

FALL 2015

Pathways

HAND IN HAND
Changing Lives
Together



Pathfinder
INTERNATIONAL
Sexual and reproductive health
without fear or boundary

Dear Pathfinders,

I'll tell you what inspires me. In Uganda, with the help of friends like you, vulnerable communities are working together, bringing hope to where hope was lost.

I remember the first time I stepped onto Bussi Island, a remote fishing community on Lake Victoria. The day-to-day challenges for women seemed almost insurmountable.

Take Gertrude, a 23-year-old Ugandan mother responsible for feeding her family. Every day, that task became more difficult. Fish were disappearing from the lake. Her community's population was increasing. When Gertrude searched for firewood to cook her children's meals, she found stumps of trees already cut down.

And what about her basic right to sexual and reproductive health care? Gertrude told us she didn't know what family planning was.

That was before we launched Health of People and Environment in the Lake Victoria Basin (HoPE-LVB), a project that partners with leaders in environmental conservation and underserved communities to ensure people can protect their health, their livelihoods, and the natural resources they depend on for their survival.

It's a big breakthrough. We are addressing the holistic way people live their lives.

When communities tell us reproductive health is just one piece of the puzzle, we listen. We help them confront challenges and find solutions for themselves. I wish you could see how they are taking ownership of this work, sharing new knowledge with all of their energy.

Today, as the chairperson of a Young Mothers' Club, Gertrude leads 20 young mothers trained by HoPE-LVB. She and her friends go out into their community—planting trees and spreading messages about a range of topics, from sustainable fishing to family planning.

Gertrude says it best: "We use what we've learned to teach women, especially young mothers like us, about how to keep themselves and their children healthy, about family planning and why it's important to deliver your baby at the health center."

Gertrude is just one of the nearly **450 project champions**—fishers, farmers, community leaders, and others—who have been instrumental in helping **43,000+ women access contraception** in the Lake Victoria Basin of Uganda and Kenya since 2011.

These local champions amaze me. They talk about the connections between their health and environment like they've known it their whole lives. Passionate and committed, they are changing everything.

In just two years (2012–14), the number of Ugandan women delivering their babies at health facilities supported by HoPE-LVB increased by nearly 1,300%.

This progress makes me proud to be a Ugandan and a Pathfinder. I hope it makes you proud too. Together, we have carved new paths for communities to walk down. Now they can run.

Thank you for your support,



Dorah A. Taranta
Project Manager, Pathfinder Uganda



UGANDA: Jake Lyell

UPDATE!

You pledged your commitment to ending the preventable deaths of women and their children. Now it's time to act. Ask your Senators to co-sponsor the Reach Every Mother and Child Act (S. 911). Take two minutes to save a life at pathfinder.org/ReachAct

Change You've Made Possible



PHOTO: Sala Lewis

As a Pathfinder supporter, you know that where we work many women do not have control of what happens to their bodies. Men often make the decisions about women's sexual and reproductive health. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, facing extreme gender inequality and often violence, nearly 30 percent of women have an unmet need for family planning. Only five percent of married women use a modern method of contraception. It doesn't have to be this way. With your help, we're inspiring generations of women and men, girls and boys to transform their thinking and lives.



PHOTO: Marie-Claude Mbuyi

"I feel naked."

Men Confront Rape, Gender Inequality, and the Effects on Women's Health in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

"I cannot go on without sharing my own story." The workshop is almost over. In a crowded circle of community leaders, all eyes are on Kasongo.*

"When I was young, my uncles pushed me to marry before I finished high school," he says. "Soon, my wife had our first child...a girl...and then our second...another girl. Then we had our third child...a girl again. Believing my wife could never give me a son, my family pushed me to leave that woman and her daughters..."

"I abandoned my children," Kasongo admits. "...To life without education...to early marriage and so many children of their own. Now after participating in this workshop...I feel naked. And I pledge I will use what I have learned to teach others...about how to treat girls and boys the same...about how all young people need information and sexual and reproductive health care. I will do what I can to mentor young people in my community, so their lives can be different."

Over 750,000 community leaders, women, men, and young people have attended workshops to reflect on and challenge harmful gender norms, violence, and poor sexual and reproductive health, and gained the tools to choose a different path forward.

Thank you for supporting this work in the DRC!

Nearly 400 survivors of sexual violence

have received the quality care they urgently needed.

250,000+ people have accessed contraception

for the first time, making free and informed choices for their futures.

* Name has been changed.

The Access to Primary Health Care Program, funded by DFID, is implemented through a consortium of partners, including Pathfinder, and led by IMA World Health.

