

Pathways

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Leave No
Woman Behind

 **Pathfinder**
INTERNATIONAL

A GLOBAL LEADER IN SEXUAL
AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH



PHOTO: MAREN VESPIA

Jenelia lives in a remote mountain village in Haiti—the most dangerous place to give birth in the Western hemisphere.

A Matter of Life and Death

“I couldn’t stop bleeding. After I gave birth, I bled every day.”

“Right here,” Jenelia points to the small dark room where she lives with her husband and three children. “This is where I delivered my son.” There’s no electricity. No skilled provider. The conditions are unsanitary. It’s where you give birth when you have no choice.

When you live on less than \$2 a day, how do you pay for reproductive health care? If a mountain stands between you and the nearest health facility, and there is no road and no ambulance, how do you get help in an emergency?

“My delivery went OK,” says Jenelia. “But after ten days, my bleeding still wouldn’t stop.”

Jenelia grew weaker by the second. She needed to get to the hospital. But there was only one way—to climb a steep mountain path for hours.



PHOTO: Keith Bennett

Climbing to save your life

Ten days after giving birth and still bleeding, Jenelia began her climb. She pulled her body up over large rocks, her husband hiking beside her with their newborn.

Imagine her relief—the clinic finally appearing through the trees.

Jenelia approached the door. In an instant, her relief was gone.

“No one could help until Monday,” says Jenelia. It was Saturday, so the clinic’s only doctor wasn’t there. The trip was for nothing. Worse than that, Jenelia had to make the long journey home again. To wait and bleed for two more days, then make the arduous trip again, before she finally received treatment.

Change starts here

No woman—no matter where she lives—should have to endure what Jenelia did.

Yet hers is a story we hear again and again. Not just in Haiti, but Nigeria, India, and Myanmar. In the world’s poorest, most isolated communities, women suffer out of sight.

As a Pathfinder supporter, you know there is a solution. We can fill this dangerous gap and connect underserved communities to the doctors, hospitals, and critical care they need to survive. It starts with well-trained community health workers, like Etienne.

Community power

It’s clear by the way Etienne jumps from rock to rock that he’s sure of his footing. He knows the terrain well. This is where he’s from and where, for the last 20 years, he’s served as a community health worker. He is proud to deliver free services and information to some of the most isolated families in Haiti.

The sun blazes down by the time he crosses the river. Etienne is on his way to make an

PHOTO: Keith Bennett



Etienne uses his phone to counsel Jenelia on breastfeeding, family planning, and more.

