

Pathways

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**Without Boundary:
Health and Rights
for Young People**

 **Pathfinder**
INTERNATIONAL

A GLOBAL LEADER IN SEXUAL
AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH



Lompo

1 in every 10 girls
in Burkina Faso is
married by age 15.
Thank you for
standing up for
their rights.

Shining a Light on Married Girls



Ouali



Nadjoari

Lompo was a child when she became a bride. She doesn't know how old her husband is. I never asked, she says softly.

Ouali will tell you how she felt when she became a wife at 15. "I was happy," she says. "My friends were getting married then too." Now away from school and her family, Ouali spends her days cooking, cleaning, and traveling long distances to collect water and firewood. "It is very difficult," she says.

Nadjoari speaks plainly. "I did not want to get married at 14. My parents pushed me into it. I could not refuse." Five years later, Nadjoari lives with her husband, her co-wife, and their small children. She holds her newborn daughter tight.

"When I got married," Nadjoari continues, "my mom wouldn't explain pregnancy to me because she considered it a conversation for adults."

Path to a Brighter Future

Like you, Pathfinder believes every girl deserves a childhood. If her childhood is stolen from her, she needs access to accurate information and high quality

sexual and reproductive health care, so she can take back control of her life.

You Make This Possible

Your passion inspires us to go where the need is greatest—to West Africa, a region with some of the lowest rates of contraceptive use and highest rates of maternal death on the continent.

In 2012, we launched an innovative partnership with local governments and communities in Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Niger to address the urgent health needs of married girls and young women—an extremely underserved group.

"Forced to abandon their education, their homes, and their friends, these married young women become isolated and virtually powerless in their relationships with their husbands, who are often much older," says Dr. Abdoul Baldé, Pathfinder's Country Representative in Burkina Faso.

They are at particular risk of bearing children before they are ready—one of the leading causes of death of 15 to 19 year old girls in Africa.

"They are falling through the cracks," says Dr. Baldé, who explains, "There is good work being done in this country to support children and prevent early marriage. But what about girls who are already married, who are seen as neither children nor adults? Is it too late for them?"

Dr. Baldé is resolute. "Pathfinder says absolutely not."

Partnering with West African governments and local organizations, we bring together entire communities—women and men, girls and boys, parents, religious leaders, mothers-in-law, health care providers, and others—to remove barriers to young women's health and well-being.

Building Strong Bonds

Today, in a small village of Burkina Faso, Lompo, Ouali, and Nadjoari gather to share their stories. They want you to know how you are changing their lives. Twice a month, they join a support group led by a Pathfinder-trained peer educator. In their safe space, they learn how to address domestic violence and the importance of healthy communication with their partners. Side by side, they discover the power of contraception.

Our Multifaceted Approach

It's true that harmful traditional practices like early marriage and childbearing are hard to change. But as a Pathfinder supporter, your contributions are creating lasting and meaningful improvements in young people's sexual and reproductive health:

Partnering With Governments to implement national policies and plans for adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health care.

Training Health Care Providers to deliver high quality services and information, including contraception, to young people in facilities and during home visits.

Engaging Mothers-In-Law, Co-Wives, and Religious Leaders who have significant influence over the lives of young women to create a supportive environment.

Counseling Husbands to promote spousal communication and joint decision making on household matters and contraception.

Empowering Young Married Women with the knowledge and services they need to negotiate life-changing decisions, including whether or when to have children.

Pathfinder's Innovative Approach in West Africa

KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORT

Supporting young married women through home visits and peer groups.



SOCIAL CHANGE

Fostering support among men, co-wives, in-laws, and religious leaders. Addressing gender norms and inequalities.



YOUTH-FRIENDLY SERVICES

Meeting young married women's unique reproductive health needs, including healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy.



GUINEA

Women married by 18: **58%**
Not using contraception (ages 15-19): **97%**

URGENT NEED

You help us go where the need is greatest.

BURKINA FASO

Women married by 18: **52%**
Not using contraception (ages 15-19): **94%**

NIGER

Women married by 18: **77%**
Not using contraception (ages 15-19): **94%**

Addressing the needs of young married women and first-time parents.

Data source: ICF International, 2012. The DHS Program
STATcompiler—Sept 17, 2014.

PHOTO: Abdou Baldé, MD



"I joined this group because I want to be healthy," says Ouali, who got her husband's blessing to use an injectable contraceptive. "I found out that you don't have to become pregnant if you don't want to."

Nadjoari's baby girl squirms in her arms as she says, "The group taught me that if you just gave birth, if you have a new baby, you don't have to get pregnant again right away."

