

Pathways

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REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE

Protecting Nature
and Human Rights



A GLOBAL LEADER IN SEXUAL
AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

The Last Mile: Empowering Families to Choose a Sustainable Future

On the distant shores of Lake Tanganyika, people are in crisis. Children are dying. Women struggle to survive childbirth. And the natural resources families rely on for food and jobs are depleted like never before. But there is hope. It starts with choice.

“I was very sick,” says Zainabu, a female farmer from a remote village in western Tanzania. Zainabu is the mother of nine children. With each new pregnancy, she suffered frequent and extreme complications.

Imagine getting pregnant in one of the hardest-to-reach places on earth. There are no roads. No phones. And if you have an obstetric emergency, there is no doctor in your village to save your life. You must travel by boat—for seven hours—to reach the nearest hospital. If the lake is stormy, you must turn back immediately. If you are lucky enough to survive the journey, you may find the hospital’s one surgeon is not there.

“We made so many trips,” says Zainabu’s husband, a local fisherman named Peter. “Each time, it cost us a huge amount of money—30,000 shillings.” That’s about \$18. For families living in extreme poverty, it can mean the difference between feeding their children or not.

“Four of my children died before they turned one,” Zainabu says softly. “Malaria was the main killer. I had it too, during many of my pregnancies. Eventually I said enough is enough.”

Zainabu did not want to get pregnant again. She believed her family’s survival depended on it. But what choice did she have?

Addressing Urgent and Growing Needs

In these communities, 41 percent of women want to prevent or delay pregnancy, but do not have access to contraception.¹ This threatens their health and wellbeing. It violates their basic human rights to make fundamental choices about their bodies. The inability for people to make choices—about whether or when to have children—can have harmful effects on the sustainability of entire communities.

On average, women here give birth to more than seven children,² and their households are nearly 30 percent larger than Tanzania’s national average.³ This contributes to a population of 590,000 people in this remote area.⁴ And that number is expected to increase by 4.9 percent each year.⁵

These demographic trends—combined with poor health and extreme poverty—place enormous stress on these communities. Families like Zainabu and Peter’s are running out of food and water. To care for their children and





PHOTO: Maren Vespiia

We support the rights of women like Zainabu who want contraception so they can protect their family and the environment they depend on for survival.

end their chronic hunger, parents must constantly search for food and ways to earn income. Often, they are forced to resort to overfishing the lake and clearing forests for their farmland and firewood, depleting the natural resources they depend on for survival.

Every year, an estimated 11 percent of the area's dense forest cover is lost. The last of Tanzania's wild chimpanzees are pushed from their habitats, and erosion muddies the once-pristine lake threatening the source of families' drinking water.

Right now, communities face two interconnected crises—how to protect their health and the environment they depend on. The problems are complex. And Pathfinder is up to the challenge.

The Tuungane Project: Where Health Meets Conservation

In 2011, Pathfinder joined two international leaders in conservation—the Nature Conservancy and the Frankfurt Zoological Society—to design a project like nothing we'd done before. Tuungane means "Let's unite!" in Kiswahili. And that's exactly what we're doing. Our three organizations are working together