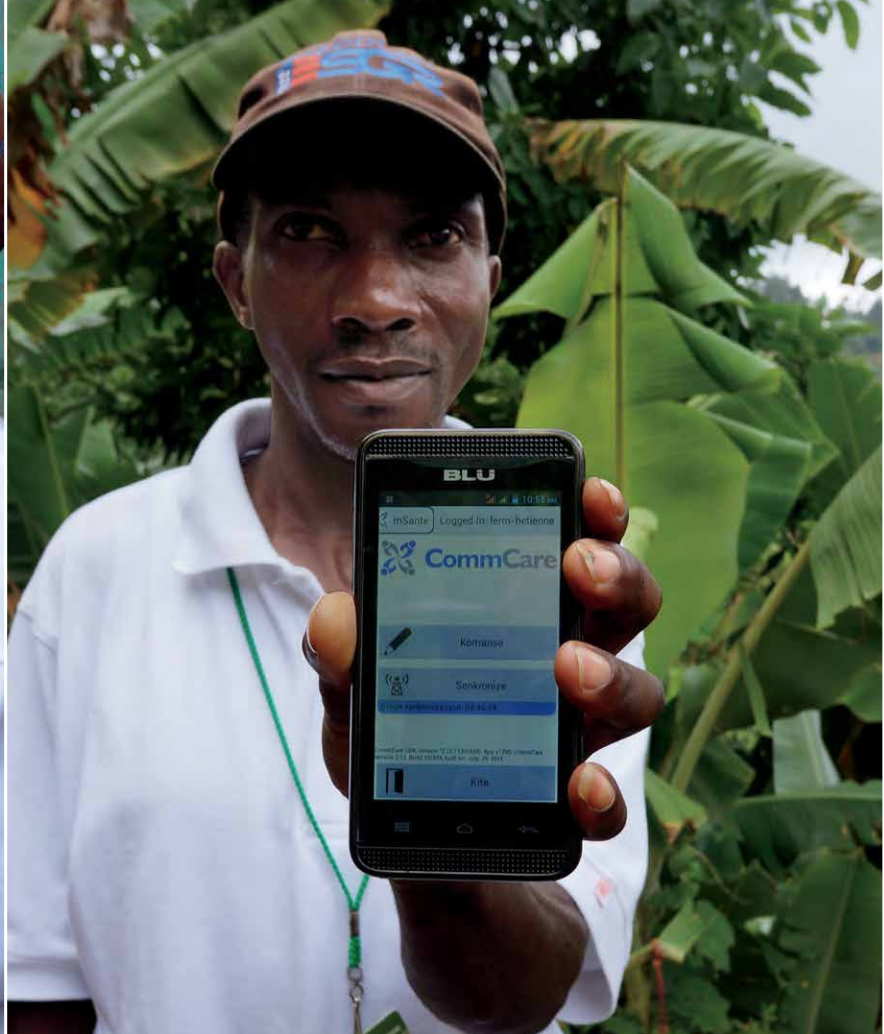


PHOTO: Maren Vespia

important home visit. He scrambles up rocks, then follows the path through tall fields of corn. Finally, he reaches the house and sees Jenelia cradling her baby in the shade.

After a warm greeting, Jenelia and Etienne sit together. To begin their counseling session, Etienne holds his mobile phone between them. Out of its speaker, a pre-recorded audio message plays. Jenelia smiles slightly, leans in, and listens.

Using technology for health

Pathfinder understands one of the best ways to address the preventable suffering of women like Jenelia is to improve the quality of community-based care.

That's why we teamed up with Dimagi, Inc., experts in open-source software for use in the world's poorest countries, to create a groundbreaking tool. Health workers can use our application—for their phone

or tablet—to make decisions, record data, refer clients to health facilities, and more. Our “app” has the potential to transform the way health services are delivered to Haiti’s underserved women. Not just for pregnant women—for all women—including those desperate to prevent another pregnancy.

Finally a choice

Jenelia is tired. She shifts her baby in her arms then turns to Etienne. “I can’t even remember how old I was when I got pregnant the first time,” she tells him, shaking her head. “I had a miscarriage, then two more. Then I had my three children. All before turning 30.”

“I’ve never used family planning,” Jenelia says. She’d heard dangerous rumors. “People told me it would

make me lose so much weight I couldn’t work. It would hurt me.”

Throughout her life, Jenelia’s sexual and reproductive rights have been ignored. That ends now. Etienne stands with her. Pathfinder stands with her. Today Jenelia learns the truth—she has the power to take control of her body and health.

Etienne opens a new menu on his phone. He follows the app’s checklist for contraceptive counseling. “Jenelia,” he says, “let me tell you about your options...”

To date, the Services de Santé de Qualité pour Haiti project, funded by USAID and led by Pathfinder, trained 280 community health workers to use this innovative mobile health application.

Here are just five ways Etienne uses our app to help remove life-threatening barriers women like Jenelia face during pregnancy and childbirth:

- 1. Register and track clients:** From the moment Etienne registers a woman in the system via his mobile phone, he has a record of her medical history and needs—including her due date—at his fingertips.
- 2. Follow an electronic checklist:** During each counseling session, the app prompts Etienne to cover relevant topics, like planning for emergency transportation and a skilled provider during delivery.
- 3. Get alerts and reminders:** The app helps Etienne stay on schedule and alerts him when his clients need services.
- 4. Audio counseling messages:** When a woman listens to a pre-recorded message, her family listens too. Their interest is piqued. Everyone in the household can now play a greater role—identify a danger sign like bleeding and urge their loved one to get help right away.
- 5. Better referrals:** Hospitals get their own app, connected to the community health workers' app. Now, when Etienne refers a woman in crisis to the hospital, both he and the hospital can use their apps to verify her safe arrival. Then Etienne follows up to make sure she gets the care she needs.



