walk yet. **When Gossou asks Kouèchi to discuss with his wife to see if she wants to have another child now, Kouèchi gets angry.** He is silent and will not even look at Gossou.

Kouèchi finally says, **"You know, I do not need to talk to her about such things, because we agreed on that! Why ask what she thinks, when I know what she thinks!** After all, it is my responsibility to take care of my family. **What will others think if they learn that it was my wife who told me what to do?** Why would she not want to have another child with me? If God says it is time to have a child, then it is time! My wife is always trying to have children for me. And she knows that I have needs. God gave me three children and now a fourth. **Who are we to question God's will and wisdom?"**

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What would your friends do in this situation?
2. How can your friends get you to change your opinions?
3. How do your friends discuss difficult topics like these with their husband or wife?

Call to action!

Read the following text out loud :

Think of a person who could help you start a conversation with your husband or wife about how many children to have and when to have them.



Responding to unmet family planning needs



Akouvi prepares to talk to Kouèchi

CHOICE 3



Akouvi and Kouèchi are a young couple from the village. Nadège Akouvi's sister and Gossou's wife. The two men are friends. Akouvi does not want to get pregnant so soon after giving birth. She told Nadège this, but is still afraid to talk to her husband Kouèchi. Gossou advised Kouèchi to ask Akouvi if she wants to have more children, but Kouèchi got angry.

Akouvi tells herself that she should do what her husband wants. But Nadège believes it is important for her to know what her husband thinks, and also for him to know what his wife thinks. She wants to help Akouvi to talk to Kouèchi, and asks her what she is afraid of if she talks to her husband about family planning.

"I too wanted to choose a good method to have as many children as we wanted when we wanted them," said Nadège. "I started by talking with our mother, whom I trust, and who supports me, as you do. Together we listed all the benefits of using the pill, injections, or other contraceptives. We also discussed the benefits of waiting several years between pregnancies. It was helpful for me and my husband Gossou."

"Mother also told me that despite what people say, she does not know any woman who had trouble getting pregnant when she stopped using methods to avoid pregnancy. In addition, I saw that my periods were heavier when I started to take the injection. But after a few months that changed. Since Gossou and I decided together to use family planning, we were both able to wait until things improved. I also knew that if we needed another method, we use CycleBeads. We could also avoid sex on the days I was most at risk of becoming pregnant because we could talk together.

"Mother and I also talked about the role of God in having children. We discussed how God gave us the intelligence to help ourselves so that we can better help Him. 'Help yourself and heaven will help you,' " adds Nadège. Then, Nadège and Akouvi wonder if people will gossip about them in the village because they chose these methods. Together, they make a list of the good and bad things people say about these methods.

Akouvi and Kouèchi must reflect on all this and decide whether they will use family planning. Nadège tells her sister how she should talk with Kouèchi and what she should say.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What positive things could you say about choosing an effective method to avoid falling pregnant?
2. How could you start talking about these things with your husband/wife?
3. What other members of your family could help you with a discussion like that?

Call to action!

🔊 Read the following text out loud :

Give some reasons why family planning might be good for you. If you are afraid of the risks of contraceptives, visit your clinic for more information.



Responding to unmet family planning needs



Akouvi is brave and talks to Kouèchi

CHOICE 4



Akouvi explained to Nadège that she did not want to get pregnant so soon after giving birth. They also discussed why Akouvi should talk to her husband about family planning. Now, Akouvi has decided to talk to her husband. When Kouèchi comes home at night, Akouvi tries talking to him about using methods that work, and which allow them to have their next child at the right time. Kouèchi is surprised and angry as a result. He pretends not to understand what she means, and starts talking about his difficult day. Akouvi tries to talk him again and he gets even angrier.

"What... are... you... talking... about?" he shouts. "Do you not want more children? It's God who decides, it's not our choice. God will give us a

child when he wants us to have one." Kouèchi adds, "You should do what I ask and not ask me questions!"

"Please can we talk? I fear for us, for you, for me and for our children" says Akouvi to calm him. "Don't we both want what is best for us and for them?" she asks. "What do you want Kouèchi?"

Kouèchi, very angry, shouts, "Well, if you do not want to have children, I will take another wife who will give me the children I need." He leaves the house very upset. He has not answered his wife's questions. He was afraid. He wants to know what she is hiding. Why does Akouvi ask him such things? Has she set her eyes on another man? He has seen other men look at her at weddings and parties. Akouvi is also upset. Kouèchi did not listen to her. He did not answer her questions. For her this is not normal. Akouvi is afraid that the children of another woman will displace her children.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Could this situation happen here?
2. What can happen if a woman disagrees with her husband about using family planning?
3. How can you solve a problem like this with your husband or wife? Who could help you resolve it?

