

Summer 2021

Pathways

Forging Paths
for Reproductive
Health

PATHFINDER

RAISE YOUR VOICE

Dear Pathfinders,

At a time when too many aspects of our world feel out of step with progress, it's important that we assert ourselves as the optimistic and resolute organization we work so hard to be. That's true for everything we put out into the world, and crucially so for the tools we use to rally new supporters to the cause of sexual and reproductive health and rights. It's a life-and-death cause, where every ounce of support counts.

That's why as of this issue of *Pathways*, Pathfinder has launched a new global brand, one that represents the organization we are—an organization who is firm in our determination to forge the path necessary to do the work, regardless of the challenges we find along the way.

Our brand, our logo—they can't remain static in a time when Pathfinder is undertaking bold steps forward. They must reflect the organization we are today. Through the brand shift you see in this issue of *Pathways*—the logos, colors, and fonts—we seek to redefine how you see us. Yes, that's a lot for brand elements to do, but we know that these visual external shifts are deeply representative of the shifts that we have undergone internally for years, shifts intended to bring more critical care to women across the globe.

Pathfinder's complex work speaks for itself. In this issue, you will read about how we launched a multi-year project in Uganda, despite the persistent challenge of COVID-19. Reaching across the country, we forged paths to some of the most remote outposts and community health workers, ensuring that they had the resources, skills, and supplies they needed to provide sexual and reproductive health care.

The arrow that you see in our new logo represents this direction. It's a guidepost, a 'way finder' that symbolizes the fact that we move forward, despite change, despite obstacles, and with resolute determination. As we move forward, we incorporate new technologies, innovative program adaptations, and consistent learning into everything we do—meaning that more clients get critical, quality care.

We take pride in our name, and what it means. We are tenacious in our determination to contribute to better systems, healthier communities, and resilient women and girls. Through these shifts in our brand, our visual identity makes its own clear, confident statement about who we are, which isn't changing: we go where we're needed, we break new ground, and we lead the way. And we sincerely hope you will continue to support us in this journey.



Sincerely,

Bec Rollins
Chief Communications Officer



1970s–80s



The Pathfinder Fund

1990s–2007



2008



2013



2014



2015



2020



2021



“I feel encouraged to continue using family planning,” says Hanifa. “Gloria has given me the knowledge to also convince my sister to use family planning!”



USAID/UGANDA FAMILY PLANNING ACTIVITY'S FIRST YEAR

Launching during a pandemic

“In my community I will be an example. I will begin with me. I will tell them the story of what I have been through. I worked and all the money I made has been spent on taking care of children.”

Michael Odwongwun has 40 children. Growing up, he learned that bigger families were prestigious families—and with seven wives, he had a huge family. But after spending a lifetime struggling to take care of his family's needs, he has a message for his community: Family planning is the key to giving children the future they deserve.

Michael works as a Village Health Team (VHT) member with the USAID/Uganda Family Planning Activity (FPA), Pathfinder's newest program in Uganda. As a VHT member mentored by FPA, Michael shares comprehensive knowledge on family planning with his community. FPA has also empowered Michael with skills to administer short-term contraceptive methods like injectables.

Launched one week before the start of the global COVID-19 pandemic, it hasn't been a totally smooth road for the USAID/Uganda FPA—but for community members like Michael, the program has already proved invaluable.

FPA seeks to address underlying social, cultural, and structural barriers that keep people from accessing family planning services across 11 districts in Uganda. The program focuses specifically on reaching those in most demand of these services, including adolescents, youth, first-time parents, and low-parity women. Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, in its first year, FPA has reached more than 70,000 clients across the country, bringing critical reproductive health care in a time when a lot of the health infrastructure was shut down.

