

## RESEARCH BRIEF

# Civil Society Involvement in Family Planning: A review of global programming and evidence

Civil Society Organizations (CSO) can play an important role in the functioning of family planning (FP) programs by expanding services, raising awareness, generating demand, and advocating an enabling environment for women and men to have informed and free choices around reproduction and contraceptive use. This review assessed the ways in which CSOs are involved in FP programs, summarized the evidence on civil society's engagement in improving FP programs, and highlighted the possible opportunities to further strengthen civil society engagement in FP programs.



Photo credit: Population Council

## RECOMMENDATIONS



CSOs should be enabled to independently facilitate supply and demand around FP, which can strengthen FP service provision and increase voluntary access to FP.



Better documentation is needed to inform on what activities and strategies by CSOs are effective and impactful, in addition to which are feasible and acceptable.



CSOs should be engaged as part of multi-stakeholder initiatives, where they can play an important role in linking health systems and communities.



Photo credit: Population Council

***CSOs can play an important role in contributing to sustainable FP and reproductive health programming globally, including in India. However, there is limited evidence around the contribution that CSOs have made to these programs.***

## FINDINGS

- The strongest evidence base was for CSO provision of facility-based FP, and social and behavior change interventions leading to increased knowledge and awareness, contraceptive use, and increased capacity of service providers to undertake SBC.
- Many successful programs were part of larger programs that involved a range of interventions and stakeholders, including international CSOs and government departments.
- CSOs served as links between the community and health system for promoting contraceptive demand and supply, and were accountable to the government and to the communities they represented.

## METHOD

A literature review identified 60 publications, describing 63 reproductive health interventions. The review was organized into ten technical strategy areas documenting how CSOs have been involved in FP, and the strength of this evidence was assessed using a scale.

## EVIDENCE

The Evidence Project uses implementation science—the strategic generation, translation, and use of evidence—to strengthen and scale up family planning and reproductive health programs to reduce unintended pregnancies worldwide. The Evidence Project is led by the Population Council

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