



## THE NEXT GENERATION: YUVAA-YOUTH VOICES FOR AGENCY AND ACCESS

### EMPOWERING YOUNG COUPLES TO USE CONTRACEPTION

Even today, girls aged 15-17 get married in India despite a law that states they should delay marriage until age 18. Once married, young couples are expected to quickly become pregnant, although many young women are not physically and mentally ready for pregnancy and childbearing. Children born to young mothers face increased risk of mortality and poor health outcomes. There is little room for negotiation, whether between couples or with the family, and contraceptive use to delay the first pregnancy is frowned upon. There is, however, strong evidence that enabling young women and couples to delay their first pregnancy and improve spacing practices can reap a triple dividend of health and social benefits for young people today, and as they become the next generation.

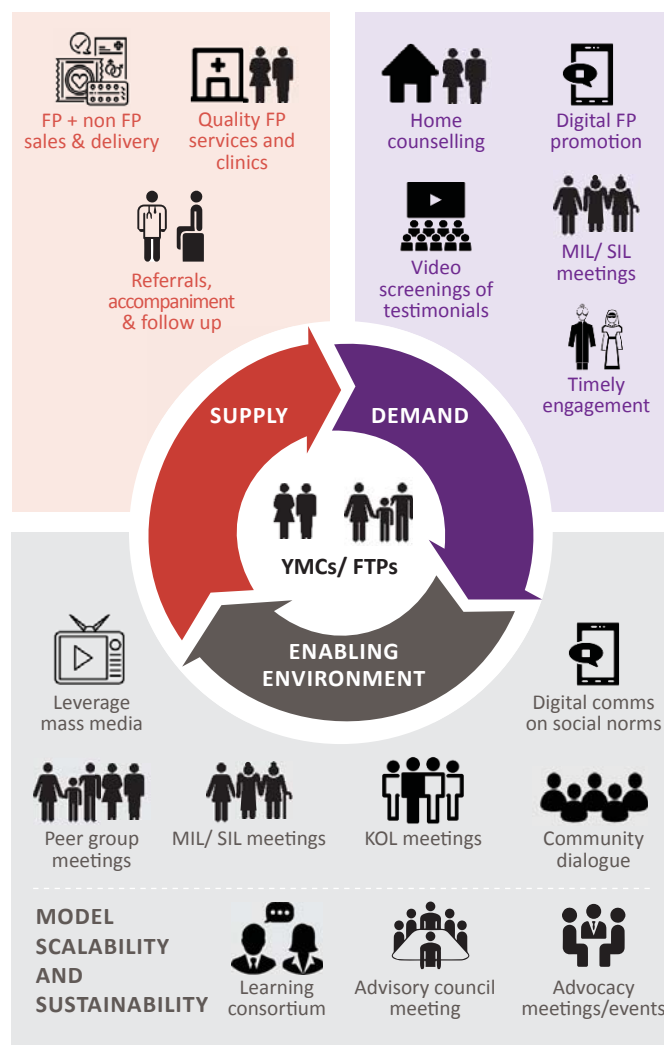
**The Next Generation: YUVAA (Youth Voices for Agency and Access) Project** will implement and evaluate a program that combines social entrepreneurship with innovative communication approaches in ten districts (five each) of Bihar and Maharashtra from **July 2018 - June 2022**.

YUVAA will reach 1.2 million young women and men in the age group of 15-24 years in the districts of Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur, Solapur, Ahmednagar in Maharashtra and Nalanda, Gaya, Patna, Vaishali, Muzaffarpur in Bihar during life of project.