What does launching a multi-year project in multiple districts look like? For FPA, it meant hiring staff members across the country, holding introductory meetings with key stakeholders from the government and civil society organizations, and starting trainings across the 11 districts. Through these meetings and conversations, an initial assessment of the varied needs and challenges was made—challenges ranging from harmful social norms and cultural barriers to ‘stock-outs’ of needed family planning resources. It meant taking a deep dive into the various entry points

Left: Michael Odwongwun, Village Health Team member
Photo: Sharon Adero

for creating a system that reduces the unmet need for family planning—amidst an increase in unplanned pregnancies due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

For Sylvia Nyangoma, a midwife at Bugoigo Health Center II in the Buliisa District of Western Uganda, these challenges were all compounded. For more than six months, she juggled deliveries, health education to mothers, antenatal care, and immunization and family planning services to clients while her one colleague was away on maternity leave. She did this as COVID-19 increased the number of clients who needed her help—and during the height of the pandemic, was serving between 20–30 mothers daily.

But she took it in stride. From her youth, Sylvia knew she wanted to be a midwife. When she was 10, her mother told her a story of how a midwife had saved her life when giving birth to Sylvia and her twin brother.

“I was so touched by the story my mother shared. It inspired me to become a midwife. My mother narrated that she bled a lot to the point of death but was saved by a midwife... and since I was 10, I wanted to be a midwife because I heard that story from my mother.”

Sylvia didn't have to do it all alone. Through FPA's “Training of Trainees” program, Sylvia received mentorship from Benadeta Wokusima, an FPA-trained health worker in her district. Benadeta conducted trainings on injectables and implants, sharing family planning counseling techniques through her mentorship. This mentorship enhanced Sylvia's ability to educate her clients on how different contraceptive methods work—and also taught her to effectively capture data into a family planning register, which feeds into Uganda's Health Management Information System—a critical tool for understanding how family planning is being used and where the critical gaps are.



Community health workers with USAID/Uganda FPA
Photos: Sharon Adero



FPA also reached Sarah Nabossa, a midwife at Kiyuni Health Center III. For five years, Sarah had been advising clients to use short-term contraception like condoms, pills, and injectables—because she was unable to administer or remove implants, which prevent pregnancy for up to five years at a time. Scared to make a mistake, she simply avoided talking to her clients about implants, even if it was their preferred family planning method. But today, after mentorship from FPA, Sarah is administering implants regularly.

In addition to direct mentorship on administering contraceptives, FPA mentors youth champions in advocacy and communication, demystifying misconceptions and myths about family planning.

Gloria Tusiime is one of the 61 youth champions who has become a face for family planning in her community. As a youth champion, she leads peer-education sessions with other young people, provides information and answers questions on family planning, and offers contraceptive methods of choice at the local health facility. She facilitates conversations about each contraceptive method, side effects, and existing myths and misconceptions. And the community trusts her.

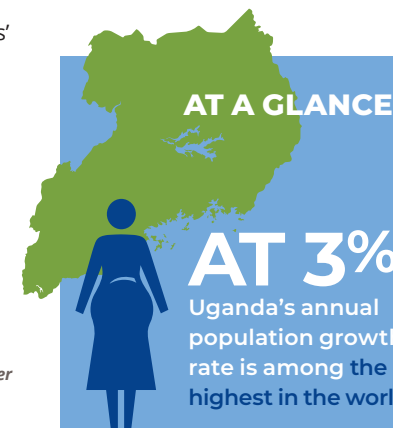
Hanifa Kwiyocwiny, a 26-year-old resident in Gloria's community, received guidance from Gloria on the use of implants. “I feel encouraged to continue using family planning,” says Hanifa. “Gloria has given me the knowledge to also convince my sister to use family planning!”

“As a champion,” says Gloria, “I act as a peer educator to fellow youth...and being a mother and a midwife has helped me to understand that it's not easy for a girl out there to know when to give birth. I talk to them positively about family planning.”

Across Uganda, it's VHT members like Michael, midwives like Sylvia and Sarah, and champions like Gloria who are making—and will make—FPA a success.

¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/uganda/overview>
² <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/SR245/SR245.pdf>
³ <https://www.ngoconnect.net/sites/default/files/2019-07/Social%20Norm%20Exploration%20Report%20February%202019%20Final.pdf>

AT A GLANCE—UGANDA'S FAMILY PLANNING STATISTICS



The main drivers of adolescent pregnancy, child marriage, and high fertility are religious influence, parenting, and lack of quality family planning services.



