

## Social marketing poised to make major contribution to 2020 family planning goal

By *David Olson*



A Pakistani couple receives family planning counseling at a health center that is part of the Dhanak social franchising network. Photo by: DKT Pakistan

Social marketing organizations are providing more contraception than ever before, but its leaders are determined to up their game even more and become major contributors to the international family planning [goal of 120 million new women and girls](#) in the next six years that was set by [Family Planning 2020](#).

In 2013, social marketing organizations around the world delivered 70 million couple years of protection, an increase of 7 percent from 2012, according to the [2013 Contraceptive Social Marketing Statistics](#) published recently by [DKT International](#). The report provides details on the 93 contraceptive social marketing programs that produced more than 10,000 CYPs in 66 countries.

This week, FP2020 released [its annual progress report](#), announcing that 8.4 million additional women and girls used modern contraception in 2013 as compared to 2012. The report notes that this accomplishment did not meet the goal of 9.4 million additional users in the first year but “is still a significant milestone.”

Of those 70 million CYPs delivered by social marketing in 2013, 63 million of them were in the world's 69 poorest countries identified as [“FP2020 focus countries.”](#)

"Social marketing organizations play an important and powerful role in improving access to contraception and increased use of family planning in general, especially among underserved populations such as youth," said Zahra Aziz, communications consultant at FP2020. "Social marketing can increase the availability of family planning products at a variety of prices, thus improving choice and access."

## **The role of social marketing in FP2020**

Chris Purdy, president of DKT International, believes that [contraceptive social marketing](#) might be able to contribute contraceptives to as many as a quarter of the 120 million new users targeted by FP2020. He said that in 2012 social marketing provided approximately 25 percent of all couples with the means to space their children in the developing world excluding China.

"Six years ago, all contraceptive social marketing programs combined delivered 40 million CYPs," Purdy said. "In 2013, they delivered 70 million, an increase of 30 million CYPs. It is reasonable to assume that with continued investments in these social marketing programs, they could deliver an additional 30 million CYPs by 2020."

The largest social marketing organizations are [Marie Stopes International](#), [Population Services International](#) and DKT. The three accounted for 76 percent of the 70 million CYPs produced in 2013. What are they doing to contribute to meeting the 120 million goal?

MSI is looking to triple its impact by 2020, with a particular focus on what it calls "high impact" CYPs, a measure which evaluates the organization's reach to the most underserved populations.

PSI President Karl Hofmann said that FP2020 has spurred unprecedented collaboration across international and country-level communities, galvanizing all towards a common goal. "Today our country offices work closely with the FP2020 country engagement teams to identify gaps and make sure activities are complementary and in line with country-specific goals and objectives," he said.

Hofmann cites the example of PSI Mali that is highly engaged in national advocacy on sexual and reproductive health and rights and facilitates Mali's participation in the Ouagadougou partnership, which operationalizes FP2020 goals in West Africa.

In Kenya, PSKenya operates the Tunza network of franchised facilities that provided nearly 270,000 women with family planning through September. Nearly one in six were new users of modern contraception.

In direct response to the FP2020 call to action, said Purdy, DKT launched programs in four large countries with significant unmet need for family planning — Nigeria (16.1 percent of married women), Myanmar, Pakistan (20.1 percent) and Tanzania (22.3 percent).

"In addition, to reach women in rural areas, DKT is introducing innovative products like the Sayana Press injectable in [Nigeria](#) and strategies such as outreach services for long-acting methods."

## **The challenge of measuring new users**

Creating new contraceptive users is at the heart of FP2020, and all three social marketing organizations as well as FP2020 struggle with the mechanics of measuring new users. Both PSI and DKT say they are starting to collect such data at the country level, especially through social franchising clinics, but cannot easily produce data for their global operations.

"CYPs remain a robust intermediate metric that is part of the overall picture of contraceptive use, including new users," noted Purdy. "It may not be as satisfactory as data from the demographic and health surveys, but it's the best we've got for now."

The FP2020 goal of 120 million more women and girls using contraception is ambitious but achievable. And it will only be met with the full and active participation of social marketers.