Overall, the implementation of YUVAA will be guided by The Supply-Enabling Environment-Demand (SEED) Programming Model which posits that sexual and reproductive health (SRH) programs will be more successful and sustainable if they comprehensively address the multifaceted determinants of health through the following interdependent and mutually supportive domains:

- The **supply** of services that are available and responsive, including their quality, accessibility, acceptability, and affordability
- The **demand** for services, which implicates the knowledge and capacity of individuals, families, and communities to ensure their SRH, including care-seeking
- An **enabling environment** which considers factors—social, cultural, and gender norms, and the community and program contexts—that enable or constrain supply and demand for contraceptive uptake by YMCs and FTPs

### STRATEGIES UNDER SEED MODEL





The foundational innovation in YUVAA is a cadre of young couple entrepreneurs, called the **Yuva Corps (YCs)** who are recruited from the communities where they operate and will be trained to provide comprehensive family planning counselling, over the counter contraceptives and referrals that enable young people to delay first child birth and space subsequent births.

YUVAA will focus on increasing contraceptive uptake:

- by ensuring young people's needs and perspectives are at the center of our intervention design
- by providing reliable sources of information, comprehensive counseling, referrals and doorstep delivery of over the counter methods to young couples
- by ensuring a gender synchronized approach that reaches both young men and women
- by encouraging couple communication and joint decision-making where possible and improving agency to be able to take decisions independently
- by fostering an enabling environment that emphasizes and supports delaying pregnancy to when couples are physically, mentally and economically ready and need for spacing.

## SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS AS CHANGE AGENTS

YUVAA will increase demand and uptake of modern contraceptives by young couples by bringing services to their doorstep through Yuva Corps or couple entrepreneurs. The Yuva Corps will provide information, counselling, and encouragement to young couples, their families, communities and market products that meet their sexual and reproductive health needs. These include condoms, oral contraceptive pills, emergency contraception, and other health and wellness products that young couples may prefer to receive at their doorsteps. The YCs will provide referrals to quality FP clinics and services.

## DIGITAL INNOVATIONS IN YUVAA

Efforts to increase awareness and use of contraception have largely depended on interpersonal communication (IPC) delivered by trained social and behavior change agents. YUVAA will test innovative digital approaches for behavior change that are effective and can be delivered at scale. These include: An IVR based social media platform with content on pleasure & parenting; outbound voice messages to young couples; digital games; and social media for changing attitudes and behaviors.

## SCALING UP AND SUSTAINING CONTRACEPTIVE USE

The overarching goal of YUVAA is to identify effective approaches that increase contraceptive use and can be implemented with young people at scale. YUVAA also seeks to identify those factors that are significant to project success, such as:

- Can a social entrepreneurship model deliver favorable shifts in attitudes and behaviors of young married couples towards Family Planning and healthy timing and spacing?
- What support is needed to ensure the Yuva Corps is motivated to sustain their activities?
- What is the "ideal" product basket that both enables the financial success of the Yuva Corps and ensures young couples' easy access to contraception and other health products?
- Are digital interventions in YUVAA perceived as acceptable by YMCs and YCs for bringing behavior change?
- Which innovations in YUVAA are effective and sustainable?

## RESPONDING TO NEEDS OF YOUNG COUPLES IN BIHAR AND MAHARASHTRA

Indicators	BIHAR					MAHARASHTRA				
	Patna	Muzaffarpur	Gaya	Vaishali	Nalanda	Ahmednagar	Solapur	Kolhapur	Satara	Sangli
Primary TG with SEC (Number of persons, 15-24 yrs, P0&1) <sup>1</sup>	146439	92044	88563	67382	48682	194735	163308	159696	117176	110343
Mobile penetration <sup>2</sup>	94%	91%	90%	92%	92%	86%	92%	94%	89%	93%
MCPR (Any modern method minus sterilisation) <sup>2</sup>	3.89%	0.00%	2.79%	1.58%	1.91%	10.85%	4.75%	4.36%	7.62%	8.97%
Unmet need for spacing (15-24yrs) <sup>2</sup>	8%	12%	13%	12%	18%	6%	8%	5%	9%	6%
Total fertility rate <sup>2</sup>	3.3					1.8				

<sup>1</sup>Census 2011 <sup>2</sup> NFHS4