TOGETHER

"They used that pole during my delivery," Teresa says. "They pushed it down on my stomach for three days...to push the baby out."

Teresa

In communities where long-held beliefs and customs harm people's health, your support makes change possible.

"It was three days of pain." A young bride, Teresa Manuel was 16 when she delivered her first baby. "I gave birth at home. My mother was there...and some neighbors." Teresa makes no mention of a nurse or doctor, because there wasn't one.

She wants you to see her home, where it happened. Down a hot, sandy street in Naihava, a predominately Muslim village in rural Nampula, Mozambique, you pass a cashew tree and children playing shoeless in its shade. A woman prepares food for her family. With a baby on her back, she raises a large wooden pole—a 4-foot hand-carved pestle—then slams it down into a mortar, grinding rice flour.

"They used that pole during my delivery," Teresa says. "They pushed it down on my stomach for three days...to push the baby out."

"This is what happens when you give birth in our community," says Teresa's neighbor Rosalina remembering when she was 19, in labor at her grandmother's home. "They took a piece of cloth and put it in my anus...and put a traditional medicine—some ground up leaves—in my vagina...For four days, they pushed the wooden pestle down on my stomach."

Like Teresa, Rosalina's delivery lasted for days. She struggled to recover. "I was lying in bed for a month," she says. "I was never taken to the hospital...not once. My mother didn't know the good of the health facility."



WE CAN



*"At the health center,
you get all the options...
You can choose pills,
an injection, an implant,
an IUD...It's your choice."*

Rosalina

João



"People believe in us community leaders. They trust us. Once we said it was better to go to the hospital and use family planning, they followed." — JOÃO ABÍLIO MUTATO, A COMMUNITY LEADER IN CHARGE OF MALE INVOLVEMENT

Rosa



"Now we know...When you are pregnant, go to the health facility with your traditional birth attendant to deliver your baby...We know that because of family planning, because our children are spaced, we can keep them healthy and clean." — ROSA MANUEL, ANIMADORA

No woman should have to go through this. But if her community expects early and frequent childbearing, and she doesn't have access to quality health care, what choice does she have? How can women like Teresa and Rosalina pull their families out of poverty and keep their children healthy and fed, when each new pregnancy could kill them?

Pathfinder supporters know there's a better way

For nearly 60 years, Pathfinder has improved sexual and reproductive health around the globe by partnering with communities most in need. We ensure they have the knowledge, skills, and tools they need to break through barriers, forging their own path to a brighter future.

"If you want to create meaningful, lasting change, you absolutely have to partner with communities," says Rita Badiani, Country Representative, Pathfinder Mozambique. "You cannot change long-held beliefs about childbearing or break harmful myths about contraception working alone. Communities have to lead the charge. It's the only way." She smiles. "It's also the Pathfinder way."

In 2009, Pathfinder joined the government of Mozambique to launch one of our largest projects, Strengthening Communities through Integrated Programming (SCIP), supported by USAID and the American people. Over the last five years, we have reached over four million Mozambicans with sexual and reproductive health services.

"The best thing the project did was to involve community leaders," says João Abílio Mutato, Vice President of Naihava's Community Leadership Council.

Groups like João's, composed of local religious leaders, farmers, teachers, and other influential individuals, have the power to create real change in their communities; they simply need support.

"When the project approached us," says João, "I listened because I realized all their advice was good." He had seen suffering in his community. "I saw women giving birth at home, women dying...malnutrition...couples having one baby after another...So all of us in the council discussed how we wanted to improve our community. Change started from here."

Change starts with Rosa Manuel, a local outreach worker or "Animadora" trained by Pathfinder, who leads a women's group for Teresa, Rosalina, and their friends, so they have knowledge about contraception, delivering at the facility, nutrition, and hygiene.

Change starts with Tina da Conceição Bandeira, a traditional birth attendant trained by Pathfinder, who ushers women to the facility for their prenatal care and safe delivery instead of having their babies at home using traditional medicine.

Change starts with Luisa Combi, a maternal and child nurse trained by Pathfinder, who provides safe, respectful sexual and reproductive health care in the health facility, saving lives.

And change starts with you. Your support gives those in need the chance to build a more just future.

All of us working together are making a difference

"I heard about the benefits of the health facility...through my group meetings and from my traditional birth attendant, Tina," says Teresa, as her two young sons play beside her.

Rosalina lifts her youngest, 5-month-old Miro, onto her lap. "All these people—Rosa, Tina, our leaders—they taught us the best way of having a good pregnancy and healthy children."

