

# Implementing Pragati:

## Community Games to Increase Fertility Awareness And Family Planning Use



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Fertility Awareness  
for Community  
Transformation

# IMPLEMENTING PRAGATI:

## Community games to increase fertility awareness and family planning use

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Pragati and the FACT Project	1
The Pragati Approach	2
This Handbook	3
<b>Overview of the Pragati Approach</b>	<b>5</b>
Fertility Awareness and Family Planning Side Effects & Social Norms	5
Who do you work with and why?	6
<b>Guidance for Program Implementation and Support</b>	<b>8</b>
1. Community Mobilization	8
2. Orientations	12
3. Game Play	14
4. Supporting Program Activities in the Community	17
<b>The Pragati Games</b>	<b>21</b>
Implementation Guidance	21
Facilitating Reflection and Discussion	24
<b>Chapters and Game-Specific Guidance</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>FACT Project Resource List</b>	<b>47</b>
Resources for Community Mobilization	47
Orientation Materials	47
Materials for Supervision and Program Support	48
<b>Annexes</b>	<b>49</b>

# INTRODUCTION

## *Pragati and the FACT Project*

In Nepal today, while fertility rates are slowly decreasing, the average woman still has more children than she desires. Women from marginalized group – such as Janajati, Dalit, Chhetri, and Muslim communities – face higher barriers to access health care and information about fertility awareness and reproductive health. Women still lack comprehensive information and access to wider choices of family planning methods and conversations about fertility, reproductive decision-making, and family planning are deeply taboo in Nepali culture.

The Fertility Awareness for Community Transformation (FACT) Project in Nepal targeted marginalized communities with low family planning use and high unmet need. FACT's intervention addressed knowledge gaps around fertility and family planning methods, as well as the social and gender barriers that prevent open discussion of family planning and reproductive health. These barriers contribute to unmet need for family planning, particularly among marginalized communities in Nepal.



The project began with a “Human-centered Design” process involving members of marginalized communities and district level stakeholders to identify the barriers they experience and how to best address those barriers. Priority target groups among marginalized communities were selected based on participants’ recommendations, as were preferred

promoters and platforms to reach the target groups. Project activities were implemented in five districts: Bajura, Nuwakot, Pyuthan, Siraha, and Rupandehi. With the end in mind, the implementation package was designed to be as simple as possible and research was conducted to provide evidence and guidance for scale up.

Pragati or “Fertility Awareness for Quality of Life” is a toolkit of games that empowers local female community health volunteers (FCHVs), health facility staff (HFS), and local champions to bring conversations about fertility awareness to their families and communities. Through these local change-makers, Pragati targets people aged 15-25, postpartum women, newly married couples, women with migrant husbands, and women and men from marginalized communities to facilitate discussion around fertility, family planning, and gender and social norms.

## *The Pragati Approach*

The approach addresses three elements associated with family planning behavior:



Central to the FACT Project and the Pragati intervention is the project’s goals to increase individuals’ overall knowledge of fertility and family planning use.

**Fertility Awareness: actionable information about fertility throughout the life cycle and the ability to apply this knowledge to one’s own circumstances and needs**

Through games and group discussions, the interactive modules of Pragati address fertility awareness, provide information on family planning methods and side effects, and create an opportunity to reflect on social norms around son preference, delaying first birth, and couple communication.

More broadly, the games create platforms for personal and public reflection and discussions, which aim to address the underlying social and gender norms that negatively influence family planning use. The games raise issues identified as normative barriers to family planning. Participants have a chance to reflect upon personal values and assumptions about the social norms in local communities. These activities become a vehicle

for diffusing new attitudes and values through communities by publicly opening up discussion of values that may deviate from traditional social norms. Through this approach, influential community members are purposefully engaged to facilitate acceptance and diffusion of new values. As people begin to recognize inconsistencies between traditional values and hopes they may have for their future or that of their children, both personal values and social norms can begin to shift.

When considering this approach, there are two distinct features within Pragati that differ from a more traditional Information, Education, and Communication approach. The first is a dependence on facilitating reflective conversation and the second is a coaching and diffusion approach through community facilitators and promoters.

**Questions, Not Messages:** To facilitate reflective discussions, promoters need to be skilled in asking open questions, managing differing opinions, and allowing space for people to come to their own conclusions. This goes beyond transmitting information: it encourages the personal reflection around community norms that can then lead to changes in individual behavior.

**Coaching promoters:** Interpersonal coaching and feedback based on direct observations are essential to facilitate reflective discussions in the community.

During implementation, community health volunteers, champions selected from mothers groups, and male champions were identified to facilitate the Pragati games. A combination of project staff and HFS provided monitoring and coaching. As support for Pragati spread, other platforms such as schools, agriculture groups, savings groups, and adolescent groups were also utilized. Additional influential community members such as teachers provided support to promoters to model shifts in attitudes and behaviors and to reinforce diffusion.

## ***This Handbook***

This handbook is designed to provide guidance to health officials, NGO or INGO staff, donors, or other stakeholders who may be interested in integrating the Pragati games into other community activities, or in adapting the games into other programs such as nutrition. As such, while the manual describes ways the games and strategies were implemented during the FACT Project, it can also be a foundation for further adaptation and strategy development.

The manual describes five primary interactive games focused on:

- the benefits of family planning and fertility awareness
- information about family planning methods, side effects, and common misconceptions about family planning in Nepal

- community and social norms that negatively influence reproductive health.

These games can be played in small or medium single- or mixed-sex groups in communities, health centers, and homes. Many of the games use the included set of flash cards, while others use common household items. The full set of cards includes game cards, game instructions, and chapter cards with key messages and facilitation guidance for implementers.

In addition to the implementation instructions for each of the five core Pragati games, this handbook also contains tools for orienting, coaching, and empowering community health volunteers and champions. There is also guidance around community mobilization, engaging men, and identifying influential community members for support.

The annexes of this handbook include instructions for playing four additional games, as well as a Resource List and links to more detailed guidance and instruction around topics that are touched upon in this handbook.

# OVERVIEW OF THE PRAGATI APPROACH

## *Fertility Awareness and Family Planning Side Effects & Social Norms*

Prior to the development of the Pragati package, IRH and Save the Children conducted formative research in the five pilot districts to understand challenges impeding family planning use. Formative research found that many men and women had gaps in their understanding of fertility and that their use of family planning methods was influenced by unsubstantiated fears of method side-effects. It also confirmed that social norms and pressures drive many couples to have children before they are prepared to, or continue having children until giving birth to a boy. Discomfort with discussing fertility or reproductive health issues in couples and families also exacerbates misunderstanding and lack of shared decision-making. Experience during implementation confirmed these findings.

Pragati increases understanding of fertility and addresses gaps in family planning knowledge and the social/gender norms which inhibit family planning uptake. By increasing awareness about both female and male fertility and how a woman's fertility changes during her menstrual cycle and throughout her reproductive life, people have more knowledge to help them achieve their reproductive goals. Based on formative research findings, the family planning content focuses on the realities of method side effects – and managing side effects – and corrects misconceptions about family planning methods (for example, that using family planning before the first pregnancy leads to infertility or that family planning methods such as pills accumulate in the body). Finally, Pragati addresses the social and gender norms that may make it difficult for people to access family planning even if they would like to.

The intervention depends on initiating individual and community reflection on knowledge, values, and norms through game play and reflective discussions. However, it also depends on subsequent diffusion of these reflections with others in the community. To accomplish this, Pragati

reaches additional people in the community as the initial games generate discussion with friends and family, creating “buzz” around new and different ways to think about reproductive health.

Previous studies and research by IRH and Save the Children identified subgroups of women – including Dalit, Janajati, Chhetri, and Muslim women – who face disproportionate barriers to family planning services due to social norms limiting access and utilization. It is our hope that the Pragati games and community diffusion strategies, as described above, get integrated into service delivery to these groups and beyond.

## ***Who do you work with and why?***

The FACT Project designed interventions that would engage individuals in learning fertility awareness and family planning fundamentals, and support application of this information in their lives. It is important that the interventions are integrated in existing community groups/structures in a way that facilitates easy diffusion through social networks to reach a “tipping point” for fertility awareness and family planning acceptability in the community.

Pragati identifies women in mothers groups and men to serve as “champions” and lead the games. Champions work with community health volunteers to implement the games in mothers groups and other community groups, with a particular focus on groups in marginalized communities. Given that men were identified as key reproductive health decision-makers during the formative research, identifying male champions was an important element of the strategy. The pilot worked with the health services delivery structure to cultivate interest and support for these community activities, as well as to link for referrals.

