

SAVING LIVES, SAVING MONEY: Financing Family Planning Commodities in Mongolia

Providing family planning services is one of the most cost-effective investments governments can make to improve health and promote economic development.

In Mongolia, increasing the investments on contraceptive commodities could avoid thousands of unnecessary deaths and morbidities – and in turn, it could avert almost \$7.5 million dollars spent on direct healthcare costs.



Family planning – the provision of modern methods of contraception and counseling, backed up by comprehensive sexuality education - prevents unplanned pregnancies and abortions, reduces maternal and child mortality and saves precious health care resources.

Family planning services should be accessible to all those who might need them (including unmarried couples, single women and adolescents) and must take into consideration the right of women and their partners to choose the best method available for them. Society as a whole reaps the benefits when women are free to choose a family planning method that suits their needs.

Investment in family planning has far-reaching social and economic impact, with as much as \$120 dollars in general social returns per each \$1 dollar spent. As such, the value of family planning for economic and social development in Mongolia cannot be underestimated.

While great progress has been achieved in the past decades in public health and economic development, much more remains to be done to reach the Sustainable Development Goals targets of Mongolia.

WHY INVEST IN FAMILY PLANNING?

Maternal health is one of the highest priorities of Government of Mongolia. Strong political commitment dedicated towards achieving MDG goal 5, support from several national and international organizations, and development partners has led to substantial decline in maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births) over the decade, from 99 in 2004 to 26 in 2015. The 2016 increase in maternal mortality calls attention to the need to maintain a laser-focus on priority investments to prevent reverse in the significant progress achieved in recent years. Therefore, it is laudable the government commitment to increase the modern Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (mCPR) from 48.1 percent among married or in-union Women of Reproductive Age (WRA, women aged 15-49 years) to 60 percent for WRA.

Turning these commitments into reality requires carefully planned strategies and investments. One of these strategies must entail the prioritization of family planning services: in fact, investments in family planning will not only dramatically reduce the costs of healthcare for mothers and their children but also result in changing age structures within the population. Changing age structures could potentially lead to a demographic dividend which could provide a boost to economic growth in the long term.

Access to family planning will also reduce the number of adolescent pregnancies, allowing young women to fully develop physically, stay in school and achieve optimal levels of nutrition before embarking on childbearing. Ensuring adolescent girls are healthier and well nourished, while a benefit in itself, will also result in them becoming healthier mothers if and when they decide to have children.

Family planning saves lives and resources

Saving mothers: Contraceptives are to maternal mortality what vaccinations are to infant mortality. When women are in control of their reproductive health, unplanned pregnancies and unsafe abortions will decrease.



Saving children: The ability of mothers to take care of their reproductive health will result in decreasing neonatal and infant mortality and morbidity. Children will grow into healthy, productive adults, contributing to national development.



INVEST IN FAMILY

SAVE LIVES SAVE MONEY

EMPOWER SOCIETY



Investments to Reach the Target:
60% mCPR.

Direct Healthcare Costs averted:
less need for antenatal, delivery and post abortion care; reduced out-of-pocket health expenditures.



Invest more productively
Savings can be invested in education and health. Women will be able to continue their education, enter the labor market and contribute more to society.

The demographic dividend
Changing age structures and focused investments on young people will increase the number of healthier, better educated adults in society, boosting economic growth.

Costs and Benefits of Family Planning in Mongolia

Increasing financial investment in family planning commodities in Mongolia can have a very attractive rate of return-on-investment: spending \$1 dollar on contraceptives can reduce the cost of pregnancy-related care by \$3.2, and save millions of dollars in direct healthcare costs.

Furthermore, shifting towards long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) should be promoted. These methods are less costly in the long run and less vulnerable to stock outs, and provide women and their partners with long-term and more effective protection against unplanned or unsafe pregnancies.

