



Women Voices 4 Better Choices in Family Planning Programming – Sharing the Sindh Experience

Report on National Dialogue

October 27, 2020

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Introduction & Background

Pakistan became part of the global What Women Want (WWW) Campaign in 2018-19. This campaign gave women the opportunity to communicate their demands with regards to their needs for maternal and reproductive health, thus contributing directly to the strategy, preparation and implementation of maternal and reproductive health services. The initiative, which was carried out in 114 countries, asked about 1.2 million women and teenage girls of reproductive age for their key demand for maternal and reproductive healthcare. Nearly 250,000 women from Pakistan participated in this campaign, of which 100,000 were from Sindh alone. In Sindh, women from 12 provincial districts, including: Badin, Gothki, Jacobabad, Jamshoro, Karachi, Kashmore, Larkana, Qambar, Sajwal, Shikarpur, Sukkur, and Thatta, highlighted the areas in which they needed change, and Family Planning came out among the Top 10 demands communicated.

In view of this opportunity, Forum for Safe Motherhood (White Ribbon Alliance Pakistan Chapter), in collaboration with the Sindh Secretariat's Costed Implementation Plan (CIP), proceeded on a women's participation initiative in Family Planning (FP) policies and programming to inform policymakers of FP demands posed by Sindh's women and on ways and means of ensuring their engagement. This was a timely initiative since the Sindh Government is currently undertaking major measures to strengthen family planning in Sindh.

As a first phase, information already collected under the What Women Want Campaign (WWW) regarding women's health priorities and challenges in accessing FP services in Sindh was examined. Through a series of virtual consultative sessions, the main questions constructed from the categories of demands were shared with non-government FP experts and various departments and programmes of the Government of Sindh. Through these, crucial improvements in policy and practice that are needed to address women's FP demands were identified.

At the same time, Listening Sessions in 5 districts of Sindh – Qambar Shahdatkot, Tharparkar, Umerkot, Sanghar and Karachi were also planned and implemented by the Forum and CIP Secretariat as an approach to involve women in identifying solutions to the requirements they had posed during the WWW campaign. These meetings were also intended to provide them with an opportunity to have a discussion with the Department of Health and Population Welfare District Managers for resolving these demands.

Equipped with some interesting lessons from these and prepared with key insights into FP's 'inclusion of women voices' approach, it was decided to take these to the decision-makers at the national level to create collaborative action plans to regularly include women in the FP planning process.

In this context, a National event titled, 'Dialogue on Women Voices 4 Better Choices in Family Planning Programming – Sharing the Sindh Experience' was organized in Islamabad on October 27, 2020. It had an in-person attendance of around 60 people with another 20 participating through online platforms like Zoom & Facebook. In this event, Technical Advisor PWD Sindh served as Chair whereas, senior representative from the Federal Government Co-Chaired the event. Senior level representatives from Population Welfare and Health Departments from all four Provinces – Sindh, Punjab, KPK and Baluchistan served as Speakers.

Purpose & Objectives:

The aim of this dialogue was to reach out to the highest levels of power at the provincial and federal level to create awareness regarding the significance of uplifting women voices in FP programming, providing information about the mechanism that can be adopted for incorporating women's participation in these processes, and also creating interest and appetite for the adoption of a potential roadmap for catalyzing relation of government's family planning goals in the respective provinces.

More specifically, it focused on:

- 1. Informing policy makers of the demands of women and the solutions with respect to family planning; and;
- 2. Proposing a model of women's participation in family planning programming in Sindh and other provinces.

Proceedings

The basic driver behind this initiative was the realization that every woman's voice is important, especially since each one is hard won and unique and more often than not been spoken at great personal risks to the speaker. The obligation therefore is to ensure that No Voice is Left Unheard.

This dialogue was conducted in acknowledgement of all the women who dared to raise their voices for their better reproductive health and wellbeing. It therefore aimed to ensure that these voices continue to be heard by the decision makers for times to come.

In this context, the dialogue aimed to galvanize a pro women engagement FP policy environment in Sindh as well as in other provinces. It sought to ensure that the participation of women & adolescent girls remains central to the roll out of Pakistan's new FP initiatives, in particular the FP 2030 Plan of the Government of Sindh.