While Pragati primarily linked with the health system under the FACT Project, there were significant opportunities for linking the approach to other systems such as secondary schools, finance and savings initiatives, or agriculture programs. These alternative platforms may be more effective for reaching sub-groups such as youth or men. Regardless of the “entry point,” it is important to identify a source for family planning methods and counseling for referrals.

If health groups are the primary entry point for implementing Pragati games, the following players might be considered for mobilization, orientation, and follow-up. However, it is important to reiterate that the capacity and engagement of interested groups and promoters is more important than the sector they “belong” to.

- **Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHV):** In Nepal, these community-level volunteers provide and promote family planning methods and other health related activities with a wide range of engagement and capacity.

- **Health Mothers Group Champions (HMG Champions):** Members are selected from existing mothers groups to enhance the activities of the FCHVs with these groups.
- **Male Champions:** Male promoters are identified with the goal of purposefully reaching other men. They can be selected from groups such as the Ward Citizen Forum, the health facility management team, or social mobilizers.
- **Local Health governance structures such as Health Facility Operation and Management Committee (HFOMC) or Palika:** These groups are often influential in both the health system and the community. Individuals who are part of these structures can coordinate links with community priorities and help assure health service delivery.
- **Health facility staff (HFS):** Effective service delivery, including family planning counseling, is an essential complement to Pragati mobilization at the community level. HFS can also help coach FCHVs and reinforce games in the community. Their capacity can be reinforced through the comprehensive family planning curriculum (used to train providers country wide) and basic counseling training.

# GUIDANCE FOR PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND SUPPORT

The Pragati games address family planning knowledge, fertility awareness, and associated social and gender norms in a comprehensive way at the individual, household, and community levels. This chapter offers step-by-step guidance for initiating, implementing, and supporting Pragati games in the community. There are four essential steps for implementation:

1.

Community  
Mobilization

2.

Orientations

3.

Game Play

4.

Supporting  
Program Activities  
in the Community

Each step is described in more detail in the supporting documents included in the appendices.

## ***1. Community Mobilization***

This step involves developing an initial familiarity with the community in order to identify key stakeholders, influential community members, youth,

or men. This process makes it possible to identify key stakeholders who might become Pragati promoters and/or play other supportive roles. Mobilization also helps develop an understanding of potential networks for diffusing Pragati concepts more widely throughout the community. In urban areas, it is important to remember that people's work place may be an important place to find them.

## **Community Mobilization Guidance**

The success of community programs depends on identifying the right people to work with, and an understanding of how influential members and networks enhance acceptance and adoption of proposed change, which in turn depends on effective community mobilization. With Pragati's focus on marginalized communities and/or sub-groups such as youth for whom there may be particular barriers to access and use of family planning, this offers the basis for prioritizing partners, groups, and stakeholders.

## **Reaching Youth**

While in Nepal, all women of reproductive age (15-49) are supposed to be part of mothers groups, this may not actually be the case. In many groups, older women tend to be more active. To reach younger women ages 15-25, the project proposed that a younger, literate woman from the mothers group also be selected as champions who would support the community health volunteers in conducting games and also conduct games with young women, whenever possible, in their community. Since many women are already married by the age of 15, these younger champions helped encourage other young married women to participate in the mothers groups as well as other groups. Alternate strategies – such as playing games and hosting discussions through schools – were used to reach unmarried youth.

During orientations, both community health volunteers and champions were encouraged to seek out opportunities to play games with young men and women (15-25), or to include them in existing groups when possible. Project staff reached out to schools to encourage game-playing with youth. Youth are also encouraged to seek additional information or services at the health center, and to share their experiences and learnings from group sessions with friends and family members to diffuse fertility awareness, family planning messages, and reflection on social and gender norms to other community members.

## Engaging and Working with Men

A detailed guidance document is available in the Resource List.

Because men are often key decision makers in the family, as well as key determiners of social norms more broadly, male engagement is a key component of this strategy to enhance family planning utilization, particularly in marginalized communities.

Pragati seeks to include men in conversations about family planning, fertility, gender and social norms, and reproductive health with their spouses, family members, and peers. Through this involvement, the project aims to influence both family planning utilization and the social and gender norms associated with reproductive health.

A few parameters can guide the male engagement strategy:

- The goal of involving men is to encourage more balanced conversation and participation with both men and women in reproductive health, and not at the expense of women's participation and voice.
- Consistent with "reflection and action" (rather than a messaging approach to behavior change), the Pragati approach encourages men to explore and reflect on gender, social norms, and reproductive health issues with their peers and in their communities.
- Given the number of absent men and husbands in Nepal (due to migration for work), it may be important to adjust the strategy to also reach migrant men.

The FACT Project experimented with different strategies to identify and involve men in playing games in their communities. New implementers are encouraged to be creative and thoughtful as they develop this component of their strategy. Possibilities include:

- Identify men who are already involved with groups of men or mixed groups and encourage them to play games
- Encourage husbands to join their wives to play games in the mothers groups
- Encourage HFS and/or government structures to play games with peers or groups
- Consider other options to reach men, including radio spots or at work
- Work on reaching migrant men given the large proportion of absent men/husbands in some communities

Regardless of how they are initially reached, men can be encouraged to enhance the diffusion of project content and reflection in a variety of ways:

- Opportunities for peer interaction
- Opportunities for mixed-sex conversations
- Role modelling for reconsidering traditional male roles
- Increasing knowledge for family planning decision-making

## Selecting and Working with Influential People as Partners

A detailed guidance document for working with influential people is available in the Resource List.

The primary role of influential people is to enhance the acceptance and diffusion of new ideas and behaviors in the communities where they have influence.

In the case of Pragati, this means encouraging family planning use, as well as influencing the social norms and acceptability associated with family planning, particularly among marginalized communities and men. Influential people themselves determine how to best do this, including determining the frequency, types of discussions and activities, or content they may influence. The task is to spark their interest in project activities and content, and to enhance their capacity to support wider diffusion and social norms change.

Emphasis on the involvement of influential people is based on the recognition that people are more likely to accept guidance or advice from:

- people they know and like
- people they respect and who respect and appreciate them
- people with informal and/or more formal authority in the community
- people who they perceive as similar to themselves

It is important to note that influential people may have positions of power or titles in the formal structure, but often, people with informal power or recognition may be more influential. These are people who influence others through their charisma, leadership, or “who they are”, without necessarily holding formal positions in society.

There are several parameters to keep in mind when working with influential people:

- Influential people are brought in as allies – people who can recognize something that will be beneficial in their community and can bring their influence to bear. Projects should provide information to open a dialogue around what they, as a leader, can do to help.
- Consistent with the “reflection and action” approach to behavior change, Pragati encourages leaders to support exploration and reflection in their communities
- Both formal leaders (people who have formal leadership roles in the community) and informal leaders (people who have social standing or respect in the community, but who may not be “official”) may be helpful. However, in some instances, the informal leaders may be the most influential.

Pragati does not:

- Recruit leaders to carry out activities on behalf of the project, nor defines how they will take action.
- Expect leaders to tell people to participate in specific activities or to follow specific behaviors

The specific role or activities for influential people is uniquely based on how their influence manifests in the community. It is important for influencers to purposefully think about how they exert their influence and how they can enhance both family planning acceptability and use in their community. This is a different role than that of a promoter because it draws on leadership and influence that is already established.

## 2. Orientations

Once the key players in a given community are identified, they need orientation on the Pragati games and on facilitation skills for encouraging reflection and discussion. Orienting community mobilizers in Nepal required at least eight hours stretched over two days. The schedule for orientation is provided in the Project’s Resource List.

### Orientation Guidance

Orientation helps establish a baseline comfort among the eventual facilitators; not only with the games themselves, but also with the topics, key messages, and reflection questions. Remember that games may be the easy part, but much of the power of the Pragati games is contained in the reflection questions and conversations they promote.

### Introduction

It is helpful to use an “ice breaker” for introducing the social and gender norms content (that may be new to participants) in a non-threatening

way. The debrief can then highlight the norms and gender issues that sometimes affect what we do in our lives.

## The Pragati Approach

Depending on the specific orientation group, it may be more or less helpful to offer an overview of the Pragati approach. This allows the group to consider the multiple factors that can contribute to family planning acceptance and use, and then how the Pragati package can address such a range of factors. By encouraging participants to discuss different barriers to fertility understanding and family planning use, issues that are sometimes unclear, uncomfortable, or unacceptable can be brought out into the open and collectively reconsidered. This discussion also helps prepare participants to facilitate such conversations in their communities.

## Building Trust and Safe Space for Reflection

Given that facilitation skills are intrinsic to being able to encourage reflection discussions in the community, the orientation for facilitators and champions needs to emphasize practice in facilitation as well as on creating safe spaces for these sometimes sensitive discussions.

