



## **Global Discussion on Family Planning Success Captivates Health Professionals, Encourages Collaboration on Electronic Knowledge-Sharing Platform**

### **Challenge:**

Collaborations enable the development of innovations that can help to accomplish objectives faster, easier, and with fewer resources. The challenge lies in supporting collaborations between a widely-dispersed network of innovators, researchers and practitioners. In the reproductive health field, health providers and program managers in resource-poor settings around the world risk being cut off from news and information that could improve their services and the lives of their clients.

### **Initiative:**

To respond to this need, the INFO Project, at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Center for Communication Programs, worked with the World Health Organization (WHO) to develop a simple and powerful tool that supports multiple virtual communities of practice and functions in low-bandwidth settings.

This tool, launched in 2004, is called the [Implementing Best Practices \(IBP\) Knowledge Gateway](#). It brings individuals and groups together at the global, regional and country level to exchange, communicate and share knowledge on reproductive health issues. The WHO has also adopted the Knowledge Gateway as its official corporate tool to support communities of practice.

### **Results:**

Today, with 8875 members from 184 countries belonging to 4039 organizations, the platform has become a dynamic tool supporting virtual forums and discussion on issues including midwifery, pregnancy prevention in youth, the female condom, and strategies to integrate HIV/AIDS and reproductive health services.

In December 2007, the INFO Project launched a forum on the Elements of Successful Family Planning Programs. The forum followed a survey of 450 people from 98 countries that asked which elements were the most important to successful programs. The forum began by asking participants why a well-trained, supervised and motivated staff is so important to success, and how participants have taken on the challenge of building staff capacity. Each day, a senior technical writer from the project's *Population Reports* journal asked participants a series of engaging questions about the challenges they face and the lessons they have learned, in creating successful family planning programs.

During those two weeks, 280 health care professionals in 63 countries chimed in. Many participants wrote in each day, from countries including India, Iran, Senegal,

and Canada. The INFO Project telephoned a few of the "regulars" to see what motivated them to contribute.

**Dr. Jonathan Ndzi from Senegal** says:

"What I gave were my experiences—it's easier to share these than to summarize a passage somewhere. I know that sharing my experiences might help other people, so I tried to afford the time [to participate], and also because it was interesting.

At the end of the day, there was now this group of people, and if I needed extra information or if I needed help with some question of family planning, I could now write to somebody and mention I'd participated in this forum.

I sent some information from the forum to my wife, who is a midwife. I also forwarded some resources to my colleagues from the University of Yaoundé in Cameroon."



Dr. Jonathan Ndzi  
Regional Emergency Reproductive Health  
Coordinator  
UNFPA  
Dakar, Senegal

**Dr. Mohammad Eslami from Iran** says:



Dr. Mohammad Eslami  
Manager, Family Planning  
and Contraceptive Security  
Ministry of Health, Iran

"I think it was the first time for me to participate in this type of participation in the internet in the RH issues. I explained some important issues that are challenging us in our country. I told my colleagues about what I learned. Sometimes it was hard because of my work load, but I was eager to participate in the discussion. I copied the questions to my laptop and answered at home or maybe on the way there in my car. I thought I could give some comments and can use some comments that maybe the discussion could provide for me and the FP program in our country."

**Sadia Dilshad Parveen from Richmond, VA** says:

"These discussions are really interesting. They are always augmented from input from technical experts, who alleviate confusion we sometimes have. It's important to find experiences from country programs and see what steps they've taken to solve problems. The problems are probably similar--they cross borders. We look out for similar programs and take their lessons. When their internet isn't working, our national offices write me to bring their program examples to the discussion.



Sadia Dilshad Parveen  
Reproductive Health Specialist  
Global Program Group  
Richmond, VA

The Elements discussion was very valuable. I've been going through it in great detail because it addressed all the different perspectives of family planning programs—monitoring, implementation, scaling up, and it sort of gives you perspective of what a successful family planning program is, no matter if it is in Asia, the US or Africa.

I liked the discussion on trainings. Often when you're planning and implementing a program we tend to focus on training and forget about supervision and monitoring. The motivation question was very good—it asked, after training has been completed, where do we go from here?"

***Learn more and share your own stories, using the resources below.***

**[Join the IBP Knowledge Gateway!](#)**

**[Download the Elements of Successful Family Planning Programs online forum summary](#), complete with all daily questions and contributions.**

**[Find Dr. Ndzi, Dr. Eslami, and Dr. Parveen](#) on the new social networking Web site, the Elements of Successful Family Planning Programs, [www.fpsuccess.org](http://www.fpsuccess.org).**

***"I know that sharing my experiences might help other people"***

***-Dr. Jonathan Ndzi, Senegal***