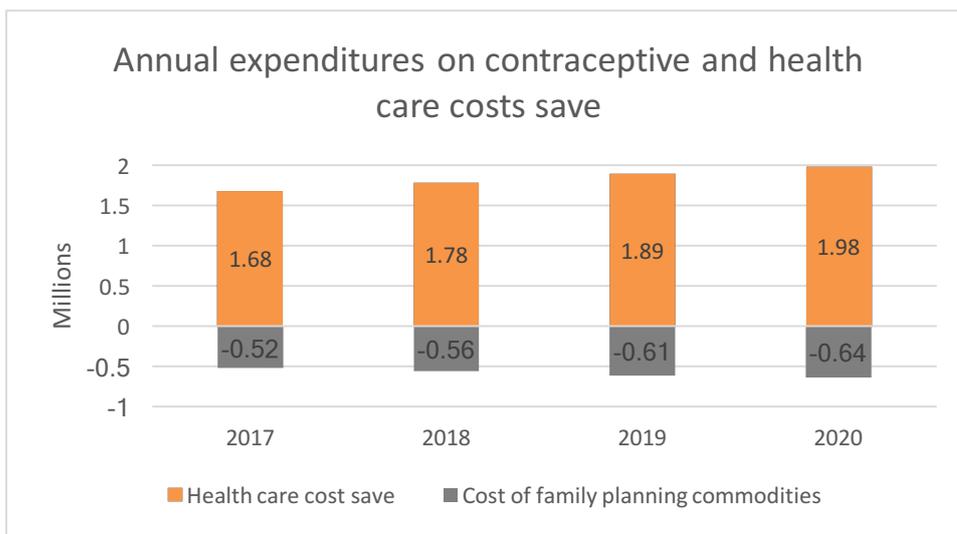
In 2016, mCPR in Mongolia was 48.1 percent among married and in-union women, with an unmet need for family planning of 16 percent. An estimated 415,000 women were using modern family planning methods, among whom 64,000 were using LARC (27 percent). By 2020, Mongolia aims to increase mCPR to 60 percent with a focus on shifting towards a higher proportion of LARC users. This means that mCPR has

to increase by 12 percentage points by 2020.

Expenditures for contraceptive commodities amounted to 0.52 million USD in 2017. This investment helped to avert almost 1.68 million USD in healthcare costs for Mongolian society by reducing unplanned pregnancies, abortions and the extra need for maternal and newborn healthcare. **In order to reach the committed targets, however, additional gradual increases in FP investments per year are required during 2017-2020.** Over time, annual expenditures on contraceptives should increase from 0.52 million USD in 2017 to 0.64 million USD in 2020, as shown in the graph below.

During 2016-2020, expenditures on contraceptive commodities should reach an overall amount of 2.33 million USD. The costs of spending will be offset greatly by the returns, as investing 2.33 million USD will save almost 7.33 million USD of averted healthcare costs in 2017-2020. Annually, the direct healthcare costs saved would increase from almost 1.68 million USD in 2017 to 1.98 million USD in 2020.

Annual expenditures on contraceptives and health care costs saved



By increasing expenditures on contraceptive commodities in this way, Mongolia would benefit from an impressive return-on-investment of \$3.2 dollars for each \$1 dollar spent – a three-fold increase.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increasing the investment in family planning commodities in Mongolia can have a very attractive rate of return-on-investment: spending \$1 dollar on contraceptives can reduce the cost of pregnancy-related care by \$3.2, and save millions of dollars in direct healthcare costs averted.
- Shifting towards long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) should be promoted. These methods are less costly in the long run, less vulnerable to stock outs, and provide women and their partners with longer-term and more effective protection against unplanned or unsafe pregnancies.
- Making family planning services available to everyone who needs them is one of the most cost-effective investment that government can make. The provision of modern methods of contraception and counseling - backed up by comprehensive sexuality education - prevents unplanned pregnancies and abortions, reduces maternal and child mortality and saves precious health care resources.



Investing in family planning has enormous potential to save lives and resources. By prioritizing family planning investments by 2020, Mongolia will be able to dramatically improve the health of mothers and their children, save millions in healthcare resources and boost economic growth. These outcomes cannot and must not be neglected.

RESULTS AT A GLANCE - 2017 to 2020 in Mongolia



\$3:\$1 Return on Investment



7 maternal deaths averted

345,000 unplanned pregnancies averted



118 child deaths averted