
2018

Expanding private sector involvement in addressing family planning needs of young people in Egypt: Increasing the use of private sector health facilities for family planning and reproductive health information and service provision for Egyptian youth

Evidence Project

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Recommended Citation

Evidence Project. 2018. "Expanding private sector involvement in addressing family planning needs of young people in Egypt: Increasing the use of private sector health facilities for family planning and reproductive health information and service provision for Egyptian youth," activity brief. Washington, DC: Population Council, The Evidence Project.

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Expanding Private Sector Involvement in Addressing Family Planning Needs of Young People in Egypt

Increasing the use of private sector health facilities for family planning and reproductive health information and service provision for Egyptian youth

ACTIVITY BRIEF

The fertility trends in Egypt are alarming.

In 2014, after decades of progress in lowering fertility levels, the country's fertility rate increased from 3.0 in 2008 to 3.5. Family planning can contribute to achieving greater economic growth. The government is increasingly recognizing the role the private sector can play in delivering family planning and reproductive health information and services.

In 2015, the Evidence Project team at the Egypt Population Council office conducted an analysis titled "Situational Analysis of the Private Sector in the Delivery of Family Planning Services in Egypt: Current Status and Potential for Increased Involvement". The analysis concluded that the Egyptians most likely to use private services for their family planning needs are young couples in the upper two wealth quintiles, those with secondary or higher education, and those who live in urban areas.

GENERATING EVIDENCE ON THE AVAILABILITY AND USE OF PRIVATE FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES

USAID/Egypt is supporting the Evidence Project/Population Council Egypt Office to implement a research activity to generate evidence on scalable interventions to expand private sector family planning and reproductive health programming for young Egyptians aged 18-34. The activity is investigating how to increase demand for private family planning services through peer education and social media campaigns that specifically target young people. The project targets young people in factories in Port Said in urban Souhag, both married and single, to "prepare the market" before they get married.

The research team is testing interventions with two groups of young men and women who are potential clients for the private sector in two distinct geographic areas in Egypt: 10,000 factory workers in Port Said, and 3,000 young people with secondary or university education who

are participating in vocational training in urban areas in Souhag. To ensure that increased youth demand is met with quality services, the activity is building capacity of private physicians, nurses and pharmacists about modern family planning methods and the need to counsel women (and their husbands) about family planning during antenatal, postpartum and child care visits. The researchers are also testing the service provider interventions at selected factory clinics, private sector and NGO clinics, and pharmacies in Port Said and Souhag.

Population Council/Evidence researchers have partnered with Ma3looma, an Egyptian website and social media platform that raises awareness of sexual and reproductive health among youth, to test the role of web-based information and social media in creating demand for family planning services. The project created three animation videos focusing on the benefits of family planning and



The research is targeting two different governorates in Egypt – urban areas of Souhag in Upper Egypt and the investment zone of Port Said.

healthy spacing and timing of pregnancies, methods of family planning and debunking myths related to family planning methods. Peer educators have been trained and deployed in the Port Said factories and Souhag urban neighborhoods. In Souhag, peer educators also received livelihood training on a range of topics such as vocational, leadership and life skills.

“ *The next time one of my friends says something about contraceptives not being safe I can argue with her from a position of strength.* ”

– Peer educator

The researchers used a knowledge, attitude and practice survey and a standardized quality assessment tool to create a baseline of, and then measure improvements in, knowledge about the availability and quality of family planning services offered by private sector and NGO health facilities. Stakeholders and family planning experts reviewed and helped improve the training materials that were developed for peer educators and service providers.

The Levi Strauss Foundation is supporting managers from the participating Port Said factories to attend a Management for Health training course to build their capacity to create and sustain a culture of health for their workers.

NEXT STEPS

At the end of the study, the Evidence Project will hold a national conference to share results and experiences with national and local stakeholders and project participants.



Informational posters have been placed in targeted factories, like this one on the importance of using family planning after the birth of the first baby. The project will measure their impact. Social behavior change materials can often be a very cost-effective intervention.

ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS INTO THE RISE IN EGYPT'S TOTAL FERTILITY RATE

Data indicating the rise in the country's total fertility rate comes from the Egypt Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS). The Survey of Young People in Egypt (SYPE) 2014 showed an increase in desired number of children among unmarried young men and women compared to 2009. The Evidence Project conducted a secondary analysis of the data in these two surveys and a series of focus groups discussions with young men and women and key informant interviews with the purpose of identifying key drivers of the fertility increase. Based on the study results a multi-pronged approach is recommended to increase awareness of FP among various sub-groups of young people, improve quality of family planning services and conduct research to identify the most effective means to reach out to young people.

Policy briefs will be produced on:

- Reaching young people through social media
- Discussing family planning and reproductive health in the workplace
- Integrating family planning and reproductive health messages in livelihood training programs
- Fertility desires among young Egyptians



The Ma3looma website is linked to a Facebook page, which reported 52,000 new users in the last quarter.



The Evidence Project is led by the Population Council in partnership with INDEPTH Network and Population Reference Bureau. Other partners are FHI360, Meridian Group International, Inc., and What Works Association.

The Evidence Project is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of cooperative agreement no. AID-OAA-A-13-00087.

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