The 'Dialogue on Women Voices 4 Better Choices in Family Planning Programming – Sharing the Sindh Experience' was started with a presentation by Mr. Ihatesham Akram. He focused on sharing with the decision makers in Sindh Government the process adopted for including women's voices in Sindh FP policy and programming. In this regard, inclusion of women voices through Listening Sessions was particularly highlighted, and its process, benefits, challenges and way forward were elaborated upon, with the objective of obtaining decision makers' endorsement on incorporating the element of women's engagement in FP policy & programming, especially in the context of renewed commitment to the FP2030 goals.

After, Mr. Ihatesham Presentation the Chair and co-chairs, and participants of the event shared their feedbacks.

While giving her feedback, **Dr. Mahwish Mubarak**, *Deputy Director*, *Clinics*, *PWD Sindh* said that "The act of women to practice FP is closely related with the overall empowerment of women. Empowerment includes the action of raising the status of women through education, awareness, gender norms, equality values and raising the voices for better choices. So, WE is all about equipping and allowing women to make life determining decisions like access to FP services and the contraceptive practices, this will require functional integration, involvement of multi-stakeholders, coordination and cooperation with each other for greater good of women's health. She further said that, the existence of top level commitment from political commitment in Sindh province is manifested in the recent policy announcement of declaring FP to be made as essential services.

Dr. Ayesha Ihsan, *Director General PWD, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*, focused on the importance of education and information for elevating women voices. She said that "Voices are never strong until and unless they are backed with knowledge and Education. We should share our experiences with all the provinces so we all can achieve our goals of FP and CPR in the coming years".

Dr. Tahira Kamal, *Director Health Services, Baluchistan* declared the Sindh government as the pioneer of the FP initiative and this step is a lesson for all other provinces. She further said that, "We should take guidance and inputs from Sindh province and implement this plan in our respective work as well". Dr. Kamal put forth a great suggestion by saying that "We must develop a technical working group from provinces, and the Federal or Sindh government must take a lead in it. We all look forward for guidance and further development towards this initiative from CIP secretariat Sindh".

The representative from PWD Punjab, **Ms. Bushra Naveed,** *Director Planning M&E, PWD,* appreciated the CIP and Forum joint venture which has been successful in bringing forward the importance of elevating women voices in FP policy, program and funding decisions and creating mechanisms for incorporating women's engagement in these processes.

Dr. Ambreen Nadeem, Director General Technical (Rep.), Population Program Wing (PPW), Ministry of National Health Services, Islamabad who was the co-chair of the event said that" it needs to be kept in mind that women and girls are not merely passive targets or acceptors of contraception, but rights holders with distinct needs and preferences. Women are deeply familiar with both the challenges and solutions facing themselves and their communities when it comes to health and more 'intimate' issues like Family Planning", which is why the public health interventions that are designed without their substantive input are more likely to be less effective or unsustainable. Moreover, Dr. Nadeem appreciated the initiative of Forum and CIP to include women in FP programming process and said that "it was in line with the upcoming needs especially when the initiatives such as FP 2020, to which Pakistan is a signatory, holds citizen participation central to improving FP services delivery". Furthermore, Dr. Nadeem also said that the Federal government also agrees with this aspect of participation and sees participation of women as an enabler in its efforts toward the achievement of FP 2020 goals. While giving her concluding remarks, Dr. Nadeem said that "I am also confident that this 'women inclusion approach' in family planning as put forward under this joint initiative will gain traction with the other provinces and will be considered for adoption and replication in their respective family planning programs".

Dr. Talib Lashari, *Technical Adviser, PWD, Sindh,* and the Chair of the event recognized the systematic approach of asking more 1m people what they want and said that "it is a very gigantic task at the same time very fundamental, very critical and much needed because it is the women who needs to tell us what they really want and how we should prioritize the services". He also mentioned that a lot of issues does not require high finances, rather just managerial issues that can be solved at district level or at facility level. Through the LS process, the Forum and CIP were able to resolve some of the issues in the five districts via DPWs and DHOs.

Dr. Lashari made an important announcement by talking about the inclusion of Listening sessions in the revised PC1 of CIP, as it will increase the accountability of decision makers and voices of women. He further said that, after going through the other recommendations, the important recommendations will be included in the policies as well.