PHOTO: Seth Bennett



PHOTO: Maren Vespia



PHOTO: Maren Vespia

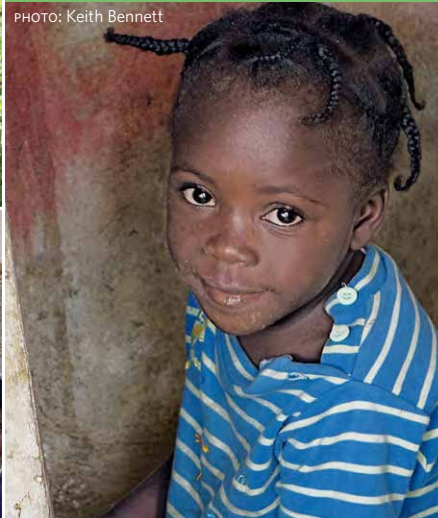


PHOTO: Keith Bennett



PHOTO: Maren Vespia



PHOTO: Maren Vespia

My Body. My Say.

In Bangladesh, nearly one in every three girls is married by her 15th birthday. Lutfa was one of them. She wants you to know her story.

“My parents arranged my marriage.

I was 14. I didn’t have a choice.” Lutfa didn’t know anything about pregnancy. She had a baby every year for the next three years. “It happens when you can’t make decisions about your family or your own body.”

As a teen, Lutfa raised her three daughters in an urban slum in Dhaka. She got a job at a garment factory, working up to 16-hour days. Her family relied on her salary—roughly \$77 a month—and whatever her husband earned pulling a rickshaw. It was never enough. Their situation was dire before it got worse.



PHOTO: Pathfinder Bangladesh

“In our society, men make all the decisions for their family. But women are human beings...”

One of Lutfa’s daughters got sick—an illness they couldn’t identify—and died four months later. Lutfa was inconsolable. “I was not physically or mentally OK,” she says.

That didn’t stop her husband and mother-in-law from pressuring her

to have another baby. Lutfa wanted to wait, but she got pregnant again. “I got fired from my job because I was pregnant,” says Lutfa. “I felt helpless. But that’s when I met Gulshan Ara.”

A Light in the Dark

Twice a week, a woman named Gulshan Ara walks to the garment factory and surrounding slum. She counsels women on pregnancy and contraception, and refers them to the clinic for care.

Gulshan is one of more than 6,600 community health workers supported by the largest Pathfinder-led project in the world. With funding from USAID, this NGO Health Service Delivery Project strengthens a massive network across Bangladesh* to save women’s lives.

“Gulshan Ara gave me advice,” says Lutfa. “She told me how people at the clinic could help me.”

At the clinic, Lutfa got prenatal care for the first time in her life. “The clinic convinced me to save a little money to pay for things like transportation and medicine, in case something went wrong during my delivery.” Lutfa decided not to give birth at home. She delivered at the facility with skilled providers.

You can’t overestimate the power of quality maternal care. It’s largely responsible for Bangladesh’s enormous drop in maternal deaths—a 40 percent decline between 2001 and 2010. Pathfinder is committed to helping even more women seek care and deliver their babies safely. But that’s just one piece of the puzzle.

Contraception Now

Lutfa had a safe delivery and a healthy baby boy. Yet she couldn’t shake her fear—*how long before I get pregnant again?*

“I learned the risks of having another baby too soon. I feared for my life.” Lutfa wanted desperately to use a contraceptive implant, but how could she convince her husband?

“A clinic doctor called me and my husband in together,” says Lutfa. “He told Zashim the implant is reversible. If we wanted to get pregnant again, we could have it removed.” A smile grows across Lutfa’s face. “That’s how my husband finally changed his mind.”

Finding Her Voice

Today, 26-year-old Lutfa speaks with remarkable confidence. “I am happy with my implant. I am free from worry. Free from fear of pregnancy.” Lutfa shares her story with every woman that will listen.

“In our society, men make all the decisions for their family. But women are human beings. When we are in pain, we are the ones that can feel it. That’s why it’s important for us to have choices about our own bodies.”

Lutfa thinks about her daughters. Her oldest—12-year-old Suma—is just two years younger than Lutfa was when she got married.

“I want my daughters to be happy,” she says. “To have a say in the decisions that affect their lives. I want them to have power.”

*To make lasting improvements to Bangladesh’s health system, Pathfinder and our partners strengthen an existing network called Surjer Hashi—26 local nongovernmental organizations, over 330 permanent clinics, and 9,550 pop-up clinics.

Dear Friends,

Together, we've done great things. In many parts of the world, more people are using contraception. Maternal mortality rates are dropping. And our global decline in the deaths of children under five is a major success.

As a Pathfinder supporter, you know a key to these achievements is access to contraception. You've seen the ripple effect—how access to contraception does more than give a woman the power to decide if, when, and how many children to have. Access to contraception impacts everything.

