

Family Planning in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Policy Action and Opportunities.



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Overview of presentation

- Situation prior to independence through 1972
- Brief overview of FP in the DRC 1972-2003
- 2004 to 2011: gradual return to normalcy in everyday life
- Country priorities from 2014-2020
- Policy Action and Opportunities
- Maintaining the FP momentum: policy expectations



COLONIAL HERITAGE PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE ON JUNE 30, 1960 THROUGH 1972



- In the Belgian Congo
 - Fertility was encouraged
 - 1920 anti birth control legislation (law adopted from France) remained in effect
 - Prohibited publicity or propaganda about birth control
 - Prohibited use of contraception
 - FP practices and abortion were illegal
 - equated with infanticide
 - subjected to severe punishments

Despite law of 1920, early signs of acceptance of family planning

1972: President Mobutu endorsed concept of “naissances désirables”



- 1976: CNND established as a peri-statal IPPF affiliate
- 1982: Projet des Services des Naissances Désirables (PSND) established with USAID funding
- Late 1980s: expansion of FP activities by PSND, PSI, IPPF and others to several cities

1990 to 2003: turmoil, chaos



- Political and social unrest
- Development agencies suspended operations
- Ex-pats, merchants, others fled the country
- Development activities were largely paralyzed or stagnant



2004 TO 2011: GRADUAL RETURN TO NORMALCY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

- Implications for FP
 - USAID and UNFPA returned and re-engaged
 - FP organizations initiated activities on small-scale
- Two conferences to reposition FP:
 - 2004: no tangible results
 - 2009: led by First Lady

2009 conference called for:

- Establishment of FP as a government priority
- Official commitment from the Presidency
- Abolition of the 1920 law
- Line item of national budget ear marked for FP
- Development of a Strategic Plan for family planning
- Development of political and technical committee to oversee development of FP program
- Additional funding sources



MARIE-OLIVE LEMBA KABILA KABANGE

The (sorry) status of FP policy and programs in the DRC as of 2011

- Little government interest in FP
- Little policy/advocacy work
- No collective vision for advancing FP
- No functioning mechanisms to coordinate (the few existing) FP stakeholders
- FP organizations working in isolation
 - PNSR: unable to play leadership/coordinating role
 - Organizations focused on individual objectives rather than collective goal of increasing modern CPR
 - Inter-agency collaboration - infrequent



2012: a breakthrough year for FP in the DRC

- Initiation of a functional CTMP
- Development of FP website in French and English
- “Mini-Dakar” conference on FP held in June
 - Convene FP stakeholders, present ongoing work
- Survey of all FP service delivery points in Kinshasa
- Establishment of the Kinshasa FP Coalition
 - Approximate 10 organizations, 5 donors
- Decision to develop a Strategic Plan for FP in DRC



2013: a banner year for policy



- MOH/D.E.P. actively engage with PNSR and FP
- Government allocates \$800,000 for procurement of contraceptives
- Government calls for expansion of FP to 516 health zones
- FP prioritized in plan to accelerate MDGs

- AFP begins policy work
 - Introduces SmartChart, supports CTMP to develop DRC statement of commitment for Addis conference
- Prime Minister issues 2 highly supportive letters
- FP stakeholders complete draft of Strategic Plan



DRC shines at the Addis conference

- DRC government gives Declaration of Commitment
 - Create a budget line for FP
 - Increase the MCPR from 5.4% in 2010 to 19% in 2020
 - Reform laws favorable to FP
 - Contribute at least 2,1 million new users by 2020



- Over 30 delegates attend from the DRC
- Participate in press conference, meet donors, develop more “global” vision

Country Commitments to FP2020 : DRC, Addis, 15 Nov, 2013



- The DRC aims to increase the contraceptive prevalence rate from 5.4% in 2010 to 19% in 2020, and to increase the number of users of modern methods from 700,000 in 2010 to 2.1 million in 2020.
- The DRC plans to execute on their newly developed national strategic plan for family planning for 2014-2020.
- The government recently made family planning and reproductive health a budget line item, and in 2013, allocated \$1 million for the purchase of contraceptives. This
- financial contribution will gradually increase to align with the implementation of the national strategic plan for family planning, particularly for the purchase of contraceptives.
- The government will protect adolescent girls from early marriage through education, awareness raising, social reintegration, and women's empowerment programs.
- The DRC commits to reforming laws which pose barriers to responsible parenthood and planned births.

Strategic Plan for FP in the DRC: 2014-2020: approved on 10 Jan 2014

Objectives:

- Increase MCPR by 1.5 % points per year (from 6,5% (2013) to 19% by 2020)
- Increase FP coverage to at least 2.1 million women by 2020



Sub-objectives

1. Ensure government commitment to FP
2. Increase access to contraceptive methods and services (in the public and private sectors)
3. Increase quality of FP services
4. Generate demand for FP services
5. Establish functional contraceptive logistics system
6. Monitor the results of this plan with state of the art methods

Promising signs for continued momentum in policy and programs

- Solid group of donors supporting FP
 - USAID, UNFPA, World Bank, DFID, Packard, CIDA
 - Emerging interest: Sweden, Norway
- Government has pledged \$1.2M toward FP in 2014
- Heightened cohesion among FP stakeholders
 - CMPT, Kinshasa FP Coalition
 - Expected emergence of CPP (committee of policy makers)
- New partners to monitor FP progress:
 - PMA2020
 - Track 20



Next steps for policy work in the DRC

- Implement sub-objective 1 of the strategic plan
 - Ensure continued government commitment to FP
 - Levels of funding for contraceptive procurement
 - Repeal law of 1920
 - Currently under review in Parliament
 - Integrate FP in all new document related to health policy, population and Economic Development, environment and Health
 - Improve policies for adolescents
 - Set FP as priority for donors and health & population programs



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work in the DRC, 2014

Objectives :

1. Increase in the budget allocation for the procurement of contraceptives and supplies for family planning
2. Removal of the existing law unfavorable to family planning and replacement with a law favorable to family planning
3. Government accountability mechanism to be overseen by the government

Deliverables:

- Event held to launch Strategic Plan in Kinshasa
- 10,000 copies of the Strategic Plan distributed nationwide.
- Strategic plan readily available electronically
- Establishment of CPP committee
- Passage of FP law
- Workshop held for the review and critique of website
- Revisions made to website

Thank you for attending!