Ugandan women have a high unmet need for family planning, with 28% of married women and women in unions expressing an unmet need and only 35% of married women using modern contraception.

YEAR

FPA'S FIRST YEAR IMPACT ON THE GROUND

Trainings conducted on essential supply chain practices, addressing record-keeping using stock cards, stock books, and procedures for redistribution.

Engagement workshops held with cultural, religious, and district leaders from five kingdoms.

11 youth engagement meetings held between July and September 2020,

reaching 259 young people (155 female and 104, males).

70 youth champions identified, who will be trained to serve as advocates to their peers, encouraging them to use family planning services.

Radio activities run, including 19 radio talk shows, 540 DJ mentions, and 540 spot messages.

USAID/Uganda Family Planning Activity (FPA) 2020–2025



Engages stakeholders across government, cultural and religious institutions, civil society, private sector, and implementing partners, strengthening leadership and coordination to address barriers to family planning uptake.

Increases the proportion of the national health budget allocated to family planning.

Facilitates the updating and dissemination of national family planning standards and guidelines.

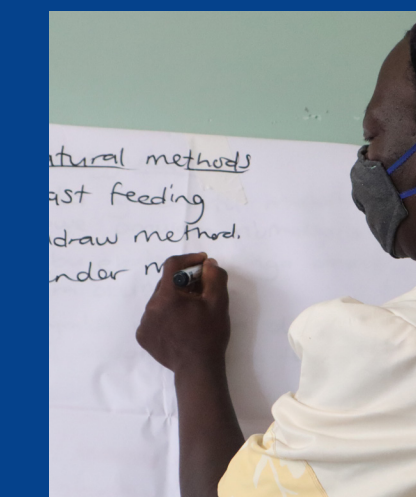
Builds capacity for family planning service delivery with a focus on quality counseling and expansion of providers' technical skills to offer a full range of contraceptive options.

Addresses contraceptive stock-outs.

Works with drug shops and private pharmacies in underserved areas where there are few or no health clinics.

Improves data quality, reporting, and use for program design, management, and decision making.

Shifts social norms through evidence-based social and behavior change communication techniques to improve healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies.



The Ramesh and Kalpana Bhatia Family Foundation

“Making an impact around the world by funding innovative solutions and programs that enrich communities and serve the common good.”

Why Pathfinder?

We believe that Pathfinder International is a leader in the field of CHOICE. Their work around women’s health and reproductive access is incredibly powerful. For us in particular, what makes Pathfinder unique and why we support their efforts is their model of incorporating staff into the communities being served. We feel this level of integration is one of the biggest differentiators in creating successful outcomes. Most importantly, we strongly subscribe to the principle that every woman has a fundamental human right to choose what is best for her body, her life, and her future.



Do you think access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) has made your life—or the lives of those around you—different?

As a family, we have faced a range of access to SRHR. Growing up in India looked very different for our matriarch, Kalpana Bhatia. At the time she grew up, it was taboo to discuss female reproductive issues. Girls were expected to get married at a young age and begin families as soon as possible. Today, Kalpana’s daughter and granddaughter live in Los Angeles, and experience a very different, open environment where SRHR is valued and seen as fundamental. The contrasting experiences three generations have faced has been eye-opening for us, and it is what has led our foundation to champion SRHR issues and women’s health around the world.

Why did you choose to support the YUVAA program?

As a family, we believe that educating young people is at the heart of a community’s success. Combine our passion for education with our strongly held belief that women should have the fundamental right to govern their own bodies, and it was an easy decision to partner with Pathfinder. From there, we narrowed down our area of interest, and in this case, the YUVAA program hit home—literally. Our founder, Ramesh Bhatia, was born and raised in Bihar—one of the two states in India in which YUVAA operates. It is imperative to educate young couples on the various sexual and reproductive options available to them so that they may make informed family planning decisions.

What would you love to see Pathfinder accomplish in the future?

At the Ramesh and Kalpana Bhatia Family Foundation, we think big! Our hope is that Pathfinder can expand the YUVAA program into more states in India and then further out into other countries, eventually being an essential part of every international community.

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