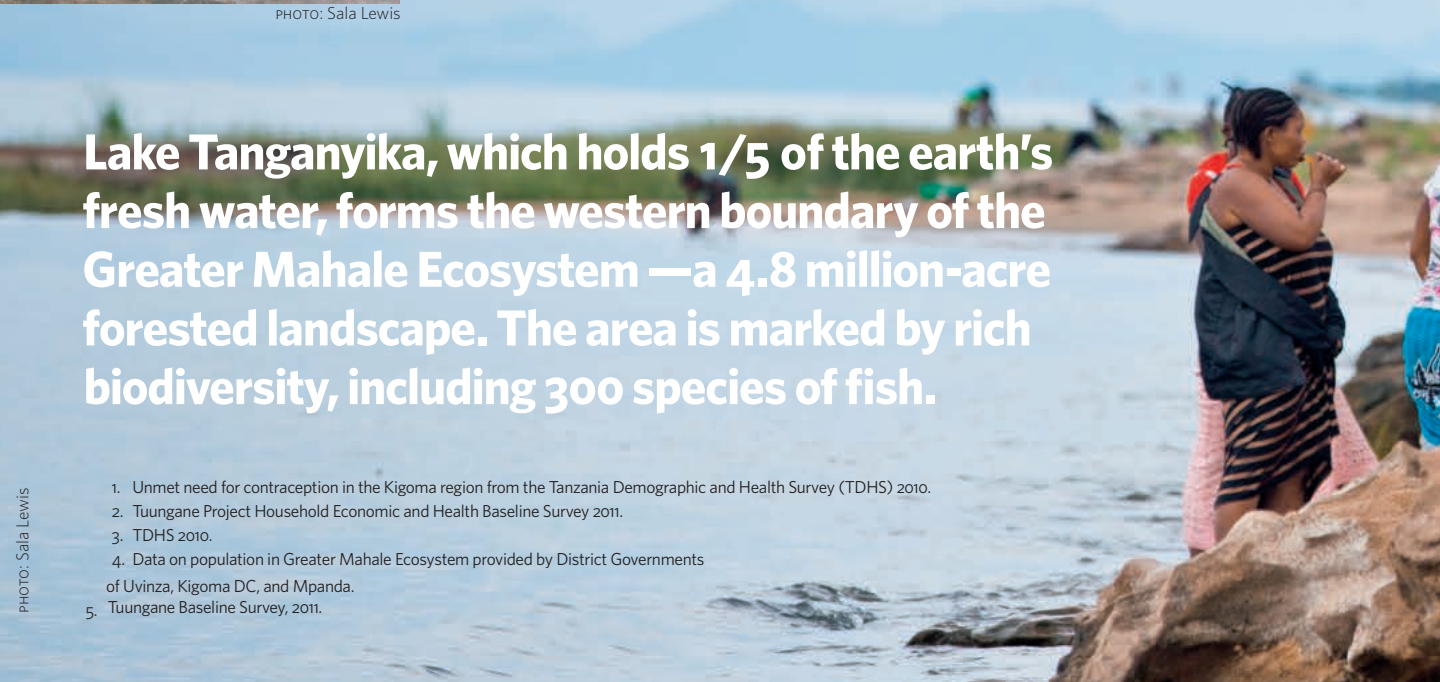


PHOTO: Sala Lewis



PHOTO: Catherine Manegold

Lake Tanganyika, which holds 1/5 of the earth's fresh water, forms the western boundary of the Greater Mahale Ecosystem—a 4.8 million-acre forested landscape. The area is marked by rich biodiversity, including 300 species of fish.



1. Unmet need for contraception in the Kigoma region from the Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS) 2010.
2. Tuungane Project Household Economic and Health Baseline Survey 2011.
3. TDHS 2010.
4. Data on population in Greater Mahale Ecosystem provided by District Governments of Uvinza, Kigoma DC, and Mpanda.
5. Tuungane Baseline Survey, 2011.

PHOTO: Sala Lewis

to empower communities with the knowledge and tools they need to live healthy lives in balance with their environment.

Why We Do This Work

At Pathfinder, we see a natural connection between the reproductive health work we do and a sustainable environment. Our 55+ years of experience in 125 countries has shown us that sexual and reproductive health affects everything. It can mean the difference between life and death for a woman and her children. It can determine her ability to complete her education and earn much-needed income for her family. And it allows her to balance her family's size with its resources, so she can invest more in each child's wellbeing and future.

"I am so happy to use family planning," says Zainabu. "Today I am healthy." She is hard at work in her garden, smiling and showing off her produce. "I want continued health for my children and grandchildren."

Peter agrees. With the help of Pathfinder-trained community health workers, who visited the couple with

Pathfinder broke ground with Tuungane, our first project to combine reproductive health and conservation. Today, we lead "Population, Health, and Environment" activities across three countries. Over the next five years, we plan to expand our efforts in this critical, often-neglected area. But we need your help.

contraceptive information and services in their home, he and Zainabu were able to make the choice that was right for them.

"We decided to use family planning because of everything we experienced. But most of all," says Peter, "it is hard to afford education for so many children. We knew we wanted all of our children to be able to go to school and be healthy. Now all of them are."

With these words, Peter reveals the true message of our work—there is hope for a better future.





PHOTO: Maren Vespia

This energy-saving stove uses only three pieces of wood. For Zainabu, who spent 10 hours every week collecting firewood, it is life changing. "Now I have more time for my family and to earn money." Zainabu even ran for village council. She has more power than ever to solve her village's health and environmental challenges.



Tuongane is a joint project of Pathfinder International, The Nature Conservancy, and the Frankfurt Zoological Society. Support comes from individual contributors and the following foundations: Carolyn Foundation; William H. Donner Foundation; Longview Foundation; Philip Stoddard and Adele Smith Brown Foundation; Swift Foundation; Trull Foundation; and the Wiancko Charitable Foundation.