Major Take Away

Some major take away from the dialogue are:

- This dialogue is an innovation in which the experiences of one province is being shared with other provinces. To achieve the FP goals as per SDGs, ICPD or FP2030 it is only possible if all the provinces are doing equal efforts and the Federal government is playing a coordinating role among the provinces. What is important is that, all provinces must come together at the same pace and work towards best practices towards FP.
- The international commitment by Pakistan with respect to family planning in Nairobi Summit ICPD25 will also require an active and sustained effort by the government towards engaging women and girls in identifying solutions to FP challenges so that a roadmap for catalyzing realization of its ambitious target will be possible".
- A policy paper is under review by the CIP secretariat and once it is reviewed and finalized, it will be shared with the Honorable Minister of Health and Population Sindh.

Annex A – List of Participants

- 1. Dr. Talib Lashari, Technical Advisor CIP, PWD & Focal Person FP2020
- 2. Dr. Ambreen Nadeem, Director General Technical, Population Program Wing (PPW), Ministry of National Health Services, Islamabad
- 3. Ms. Ayesha Ihsan, Director General PWD, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- 4. Dr. Mahwish Mubarak, Deputy Director, Clinics, PWD Sindh
- 5. Ms. Bushra Naveed, Director Planning M&E, PWD, Punjab
- 6. Dr. Tahira Kamal, Director Health Services, Baluchistan
- 7. Dr. Atiya Abroo, Deputy Director, RMNCH, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination (MONHSR & C) Islamabad
- 8. Dr. Mumtaz Eskar, Ex Director General (DG), Population Council
- 9. Dr. Tanveer Inam, Dy. Director MCH/RH, Health Services, , Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- 10. Ms. Ghazala Bashir Memon, Dy. Director Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination (MONHSR & C) Islamabad
- 11. Dr. Fauzia Assad, Country Director, Jhpiego
- 12. Dr. Mr. Riaz Shujrah, Manager M&E, CIP Secretariat Sindh
- 13. Mr. Waqaruddin Usman, Admin Officer, CIP Secretariat Sindh
- 14. Mr. Khurram Mubeen, Disoperation's IRMNCH & Nutrition Program Primary & Secondary Healthcare Department, Punjab
- 15. Dr. Mohammad Mohiuddin, Project Director, Family Planning, Riz Consulting
- 16. Ms. Roshan Fida, Technical Advisor, Family Planning, Riz Consulting
- 17. Mr. Zahid Ali, Regional Director, Federal, GB & AJK Region, Family Planning Association Pakistan (FPAP)
- 18. Dr. Asma Badar, Health and Nutrition Specialist, Save the Children
- 19. Dr. Riaz Hussain Solangi, Public Health and Management Specialist, Consultant
- 20. Dr. Ghazala Mahmud, Head of Department Obstetrics and Gynecology, Fazia Medical College Islamabad
- 21. Dr. Samina Naeem Khalid, Reproductive Health Consultant Director, Reproductive Health Research Center
- 22. Ms. Fatima Shehryar, communication Officer, UNICEF
- 23. Mr. Muhammad, Tahir Qazi, NPM, Ipas Pakistan
- 24. Ms. Ambreen Khan, Director Basic Health Services, Chemonics Pakistan
- 25. Dr. Shahzad Ali Khan, Head of Public Health Department
- 26. Dr. Aisha Babar Kawish, Head ASOPH
- 27. Ms. Anza Abbasi , Regular Member FSM, Member DEI committee WRA-Global
- 28. Mr. Bashir Anjum, Manger Special Project, Rural Network Support Program (RSPN)
- 29. Dr. Amanullah, Chair/Member, Forum for Safe Motherhood
- 30. Dr. Shuaib Khan, Vice chair/ Member, Forum for Safe Motherhood
- 31. Dr. Masood Abbasi, Director, Forum for Safe Motherhood
- 32. Mr. Ihatesham Akram, Technical Advisor, Forum for Safe Motherhood
- 33. Dr. Harris Ahmed, Member Governing Body, Forum for Safe Motherhood
- 34. Ms. Rafia Rauf, Project Director, Forum for Safe Motherhood
- 35. Ms. Navroza Sher Ali, National Coordinator, Forum for Safe Motherhood
- 36. Dr. Rajesh Kumar, Provincial Coordinator Sindh, Forum for Safe Motherhood
- 37. Mr. Muhammad Kashif, Admin & Finance Officer, Forum for Safe Motherhood
- 38. Mr. Shakeel Yasin, IT & Telecommunication Specialist, Forum for Safe Motherhood
- 39. Ms. Sabeen Zahra, Admin and Finance Assistant, Forum for Safe Motherhood