The next section in this handbook includes guidance for creating a safe space for reflection. The open and reflective questions suggested for each game help orient champions toward their role in facilitating reflection among game players. People who are facilitating these orientations for game facilitators and champions can reinforce this skill in the following specific ways:

- Use the implementation guidance in this handbook on Reflection, Creating a Safe Space, and Facilitation to support orientation for implementers on the importance of trust, reflection, and safety.
- Encourage facilitators and champions to introduce expectations around confidentiality, active listening, and sharing as part of the introduction to each game.
- Discuss the difference between correcting factual information – for example about myths and side effects – and changing people’s beliefs and values. While there is some right and wrong information around family planning methods, there are no fixed right or wrong in terms of people’s beliefs or values. Everyone in the group needs to be encouraged to respect and appreciate each person’s belief and values.
- Explain the importance of reflection questions: they are used to encourage open discussion, questioning, sharing, and thinking about new and different ideas that may be threatening or make us feel uncomfortable. People should be encouraged to think in new ways and to support each other in doing so. The facilitator uses these

questions as a guide to help people think about what they learned during the game and how it applies to their lives.

## Specific Orientation Materials

Detailed guidance for orienting promoters, HFOMC/Palikas, and HFS is available in the Resource List.

The implementation of Pragati depends on orienting community promoters (e.g. FCHVs, champions, and others), as well as HFS to support game activities. In Nepal, it is likely Palikas may take the lead on these orientations with support from the District Health Coordinator.

A general agenda for orienting community promoters, along with session-by-session facilitator guidance, can be found in the Resource List. An orientation agenda for HFS is also included. These materials provide a strong foundation for any Pragati champion orientation that may be needed.

In planning for orientation, it takes approximately two days for an initial promoter orientation with three to five games included.

## 3. Game Play

Facilitating games in the community – including reflective discussion around participants' experience or thoughts resulting from the game – is the core activity to change behavior around family planning by addressing associated barriers to family planning use. Using open questions and establishing a comfortable space for discussion are key to managing the associated discussion. This handbook contains five core games, with options for additional games, and provides instructions on:

- identifying the objective or “take-away message” for the game
- setting up the game in the community
- playing the game
- guiding discussion using key reflection questions

## Game Playing Guidance

Each Pragati game provides content around one or more of the core Pragati components: family planning Knowledge, fertility awareness and/or Social and Gender Norms. Regardless of the specific content, each game also offers the opportunity for reflection on new content that may be uncomfortable or challenge social expectations and norms.

The Pragati games are designed to help community health workers, champions, and other interested members of the community open discussion with women, men, and youth, and their larger communities about topics related to fertility, gender, family planning, and social norms. Games are designed for use in groups ranging from five to 20 participants, but can be adapted for smaller or larger groups to specifically reach men and youth, or to work with mixed-sex groups as needed. They can be played individually or together depending on how much time a group has available.

## How Often to Play Games

The frequency and location for playing games varies significantly depending on factors such as the season, who the facilitators are, how often a given group may meet, and how many different promoters and platforms are working within a given community. The goal is to create a “critical mass” of experience within a community such that people have heard of the games and begin to independently talk about the games and what they are thinking about the topics. This kind of diffusion, where the attitudes and acceptability begin to spread on their own, creates the “tipping point” for social change to occur. While more is certainly better as the games develop their own momentum, it is preferable for a game to be played in a community at least once or twice a month. It is also preferable to have more than one different kind of group playing games so that different social networks are also touched. It works well to play the same game with different platforms during a given month, as this also facilitates reaching the “critical mass” for conversations.

## Creating a Safe Space for Difficult Conversations

Time for open reflection and discussion after playing each game is an essential element of the activity. Fertility, family planning, and reproductive health can all be taboo topics in Nepali society and elsewhere. As such, it may be difficult for people to talk about menstruation, sex, their bodies, or their decisions about when and if to have children. This discomfort can be apparent in many ways. Participants may be embarrassed, shy, talk quietly, refuse to respond to questions, or giggle or laugh nervously. These are all normal human reactions to taboo topics and do not mean that the facilitators have done something wrong. People can also be afraid of stigma, or what others will think, if they are willing to talk about or do things that may not be consistent with what they think the community thinks.

Facilitated open discussion helps people internalize some of the new or challenging ideas that may be introduced through the game, and it also helps normalize the public discussion of topics that may be uncomfortable. There are ways for facilitators to help group members feel more comfortable to talk about these issues. And once people are talking, they may become more comfortable and even have fun!

There are a few tips to help facilitators and promoters manage these discussions:

### **1. Reflect on your own discomfort**

We all have our own taboos and discomfort: we are members of the same culture and community, after all. But if you are clearly uncomfortable talking about these topics, the members of your group will follow your lead. If you show confidence, comfort, and no embarrassment talking about women's bodies, fertility, and family planning, it will help your participants break through their own embarrassment and be more comfortable with you.

So how can you get more comfortable?

- Talk to partner staff or colleagues about any questions or concerns.
- Consider your own life experiences. Are there times when you wished you had known more or had someone to talk to about your body or your reproductive health?
- Think about your own assumptions. Do you think you treat people differently or talk to people differently based on their age or whether they are married or not? Do you think that these games will be easier if you treat all members of the group the same way?

The more you talk about these things, and the more these conversations come out into the open, the less sensitive or stigmatized they become.

### **2. Use friendly language**

Sometimes the language we use can contribute to participants' discomfort. How can you use gentle language to encourage participants to contribute to discussion? How do you correct someone when they have a misunderstanding about a family planning method without discouraging them from trying again?

You can also help people use language that helps them get more comfortable. Let them talk about "someone I know" rather than telling a personal story. Ask about what they have heard, rather than what they know. Talk to them about the fact that many people feel uncomfortable talking about these things, which is why we hear so many things and never know what is true. Reassure them that this is normal.

### **3. Don't be afraid of discomfort!**

Above all, remember that it's ok for people to be uncomfortable! Make it clear that this is normal and participants are welcome to sit out a game or observe if they are not comfortable participating. Maybe if they watch a game once and see how fun it is, they will feel more comfortable to participate the next time.

#### 4. Set ground rules

You can also ask participants to agree with each other on how they want to treat each other while playing these games. This is sometimes called setting ground rules or community agreements. Some suggestions for ground rules:

- We don't make fun of each other or make each other feel bad when they share something personal.
- It's ok to share something personal in the group here but it should not be shared with people outside this group.
- It's always ok to ask for help, or to explain something we don't understand.

### ***4. Supporting Program Activities in the Community***

This section of the manual describes how even when paired with good materials, community promoters need ongoing supervisory support in order to reinforce their ability to continue to effectively facilitate the games in the community. While the process will need to be adapted to the local setting, it's important to consider these steps. Regular visits and coaching improve the quality of their activities and help motivate both them and their participants. Effective and simple monitoring can also provide feedback on progress to all concerned.

#### **Guidance for Supporting Pragati Activities in the Community**

Detailed coaching guidance and a supervision check list are available in the Resource List.

Once promoters have been selected and oriented, they need ongoing support for their activities in the community. This includes, supervision, motivation, and some means to track and recognize their efforts.

#### **Coaching**

As indicated above, implementing Pragati activities in the community requires the ability to facilitate groups, to encourage reflective discussion, and a minimal level of comfort around social norms and reproductive health attitudes that may traditionally be taboo. A coaching approach to supervision was developed to offer a more interactive and supportive way to reinforce these required facilitation skills.

## What is coaching?

Coaches help people improve their work and do their best. They help people see their potential: what they can be in the future. Good coaches are not negative and do not focus on mistakes in the past. There are three important aspects of coaching:

- **Strong relationships:** Coaching depends on an ongoing, trusting relationship. The goal is to improve performance and help the coached person do a better job.
- **Talking through challenges:** The coaching process helps someone understand her or his own problems, think about solutions, and select a course of action.
- **Responsibility:** The coach can support the coached person. But the responsibility for improvement lies within the coached person.

## What is the coaching process in Pragati?

- **Orientation:** First, facilitators orient champions on how to use the games and facilitate conversations.
- **Practice:** During orientation, some champions will practice facilitating the games through role play with other participants. Everyone will have a chance to discuss how the practice went and how things could have gone better.
- **Continuing support:** The HFS and project officers will continue to coach the champions (community health volunteers and champions) after the orientation through observation and review of activities with their respective groups. The needs and skills of each champion will determine how much coaching and support they need. It may also be possible to encourage stronger champions to provide support and coaching to others who may be having difficulty.

