

# Population Reproductive Health Program

## South Asia Strategy Brief

The David & Lucile Packard Foundation's Population and Reproductive Health program is committed to promoting reproductive health and rights and stabilizing population growth. Building on more than 15 years of work in the region, the South Asia subprogram works to improve the quality of, and access to, voluntary family planning/contraception, comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and adolescent sexual and reproductive health services, including safe abortion and post-abortion care.

### The Challenge

A combination of political instability, gender inequity, and lack of quality reproductive health services has left women and young people in the South Asia region without the proper information and services needed to make decisions that will impact their lives and well-being.

Women and girls from marginalized communities bear the greatest burden of poor sexual and reproductive health due to their disadvantaged social status and limited educational and economic opportunities. A significant proportion of girls are forced into early marriages and pregnancies, and have frequent childbearing while lacking access to quality sexual and reproductive health information and services. These inequities within a rapidly growing youth population are known to cause intergenerational compromises to quality of life.

### Our Strategy

The South Asia subprogram works to expand access to and improve the quality of voluntary family planning and contraception, gender responsive comprehensive sexuality education, and adolescent sexual and reproductive health services, including comprehensive abortion care.

### Our Approach

In South Asia, we aim to:

- Improve access family planning and contraception services for women and young people with an emphasis on quality of care;
- Scale-up innovative approaches to gender responsive comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services for young people;
- Improve access to comprehensive abortion care with a focus on reducing barriers to access; and Support evidence-informed advocacy, particularly youth led efforts to increase political and financial commitment to quality focused sexual and reproductive health programs.

More specifically, in Bihar, India, we aim to:

- Improve the quality of FP services in the public sector, improve birth spacing through post-partum FP services, and increase the use of underused methods through the private sector;

- Scale-up CSE in schools and communities and improve access to youth friendly sexual and reproductive health services in the public sector; and
- Continue working to improve access to safe abortion the public and private sectors with a focus on community engagement to reduce barriers to access.

At the national level in India, given the emerging restrictions on access to safe abortion and early signs of a return to target-driven family planning programs, we aim to:

- Support advocacy to protect access to safe abortion, while also advocating with government to increase investments in programs that promote gender equality; and
- Support advocacy for a new population policy and programs informed by a quality, equity, and rights framework.

Building off our work on safe abortion in Bihar, we will make targeted investments to improve access to safe abortion in select districts of Uttar Pradesh.

In Pakistan, where we have worked since 2000, we support a multi-donor initiative focused on increasing use of contraception among select urban poor communities of Karachi. At the national level we support advocacy, with provincial governments, for investment in voluntary family planning/contraception and post-abortion care.

In Myanmar, given the changed political climate and our past experience there (2000–2004), we make targeted investments in voluntary family planning and reproductive health initiatives in order to energize political and administrative leadership and attract other donor investment in family planning and reproductive health to the country.

## Where We Work

The South Asia subprogram invests deeply in Bihar, India; supports a multi-donor initiative in Karachi, Pakistan; and makes targeted investments in Uttar Pradesh, India and Myanmar. We also support strategic regional initiatives in South Asia.

## Progress

The South Asia subprogram has been instrumental in seeding and accelerating progress on reproductive health and rights, often under the most challenging of circumstances. Enabling women and young people to make more informed decisions contributed to young girls in Bihar starting to make informed choices about when to marry, when to have children and how many children to have – an important shift in social norms.

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*Our grantmaking aims to improve the quality of family planning and reproductive health services for women and young people.*

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## What We Don't Fund

While we coordinate and work closely with public sector stakeholders, we generally do not fund governmental institutions or direct services.

## To Learn More

To learn more about the U.S. subprogram, our strategies and funding, visit our website at [www.packard.org/population-reproductive-health](http://www.packard.org/population-reproductive-health).