Two years—that's how long Nadjoari wants to wait before getting pregnant again. "Family planning is helping my health, my child's health, my whole family," she smiles. "Even my husband is happy."

The late afternoon sun blazes down. Soon the three young women must return home to start preparing the evening meal. But before they turn to leave, Lompo, the youngest, raises her head to speak.

"Do you want to know why I joined this group?" she asks shyly. "I wanted to find out what family planning is."

This is the change you make possible. Thank you! Just listen to Lompo, who speaks a little louder when she says these final words:

"When it comes to my body and my health, I think I should be the one to make the decision."

For the latest on Pathfinder's work in West Africa, follow us on Twitter.
 www.twitter.com/pathfinderint

FUNDERS: John Templeton Foundation, Pathfinding Fund, Weyerhauser Family Foundation, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. To ensure young women can access quality services and contraceptive methods of their choice, Pathfinder also implements the IMPACT project in Niger with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

PHOTOS: clockwise from top, Pathfinder Ethiopia, Pathfinder Brazil, Simon de Trey White



Over the last 5 years young people made

15 MILLION+ VISITS

for contraceptive services in health facilities and communities supported by Pathfinder around the world.

PHOTOS: clockwise from left, Maren Yespira, R Dan Friendly, Jaime Jacobson



33 Million Strong: Investing in Ethiopia's Future

"I am proud to be a Pathfinder," says Worknesh Kereta Abshiro. "Proud of all we have accomplished together."

For the past nine years, as our senior expert in adolescent sexual and reproductive health in Ethiopia, Worknesh has spearheaded a massive effort to improve the way health care is delivered to her country's 33 million young people. To celebrate the latest results from our Integrated Family Health Program* we asked Worknesh to share three reasons why she believes your support is helping transform Ethiopia and save young lives:



PHOTO: Sala Lewis

248 facilities across 6 regions now provide critical youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services!

1. Breaking Through the Silence

Worknesh will never forget the pain she saw before the project. "There were so many deaths due to HIV and unwanted pregnancies," she says. "Most were youth. Yet parents kept quiet, even as their children died of AIDS. Even as their pregnant daughters died from unsafe abortions. Because of taboos and stigma related to sex and reproduction, because parents themselves didn't have accurate information, they didn't talk to their children. That's where we came in."

What We've Accomplished

- 12,000 religious leaders, parents, and other stakeholders engaged to create a supportive environment.
- 13,000+ youth trained as peer educators, who reached 5.2 million young people with information about sexual and reproductive health.

2. Introducing Youth-Friendly Services

Eliminating social stigma is just one piece of the puzzle. "Young people were in urgent need of services, but they weren't going to health facilities to get help? Truth is, they faced *huge* barriers," says Worknesh. "No private spaces for them to confidentially access care. We saw youth turned away by judgmental providers who didn't think they should be accessing sexual and reproductive health care in the first place. So with the Ministry of Health, we launched Ethiopia's first public 'youth-friendly services.'"

What We've Accomplished

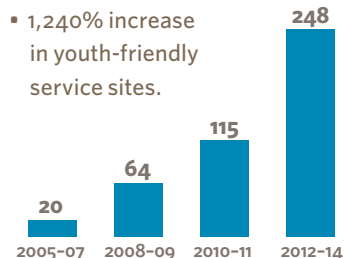
- 1,700+ providers trained to deliver respectful, quality health care for youth.
- 2.3 million young people received youth-friendly services, including contraception and HIV services.

3. Building on What Already Exists

As a Pathfinder supporter, you will appreciate this model. "We use existing resources," says Worknesh. "By integrating these services into the public health system, there are no additional health care providers and no additional facilities to pay for. We have partnered with over 2,000 government officials to scale up the program—from 20 to nearly 250 facilities! What does that mean for the young people of Ethiopia? It means they can finally take charge of their health and futures."

What We've Accomplished

- 1,240% increase in youth-friendly service sites.



*The Integrated Family Health Program is funded by USAID, led by Pathfinder International and John Snow, Inc., in collaboration with the government of Ethiopia and our local partner organizations.

RAISE YOUR VOICE!

Dear Friends,

I have big news for you.

Over the past year, we asked you to take action on a number of major issues harming women around the world. Your response—signing petitions, writing letters to your representatives, and supporting our programs—was more than just inspiring. It worked.

Because of you, we achieved major wins:

UNITED STATES Like nearly all other women who receive their coverage from the federal government, Peace Corps volunteers who survive rape will now have the health care coverage they need to access safe abortion. President Obama signed this bill into law at the end of last year.