## What are key coaching practices?

- **Observe** how the champion interacts with the group and uses the games and reflection questions. The Observation Checklist can help you remember what to look for.
- **Know the materials.** It is important for you to be familiar with all of the games, key messages, and reflection questions. Think about the issues they raise so you can help the champions think through these same issues.
- **Discuss sensitive issues** with the champions. Help them learn to raise these issues with the group by discussing them in advance.

- **Model** your own comfortability with the gender and family planning themes.
- **Give feedback** in a positive way so the champion is motivated to improve and continue using the games. Help them solve any problems that may come up. Encourage champions to support and motivate each other.
- **Communicate:** Good communication combines active listening and positive feedback. Ask them how they think they are doing with the activities using open-ended questions like “What?” “How?” or “Why?” Listen to their comments and concerns. Examples of some explorative questions are:
  - “What went well?”
  - “Why do you think that is?”
  - “What did you learn?”
  - “Where might you have had difficulty? “What can I do to help you do better?”
  - “Tell me more...”
  - “Yes, go on...”
- **Reinforce positive aspects** of the champions’ work. Praise can help motivate the champion. By seeing what is good in the present situation, we can learn about how to create positive change for the future. This kind of approach is known as Appreciative Inquiry.

## What is a coaching session?

Any in-depth discussion between the HFS, or project officers, and/or champions can be a coaching opportunity. A session could include:

- Observation of the champions conducting the games with the mothers groups or other groups and providing feedback.
- Meeting with an individual champion to discuss their activities.
- Meeting with more than one champion to encourage joint problem solving, learning, and support among each other.

During a session, coaches can:

- Problem solve with the champion
- Prepare and plan activities
- Encourage and recognize the champions for their efforts

Coaches can use the Coaching Observation Checklist, included in the Coaching Guide on the Resource List, as a tool to review and assess the facilitator’s skills. This list is not meant to be used as a test, but rather as

a guide that can be modified as needs change to identify areas where additional coaching and support may be helpful.

## Managing Motivation

Motivation can be challenging for both the promoters and the game participants. There is widespread expectation for allowances to participate in all activities. As these interventions move forward and become independent of an international NGO, this could change.

It may be helpful to distinguish motivation for promoters from motivation for participants. Participants are expected to benefit from these interventions in non-monetary ways. If this is not the case, and if people are not valuing their participation, the approach needs to be reconsidered.

With respect to promoters, it is important to recognize that their facilitation of these activities may have an opportunity cost that may require adjustment. It is often easiest to justify travel allowance for meetings and/or trainings, however, whatever allowances may be arranged, implementers will need to be sure they are not compromising the sustainability or the ownership for the interventions.

## Recording and Reporting

A community activity report is available in the Resource List.

While specific monitoring and reporting requirements will be determined by funders and reporting lines, monitoring data is useful for tracking progress in reaching community members and specific sub-groups and for identifying issues that may affect program quality in order to understand where additional adjustment or intervention may be necessary.

Promoters and other game facilitators are a helpful source of monitoring data, as they are truly on the “front line.” However, their reporting may be limited by their literacy levels or lack of motivation to fill out reports. This can be offset by reviewing the data with them to facilitate an appreciation of their accomplishments.

Once the community-level data is compiled, program implementers or managers may monitor which games are being used more often than others, and review which Pragati messages are being shared and with whom. This allows program managers to identify which games are not being played and to conduct follow up coaching with community promoters to ensure that all games are being played and that all beneficial information is shared in the communities.

# THE PRAGATI GAMES

## Implementation Guidance

### Setting up the Games

The games included in the Pragati Toolkit are designed to help community health volunteers, champions from mothers groups, male champions, and other interested people in the community open discussion about topics related to fertility, family planning, and gender or social norms. The games are designed for use in mothers groups ranging from five to 20 participants, but can be adapted for smaller or larger groups, or men's groups and mixed groups as needed. The games can be played individually or together depending on how much time a group has available.

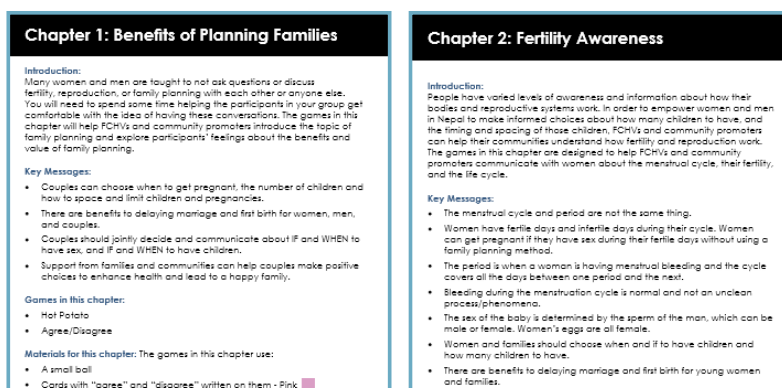
### Orientation to the Toolkit:

The toolkit has three different types of cards:

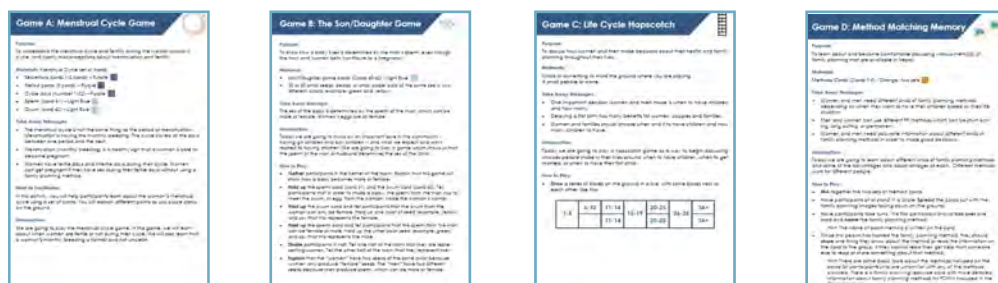
#### 1. Chapter Cards:

These black cards include the chapter guides to the games according to the Pragati themes:

- Fertility Awareness
- Community Norms
- Family Planning Methods
- Side Effects of Family Planning Methods



## 2. Game Instruction Cards



These blue cards are the instructions for the individual games included in the Pragati toolkit. They provide facilitators with:

- the purpose of the game
- what materials are needed
- the steps for how to play
- what questions to discuss with participants after playing

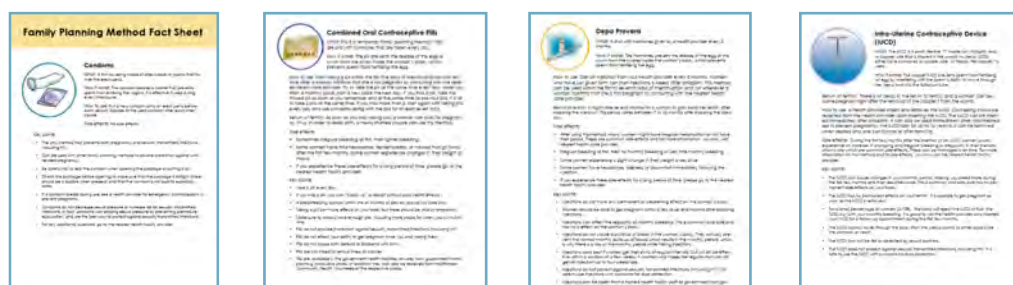
## 3. Game Cards



These cards, which are different colors depending on their content, are the actual pieces used to play many of the games. They include cards with family planning methods, side effects, myths, and characters. There are also smaller purple cards with numbers and drops for the Menstrual Cycle game.

Some of the games require other materials that can easily be found in the community, such as small pebbles, seeds, or a ball. The materials needed for each game are included on the blue game instruction cards.

## Family Planning Methods Fact Sheet:



This document with yellow borders, found in the Resource List, includes all the family methods showcased on the family planning methods cards.

The fact sheet provides in-depth information about each family planning method; information not found on the methods cards.

### Before playing:

1. Read the chapter cards and game instruction cards.
2. Make sure you have the materials you need for the game you want to play.
3. Read through the key messages on the chapter card and the discussion questions for the game. Make sure you are comfortable with the information included in the key messages and the discussion.
4. If you have questions talk with the local health service provider.

### Setting up the space:

Most of the games can be played in any physical space that has room for five to 20 participants and some blank floor space. The games are designed to be played either sitting in a circle or standing in a small group.

Some additional questions to consider:

- How far will participants need to travel to meet you?
- Is there space for the group to move around?
- How comfortable will participants be sitting on the ground or floor? Do you need chairs or benches?
- Is the space inside or outside? Outdoor spaces may be noisier or attract attention from other members of the community.
- Will participants be bringing their children? Is there space for the children to play together or with an older sibling who can take care of them while the mothers group plays?

