ADVANCE FAMILY PLANNING 2017
We advance family planning through evidence-based advocacy

The Advance Family Planning (AFP) initiative comprises more than 20 partner organizations worldwide. We help to achieve the global goal of expanding access to quality contraceptive information, services, and supplies. In support of Family Planning 2020, we work to ensure that an additional 120 million women and girls have access to and are able to use family planning by 2020.

The initiative launched in 2009 at the Bill & Melinda Gates Institute for Population and Reproductive Health within the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. It is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Our advocacy depends on country ownership

Political commitments shift and financial resources falter, but strong, locally-led advocacy evolves to meet these challenges. 

Our advocacy focuses on the incremental policy and funding decisions needed to ensure quality, voluntary family planning in a given setting. Advocacy wins signal progress, reinforce local leadership, and accelerate momentum toward long-term global and national goals.
We advocate at every level, from capitals to communities

In many countries it is no longer enough for presidents or prime ministers to make national commitments to family planning. Decision-makers—especially those at the local government level—have more power than ever before to make budgetary and programmatic decisions that affect family planning. Meeting the need for family planning means engaging these local decision-makers and persuading them to take action.

Our focus countries are:

- Bangladesh
- Burkina Faso
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- India
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Nigeria
- Senegal
- Tanzania
- Uganda

We catalyze advocacy into action—our advocacy resulted in more than 450 wins across all levels of government.
We engage with decision-makers, who commit national and local government funds for family planning.

In 2016, our advocacy led to $11.7 million for family planning information, services, and supplies.

Kenya’s county governors are outstanding family planning champions. With the support of advocates, more than ten county governors approved costed implementation plans to effectively invest in family planning. These plans are bearing fruit—family planning budget allocations in six counties in 2016 increased 413% from 2015, totaling $1.27 million. Every $1 invested in AFP’s advocacy efforts returned $43 in local funds for family planning.
A suburb of Lagos, Nigeria set an example for the entire country when the local High Commissioner for Health issued a directive in January 2017 mandating that family planning services should be completely free of charge to clients. Eight months of sustained advocacy helped make it happen. Yaba is the first locality to follow through on the government of Nigeria’s commitment to provide free family planning services to all Nigerians.

We expand policies to better meet the reproductive desires of more people

Our advocates work to raise the quality of family planning services; facilitate a wider range of available contraceptive commodities; increase the types of health workers who can provide methods; improve accountability mechanisms; and revise family planning curricula and training.
The Opportunity Fund provides small grants to civil society organizations to seize advocacy tipping points; it accomplishes much more.

Managed by PAI since its establishment in 2013, the Opportunity Fund is now critical for AFP to expand into new geographies, deepen efforts in focus countries, take risks on new objectives, leverage additional funding for advocacy, and improve the capacity of local advocates to lead successful family planning advocacy efforts in their communities.

In 2016, advocates in Zambia used their Opportunity Fund grants to amend a policy in the Eastern Province so that women can access family planning services every day from a community health worker—instead of repeatedly traveling far distances to district health centers. They also collaborated with decision-makers to approve family planning budget allocations at the provincial level and revise national guidelines to lower the age of adolescents allowed to access contraceptives from 18 to 12.
In February 2016, Burkina Faso’s Prime Minister officially committed to integrate sexual and reproductive health education into school curricula for students aged 10 to 24. More than four months in the making, this advocacy win represents a remarkable step forward in expanding family planning information and access for young people and addressing the growing issue of unplanned adolescent pregnancies in Burkina Faso.

“My government will make the fight against unplanned adolescent pregnancies in schools our fight.”

Prime Minister Paul Kaba Thieba

Many young women’s potential is held back by early or unintended pregnancy. Our partners collaborate with young people and decision-makers to help governments and schools integrate funding, information, and services specifically dedicated to young people’s needs.

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More private companies are investing in family planning for the first time

The same advocacy that draws engagement from governments, faith-based organizations, and young people, is succeeding with companies. Our partners in India engage with leading companies to include family planning in their corporate social responsibility programs.

Our partners in Tanzania advocated steadily for three years with the largest private health insurance company to include family planning in their policies. Advocates demonstrated that family planning improves the lives of clients and reduces the company’s rising maternal health care costs.

As a result, in 2016, AAR Health Care Tanzania approved coverage for family planning services worth up to $138 annually for clients renewing their plan after May 2016. This covers a broad range of contraceptive choices for women — including the option to switch to another method if they prefer. An estimated 80,000 policyholders could benefit.
How do our advocates achieve this progress?

**AFP’s SMART—Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound**—advocacy approach focuses on opportunities that have the highest potential for success in the near term. It connects short-term advocacy strategies and wins with broad, long-term goals. The approach transforms the way family planning champions maximize their time and funds to effectively persuade those in power to take action.

Since 2009 Advance Family Planning led to more than 450 advocacy wins across all levels of government.

- **64%** of the wins increased budgets for family planning
- **19%** improved policies to expand contraceptive access and choice
- **17%** gained visibility for family planning

**41 Opportunity Fund grants** resulted in family planning allocations totaling $6.8 million.
In January 2017, more than 150 researchers, health professionals, advocates, and donors from 19 countries met in Senegal for three days to strategize on how to ensure a policy environment that would support access to subcutaneous depo provera via Uniject, also known as DMPA-SC or Sayana® Press and a broader range of contraceptive choices. Each country representative left with objectives specific to necessary policy changes and a plan for engaging decision-makers.

We are facilitating a broader base of AFP SMART advocacy capacity

Building SMART advocacy capacity and enabling more people to use our approach is a priority. In January 2016, in Indonesia, 21 family planning advocates from 14 countries learned and applied our evidence-based, decision-maker-centric advocacy approach to strengthen local family planning efforts. Nine received Opportunity Fund awards to implement their plans. Support from new donors also allowed us to apply our approach in Ouagadougou Partnership countries and Latin America.

In 2016 we initiated The Advocacy Collaborative with international reproductive health organizations. The aim is to advocate more effectively collectively and mentor more highly-skilled advocates in countries where family planning needs are greatest.
In one year, our potential reach at subnational levels quadrupled from 22.2 million women of reproductive age in 2015 to 91.3 million in 2016.

Through direct advocacy and diffusion efforts, AFP’s footprint increased from 140 subnational geographies to 224.

AFP’s tenth and newest focus country, Bangladesh, is the eighth most populous country in the world and growing rapidly. Despite policies in place for provision of family planning services, implementation of these policies remains a challenge and access to the full range of contraceptive methods and quality, affordable services is limited. Our local partner works closely with the government and others to advocate for improving quality of care for long- and short-acting methods and increasing family planning budgets at the national and subnational level.
We need thousands, not hundreds, of advocacy wins

As our advocacy reach significantly expanded in 2016, our results also multiplied. However, progress is predicated on collaboration with donors and governments. It also relies on strategic use of evidence and our ability to leverage other resources.

We are committed to advocating for actions that have the highest potential to benefit the women, men, and young people seeking to plan their families and their futures.