

Steps to Sustainability

2003

- Phaseout process begins
- 8 countries dependent on contraceptive donations
- Family planning supported mainly by donors.

2006

- Country assessments show that contraceptive security challenges remain
- Contraceptive security committees active in 8 countries
- Various countries financing and procuring contraceptives.

2011

- 6 countries financing 100 percent of their contraceptives
- 5 countries managing integrated supply systems
- 6 countries procuring quality contraceptives at internationally competitive prices.



Working Together Regionally
to Save Lives Locally:

**How Latin America
Increased Access to Family
Planning Services and Supplies**



USAID | DELIVER PROJECT

John Snow, Inc.

1616 Fort Myer Drive, 11th Floor

Arlington, VA 22209 USA

Phone: 703 528 7474

Fax: 703 528 7480

Email: askdeliver@jsi.com

Internet: deliver.jsi.com

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Our goal is to give every woman and man the ability to choose, obtain, and use contraceptives whenever they need them. This is the definition of contraceptive security.

Since 2000, seven of the countries participating in the Regional Initiative have seen an increase in contraceptive use ranging from 3 to 10 percent.

Fifteen years ago, women and men in many Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries had significantly less access to family planning services and commodities than they do today. When families could not get the products they needed, they often faced unwanted pregnancies and maternal and child deaths.

Although much work remains to be done to increase access for the poorest clients and for rural, indigenous, and undereducated populations, LAC countries have made significant progress in achieving contraceptive security in recent years. In most countries, this is reflected by increasing contraceptive prevalence rates, decreasing unmet need, and decreasing total fertility rates.

A significant part of this achievement can be attributed to the efforts of the LAC Contraceptive Security Regional Initiative. Launched in 2003 by the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and USAID missions in LAC, the Regional Initiative aims to strengthen contraceptive security and build a network to help countries sustain progress when USAID donations and family planning technical assistance are being phased out.

The Regional Initiative brings countries together to share lessons and solutions, which are then translated into results nationally. With eight countries continuously challenging and supporting each other to improve contraceptive security, the initiative has been a great success. For every improvement in one country, policymakers and technical managers in other countries emulate their neighbor's achievement.

Countries participating in the Regional Initiative include Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Peru.

Most countries participating in the Regional Initiative have seen a dramatic increase in the use of contraceptives. This can only happen when the availability of products also increases. To ensure that products reach the consumer, countries must build and maintain a robust supply chain, improve procurement mechanisms, secure long-term financing, and work to develop supportive public policies. Collaborating through the Regional Initiative, LAC countries have achieved the following results:

- 3 countries passed laws that protect financing and access to family planning services and supplies
- 6 countries finance their contraceptives 100 percent
- 6 countries realize significant cost savings by procuring through UNFPA and other innovative options
- 5 countries are building integrated supply chains, based on the contraceptive model
- 2 countries manage their supply chains on their own, and one with minimal external assistance.



Moving Forward

Many countries have taken major steps to achieve contraceptive security, but they must continue to protect the lives of women and children by increasing access to family planning commodities for all citizens. Some areas for future focus include—

- continuing to maintain robust, effective supply chains during health sector reform
- developing new sustainable procurement options
- ensuring stable and sustainable financing for distributing contraceptives and other essential medicines
- using practical and innovative data-driven tools to analyze the family planning market and reduce disparities and gaps in access
- implementing creative strategies for reaching the most vulnerable and difficult to access populations with a basic package of health services, including family planning
- continuing to use the collaborative contraceptive security approach to strengthen health systems
- helping local stakeholders and donors understand the critical role played by the supply chain in achieving public health goals.

The interactive method used in the LAC region—sharing challenges, solutions, and successes—has motivated countries to develop customized contraceptive security strategies that are having a significant impact on clients' lives by increasing their access to contraceptives when and where they need them.

More than ever before, women and men in Latin America and the Caribbean can choose and use the family planning method that is best for them.