- 40. Mr. Shahzad Ahmad, Officer Assistant, Forum for Safe Motherhood
- 41. Dr. Farhana Shahid, Provincial Coordinator, Forum for Safe Motherhood
- 42. Dr. Yasmeen Qazi, Senior Advocacy Consultant, Senior Advocacy Consultant, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)
- 43. Ms. Nosheen Khawar, Liaison Officer, World bank
- 44. Dr. Aliya Kashif, Senior Health Specialist, World bank
- 45. Dr. Naila Yasmin, UNFPA

Annex B – Agenda

EVENT INFORMATION:

Date: Tuesday, October 27, 2020 Time: 11:00am to 01:00pm

Venue: Shamadan Hall, Serena Hotel, Islamabad

	AG	ENDA			
Technical Advi	Chair Talib Lashari isor, Population Welfare artment, Sindh	Co-Chair Dr. Ambreen Nadeem DG Technical (Rep.), Population Program Wing, Ministry of National Health Services, Islamabad			
11:00 – 11:25 am	Registration				
11:25 – 11:30 am	Recitation from the Holy Quran				
11:30 – 11:35 am	Welcome Remarks - Dr. Amanullah, CEO, Forum for Safe Motherhood (FSM)				
11:35 – 11:40 am	Curtain Raiser – What Women Want				
11:40 – 11:55 am	Strengthening FP Programming – Sharing the Sindh Experience - Mr. Ihatsham Akram, <i>Technical Advisor, FSM</i>				
11:55 – 12:00 pm	Women Voices for Better Choices – Glimpses from the Listening Sessions				
12:00 – 12:30 pm	Ms. Ayesha Ihsan, IMs. Bushra Naveed	rak, Deputy Director Medical, PWD, Sindh Director General, PWD, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa , Director Planning M&E, PWD, Punjab irector Health Services, Baluchistan			
12:30 – 12:40 pm	Remarks by Co-Chair - Dr. Ambreen Nadeem, Director General Technical (Rep.), Population Program Wing (PPW), Ministry of National Health Services, Islamabad				
12:40 – 12:50 pm	Remarks by Chair - Dr. Talib Lashari, <i>Technical Adviser, PWD, Sindh</i>				
12:50 – 01:00 pm	Vote of Thanks - Dr. Harris Ahmad, Governing Body Member, FSM				
01:00 pm	Lunch				

Annex C - Presentation







Women Voices for Better Choices

in Family Planning Programming



Lessons from Sindh Experience

How the Story Began...





A Global Campaign in 2018-19 directed on What Women Want with respect to their maternal & reproductive healthcare

REACH:

Worldwide: 1 Million+ Pakistan:

Sindh: 108,251

244,752

"What is your top request for your maternal & reproductive health care?"

PARTNERS

- Rural Support Programs Network
- Fire Communications
- Tameer Khalq
 Foundation
- SHADE Balochistan

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Inclusive & Diverse

- · Rural women & girls
- Urban women & girls
- Parliamentarians
- · Political activists
- · Social activists
- · Working women
- Students





















Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

- · Mardan
- Swabi

Punjab

- · Bahawalpur
- · Toba Tek Singh
- · Jhang
- · Rahim Yar Khan

ICT

Islamabad

Balochistan

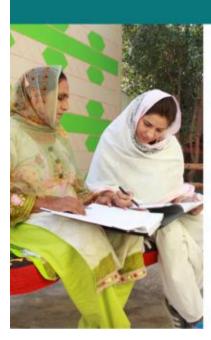
- Quetta
- Jaffarabad

Sindh

- Jacobabad
- Jamshoro
- Karachi
- · Qambar Shahdadkot
- · Shikarpur







The Key Asks...

