

EngenderHealth's Approach to Safeguarding Clients' Rights and Choices in Programs that Focus on a Narrow Range of Family Planning Methods

EngenderHealth is dedicated to safeguarding individuals' rights to full, free, and informed choice for their reproductive health.

To this end, EngenderHealth supports programs that increase access to a broad range of locally available contraceptive methods and that improve the quality of family planning counseling and services. We ensure that health facility service providers and community-based health workers receive the training they need to provide high-quality counseling and services for a full range of contraceptive methods. We sensitize these providers on related topics, such as gender, youth, and social inclusion; gender-based violence; and male engagement in family planning counseling to ensure that services meet the needs and expectations of all clients, for example, young people and people with disabilities. Through these sensitization activities we ensure that providers have the skills necessary to understand the contraceptive needs of clients experiencing gender-based violence as well as the special safeguarding and confidentiality needs of these clients to prevent backlash. We also ensure ongoing quality assessment and improvement mechanisms include clients' rights for informed choice. We support tracking availability of a full range of contraceptive commodities to ensure continuous availability of a full range of services.



Our commitment to full, free, and informed choice extends to all our work, including projects focusing on a single contraceptive method or a narrow range of methods. Our support for such programs stems from our commitment to increasing the range of contraceptive methods available to clients. Such programs often focus on improving access to underutilized or new contraceptives and increasing their availability among the full range of contraceptives. We contribute to expanding the availability of such methods by training service providers on effective counseling and service delivery of the individual methods, along with other methods, within national family planning policies and guidelines. We support communication initiatives to increase clients' knowledge about the specific methods, along with all other methods, to expand informed choice. We also work with community-based champions and community gatekeepers to support behavior change strategies addressing myths and misconceptions related to various contraceptive methods and to engage community members in creating an enabling environment in which all family planning methods are socially acceptable and accessible.

Country Project Example

In Kenya, EngenderHealth is supporting the Ministry of Health in scaling up the hormonal intrauterine device by training healthcare staff on counseling and service delivery, ensuring adequate supplies of the method, and disseminating information to potential clients. Our program also includes activities to ensure the availability of other contraceptive methods and services to ensure clients' full, free, and informed choices.



15 Principles of Full, Free, Informed Choice Programming

EngenderHealth's full, free, and informed choice approach is guided by the following 15 principles:

1. Ensure availability of all methods by motivating health program managers working at all levels of the health system in supporting client choice, enhancing supply chain management, and ensuring availability of provider training.
2. Make comprehensive counseling and informed, voluntary choice the foundation of the project.
3. Use EngenderHealth's global indicators to monitor projects that focus on availability of and access to a full range of contraceptives to ensure choice.
4. Sensitize counselors and providers on topics related to equity and rights, including gender, age, disability, and power relations.
5. Train counselors and providers in client-centered counseling.
6. Observe counseling and service provision to ensure free and informed choice.
7. Conduct client exit interviews to obtain clients' perspectives related to the effectiveness of programs in applying the principles of full, free, and informed choice.
8. Monitor method mix to ensure the availability of all contraceptive methods.
9. Ensure safety and continuity of services by supporting clinical monitoring and coaching.
10. Ensure demand generation strategies and activities include information covering the range of family planning methods available according to national guidelines.
11. Ensure information on all methods is included in various communication activities.
12. Establish or strengthen appropriate referral mechanisms for methods not available at the facility.
13. Address method mix and availability through stakeholder engagement.
14. Carefully consider the language used to describe activities, avoiding terms that may imply preferences for certain methods.
15. Strengthen data analyses and conduct periodic reviews about method mix.