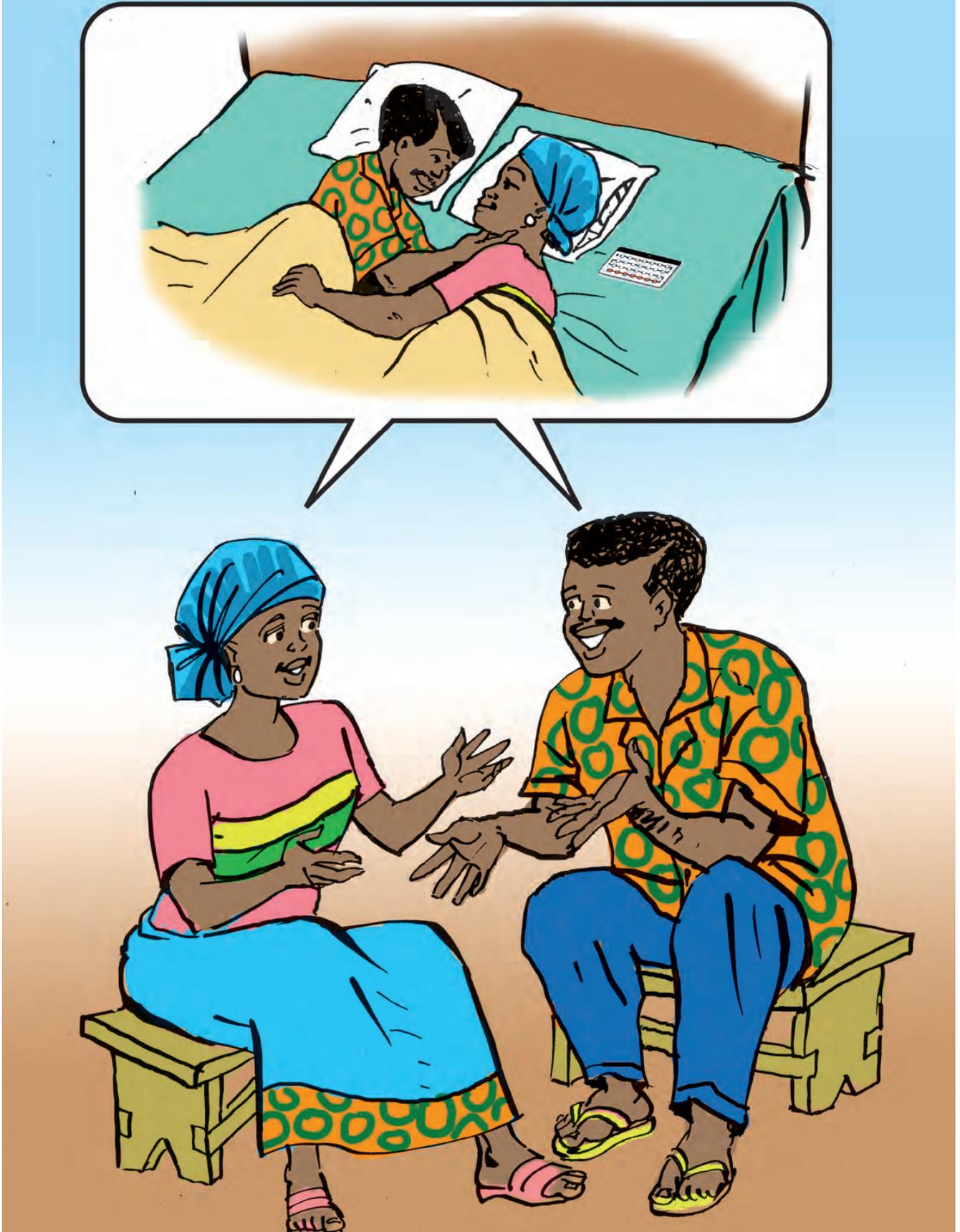
Call to action!

🔊 Read the following text out loud :

It can be difficult to talk to your husband or wife about family planning. Now, we have talked a lot about how to discuss these things. Think about talking to your husband or wife about how many children you want and if you want to do family planning.



Responding to unmet family planning needs



Kouèchi and Akouvi understand that they can get along!

CHOICE 5



Akouvi decided to tell her husband Kouèchi that she wants use a family planning method. Kouèchi got very angry and refused to talk to her about it. The next day, Kouèchi and his friend Gossou talked about what happened. Gossou asked Kouèchi to talk to his wife. He told him that he often speaks with his wife Nadège about their family and asks her to share her thoughts too. Both men stated why they find these talks useful.

After a few days, Kouèchi gave this a lot of thought. On the one hand, he is afraid that he will not be seen as a real man if he lets his wife talk about "such things". He also still wants to have more children, especially a son. But, he begins to understand the advantages of a smaller family. He already sees that it is good when children are not very close in age because this allows women to regain their strength. He begins to understand that with the use of family planning, he can have everything he wants.