That's why we push policymakers to prioritize family planning programs, which save lives and dramatically improve the health of mothers and children. And it's why we need you to stand with us today, as our progress is threatened.

War, civil instability, economic disparity, and health crises rage across regions where we work. The Ebola virus—wreaking havoc in West Africa and stretching health systems to their limits—underscores just how fragile our progress is.

We are at a crossroads. With so much against us, how do we keep the world moving forward?

2015 is upon us. The Millennium Development Goals—an agreement between all countries for meeting the needs of the world's poorest people—are about to expire. The goals spurred significant progress, but uneven results.

It's true—unmet need for contraception dropped in all regions. But what about the more than 220 million women that want to stop having children or delay pregnancy, but still can't access contraception? How do we meet *their* needs while supporting the 900 million married women projected to use contraception by next year?

We need a bold new plan: *A global commitment to sexual and reproductive health care, including family planning, for every woman everywhere.*

Right now, the United Nations is debating the makeup of our next set of global goals—the Sustainable Development Goals. Pathfinder is right there, using our voice to keep the agenda focused on the rights of women and young people. But we can't do it alone.



PHOTO: Sala Lewis

JOIN THE FIGHT

- 1. Ask the Obama Administration to actively and strongly advocate for the inclusion of sexual and reproductive rights in the Sustainable Development Goals.**
- 2. Contact your representatives in Washington and tell them we need bipartisan support for international family planning.**

Don't forget—both political parties once supported these issues. It's up to us to demand their bipartisan support again. Tell them it's the *right and smart* thing to do.

Need some inspiration? After a long week in Washington, when it seems like everything is against our cause, I often think of something Pathfinder's president, Purnima, shared with me. It's a quote from Gloria Steinem...

"How do we move forward? It's not rocket science. We need to worry less about doing what is most important, and more about doing whatever we can."

Thank you for doing whatever you can to say, "We will not go back."

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Rucks".

Jonathan Rucks
Director of Advocacy and Public Policy

A Passion for What's Right

"Reproductive rights are human rights. And human rights are our passion."

Chicago natives Dave and Nicole Berger support their passion by giving to Pathfinder International. It's how they make a difference.

"When you see the power of helping transform someone's life, it's addictive," says Dave. "You feel excited. You feel empowered, like your life matters."

With each gift to Pathfinder, the couple invests in the future they want to see. It's a future where people are free and their human rights protected. Where women everywhere have power—something that's always been important to Nicole.

"It's so important for women to be educated about their reproductive health," she says. "Without access to reproductive health, their lives can be completely different."

But change doesn't come easy. Dave and Nicole know that progress—to reach the millions of women without access to contraception or maternal care—takes a strong partnership.

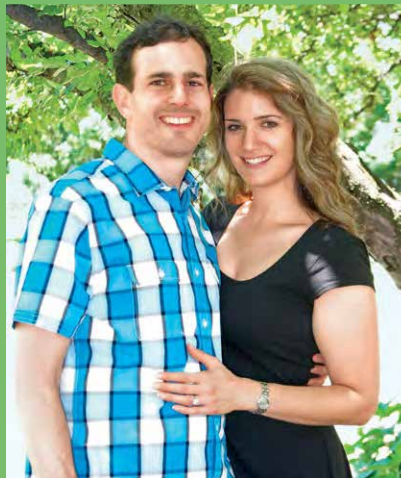
"I've been impressed with how Pathfinder builds connections with a community," says Dave. "If you're coming in as a big international organization and throw yourself onto a society, they're not going to listen to you. But Pathfinder shows people we're on their side."

That's the message Dave and Nicole send with every gift: *we are on your side*. This sentiment is at the core of who they are as a family. They raise their five-year-old son and

three-year-old daughter to stand up for what's right.

"I want our children to realize how important it is to make a difference in the world. To help out in whatever way you can," says Nicole. "To teach my son to treat women equally is important for me. And for my daughter to realize she has rights."

Both Dave and Nicole are confident their support of Pathfinder is



"I've been impressed with how Pathfinder builds connections with a community..."

making that difference in the world. They appreciate seeing sexual and reproductive health treated as a basic, fundamental right—something they hadn't seen before.

"There are so many places around the world where women don't get to control their own bodies," says Dave. "We wanted to help change this. And giving to Pathfinder is a great way to do that."

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