

Using Mobile Technology and Enhanced Counselling to Improve Family Planning Among Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Lebanon and Jordan

Project Information

- ◆ Department: Center of Excellence for Applied Epidemiology
- ◆ Unit: Research and Policy

SCOPE OF WORK

The overall goal of this project is to develop, implement, and evaluate contextualized, *culturally sensitive, data-driven, and evidence-based strategies to encourage the adoption of quality FP services*. The project aims at *developing and evaluating the feasibility and effectiveness of an intervention aimed to encourage contraceptive use* through high-quality, effective couples counseling and the use of digital technologies.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The *Family Planning* project will support a comprehensive qualitative research around family planning accessibility to Syrian Refugees and vulnerable host communities, that will be utilized for better informed policies and strategies to provide healthcare services. Moreover; the project will support the digitalization efforts of family planning services that will enhance the accessibility of the family planning services among the clients and to assure better and sustainable data that can be utilized for better evidenced based action-oriented, and human rights-based decisions. Following the formative phase of the project; co-design workshops in both countries will be conducted through engaging healthcare providers to provide solid approach to develop the intervention packages on couples counselling and family planning services. The project will continue with the package implementation followed by intervention package evaluation exercise. The project team will ensure dissemination of projects results in each phase through production of manuscripts and communicating the projects outputs on regular basis.

BENEFICIARIES

The targeted audience are vulnerable citizens in host communities and Syrian refugees with special focus on women and girls. The project will also target healthcare providers.

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

The project will be implemented among vulnerable citizens in host communities and Syrian refugees living in Lebanon and in Jordan mainly the three major governorates in Irbid, Al-Mafraq, and Al-Ramtha.

Project Start and End Date	November 1, 2019 – July 31, 2023
Partner Organizations	Ministry of Health in Jordan, American University of Beirut, and Jordan University of Science and Technology
Funded by	International Development Research Center (IDRC) Canada
Collaborators	The American University of Beirut and Jordan University of Science and Technology

PROJECT PHASES

The project involves five phases:

Phase I – Initial framework development and formative research phase: This phase will be for the first 10 months of the project period. It will focus on understanding the decision-making processes around family planning in fragile situation and to develop a participatory design process for rights-based digital health strategies.

Phase II – Co-design and development of interventions phase: Workshops will be conducted in each country with local stakeholders (researchers, Community Advisory Committee members, and partnering organizations) to co-design and develop a starting set of digital health solutions to promote FP among clients, based on the evidence collected in phase 1 and in consideration of the local contexts.

Phase III - Capacity building of healthcare providers: This phase will enhance the participating healthcare providers to provide adequate couples' counseling based on the best available evidence and where the process is culturally sensitive, gender-appropriate, and equitable. The training package will include effective FP counseling. Blended learning format (a combination of face-to-face and online) will be used to train health professionals and community workers, in combination with the self-paced, on demand mobile app resource (OppiaMobile.)

Phase IV- Implementation and evaluation of the Intervention for clients: This phase is research focused; adopting a stratified parallel-group pilot cluster randomized clinical trial (RCT) design to compare the intervention package targeting clients alone. An intervention including enhanced counselling plus digital health support for clients will be compared with an intervention including enhanced counselling alone.

Phase V- Dissemination: Several reports, publications, and presentations will be prepared to share the findings with policy makers, media, the general public, and academic beneficiaries in both countries. Some preliminary findings might be shared after the first phase once the formative research phase is concluded. Initial manuscripts will include a case study reporting the rationale of the study and a study protocol for the intervention, which will be submitted to the international trial registry (ISRCTN). A case study/process paper on the implementation of the protocol, including lessons from the development phase (co-design research process) will be produced.

Currently . . .

The pre-identified gaps for the initiation of this project: are the lack of family planning services, especially those related to provision of couples counselling and digital tools in several segments of the local communities in Jordan and Lebanon, specifically in the rural areas of both countries. Also, it has been reported that there is still a confusion among the refugees and vulnerable individuals about the accessibility for family planning services. The ultimate goal of this project is to support those who are in need and/or poor to make informative decisions about their reproductive lives.

What's next . . .

The project collaborators will be focusing on developing a participatory- contextual understanding of the targeted audience needs in relation to family planning services; through different scientific methods of studying and analyzing the relevant literature. Also, through conducting operational research and stakeholders' mapping analysis. The project team will support in building the capacity of health care and community professionals to enhance the accessibility and quality of family planning services. The project will also focus on providing digital based tools that will be used by health care providers and clients.

OUTCOMES BY NUMBERS

The followings were conducted:

- Two Community Advisory Committee meetings
- Eight Field visits to eight PHCs
- Four focus group discussions
- 17 interviews
- One Scientific Advisory Committee

- Two co-design workshops in two healthcare centers where 20 married women (10 Syrian and 10 Jordanian) and six midwives participated
- Training session for nine Family Planning Healthcare Providers

- Designed Training Manual
- m-Ayla Website
- Arabic-Based Mobile app.
- Two studies published and three in the process.
- RCT in the process

ABOUT SYRIAN REFUGEES HEALTHCARE IN TARGETED COUNTRIES

By the Numbers



EMPHNET Information: Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) works at achieving its mission by responding to public health needs with deliberate efforts that allow for health promotion and disease prevention.

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