Kouèchi comes home to talk to Akouvi and asks her why she wants to use a family planning method. He tells her he was afraid of what others might think of them, especially that they might wonder if she is cheating on him. He does not know what religious leaders think of family planning and he does not know much about it himself. Moreover, he really

wants to have another son and he heard that Akouvi would no longer be able to get pregnant if she uses family planning.

Akouvi tells him what she learned from her sister Nadège. She says that people spread the rumor that women can't get pregnant after they use family planning. However, women who stop using family planning methods still get pregnant six months to a year later. Kouèchi is surprised to hear these things he did not know. Akouvi is also surprised to learn that her husband thinks about using family planning. They have never talked about these things before.

They each talk about what they would like and what is important to them. They talk about the advantages for their family in having the number of children they want, when they want them. As benefits, they determine that it allows them to feed their family, clothe their children and send them all to school. Kouèchi also sees that Akouvi would be very healthy and would not be as tired. They remember the old saying "two heads are better than one."

Akouvi asks Kouèchi to seek out more information before choosing the method they will use. They decide to ask Akugbe, who works at the village health center. Akugbe is very good at her job and will not lie to them. They want to ask her questions about different family planning with family planning.

Kouèchi and Akouvi decide to go see Akugbe the next day.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In your community, can a man talk about these things with his wife?
2. Can a woman talk about these things with her husband?
3. Could you talk about these things with your husband or wife?

Call to action!

🔊 Read the following text out loud :

If you decide to use an effective method to have the number of children you want, when you want them, go together to the clinic to find out more about different methods and those that work best for you.



Responding to unmet family planning needs



Akouvi and Kouèchi go to learn more about how to have the number of children they want, when they want them

CHOICE 6



With advice from friends and family, Akouvi and Kouèchi finally talked about family planning methods. Each of them listened to the ideas of the other. The next day, Kouèchi and Akouvi go see Akugbe who works in the village health center.

There they begin to regret their decision to come to her. They are afraid of being seen by neighbors who might gossip about them. They are just about to leave when Akugbe tells them to come in. Akouvi and Kouèchi explain why they came to see her.

Akugbe is very happy to talk with them, and she is happy that they came to see her together. She talks about different methods. They ask many questions about each method and how they can affect Akouvi's health. They also want to know when, at the earliest, they will be able to have another child after they stop using the methods. Akugbe responds, "There are several methods that allow you to be pregnant as soon as you stop using them, such as condoms, the pill and the IUD. But if you choose the injection or the implant (which goes under the skin) it will take you a few months (six months to a year) before you can get pregnant. You can still have a child once you

stop using them, but it will take a few months for your body to be ready."

They also asked about the rumors circulating about these methods. Akouvi said she heard that these methods could cause problems for the woman and prevent her from getting pregnant after. Akugbe replies, "These methods are not dangerous. They do not cause diseases and do not prevent you from having children later. They do not cause twins. Sometimes injections or implants can cause your periods to become heavier or lighter. But this change does not last and disappears by itself within six months. In any case, you can come see me if you have a problem and we can address it together. If you decide you do not want children, there is also a method that a man or woman can use to never have children. These are operations. It is for you two to choose the method that you find the best for you." Akouvi and Kouèchi ask Akugbe where they can buy contraceptives and how much they cost.

Akouvi and Kouèchi now know what it takes to choose or not to choose a family planning method that works. They also know how to choose the best method for them. They now wonder if they will use a method and which one it will be.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important for a husband and wife go together to ask about family planning methods?
2. Why is it difficult for a husband and wife to go see a health worker in the village?
3. How can the villagers help men and women take action to have the number of children they want, when you want them?