It's been five years since Teresa and Rosalina delivered their babies at home. Thanks to your support and their community's commitment to real,



"As a woman, I feel happy to see other women happy. By reducing maternal death and child death...and providing family planning services that support a woman's health, her children, and her whole family...I am helping these communities. When I see children growing better, and I see mothers healthy, I am proud." — LUISA COMBI, NURSE

meaningful change, they will never be forced to suffer that way again. Armed with information and choices, the women of Naihava are starting a new tradition.

"Now, we deliver our babies at the health facility," says Teresa.

"At the hospital, where I had my second and third babies...I didn't suffer," Rosalina says. "My husband and I were even told how to prevent HIV...how to feed our children. I got a mosquito net. While I was recovering after my delivery, the nurse actually gave me some tea!" A smile stretches across Rosalina's face. "They took good care of me."

"It's really worth it to go to the hospital," Teresa agrees strongly. "And to use family planning."

Both women now plan their pregnancies. "At the health center, you get all the options," Rosalina says. "If you want, you can choose pills, an injection, an implant, an IUD...It's your choice."

At 21, Teresa wants to have one more child and hopes for a girl. "I've learned family planning doesn't mean you have to stop having children. I can rest for two years before I get pregnant again. I can wait until my youngest grows up a little."

This is what progress looks like. In communities served by the project:

- The number of women choosing to give birth at the health facility with a skilled provider has **increased from 63 to 75 percent** in just five years.
- The number of women using a modern method of contraception has nearly **tripled, from 7 to 18 percent**. More women than ever are taking control of their health, and their futures.

"Today, I am happy because of what I have learned," says Rosalina. "I want others to feel the same way. That's why I follow all this advice...to be an example."

"I just want my children to grow safe and healthy," Teresa says. "Now they will."

Our Impact in Rural Mozambique

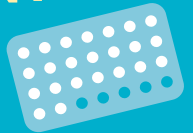


Nearly 25,000

Community Leaders Trained in Sexual and Reproductive Health

2,100+
Community Groups Supported

1 MILLION+
Contraceptive Pills Distributed



2.9 MILLION+



Prenatal Care Visits with a Skilled Provider



Nearly 700,000 Deliveries Performed at Health Facilities



900,000+ Visits to Health Facilities by New Users of Family Planning

Why I Share: One Woman's Monthly Promise

"My parents told me I could do whatever I wanted to—so I did," says Judy Fair-Spaulling. "There was never any question that I was in charge of my own destiny."

Judy, a retired librarian and longtime Pathfinder International supporter, believes that's how all women should live their lives.

It was a bold belief for a teenager in the 1950s. She didn't understand that until she moved from her home in Montana—where men and women worked alongside each other to survive the long, harsh winters—to California.

"In high school I realized that being a smart woman was a dangerous thing," she says. "It made the boys really nervous."

Judy saw an even greater divide in college, where the men outnumbered the women three to one, and women had to be "twice as smart" to get in. It was a slow realization that not everyone was thought of as equal, she recalls.

This is what inspired Judy to be a champion of women's rights. She discovered Pathfinder in the 1990s when she researched organizations that support her passion. She was particularly drawn to Pathfinder's commitment to helping people around the world.

"Pathfinder gives women the power to choose what happens to them," she says. "I understand and appreciate that cultures around the world are very different and women have different roles in those cultures, but every woman has a right to her own destiny."

Judy's support is making that possible. And she's doing it in a critical way: through monthly donations. We've counted on Judy's continuous support every month—year in and year out—for two decades.

"I want Pathfinder to be there to do the work it does consistently so there's no worry about funding," she says.



And that's exactly what a recurring gift does. It gives Pathfinder a dependable source of support to bring life-saving sexual and reproductive health care to those who need it most.

For Judy, it all stems from one simple concept: sharing. It's a principle she learned early on as a child and has held onto throughout her life. Now retired and living in New Mexico, she thinks we would all benefit from giving a little more to each other.

"Sharing is crucial to our humanity," she says. "Giving a recurring gift to Pathfinder is my way of sharing. It provides people with an opportunity to have a better life."

We thank Judy for sharing her humanity with us and giving women everywhere the chance to be in charge of their own destinies.

Non-profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Boston, MA
Permit No. 52614

President
Purnima Mane
Board Chair
Richard Berkowitz, MD

Executive Editor
Linda Suttentfield

Senior Editor
Maren Vespi

Contributors
Estrella Alcalde, Marie-Claude Mbui, Alicia Mehl, Stacey Perlman, Abdul Rachyd, Luciano Rocane, Luc Vander Veken, and Tereza Vitorino



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

pathfinder.org