PHOTO: Linda Suttentfield



PHOTO: Sala Lewis

"Our Lake. Our Future."

On beaches across Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda, Pathfinder identified thousands of new champions for reproductive rights—fishermen. Armed with knowledge (and nets), they are making dramatic, inspiring changes to protect their families and the natural resources they depend on.

"Yes, there is a link between population, health, and environment," says Wilber Force, a fisherman on Uganda's Jaguzi Island. "We see it in our homes. In how we live and work." With training from the HOPE-LVB project,* Wilber and his fellow fishermen understand the decisions they make today shape tomorrow.

"The lake is ours. It's our children's. We want them to grow up and find the same lake," says Wilber. "That's why we changed the way we fish. We had been catching fish too young—before they had time to grow. Thanks to our training, we learned to respect the breeding sites. Look!" Wilber holds up a giant fish. "This one is worth as much as five basins full of the smaller fish. We are protecting our lake and earning more for our families."

Family means everything to Wilber. That's why he believes in the power of contraception. "Before, we had a baby every year." He watched his wife grow weak and struggled to earn enough money to keep his children fed and in school. "More children also meant more pressure on the lake."

"We didn't know about family planning or where to get it," says Wilber. "Now, because of our training, we have knowledge. We can make a choice. That's what family planning is—a choice. And most of us fishermen have decided to use it."

See fishermen like Wilber in action—championing women's health and protecting Africa's largest freshwater lake—at www.pathfinder.org/fishermen

“We space our children like we space our trees. So they grow big and strong.”

At 15, Fausta gave birth to her first child. By 23, she had four. Like many girls on Uganda’s Bussi Island, Fausta felt pressure to marry young and grow her family fast.

“Because I was always pregnant,” says Fausta, “I was sick all the time. I had trouble caring for my family. I needed to support them, but I couldn’t work. I was too weak.”

Today, everything is different. Fausta kneels between rows of lush green plants. Sweat collects on her forehead as she concentrates on her graft—joining an orange and lemon tree. Fausta is one of the nine women that run the Mirembe tree nursery cooperative. These women are trailblazers. They do work traditionally reserved for men. With support from the HOPE-LVB project,* they do it better.

Three things you should know about Fausta’s remarkable nursery:

1. Trees are just the start

Every member of the group completed reproductive health and conservation training, conducted by Pathfinder and our environmental partner, Ecological Christian Organization. Right away, the women started the nursery, planting trees to replenish their depleted forests. While they worked, they discussed the benefits of contraception. Women like Fausta—who wanted desperately to prevent pregnancy—learned they had options.

“Before my training,” says Fausta, watering a row of seedlings, “I didn’t know the truth about family planning. I heard bad things—that it gives a woman cancer.” After learning the facts, Fausta spoke to her husband,



Paul. “We agreed we could not afford another child. Together, we decided we wanted to use family planning.” Fausta is proud. “Family planning is the greatest thing in my life.”

2. With money comes power

Fausta’s nursery is abundant with cash crops—25,000 passion fruit seedlings, 7,000 coffee plants, and rows of trees perfect for building boats. Last year, the women sold their harvest for 500,000 shillings. That’s nearly \$200—a substantial amount of money for families suffering extreme poverty. After splitting their profits, the women returned home with income for their families.

Imagine how important this money is. Pathfinder believes when a woman is able to contribute income to her family, she gains power. Maye, the chair of Fausta’s group, agrees. “Because of the nursery, women no longer have to ask for everything from our husbands. To rely entirely on them and what they say. We can decide what we need for our children’s wellbeing. We can get it.”

3. Men are lending a hand

Fausta’s nursery was started by nine amazing women. Today, a group of men stands beside them. “Our husbands saw what we are doing

and wanted to get involved,” says Fausta. “Paul and I work together in the nursery now. We have divided responsibilities. We join hands.”

All the men have completed the project’s training. “The husbands have learned things,” says Fausta. “They no longer believe we want to use family planning to go with another man. They no longer put pressure on us to have children.”

That means women in Fausta’s nursery—and the six other nurseries supported by the project—have freedom to make their own choices. They have freedom to manage their natural resources by planting trees that grow strong and healthy, like their children.

“I never imagined I could have such knowledge and skills,” says Fausta. “I feel ready to teach others. I will do it with courage. Because I am a strong woman, and this is my profession.”

