

## What Has Gates Done Lately on Global Family Planning? Big Things, With a Big Partner

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Improving access to birth control, safe abortions, and family planning in general is critical for improving global health and development. In a [TED Talk](#) she gave a few years ago, Melinda Gates said giving everybody access to birth control is "one of the simplest and most transformative" things that the global health and development community can do. Later in the talk, she noted that in order for that to happen, "both rich and poor governments alike must make contraception a total priority."

Access to contraception has certainly been a priority for the Gates Foundation, which has committed over \$1 billion in grants backing family planning efforts around the world. To advance its global family planning mission, in 2012, Melinda Gates and the Gates Foundation launched [Family Planning 2020](#) (FP2020).

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couples by the end of 2020. The grant is also being put to good use in DKT's other endeavors.

In a press release, Purdy noted that the funds would also allow the organizations to scale its existing programs "and expand the sale of contraceptives to at least 20 new countries." Additionally, it will use the money to increase the sale and distribution of modern contraceptives and launch mass media campaigns to increase demand, mainly in West Africa and Latin America.

DKT is also planning to increase its engagement with young people by providing information about contraception and reproductive health and increase the number of community health workers offering sexual and reproductive health services in underserved communities.

The remaining \$12.5 million loan commitment, which DKT will pay back at a below-market interest rate, is designed to increase sustainable access to sexual and reproductive health products in least-developed countries.

While it's not unusual for Gates to make program-related investments in for-profit companies doing work to advance its goals, this \$37.5 million loan-grant combo is the first of its kind for the foundation.

Gates's funding to DKT is results-based, but not in the sense that the foundation requires regular progress reports to measure impact and progress. Generally speaking, those reports are required regardless. Rather, in this case, if DKT doesn't meet its stated goals and outcomes, it won't receive full funding from 2018 to 2020.

One last thing: Not everyone is thrilled with Bill and Melinda Gates's stepped-up interest in family planning. When President Obama awarded the couple the Presidential Medal of Freedom last month, anti-abortion media outlets described the Gateses as "pro-abortion" activists. In fact, Gates money has prevented innumerable abortions worldwide, not to mention saving thousands of women from maternal death. Contraception is the best way to fight abortion, and DKT International's record of success underscores that. It says that in 2015, it prevented over 5 million unwanted pregnancies and 2.6 million abortions. Show me a pro-life group anywhere that can claim such impact. If anti-abortion advocates were less puritanical and more practical, we would see a lot more concrete progress of this kind around the world.

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