- Increased, fully functional and closer health facilities 9.6%;
- Antenatal information, personnel, services and supplies 9.3%;
- Water, sanitation, and hygiene 7.5%;
- Food and nutrition information, personnel, services and supplies 5.8%;
- Medicines and supplies 5.5%;
- Labor and delivery information, personnel, services and supplies 5.4%;
- Increased, qualified, closer and better supported female providers 5.2%;
- Transportation infrastructure 4.7%;
- Family planning information, personnel, services & supplies
- Free and affordable services and supplies 4.6%;



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Partnership with CIP Secretariat Sindh

For:

 Accelerating realization of Sindh FP2020 Working Group and Sindh Population Taskforce recommendations



Inclusion of Women
 Voices in Family Planning
 programming in Sindh



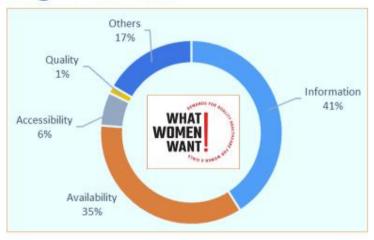
We approached our Goal



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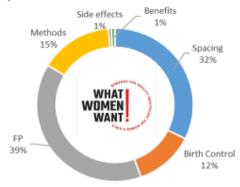


What Women Want for Family Planning in Sindh





Topics of Information Demanded for FP



Demands for awareness raising of:

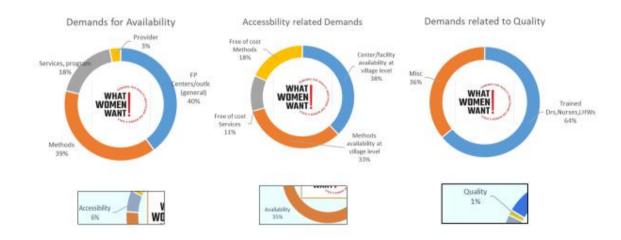
- Women and Mothers (59%),
- Village level (27%)
- Husbands and males (14%)

Demands of awareness raising through:

- Health Care Providers (67%),
- Awareness raising program (27%)
- Campaign (9%)

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Provincial Consultations

- Effective BCC and counselling services including couple counselling at health facilities through male workers
- Use of all community health workers, introduction of male FP service providers and reaching men at doorsteps, linking male mobilizers with community support groups etc.
- Telemedicine and Helpline, Scaling Up of clients' transportation services and camps in LHW uncovered areas
- Increase in number and training of WMOs, LHVs and CMWs
- Ensuring commodity security in general and for hard to reach areas in particular
- Quality focus on: (i) counseling, (ii) access to chosen method, (iii) follow up and (iv) support.
- Introduction of Real time monitoring, improving quality of data and regular data analysis
- Adequate funding on FP services.
- Supportive supervision of the technical staff
- Introduce quarterly quality audits, Pay for performance (P4P), third party quality of FP care surveys
- Empowerment and innovation should be included as cross cutting



Listening Sessions - Including Women in Solutions

- Relatively new practice
- Embedded in citizen participation central to improving FP services delivery (FP2020)
- In line with SC enunciation of FP as a Human Right.
- Explores the viability of user's participation in FP Programming especially Women
- To engage women in identifying solutions for the demands they raised during the WWW campaign and provide them an opportunity for sharing their demands as well as solutions.

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How

- Implemented in 5 districts of Sindh
- Each listening session was split into 2 sub-sessions.
 - The first sub session focused on prioritization of demands and identification of solutions by women themselves for addressing the demands
 - The second was conducted with district managers that included officials of DoH, PWD, National Program, PPHI, and HIS for their response.

