



## The FACT Project

FACT is a research, intervention, and technical assistance project that is developing and testing unique interventions in India, Nepal, Rwanda and Uganda. The interventions are investigating two primary hypotheses:

1. Increased **fertility awareness** improves family planning use.
2. Expanded access to **fertility awareness-based methods** (FAM) increases uptake of family planning and reduces unintended pregnancies.

## Why is FACT needed in Nepal?

- ✓ Nepal has experienced steady growth in population in the last 10 years despite a decreasing total fertility rate (TFR). Still, Nepalese women report having one child more than their ideal number, implying that the TFR is 44% higher than desired.
- ✓ Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) has increased 2% from 2006 – 2011. This marginal increase could be attributed to several factors that include use of:
  - Traditional methods
  - Emergency contraception
  - Abortion
- ✓ Difficult to reach populations have particularly low levels of contraceptive use.
- ✓ New approaches are needed for difficult to reach groups. Janajati, Dalit, and Muslims tend to experience higher TFR and lower CPR rates than the national average.

*Sources: Ministry of Health & Population, New ERA & ICF International Inc., 2012; Khanal et al., 2013*

## FACT can contribute by:

- ✓ Improving women and men's understanding of the risk of pregnancy at different times during the life course.
- ✓ Increasing understanding of how family planning methods work to counter concerns, myths, and misperceptions.
- ✓ Expanding access to the Standard Days Method® (SDM), which may be more acceptable to difficult to reach groups.

## PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Fertility Awareness for Community Transformation (FACT) Project

### GOAL

To increase use of family planning by improving **fertility awareness** and expanding access to **fertility awareness-based methods** (FAM)

### DONOR

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)  
Five Year Cooperative Agreement (2013 -2018)

### PRIME

Georgetown University's Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH)

### COLLABORATING PARTNERS

International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)  
Save the Children  
Population Media Center

## The FACT Nepal Team

**IRH** is an applied research organization that has successfully developed evidenced-based strategies to empower men and women through fertility awareness information and the introduction of SDM, TwoDay Method, and LAM into programs around the world. **Save the Children** has a strong foundation of programming in health, education, and livelihoods. Its extensive networks of women, men, and community groups serve as platforms for achieving project goals. **ICRW** provides critical inputs from a gender perspective on the design and testing of interventions to identify gender-related barriers and other social determinants of unmet need.

## The Interventions

In Nepal, the FACT approach is taking two related, but unique solutions to increase fertility awareness and family planning use. Both solutions will be guided by key stakeholders, service providers and the communities in need through a research based approach that systematically facilitates scaling the activities.

### Solution 1: Community Mobilization through Existing Networks

The *Community Mobilization through Existing Networks* intervention aims to increase fertility awareness to improve family planning use. Fertility awareness involves both actionable information about fertility throughout the life course and the ability to apply this knowledge to one's own circumstances and needs. Applying this information to one's life requires individual knowledge, personal experience and skills, as well as an environment within the family and community that enables people to undertake appropriate actions.

Qualitative research in five Nepali districts (Pyuthan, Siraha, Rupandehi, Nuwakot and Bajura) will guide the development of solutions and ensure the integration of contextual drivers of family planning use into all activities. Local creative experts will lead the design of a data-based, locally-driven solution. Continued engagement with partners and local officials will ensure the integration of those activities into existing structures and facilitate a rigorous evaluation process.

### Solution 2: Roving ANM/SDM Integration

A Technical Assistance intervention will involve a Roving ANM/SDM integration, designed to increase access to family planning services in Rupandehi. This expansion of existing service delivery will reach Muslim communities and/or the urban poor, in partnership with the Ministry's Family Health Division. The intervention will be implemented in parallel to the FACT solution activities in Rupandehi that started this year and will continue through 2018. With regard to the Roving ANM/SDM intervention, formative research will inform the design of the intervention and ensure that it is both feasible and culturally acceptable. SDM and CycleBeads® will be incorporated into the services provided by ANMs.

Simultaneously, FACT is investigating local perceptions and demand-side factors to guide marketing, distribution and pricing for CycleBeads through social marketing. FACT will apply the conclusions derived from this study to guide the development of contextually relevant messaging for SDM and CycleBeads, and will shape the packaging and possible price points necessary to ensure a sustainable integration of this family planning method into the local method mix in Bardiya and Banke with support from CRS, a Nepali social marketing organization.

#### FERTILITY AWARENESS DEFINED

Fertility Awareness is actionable information about fertility throughout the life course and the ability to apply this knowledge to one's own circumstances and needs. It includes basic information about the menstrual cycle, when and how pregnancy occurs, the likelihood of pregnancy from unprotected intercourse at different times during the cycle and at different life stages, and the role of male fertility. Fertility awareness also can include information on how specific family planning methods work, how they affect fertility, and how to use them; and it can create the basis for understanding communication about and correctly using family planning.

#### STANDARD DAYS METHOD® DEFINED

Standard Days Method® (SDM) identifies a fixed fertile window in the menstrual cycle when pregnancy is most likely and is typically used with CycleBeads®, a visual tool that helps women track their cycle to know when they are fertile. Results of an efficacy trial showed SDM to be more than 95% effective with correct use and 88% effective with typical use, well within range of other user-dependent methods.