If the space available is central to the community, the games may attract the attention of onlookers or children in the area, making it harder for the group to have discussions. There are a few ways of managing this:

- Find an indoor space or plan games during a time when other members of the community may be busy.
- Have a fellow community health volunteer or champion take onlookers to play games in another space or invite the onlookers to come back later to play the games themselves.
- Ask onlookers to help by taking care of or playing with the children while the group members are discussing.
- Invite a health provider or other local stakeholders to host a discussion with the other community members in another space while the mothers group is playing the games.

## ***Facilitating Reflection and Discussion***

To get comfortable with uncomfortable topics, refer back to some of the suggestions in the previous chapter. Re-read the information on the cards to make sure you are confident in what you are discussing with the participants.

Each of the game cards contains three discussion questions to help group members reflect on the game and their experience. The questions are part of the game, not something extra. They help participants make decisions about the topics in the game and make the game relevant to people's everyday lives.

The term "reflection questions" means they are used to encourage open discussion, questioning, sharing, and thinking about new and different ideas that may be threatening or make participants feel uncomfortable. There are no right and wrong answers as long as people are exploring and learning. Participants should feel encouraged to think in new ways and to support each other in doing so. Encourage the possibility that community norms and acceptance can shift as these discussions happen more openly.

The facilitator's role is to use these questions as a guide to help people think about what they learned during the game and how it applies to their lives. In order to do this, the facilitator needs to be comfortable thinking about their own values and assumptions and recognize where they also may be uncomfortable. As the issues, concerns, and discomforts in facilitating these games and discussions become more familiar, the facilitator will be able to help others also think about them.

In general, the questions in each game instruction card follow a similar order, but applied to specific ideas introduced in the game:

- How does the game reflect experiences of people in your community?
- What types of things would need to happen for you to adapt the information in the games to your life?
- What might happen if you make the changes that are offered?

At the end of each game, participants are encouraged to seek additional information or service from the health center, and to share what they are thinking or learning with their family or others in the community. Facilitators may also be able to help get more information or facilitate conversations with others.

Finally, it is important to remember that this is a learning process for everyone. Facilitators do not have to have all of the answers for participants immediately. It is always ok to say that you do not know, that you will find an answer, and to follow-up at the next meeting.





## CHAPTERS AND GAME SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

# Chapter 1 – Fertility Awareness

## *Menstrual Cycle Game*








# Menstrual Cycle Game

## Purpose:

To understand the menstrual cycle and fertility during the typical woman's cycle and clarify misconceptions about menstruation and fertility.

## Materials: Menstrual Cycle set of cards

- Secretions cards (12 cards) – Purple 
- Period cards (5 cards) – Purple 
- Cycle days (1-32) – Purple 
- Sperm card (card # 41) – Light Blue 
- Ovum card (card # 42) – Light Blue 

## Take Away Messages:

- Women of childbearing age typically experience a menstrual cycle, made up of bleeding days or menstruation, fertile days, and other, non-fertile days.
  - Different women experience different cycle lengths, but variation is normal.
  - Monthly bleeding, or menstruation, is normal, and makes it possible for women to get pregnant.
- If a woman has sexual relations during the fertile days of her cycle without using some method of family planning, she is at risk for getting pregnant.

## Introduction:

We are going to play the Menstrual Cycle game. In this game, we will learn about when women are fertile or not during their cycle and how this can influence choices around having sexual relations or using family planning. We will also learn that a woman's monthly bleeding is normal and not unclean.

## How to Play:

**Spread out the number cards 1-32 on the ground in a large circle and have participants stand outside of the circle.**

1. **Ask:** What can anyone tell me about menstruation, or a monthly menstrual cycle?
2. **Tell:** All of these cards represent the woman's menstrual cycle and each card is a day of the cycle. It is called a cycle because it happens over and over again. While the number of days will vary between women, for now we are using 32 days."





**Next, place the red drop cards next to the cards numbered 1-5.**

**Tell:** "The red drops represent menstruation (or monthly bleeding). Women usually have monthly bleeding for three to seven days. Every woman is different and that is normal."

**Ask:** "Why do women bleed every month?"

**Tell:** "Every month, a woman's womb prepares to receive a fertilized egg if she becomes pregnant. If her egg is not met by the man's sperm (fertilized egg) her body gets rid of the blood from her womb. This is menstruation and it happens to women every month, from puberty to old age."

**Next, place a few clear drop cards by the cards 8 to 19.**



**Tell:** "These cards represent secretions. Every month, women's bodies produce clear secretions as a normal part of their cycle. When they are healthy they do not smell, itch or cause any pain. Healthy secretions are a sign that a woman may be fertile, and are most often present from day eight to 19."

**Next - hold up the card with the egg and place it on Day 12.**

**Tell:** "Every woman's body releases one egg into her womb each month. It is not possible to know the exact day an egg comes out, but it is sometime mid-cycle"

**Next, hold up a sperm card:**

**Tell:** "Men are fertile every day since puberty and are able get a woman pregnant during the fertile period if their sperm meet an egg. This will not happen if they use family planning methods, or if they have sexual relations during a time when the egg is not present."

**Next, place the sperm card on Day 13**



**Ask:** What happens here when there is an egg and a man and woman have sexual relations such that there is also a sperm?

**Tell:** "The answer is that if the egg and sperm meet, the egg is fertilized and it means a pregnancy."

**Next, remove the egg card from Day 12 while leaving the sperm card.**

**Tell:** "If a woman is using a hormonal method of family planning such as pills, implants, or injectables, she does not release an egg and so there is no possibility that the sperm will meet an egg."

## Game C: Menstrual Cycle Game



### Explain Fertile and Unfertile Days:

Walk to participants standing behind cards 8-19 and say that during this time when a woman has secretions and her egg is released, it is possible she can get pregnant. Then walk to the participants standing behind cards 20-30 and say that because there is likely no egg in the womb during these days, the sperm will not meet an egg, therefore a woman is less likely to get pregnant.

**Emphasize:** Just as the length of the cycle or bleeding days can vary from one woman to the next and this is normal, the number of days in which a woman may be fertile or infertile also varies. Therefore, you cannot predict your fertile or unfertile days without more information about the consistency of your own menstrual cycle.

**Next, tell participants to walk in a circle around the cards while clapping or singing. While they are circling, put the sperm on different card numbers.**

**Put** the sperm on card 22. Ask again if the woman can get pregnant on this day. The answer is **NO** because there is no egg.

**Put** the sperm on day 15. Ask again if the woman can get pregnant on this day. The answer is **YES** because she has secretions that tell her she is fertile. Also, show the egg card on day 12 say that this is around the time an egg comes out.

**Ask:** What are options for avoiding pregnancy on the 15th day of her cycle?

**Answer:** She can avoid having sexual relations or use a condom (so there is no sperm) or she can use another family planning method (so there is no egg).

**Repeat** as many times as necessary to be sure the participants understand when there are fertile days during their cycle.

### Discuss:

- ? What information about the menstrual cycle was new to you?
- ? What difference might it make in your life to know this?

### Next Steps:

What is one thing that you learned today that you would share with a friend or family member? (What about your husband or wife?)

**Please talk with your health provider if you have questions or are interested in family planning.**

# *Son / Daughter Game*




# Son/Daughter Game

## Purpose:

To show how a baby's sex is determined by the man's sperm, even though the man and woman both contribute to a pregnancy.

## Materials:

- Seed game cards (cards numbers 40-42) - Light Blue 
- 20 or 30 small seeds, beads, or small paper balls of the same size in two different colors (example: green and yellow)

## Take Away Message:

- The sex of the baby is determined by the sperm of the man, which can be male or female. Women's eggs are all female.

## Introduction:

Today we are going to focus on an important issue in the community - having a girl or boy, and what we expect and want related to having children. We are going to play a game which shows us that the sperm of the man determines the sex of the child.

## Discuss:

- ? What happens if a family has sons and no daughters?
- ? What happens if a family has daughters and no sons?
- ? Why do you think the reaction is different?
- ? What kinds of challenges do women and men face when they have no children?

## How to Play:

- Gather participants in the center of the room. Explain that this game will show how a baby becomes male or female.
- Hold up the sperm card (card 41) and the ovum card (card 42). Tell participants that in order to make a baby; the sperm from the man has to meet the ovum, or egg, from the woman, inside the woman's womb.
- Hold up the ovum card and tell participants that the ovum from the woman can only be female. Hold up the card (example: yellow) and say that this represents the female egg.
- Hold up the sperm card and tell participants that the sperm from the man can be female or male. Hold up (example: green) the card and say that this represents the male.