listening Sessions Outcomes





Actions Taken - Demands Resolved

Women's Suggestion	Action Taken
Make LHWs conduct sessions on FP with follow up for reinforcement and answering follow up questions. Currently, LHWs do not conduct sessions, even if they conduct some sessions they listen and go away and never come back. Provide brochures with pictures of methods, in simple language.	LHWs and LHS trainings organized with a focus on FP by National Program. They have been instructed to conduct sessions regularly and the same is also being monitored. The DPWO Qambar assured that the pictorial brochures will be available for FP clients in the field.
Provision of FP Products Contraceptives are sometimes being sold to women.	DHOs and DPWOs ensured that clients are not charged for any FP services (These were being illegally charged at some places).
Trained and Skilled Providers Provide Interpersonal Communication (IPC) trainings to providers so that they can properly address the information needs of the clients. LHW needs to follow up with the new client at least within a week after giving contraceptives for any side effects management.	Trainings imparted to LHWs in Umerkot, LHSs trained in Tharparkar by LHWP. Camps arranged in Tharparkar, Umerkot and Sanghar to address the follow up issues.
Provide FP Services at Village Level Women have an acute transport issue. Contraceptives should be provided through Mobile Van/Camp.	Camps arranged in Tharparkar, Umerkot and Sanghar.
Provision of Methods Timely availability of contraceptives needs to be ensured.	Stocks are available now.



Improvement in Management Practices

- Managers' Awareness of Field Issues
- Improved Coordination at District Level
- Improved Coordination at Field Level
- Better Utilization of Resources
- Curbing Malpractices



What Does Existing Literature Tell

PDHS (2017-18) Highlighted Information Gaps

The PDHS 2017-18 indicators highlight gaps with respect to different aspects of information about FP that may underpin the high demand for FP information by women.

Nearly half of the women appear to not have even heard of implants.

A majority of women (nearly two thirds) using FP methods were not advised on selecting FP method; how to use, possible side effects, and what to do in case of side effects.

Health concerns/side effects have been reported as a major reason for discontinuation of IUD, injectable and pills. Only 10.9% of women were given information on family planning during postnatal checkup. This percentage was double for Sindh i.e. 20.9%.

Majority of Women (76%) did **Not** receive FP message through radio, TV, newspaper and mobile.

Amongst those who got FP message through radio, TV, newspaper and mobile, only 17.9% received message on limiting family size.

Wife and husband jointly take decision of using or not using FP, however, husbands are more responsible for decisions of not using FP.

More than one fourth (26.6%)married men consider FP as women business and a significant 15.8% thinks FP makes women promiscuous Supply-side barriers documented include:

- ☐ Poor access to FP services,
- Lack of counselling and technical knowledge of unmotivated providers
- Insufficient availability of affordable modern methods
- Quality effects satisfaction which in turn effects the continuity of using FP services
- Provider bias, lack of capability to manage side effects
- Low economic status the users could not afford to choose any but the cheapest methods
- FP clients preferred private facilities over government's health facilities as the later were 'derided'

Community Participation - What We Know

□ T	There is	a	growing	consensus	to	include	users	in	services	deliver	۷
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Central to International Covenants

- The recognition of community participation as a key component in defining essential health care dates back to Alma - Ata declaration
- Rights Paradigm of International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994
- WHO) has included participation as one of the nine key principles of "Ensuring human rights in the provision of contraceptive information and services"
- ✓ FP 2020
- Participation recognized as a precondition for sustainable development and for ensuring good-quality care and increased use of services and is defined as active involvement of populations in decision making, implementation, management and evaluation of policies, programs and services

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Participation - Known Benefits

- While health programs have witnessed participatory approaches, participation has not adequately been included in large scale family planning/contraceptives programs
- Benefits recorded include:
 - programme efficacy and sustainability may increase
 - empower healthcare providers to implement realistic changes that reflect the needs of the community
 - integrated services rather than FP/C only may also be better-suited when community structures are still weak or missing
 - greater awareness from both sides about the issues, barriers and needs leading to the identification of appropriate actions and solutions, bridging the gap between providers and their clients and finding as well as implementing solutions to barriers
- Be seen as a partnership approach to service provision and not a means to create self-sufficiency in the community



Key Takeaways

- Women demands and the need for their participation is corroborated by existing evidence and our experience
- Women participation Strategic and Small investment for Big Returns
- Can come handy in implementation of the GoS recent strides in improving FP services delivery in province
- Will be giant leap towards overall vision of women empowerment of GoS
- Opportunities Exist Need to Leverage

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Annex D – Glimpses from the Event





















HEALTHY WOMEN - HEALTHY WORLD

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