MOZAMBIQUE Thanks to your support, fewer women in Mozambique will be forced to seek unsafe abortions. The local Pathfinder team, along with the Coalition in Defense of Sexual and Reproductive Rights, recently achieved a victory 10 years in the making. They successfully advocated with the government to revise its dangerous penal code, dating back to the 1800s, paving the way for a less restrictive abortion law.

Thank you! Your efforts mean more women can exercise their right to essential health care.

But the story does not end here. As an advocate, you know change doesn't come overnight. With each victory, there's often another setback. I'm here to tell you—we still have a fight ahead of us. And it's a big one.

Every year, nearly 22 million women experience an unsafe abortion worldwide. *Almost all of these occur in developing countries.* Resorting to untrained providers in unsanitary conditions, women suffer infection and injury to their internal organs. And, each year, 22,300 women die.

But it doesn't have to be this way. Their deaths are preventable.

Take the Helms Amendment, a 41-year-old provision that forbids the US to “pay for the performance of abortion as a method of family planning.” Helms does not prohibit US foreign assistance for abortion in cases of rape, incest, or life endangerment, but you would never know it. It has been wrongly implemented as an absolute ban.

You and I both know—in these exceptional circumstances, women are not seeking abortions as a method of family planning. The lack of clarity around the implementation of Helms has served as a barrier to safe, legal abortion services for millions of women and girls, including those raped in conflict.

You can change this.

Join Pathfinder in demanding that President Obama correct this policy that denies women lifesaving care in these emergency circumstances. Send him an email now!



PHOTO: Mercedes Saguyes

TAKE 1 MINUTE OUT OF YOUR DAY

We've got your letter ready.
Visit www.pathfinder.org/helms
fill in a couple boxes and hit send.

Correcting Helms is not only legal: we have a clear moral imperative. It is consistent with the values of the vast majority of American voters who support abortion in cases of rape, incest, and danger to the woman's life.

You can help solve this crisis today. Your voice is strong. Now please keep using it.

In Solidarity,

Jonathan Rucks

Jonathan Rucks

Director of Advocacy and Public Policy

Make it Count

Susie Goodwillie Stedman is modest when talking about giving to Pathfinder.

“I wish I could be a bigger donor,” she says. “But I try to be a consistent donor.”

For the people Pathfinder reaches around the world, every gift—no matter the size—makes all the difference. Every dollar really does count. According to a recent article in *The Economist*, research shows that for every dollar spent on reproductive health services, there is a \$120 economic benefit to the world!



That means Susie’s dependable generosity not only enables people’s access to life-saving sexual and reproductive health care, it’s also one of the smartest investments one can make.

Now retired and living in Maine, Susie reflects on her career in global health and development. In fact, that’s how she was introduced to Pathfinder nearly 30 years ago.

She was sent by USAID to evaluate Pathfinder’s family planning programs in Nigeria, Kenya, and what is now Democratic Republic of the Congo.

“It was a wonderful experience.” Susie recalls being greeted by local religious leaders, who worked closely with Pathfinder to bring critical family planning services to their communities.

“I was deeply impressed that religious leaders were Pathfinder’s local partners,” she says. “This kind of collaboration is a big reason why Pathfinder is so effective.”

Susie was given an office to answer questions and concerns from local people. To her surprise, most of her conversations were with men.

“Their wives were sick, tired, and dying,” she says. “The husbands were grateful for the help they were getting from Pathfinder to improve their wives’ health.”

Seeing religious leaders and men involved in family planning was surprising for Susie. She knew they were important allies to improving women’s lives, but she had never seen an organization mobilize these allies into action in such an inclusive way.

Susie’s professional passion for empowering women easily turned into personal support for Pathfinder. And she puts careful thought into all of her philanthropy.

“I pick organizations that spend their money well. That find creative new ways to address the world’s most urgent problems,” she says. “Most of all, I give where I know my contribution will make a difference.”

For Susie, girls and women are part of global development.

“If given basic opportunities, girls and women can be key catalysts for development,” she says. “This is fundamental to Pathfinder’s mission, which I am proud to support in any tiny way I can.”

Susie’s ties with Pathfinder are anything but “tiny.” It is the generosity of people like her that make our work possible—and *that* is a big deal.

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Nine Galen Street, Suite 217
Watertown, MA 02472-4501

pathfinder.org

President
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Board Chair
Richard L. Berkowitz, MD

Executive Editor
Linda Suttienfield

Senior Editor
Maren Vesplia

Contributors
Solomon Abebe,
Worknesh Kereta Abshiro,
Abdoul Baidé, MD,
Natazia Fistrovic, and
Stacey Perلمان

COVER: Nadojari Bahantia, 19, a family planning user from Burkina Faso, says, “I make the decisions about my health.” **PHOTO:** Abdoul Baidé, MD