- Divide participants in half and have them stand in two lines facing each other. If the group is mixed and if it is possible, it is most clear if men and women represent their own sex. Either way, one half of the participants are representing women while the other half is representing men.
- Explain that the “women” has two seeds of the same color because women only produce “female” seeds. The “men” have two different seeds because men produce sperm, which can be male or female.
- Give all the “women” 2 yellow seeds. Give all the “men” 1 yellow seed and 1 green seed.
- Have the “women” stand in one line and hold one seed in each hand behind their backs. Tell the “men” also to stand in another line facing the “women” and hold one seed in each hand behind their backs, so that they don’t know which seed is in which hand.
- Ask the “woman” and “man” at the front of the line to demonstrate:
  - First, ask both the “woman” and the “man” what sex of baby they want, a boy or a girl.
  - Then the “man” without looking at the seed he has, should give one seed to the woman.
  - The woman should hold the seeds so that all people can see them.
  - **If the two seeds match, the baby will be a girl. If they are different, it will be a boy.**
- Go down the line and have each “couple” that is facing each other “make a baby” by **asking the “man” to give one seed to the “woman” without looking at the seed color. The “woman” should now have two seeds.** Once all of the couples have made their baby, ask them to come back to the center of the room.
- Using card 40, explain that while women and men both contribute to the sex of the baby, it is the man’s sperm that determines whether the baby will be a boy or a girl. Ask the “men” if they knew which seed they were contributing: explain that because each sperm can be either male or female, no one can control or know which the baby will be.

### Discuss:

Earlier we discussed how some women are treated poorly when they don’t have sons.

### Next Steps:

- What is one thing you learned today that you would share with a friend or family member?
- Please talk with your health provider if you have questions or are interested in family planning.

## Chapter 3 – Community Norms

### *Hopscotch Game*



# Hopscotch Game

## Purpose:

To discuss how women and men make decisions about their health and family planning and how these decisions may change throughout different times in their lives.

## Materials:

- Chalk or something to mark the ground where you are playing.
- A small pebble or stone.

## Take Away Messages:

- A person's choice whether to use family planning and which method to use will be influenced by their age and when or if they want to have children.
- Delaying a first birth has many benefits for women, couples, and families.
- Young people need reproductive health and family planning information in order to choose when they want to get pregnant.

## Introduction:

Today we are going to play a hopscotch game as a way to begin discussing choices people make in their lives around when to get married, and whether or when to have their first child.

## How to Play:

- Draw a series of 10 boxes on the ground in a line, with boxes next to each other, like this:

1-5	6-10	11-14	15-19	20-25	26-35	36+
		11-14		20-25		36+

- Write numbers in each box with the following age ranges as shown above. Boxes that are next to each other should have the same age in them.
- Explain to participants that each box represents an age range in a person's life and that we will use the hopscotch game to discuss important life choices. Tell participants that you will call out a common life event, and that they should place the stone into the box **they think** represents the age at which that life event should happen. They should then hop, from zero, across the boxes to where the stone has landed.

- After the participant places the stone and hops to the box, ask:
  - ? Why do you think this is the right age for this event?
  - ? Is it the same age for boys and girls? Why?
  - ? Do you think this is the age people in your community think is the right age? Why is it the same or different from what you think?
  - ? Does anyone else here feel differently? Why?
- As each participant comes up for a turn, call out a different common life event from the list below. The person will follow the same steps: place the stone, hop to the square, and answer the same questions. You should feel free to choose the events that are most interesting to you or your community. Continue until everyone has had a turn, or until 15 – 20 minutes have passed.
  - Learn about sex and reproduction
  - Learn about family planning methods
  - Start using family planning
  - Start a job
  - A girl learns about menstruation
  - A boy learns about menstruation
  - Develop an interest in romantic relationships
  - Leave school
  - Get married
  - Have first child

#### Additional Discussion if there is interest and time:

- ? Are life events like pregnancy something people can always control? What kinds of things determine when these things happen?
- ? Would anyone like to share their experience with planning for when to have children or how many children to have?

What is one thing you learned today that you would share with a friend or family member?

**Please talk with your health provider if you have questions or are interested in family planning.**

Additional community norms games can be found in the Annex:

- Role Play
- Hot Potato
- Agree/ Disagree

## Chapter 3 – Family Planning Methods

### *Method Matching Memory*




# Method Matching Memory

## Purpose:

To learn about and become comfortable discussing various methods of family planning that are available in Nepal.

## Materials:

- Methods Cards (Cards 1-9) – Orange , two sets

## Take Away Messages:

- Family planning methods can be short acting, long acting, or permanent.
- Women and men need accurate information about different kinds of family planning methods in order to make good decisions.
- Different family planning methods may work better at different times in a man or woman's life, depending on when and how many children they want to have.

## Introduction:

Today we are going to learn about different kinds of family planning methods and when to start as well as how fertility returns. Different methods work for different people.

## Discuss:

- ? Do you know someone who uses or has used family planning? What was their experience like?
- ? For people who want to use family planning, what support might they need from their friends or family?

## How to Play:

- Mix together the two sets of method cards.
- Have participants sit or stand in a circle. Spread the cards out with the family planning images facing down on the ground.
- Have participants take turns. The first participant should turn over one card and name the family planning method.

*Hint: The name of each method is written on the card*

- Once this person has named the family planning method, they should share one thing they know about the method or read the information on the card to the group. If they cannot read then get help from someone else

*Hint: There are some basic facts about the methods included on the cards for participants who are unfamiliar with any of the methods pictured. There is a family planning resource card with*

*more detailed information about family planning methods for FCHVs included in the Pragati manual.*

- Once the participant has named the family planning method and shared a fact, they may turn over another card from the ground to see if it “matches.” If the cards match, they have “won” their turn. If the cards do not match, they should turn both back over and return to their place in the circle or sit where they were, and another participant should take their turn.
- Each time a participant “wins” by matching *their new card with one of the face up cards* a pair of cards with the same method, leave the matched cards face up. Keep playing the game, with participants taking turns one by one, until all nine methods have been matched and discussed.

#### **Discuss:**

- What would make it easier or harder for people in your community to use a family planning method?

#### **Next Steps:**

What is one thing that you learned today that you would share with a friend or family member?

**Please talk with your health provider if you have questions or are interested in family planning.**

## Chapter 4 – Side Effects of Family Planning Methods

### *Side Effects Puzzle*





# Side Effects Puzzle

## Purpose:

To distinguish between side effects and misconceptions or rumors associated with family planning methods.

## Materials:

- Side Effects Cards (Cards 10-21) - Blue 
- Myths Cards (Cards 22-31) – Blue 

## Take Away Messages:

- Most modern family planning methods may have some side effects, but most side effects disappear after a couple of months.
- It is important to learn what is true about family planning and talk to your health care provider if you have questions.
- Talk about side effects or questions with your health provider.

## Introduction:

This game will help us identify what are possible side effects of family planning methods, and what are some rumors that are not true. Many of the side effects are temporary, and can be managed. Your health providers are the best source of information and can help with these concerns.

## Discuss:

- ? Do you know someone who has experienced any side effects from using family planning? What did they do about it?

## How to Play:

- Mix together the side effects and myths and misconceptions cards into one set. Tell participants that for this game, they will make a puzzle by learning which side effects are “real” and which are common rumors that are not true.
- Show participants the backs of the cards, the side with a part of a picture of the happy family on it. Tell participants that for this game, they will need to create a full picture out of the cards that have the “real” side effects on them. Show them an example of the full family picture.
- Spread the cards out on the ground in front of the participants. Explain that there are 22 cards, but only the 12 “real” side effects will make the picture. There are 10 cards with common myths on them that they will need to remove.

*Hint: answer any questions about side effects and myths. The side effect cards have pictures of the methods that cause them for your reference.*

- Now, ask the participants to make the picture of the family. Once participants have completed the puzzle, the picture will show a happy Nepali family with two children.
- Use each of the 12 cards of the happy family picture and discuss side effects.
- Use the 10 cards that are separate from the picture and discuss about some of the rumors and myths about family planning.
- Sometimes we hear about side effects from people in our community that may not be real or aren't caused by family planning. Show the myth cards first and tell participants that these rumors and myths are common, because family planning is important to people, but correct information isn't always easy to find. **Reinforce that these conditions are NOT necessarily associated with family planning use.**

#### Discuss:

- ? What are some myths or misconceptions that women in your community believe? How does this change their opinions about family planning?
- **Then tell participants about some of the side effects people may experience that can be associated with family planning:**
- While there are many benefits to using family planning, and sometimes even real side effects for our bodies when we use some family planning methods. Side effects are often not severe enough to disrupt daily activities, and often pass after several months of using a method. These side effects are a normal part of how our bodies react to the medicine in the methods.
- Turn over one of the side effect cards, like "Headache" or another card, and point out the small methods pictures that indicate that this symptom can sometimes be associated with those methods
- **Ask participants:** "Do you think that this side effect is manageable? Would the benefit of using an family planning method outweigh the risk of possible experiencing this side effect?"
- Turn over the rest of the side effects cards and explain the methods on each card that can cause that particular side effect. Ask participants what they would tell someone to do if they experienced one of these side effects: the answer would be to talk to their FCHV or health facility staff.

