Scaling Up Family Planning in Zambia (SUFP) is a four-year project (2012–2016) funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and implemented by Abt Associates. It aims to increase uptake of long-term reversible methods of contraception for improved maternal health.

**Overview**

SUFP focuses on reaching adolescents and couples in underserved communities and increasing the uptake of long-term reversible methods of contraception for improved maternal health. The project aims to provide modern methods of family planning to an additional 200,000 women and adolescent girls.

The overall goals of the SUFP program are to:

- Expand availability of a choice of family planning methods, especially long-term reversible methods
- Increase access to family planning services for underserved areas and adolescents
- Increase community support for family planning
- Increase capacity of government health facilities to provide quality comprehensive family planning services

**Selected Family Planning Accomplishments**

**Family Planning for Youth**

While premarital relations are considered taboo by many, Zambia has a high rate of teen pregnancy and the young mothers usually cease their education. Offering family planning to adolescents is key to keeping Zambian girls in school. SUFP is working to strengthen “youth friendly corners” in health facilities in the project's target districts and is training youth and other community leaders in family planning. The government and DFID are both keen to see the project succeed in engaging with young Zambians.

**Partners**

- Strategic Inventive Thinking
- American College of Nurse Midwives
- RTT (South African logistics firm)
- Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia

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Engaging Men in Family Planning Decisions

Family planning has traditionally been viewed as a woman's issue in Zambia, yet social norms in many remote, rural areas emphasize large families and decision making by men. SUFP is explicit about engaging men in family planning decisions. Indeed, the project’s logo was designed to show a mother, father, and child to emphasize the role that both partners play in planning the size of their families. In one target district, the project helped to establish a monthly “men’s day” to encourage men to visit health facilities to discuss reproductive health and family planning. The project provides family planning training for religious and traditional community leaders so they can disseminate fact-based information.

Meeting Unmet Need Nationwide

SUFP activities focus on filling unmet need for family planning. Using recent Demographic and Health Survey data, DFID calculated the number of maternal deaths that could be averted by filling unmet need for contraception. Partnering with the Government of Zambia, the project identified the districts with the highest unmet need for family planning—typically remote, rural districts with few skilled health care workers and long distances between static facilities—and concentrated efforts there. All project activities emphasize voluntary use of family planning, allowing clients to select the method of their choice, and emphasize adequate birth spacing, rather than limiting family size.

Adopting Innovative Training Techniques

Using an approach to engaging with district staff referred to as the “camping approach,” SUFP Lusaka staff travel to a district to conduct a series of related activities over a period of several weeks, rather than pulling health care workers out of the district for training. The goal is to raise awareness of the benefits of family planning and the availability of services, engage local leaders, and train health staff all in a very short time, so that demand creation happens concurrently with the increase in availability of services locally. This approach also minimizes the time that scarce health staff are away from health facilities for training.