



Strengthening Guatemalan families through reproductive health

### Why should you care about family planning?

1. **Family planning saves the lives of mothers.** An estimated 343,000 maternal deaths could be prevented every year if the unmet need for family planning was met (Population Council, 2011)
2. **Family planning leads to healthier children.** Child mortality rates are 3 times lower if births are spaced between 3 and 5 years apart. (International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics, 2005).
3. **Family planning gives women and girls a better life.** Being able to plan how many children to have and when to have them means mothers are more able to participate in their community and in the workforce and young girls are able to avoid early pregnancies and attend school longer. (UNFPA, 2005).
4. **Family planning prevents deadly, unsafe abortions.** Every year, an estimated 30 million women in the developing world seek abortions due to unintended pregnancies. Nearly half of these are unsafe abortions, resulting in the death of 68,000 women each year. Increased access to family planning education and services reduces the number of women who turn to unsafe abortions (IPPF, 2009).
5. **Family planning is the best way to reduce the spread of STIs, including HIV/AIDS.** In Latin America & the Caribbean, an estimated 1.8 million people live with HIV/AIDS and 68,000 people die annually from the disease. The primary cause of HIV/AIDS transmission is unsafe sex (UNAIDS, 2007).
6. **Family planning is the most cost-effective way to reduce global warming.** Family planning is 5 times as cost-effective as conventional green technologies in reducing CO2 and curbing climate change (London School of Economics, 2009).
7. **Family planning is needed to reduce rapid population growth.** Over half the world's population is under the age of 25 and 1.5 billion adolescents are entering their sexual and reproductive years. Demand for family planning services will increase by an estimated 40% over the next 15 years (IPPF, 2009).
8. **Family planning allows parents to invest in their children's education.** Having fewer children reduces the economic burden on parents and allows them to invest more in each child's education, helping break the cycle of poverty (UNFPA, 2011).
9. **Family planning is a good investment.** Every \$1 invested in family planning will save up to \$31 in spending on health, education, housing, water and other public services (PATH and UNFPA, 2006).



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### Why should you care about Guatemala?

1. **A Guatemalan woman is 67 times more likely than her American counterpart to die during pregnancy or childbirth in her lifetime.** Guatemala has the 2nd highest maternal mortality rate in Latin America & the Caribbean (UNICEF, 2005).
2. **Unsafe abortion is the leading cause of maternal mortality in Guatemala.** It is estimated that between 42 and 67% of rural women who have abortions experience health complications that require medical attention (Guttmacher Institute, 2006).
3. **Over half of all of children in Guatemala are malnourished and suffer from physical and mental stunting.** This represents the third-highest rate of malnutrition and stunting in the world, behind Afghanistan and Yemen (UNICEF, 2009).
4. **Guatemala has the highest fertility rate in Latin America and the Caribbean.** The average Guatemalan woman has 3.8 children, while the average for indigenous women in Guatemala is 6.2 children (UNFPA, 2011 and World Health Organization, 2007).
5. **Guatemala has the highest gender equality gap in Latin America & the Caribbean.** Out of 134 countries, Guatemala ranked 111th for equal educational, economic and social opportunities between men and women. This places Guatemala behind Nigeria, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe, and more than 40 ranks behind neighboring countries Honduras and El Salvador (World Economic Forum, 2009).
6. **Almost half of all women in Guatemala have had a child by the age of 20.** While 83% of married Guatemalan women between the ages of 15-19 do not want a child within the next 2 years, only 18% are using a reliable form of contraception (Guttmacher Institute, 2006).
7. **Nearly one-third of all pregnancies in Guatemala are unplanned and 28% of Guatemalan women report an unmet need for family planning services.** Simply meeting the unmet need of Guatemalan women would help to significantly reduce the country's growing population (Population Reference Bureau, 2009).
8. **In Guatemala, over 40% of the population is under the age of 15, and by 2050 the population of Guatemala is expected to double.** Without increased access to quality family planning education and services, this tremendous growth will further increase poverty rates in Guatemala (Population Reference Bureau, 2009).
9. **Family planning reduces undocumented immigration to the US.** By addressing the underlying poverty and population growth that is at the root of rising illegal immigration, investing in family planning reduces the number of Guatemalans who seek to illegally immigrate to the US (UNFPA, 2011).