## Final Discussion

- ? How might you encourage your friends and family to learn more about their concerns and fears so they could know the **difference between side effects and rumors** and can be more comfortable using family planning?

### Next Steps

What is one thing you learned today that you would share with a friend or family member?

**Please talk with your health provider if you have questions or are interested in family planning.**

## Alternate Game Instructions –

(in case completing the puzzle is too difficult or time-consuming for participants)

### How to Play:

1. Go through the cards and sort them according to misconceptions (those without method pictures on them) and true side effects (those also showing methods associated with the side effects for each card.)
2. **Look at the misconception cards and tell participants about some of the rumors and myths about family planning:**

Sometimes we hear about side effects from people in our community, that may not be real or aren't caused by family planning. Show the myth cards first and tell participants that these rumors and myths are common, because family planning is important to people, but correct information isn't always easy to find. Reinforce that these conditions are NOT necessarily associated with family planning use.

#### **Discuss:**

What are some myths or misconceptions that women in your community believe? How does this change their opinions about family planning?

3. Look at the side effects cards:

#### **Ask:**

- a. Which ones do people most commonly experience here?
- b. Which ones are most associated with hormonal family planning methods?

**Then tell participants about some of the side effects people may experience that can be associated with family planning:**

While there are many benefits to using family planning, there are also sometimes real side effects for our bodies when we use some family planning methods. Side effects are often not severe enough to disrupt daily activities, and often pass after several months of using a method. These side effects are a normal part of how our bodies react to the medicine in the methods.

4. **Encourage participants to put the puzzle together to create a happy family**, using the side effects cards.
  - a. Reinforce that these are side effects people can experience, but that they can be managed with the help of their health care provider.

**An additional side effect game can be found in the Annex:**

- Side Effects Match Game

# FACT PROJECT RESOURCE LIST

The following resources can be found at:  
[irh.org/pragati-fertility-awareness-games](http://irh.org/pragati-fertility-awareness-games)

## *Resources for Community Mobilization*

Newer models for Behavior Change Communication recognize that community and social norms influence individual behavior. Therefore, to change family planning behaviors, a range of people in the community need to become engaged.

**Engaging Men:** This document identifies why men should be engaged, some strategies for involving men, identifying male champions who can help reach other men, and some specific suggestions for what men can DO to make a difference.

**Engaging Influential People:** This document identifies why influential people should become engaged with family planning discussions in their communities, how to identify influential people, and what influential people can DO to make a difference.

## *Orientation Materials*

While not complicated, basic orientation activities with game facilitators and health staff will enhance the motivation and subsequent success of these activities.

**Pragati Promoter Orientation:** This is the core group for orientation in order to encourage facilitation of games throughout the community. Promoters can include community health volunteers, champions, other champions such as members of mothers group, school teachers, or anyone else who might be interested in facilitating games. This document offers an outline with session-by-session guidance for a two-day orientation covering the five core games.

**HFS Orientation:** There are two components to this orientation:

- A half day orientation to the Pragati games
- A one and a half day orientation to strengthen family planning capacity and balanced counseling skills

**Family Planning Fact Sheet:** This is an important reference for Pragati facilitators. It offers a summary of all of the family planning methods, their duration, effectiveness, side effects, and other considerations for use. Facilitators or providers can refer to this when questions come up that they may not know the answers to.

## ***Materials for Supervision and Program Support***

The effectiveness and impact of playing games in the community will be expanded with good program support. This includes supervision, coaching on facilitation skills, and basic monitoring of activities.

**Supervision Check List:** This document offers guidance to HFS, NGO staff, or others who may be offering supervision and guidance for Pragati activities in the community. It identifies some of the things the supervisor should look for, as well as guidance for discussing these observations to assure the quality of the activities

**Coaching Guide:** Recognizing that a top-down approach to supervising the activities of community volunteers may be counter-productive, this document offers concrete, step-by-step suggestions for taking a “coaching” approach to program strengthening.

**Community Activity Monitoring:** This document is an example of a monitoring document that tracks both the games that are played and who they are played with at the community and HFS levels. This is probably more detailed than needed, but offers a way for implementers to start thinking about what activities they would like to monitor.

# ANNEXES

While the team identified five core games for initial introduction of the FACT themes (fertility, family planning, and related social norms), an additional four games are available if people would like to expand:

**Hot Potato Game** – A game to introduce the benefits of couple communication around family planning and of delaying the first birth.

**Agree/ Disagree Game**– A game encouraging reflection on our personal values and attitudes, leading to an understanding of how social norms might affect family planning choices.

**Role Playing Game** – A game offering practice for communicating about family planning with different people in our lives

**Side Effects Match Game** – Complements the Side Effects Puzzle, linking common side effects with different family planning methods.

# *Hot Potato Game*



# Hot Potato Game

## Purpose:

To explore participants' values around children and to open conversation about the possible benefits of family planning

## Materials:

- A small ball, potato, or another ball-shaped object

## Take Away Messages:

- Couples can talk together and make a choice about how many children they want to have and when they want to get pregnant.
- There are benefits to delaying first birth for women, men, and couples.

## Introduction:

Today we are going to begin discussing how couples can talk to each other about having children, and how they can choose when to get pregnant by using family planning.

## How to Play:

- **Begin** the game by gathering everyone in a circle. Make sure each participant has room to move their arms. Tell participants that we are going to have a conversation about how couples can talk together about having children and how they can choose when and how many children to have.
- **Explain** that the ball you are holding is a "hot potato" that you don't want to hold for very long. So the point of the game is to pass the "hot potato" to someone else **as quickly as possible**. But before you can pass the "hot potato" to someone else, you have to say an answer to a question. It is important to pass the ball quickly and not think TOO much about what you are saying.

**Example Round 1 – Who can I talk with about my family and having children?** Say, for example, - "my sister". When someone catches the ball they then need to name a **different** person they can talk with before passing the "hot potato" on. If you can't quickly say someone, pass the potato on to someone else until at least two or three answers have been given or until no one has something to say.

- **Tell:** participants that for the rest of the game, there are no "wrong" or "right" answers, only people's opinions and values. For every round give participants a few minutes to think before passing the ball/potato.
- **Discuss:**

? Why is it sometimes difficult to talk to our friends and families about how many children we want and when?

- **Recap** – it can be helpful to talk about reproductive health and planning a family with your husband or wife, and with other family members who can support you.

**Round 2 – Reasons to wait before having a first child**. Take the ball back and suggest that the next category is “Reasons to wait before having a first child.” Say, for example, - “to finish school” and toss the ball to someone else. Continue until at least two to three answers have been given or no one has anything to add. This may mean giving people more time or second chances.

- **Ask participants:**

? What are some other reasons why newly married people might prefer to wait to have children?

? Who can affirm their decision?

- **Recap Message for this Round:** Delaying pregnancy until age 18 can improve the wellbeing of the mother and baby, as well as offer girls opportunities for study and economic stability. While others have an interest in your family, the final decision of when to have children and how many is up to you and your spouse.

**Round 3–** Suggest that the next category is “**Benefits of using family planning.**” Say, for example: - “To decide when to have children” and toss the ball to another person. Continue until at least two or three answers have been given or no one has anything to add.

- **Recap message for this round:** It is important to talk to your spouse about using family planning and deciding how many children to have.

- **Discuss:**

? Have you had conversations about these things with your friends or family? What was your experience? Who would you want to discuss these types of decisions with?

? Would anyone like to share their experience with having this kind of conversation with a friend or family member? How did it go?

**Round 4 (if there is time) –** Suggest that the next category is “**Reasons to have fewer, well-spaced children.**” Say, for example: - “To be able to have healthy babies and mothers” and toss the ball to someone else. Continue until at least two or three answers have been given or no one has anything to add. This may mean giving people more time or second chances.

- **Ask participants:**
  - ? Was it hard to think of reasons for waiting between pregnancies? Why do you think it was hard?
  - ? What are some other reasons why people might want to have fewer children?
- **Recap message for this round:** For the health of the baby, the mother and her children, a couple should space their children. After having a baby, wait at least two years to become pregnant again.

