Mobilizing Satisfied Users as Providers of Family Planning Information to Support Healthy Behaviors

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SIGNIFICANCE

- Contraceptive satisfaction is a critical barrier to family planning (FP) uptake. The Philippines 2011 Family Health Survey showed that fear of potential side effects and perceived health concerns are the top 2 method-related reasons women cite for not using contraception, at 16 and 15 out of 100 women, respectively.
- To address this issue, this study examined the value of engaging satisfied FP users to dispel myths and misconceptions related to contraceptive satisfaction.
- First, EngenderHealth developed the Unmet Need Reduction Strategy to map potential satisfied users and women with unmet need. Then, EngenderHealth built the capacity of the satisfied users to use information, education, and communication materials to share their FP experiences with non-users in their communities and invite potential clients to health centers on special FP days. At the health centers, clients received comprehensive FP information and counseling and were provided with their preferred FP method, as requested.

METHODOLOGY

- In November 2016, the province of Leyte in Eastern Visayas adopted EngenderHealth’s Unmet Need Reduction Strategy in order to mobilize satisfied FP users and counter high unmet need for FP.
- Under the leadership of the provincial health office, the project supported a province-wide phased approach (see Figure 1) to orienting local health offices to the Unmet Need Reduction Strategy.
- EngenderHealth compared facility data collected in the year prior to the intervention (November 2015 to October 2016) with data collected during the implementation period.
- The project created an FP day tracker to monitor output from these events, including the numbers of FP days conducted, satisfied users mobilized, and clients served, by method.

RESULTS

- Over the course of the implementation period (from November 2016 to December 2017), all 43 health offices in the province conducted at least one FP day; of these, 28 health offices consistently supported satisfied FP users to generate demand in their catchment areas.
- By the end of December 2017, a total of 703 satisfied users of intrauterine devices and implants were mobilized to promote FP in their communities and 88 trained providers received coaching and skills updating support from the project.
- EngenderHealth compared the number of clients adopting long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs) before and during the intervention period (see Figure 2). Results showed that 409 clients were served in the preintervention period compared to a total 3,095 clients who were served during the intervention period. This latter figure includes 2,579 (83%) clients who adopted LARCs, representing a more than five-fold increase in the number of clients adopting LARCs compared to the preintervention period.

IMPLICATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

- This study showed that employing satisfied users generated demand and increased health center client requests for FP services, which contributed to addressing unmet FP needs in the province. It also showed that satisfied users were willing to help others in their communities by providing behavior-changing FP information.
- As the number of new acceptors increases, the number of satisfied users who can support this initiative by reaching out to other women with an unmet need in their communities similarly grows. In turn, as the number of clients seeking FP services in the targeted communities and health centers increased, the project demonstrated a positive change in health-seeking behavior toward FP services.
- In Leyte today, health centers hold FP days twice a month. Based on the success of this intervention, the satisfied user approach has been expanded to the other municipalities in the province.