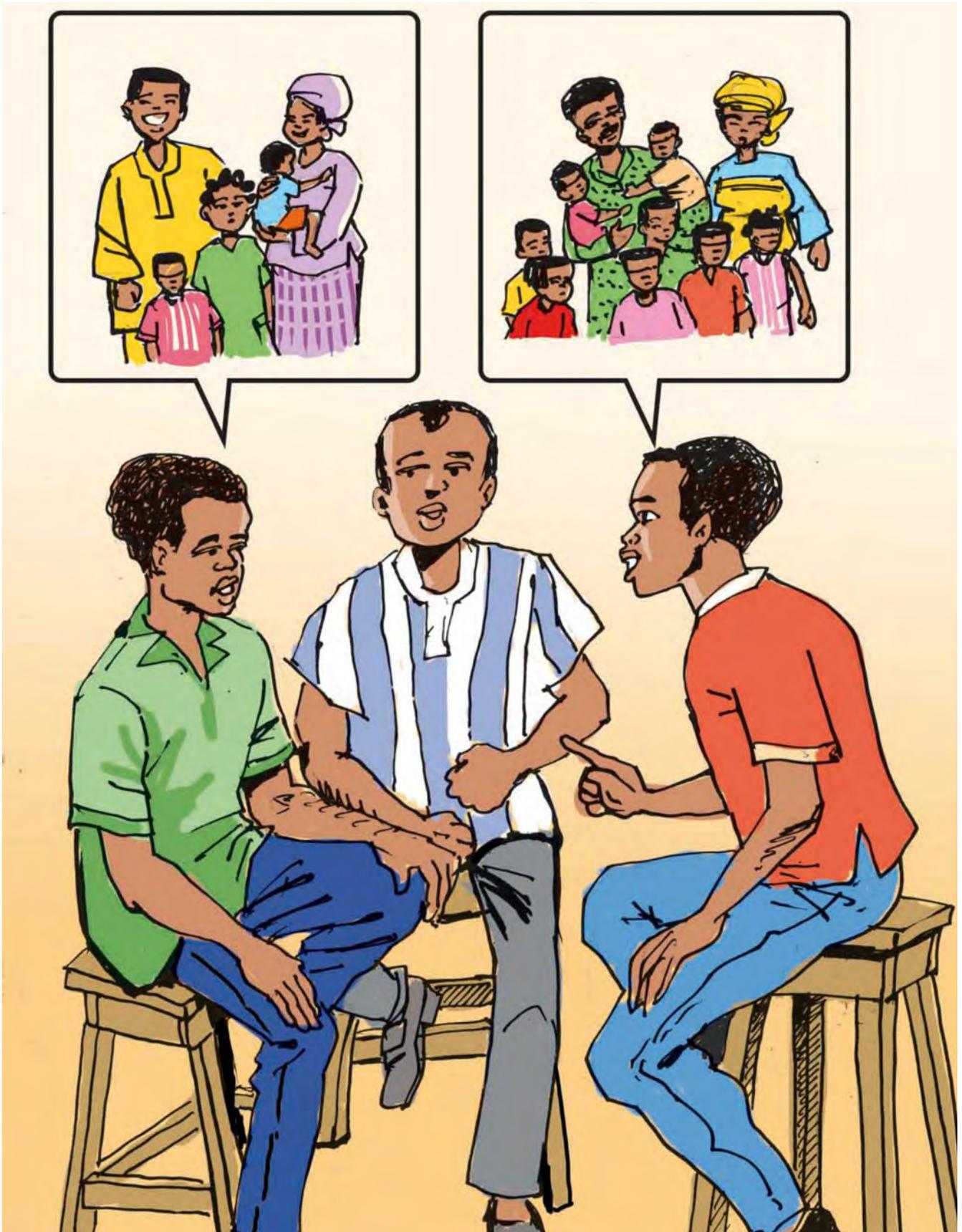
Call to action!

🔊 Read the following text out loud :

You are already convinced it is good to use a method to have the number of children you want, when you want them. How can you let other people, who do not yet know about these things, to start to think of family planning as a good thing?

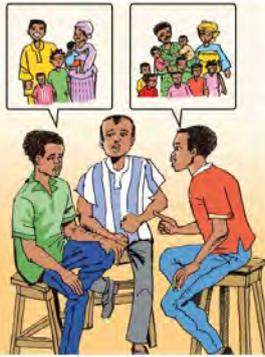


Responding to unmet family planning needs



Family planning is also men's business

CHOICE 7



Bio comes home after a discussion with friends about the benefits of family planning. He invites his wife Baké to discuss.

"My dear Baké" he says, "since we decided we do not want to have a child right now, I want to talk to you about it."

Baké responds, "Are you bringing up this issue of family planning again? I was told these methods makes women infertile, and I'm afraid you will leave me and take another wife when I am no longer able to bear children."

"No Baké, I will never leave you," promises Bio. "I was just thinking about our family and the challenges we face in taking good care of our children. What do you think? I just had the same discussion with my friends Anago and Koffi, whose wives are currently using family planning."

"You know, family planning allowed them to space births. They were able to save more money for their household and ensure education for all their children. In addition we will be able to have sex freely, and all we will need to do is to stop using the family planning method when we want to have another child."

"Really!" says Baké. "I never knew that there are women in my neighborhood who use family planning. Bio, are you sure I will not have a problem using a family planning method?"

Baké thinks for a moment, and then says, "Okay Bio, I want to choose a method too. What are we going to do? "

Bio responds, "When you are ready, I will take you on my motorcycle and we will visit the midwife for an explanation. We will choose a family planning method that works for us."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Can you engage in a conversation like this in your household? Why or why not?
2. How can men raise the topic of family planning with their wives?
3. What actions can men take to support family planning in the community or with their friends?

Call to action!

-  Read the following text out loud :
- Men, go chat with friends and other men about the benefits of family planning. Women, encourage your husband to discuss family planning with his friends.*