### Final Discussion:

- ? What can we do in this community to help people talk about choices around when to have children and whether to use family planning?

### Next Steps

What is one thing you learned today that you would share with a friend or family member?

**Please talk with your health provider if you have questions or are interested in family planning.**

# Agree/Disagree Game



# Agree/Disagree Game

## Purpose:

To give participants a chance to reflect on their own attitudes and values about fertility and family planning.

## Materials:

Cards or small signs:

- One with "Agree" written on it
- One with "Disagree" written on it
- Tape

## Take Away Messages:

- We can reconsider and change our own attitudes and beliefs around reproductive health.
- Support from families and communities can help couples make positive choices for healthy and happy families.

## Introduction:

We are going to play a game where people can think about their ideas regarding family planning and having children. As people begin to talk about their ideas, communities and families can be more supportive of couples' choices.

## Discuss:

- ? Why is it difficult to talk about reproductive health and family planning with other people?
- ? Why might it be helpful to be able to talk with other people about these things?

## How to Play:

- Tape or place the sign with "Agree" to the wall (or on floor) on one side of the space and the sign "Disagree" on the other side of the space.
- Tell participants: "I will read several statements out loud. Move to the 'Agree' side of the room if you agree with the statement read. Move to the 'Disagree' side of the room if you disagree." Participants who are not sure can stay in the middle.
- Explain:  
**"There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers for this game. You should follow what you think and not what others think. Everyone can stand where they are most comfortable."**

- Read the first statement: **"Couples should decide together when to have their first child."** Allow time for participants to move to one side of the room or the other.
- Ask:  
"Can anyone on the "Agree" side can give a reason why you chose to go to the "Agree" side?" Then ask: "Can anyone on the "Disagree" side can give a reason why someone might have chosen "Disagree?" If there are people in the middle, ask why someone might choose the middle.

Important Instructions:

- "It is important that people share by choice – do not force participants to share if they do not want."
- "It is also important that this is a discussion to SHARE IDEAS, not a debate to convince people to change their mind."
- Tell everyone to move back to the center of the room and read the next statement. Continue to follow the same steps for each of the statements below: read it, ask participants to decide where to stand, and ask people to explain why they chose to stand where they did.
  1. **"It is necessary for every family to have a son."**
  2. **"Young people should not think about family planning until they are married."**
  3. **"A newly married woman should get pregnant soon to prove she is fertile."**

#### Discuss:

- ? How is it possible to change our opinions and traditional beliefs?
- ? How can our friends and families help support each other to make their own choices?
- ? Would anyone like to share their experience with having conversations like this?

What is one thing you learned today that you would share with a friend or family member?

**Please talk with your health provider if you have questions or are interested in family planning.**

### **Optional Additional Sentences for Discussion:**

- A man should follow his wife's choice to use family planning or not.
- It is important for a couple to discuss together when they would like to get pregnant.
- It is not necessary for a girl to understand menstruation before she is married.
- A woman has a right to say "no" when her husband wants to have sex.
- Boys and girls should not talk together when they are attracted to each other.
- Boy children are more important than girl children.

# *Role Playing Game*




# Role Playing Game

## Purpose:

To practice having conversations about family planning, fertility, birth spacing, and life choices with friends, family, and members of the community.

## Materials:

- Character Cards (Cards 32-39) - Gray 

These include an unmarried woman or daughter, a mother-in-law, a male friend, a newly married husband, a female friend, a health provider, a faith leader, and a married woman.

## Take Away Messages:

- Families and friends should help young men and women learn about family planning and fertility.
- Couples should discuss their desired number and timing of pregnancies and how to avoid getting pregnant.

## Introduction:

Today we are going to play a game where you can practice talking about family planning with different kinds of people in your community through role play. By having these conversations, families and friends can help each other learn about family planning and discuss how to avoid getting pregnant when they do not want more children.

## Discuss:

- ? What makes it difficult to talk about family planning with different people? Why?
- ? What might be some benefits to talking about family planning with others?

## How to Play:

- Choose a few characters (maybe four) from the character cards (Cards 32- 39), based on which ones you think are most suitable for your district.
- Hold up the character cards you have selected, one by one. As you introduce each character, ask participants to think about what they would say to this person if they had a chance to talk to them about family planning or their life choices.
- Distribute the character cards to different participants. Have participants with cards find a partner who does not have a card. Line up facing each other in pairs: each participant who has a

character card should be facing one participant who does not have a character card.

### Explain:

- "Each person with a character card will pretend to be the person on their card. Each person without a character card will pretend to be a woman who wants to talk about family planning. People who are not paired up should observe the conversation so you can share your observations during discussion."
- The woman who wants to talk about family planning should start a conversation with the person who is playing a character about why it is important to know about and be able to use family planning. They have two minutes to discuss family planning.

### Discuss:

- ? Was it strange to talk about family planning with your character? Why?
- ? What might make it easier to talk about family planning?

### Explain:

The pairs should now rotate. The person with the character card should give the card to the person who played the woman. This person should then find a NEW partner who will now play a woman who wants to discuss family planning. Others will observe.

Each pair now has two more minutes to discuss family planning.

### Discuss:

- ? Now was it easier to talk about family planning? Why?
- ? Are there some characters harder to talk to than others? Why?

### Explain:

The pairs should now rotate one more time. The person with the character card should give the card to the person who played the woman. This person should then find a NEW partner who will now play a woman who wants to discuss family planning. Others will observe.

Each pair now has two more minutes to discuss family planning.

### Discuss:

- ? Would anyone like to share an experience of having these kinds of conversations in real life? Were they easier or harder? Why?

### Next Steps:

- What is one thing you learned today that you might like to talk about with a friend or family member?
- **Please talk with your health provider if you have questions or are interested in family planning.**

# Side Effects Method Match Game





# Side Effects Method Match Game

## Purpose:

To learn which methods cause which side effects and discuss concerns about the side effects of family planning.

## Materials:

- Methods Cards (Cards 1-9) – Orange 
- Side Effect Cards (Cards 10-21) – Blue 

## Take Away Messages:

- Family planning methods may have some side effects. These often disappear after a few months or alternatives can be found.
- Talk about side effects, questions about family planning methods, or alternatives with your health provider.

## Introduction:

This game will help us identify what the expected side effects associated with various family planning methods. Our health providers are the best source of information and can help you if you have any concerns about a side effect or a family planning method.

## How to Play:

- Mix together the methods cards with the side effects cards.
- Pass out the cards to the participants until all the cards are distributed.

*Note–For a larger group, each participant may only have one card. For smaller groups, each participant may have multiple cards. OR use NOTE?*

- Ask the participants if they have questions about the pictures or words on the cards they are holding, in case they are not clear about what cards they are holding.
- Ask the participants holding cards with family planning methods to hold them up and say which method they are holding.
- Ask the participants holding cards showing side effects to hold them up and say which side effect their card represents.
- Ask:  
“Does anyone here know people who may use these methods and who may experience side effects? What have they done about it?”
- Tell:

"Some family planning methods have side effects. Often these go away after a few months. If they don't go away, your health service provider might be able to help you manage them or to find another method."

ASK:

"Does anyone know of any side effects that they don't see here? Any examples?"

● TELL:

"People sometimes have wrong information – that is they believe there may be side effects when it isn't really true. If you think you know some side effects that you don't see here, please check with your health service provider to understand why you may not need to worry about it."

- Tell the participants that they are going to form pairs or small groups by connecting appropriate side effect cards with the related family planning method. When you say go, each person holding a card with a family planning method on it should find at least one other person holding a card with a side effect caused by that method.

*Note – there may be more than one method that a particular side effect will match with (the same side effects correspond with several hormonal methods), and there may be some methods (condoms, Standard Days Method, sterilization) with no side effects.*

- Say "GO." When most people have found a partner or group, say "STOP."
- Ask the women holding cards with methods to hold them up again. Take turns going to each person with a method card and having them introduce their partners or groups and what side effect cards they are holding.

*Note –As the participants are doing their introductions, you, as the facilitator, need to make sure that the side effect cards are correct: each side effect card has pictures of the methods that it can be caused by on it.*

● ASK

❓ Do all methods have side effects?

❓ Are there some side effects that may show up with more than one method?

● TELL:

You will notice that not all methods have side effects. While side effects are often manageable, there are alternative methods if the side effects are difficult to manage.

You will also notice that many of the hormonal family planning methods (pills, Depo, and implants) may have similar side effects.

**Discuss:**

- ? What side effects are you worried about? What information would help you be less worried?
- ? Are there benefits to family planning that make some side effects worth risking? Why?

What is one thing that you learned today that you would share with a friend or family member?

**Please talk with your health provider if you have questions or are interested in family planning.**