**The Health of People and Environment Lake Victoria Basin project is led by Pathfinder with local communities and partners—Ecological Christian Organization, in Uganda, and OSIENALA-Friends of Lake Victoria, in Kenya. The project is funded by individual donors, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and USAID.*

Dear Friends,

I have news you will want to hear.

On March 4, President Obama released his FY 2015 budget. Guess which global health program stood out? That's right, international family planning and reproductive health was one of the only areas slated for an increase in funding.

This victory is yours. Last year, Pathfinder called on you to tell President Obama to give these programs the additional support they need. You spoke, and he listened. Thank you!

But we can't give up now. Not when we are so close.

The President's budget is just a guiding document. We need Congress to put his plan into action. We need Congress—at the very least—to match the President's funding request.

You know how critical these programs are:

- Every 60 seconds, a woman dies in pregnancy and childbirth. **A third of these deaths could be prevented** if women who wanted to use contraception could get it.
- There are **222 million women** who want a safe and effective form of contraception. But they can't access it.
- In 2012 alone, women in developing countries had an estimated **80 million unintended pregnancies**.

The clock is ticking. Our sisters all over the world deserve better. Their right to sexual and reproductive health care must be met.

Thank you for everything you do.

In Solidarity,



Jonathan Rucks

Director of Advocacy



PHOTO: MAREN VESPIA

Here are two simple, but important actions you can take today:

1. Contact your Senators and Representatives.

Email, call, and write to tell them to support the President's funding request for international family planning and reproductive health programs.

2. Visit www.womendare.org and sign

Pathfinder's pledge to stand with women and girls all over the world, as they dare to demand their rights.

PS— Did you know Pathfinder advocates directly with governments in over 20 developing countries? One of our main goals is to ensure contraceptive methods, like pills, implants, and condoms, are always available. No woman should be turned away from her clinic because they are out of stock. Yet this happens often. Want to know why? Follow a box of condoms on its incredible journey to one of the most remote regions in Tanzania. Photo slideshow at www.pathfinder/FollowCondoms

Judy Kahrl Has a Vision

“I see a world where every woman who wants contraception has it. Where every family lives a healthy life in harmony with their environment.”

Judy’s vision sparked some of Pathfinder’s most remarkable work. As daughter of Pathfinder’s founder, Clarence Gamble, and a former board member, Judy has a lifelong devotion to our mission. She is a tireless champion for women’s reproductive rights, who is also deeply passionate about the environment. In 2010, she united her two passions.



PHOTO: Linda Suttentfield

“I may have been the match,” says Judy. “But the fire was ready to ignite.”

Judy jumped at the opportunity to visit Kenya. “I was traveling with The Nature Conservancy,” she says. As supporter of the international environmental organization, Judy wanted to see the ecosystems they protect firsthand. What she saw surprised her.

“Here we were, going to this beautiful remote countryside. But we didn’t focus on the people who lived there.”

She thought of her many trips with Pathfinder. In India, she met girls raising their collective voices to stop their early marriage. In Egypt and Ethiopia, Judy witnessed entire communities work together to save women’s lives. Judy believes

in the power of people because she has seen it.

“So, I asked TNC about the communities living on the land and their access to health care.”

With this one question, Judy sparked a remarkable partnership between Pathfinder, The Nature Conservancy, and the Frankfurt Zoological Society. Today, we are implementing “Tuungane” together, our first project to connect reproductive health and conservation.

Judy’s tenacity to turn ideas into action extends far beyond the Tuungane project. You can see it at home, in her beloved Maine.

“When all women have access to sexual and reproductive health care and can control their own fertility, then a reservoir of energy can be unleashed!” — A recent Facebook post from Grandmothers for Reproductive Rights

Judy leads Grandmothers for Reproductive Rights. “GRR!” is a grassroots movement, responding to recent attacks in the US on women’s reproductive rights—rights Judy’s generation fought so hard for. Judy mobilized a large group of enthusiastic grandmothers. Together, they speak out. They make sure women can get the reproductive health services they need.

Pathfinder is proud to stand with Judy Kahrl. Her advocacy and her philanthropy are changing the world.

“Philanthropy is a willingness to be concerned about the world and find a way to make it a better place,” says Judy, who credits her grandchildren for energizing her to donate both her money and time to Pathfinder.

“I want the world to be better for my own grandchildren and for everyone else’s grandchildren.”

That’s why Judy fights. It is why the world needs her.

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COVER: Wengi, 18, carries the fish her brother caught in Lake Tanganyika. Read about Pathfinder’s approach to “Population, Health, and Environment” at www.pathfinder.org/PHE PHOTO: Maren Vespia