



WHAT DO WOMEN REALLY WANT?

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TALKING TO WOMEN: DEMOGRAPHIC AND HEALTH SURVEYS (DHS)

Funded by USAID, several UN agencies

Conducted in over 90 developing countries

Household-level surveys, including survey of women

Important source of data on women's health, attitudes, behavior, and future demographic trends

Evolved from surveys on fertility and contraceptive prevalence in the 1970s-80s



“UNMET NEED” FOR FAMILY PLANNING

DHS: Do you want to become pregnant in the next two years?

YES NO

DHS: Are you currently using a (modern) method of family planning?

YES NO

“Unmet Need”
(200+ million women in
developing countries)

DHS: How much of a problem would it be if you got pregnant in the next few weeks?

A quarter to half of surveyed women in Kenya, Ghana, Burkina Faso:

It would be no problem or a small problem

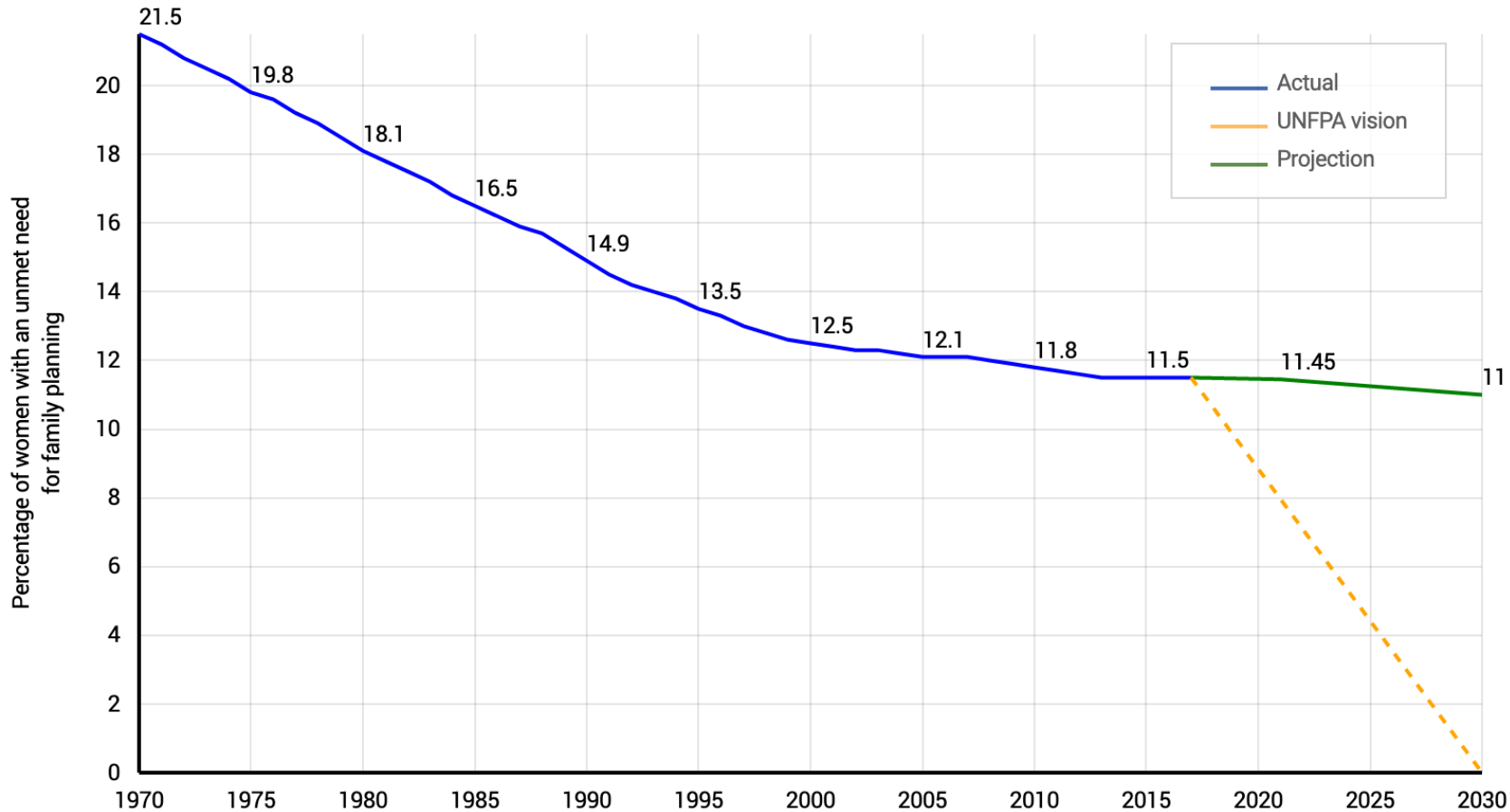
This question is no longer being asked in the DHS

Eliminating “unmet need” for family planning is one of UNFPA’s “transformative results” to achieve the Sustainable Developing Goals

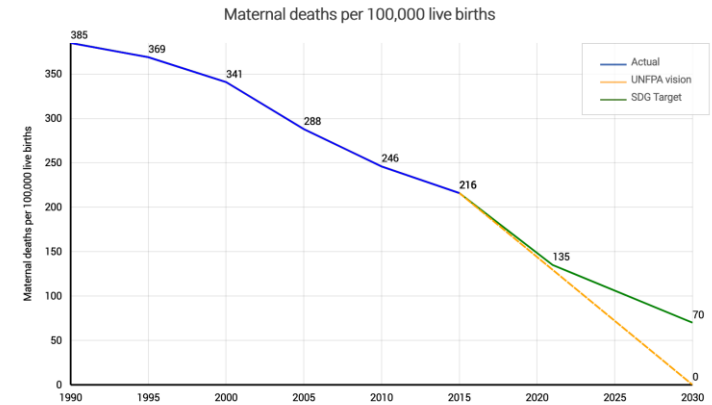


HOW ARE THEY DOING?

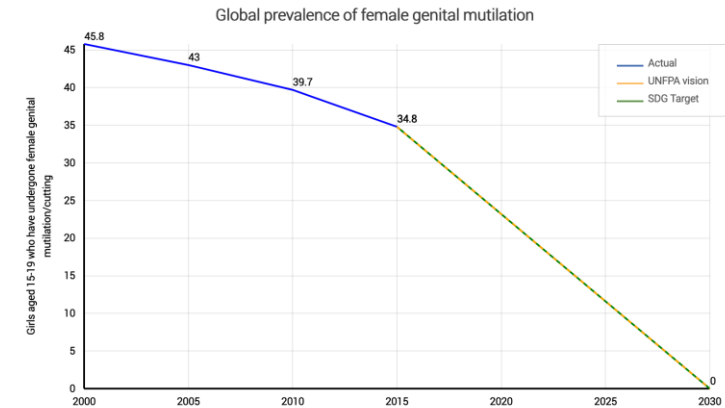
Unmet need for family planning



OTHER UNFPA TARGETS



END MATERNAL DEATHS



END FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

“UNMET NEED” OR SATURATED MARKET?



UNFPA

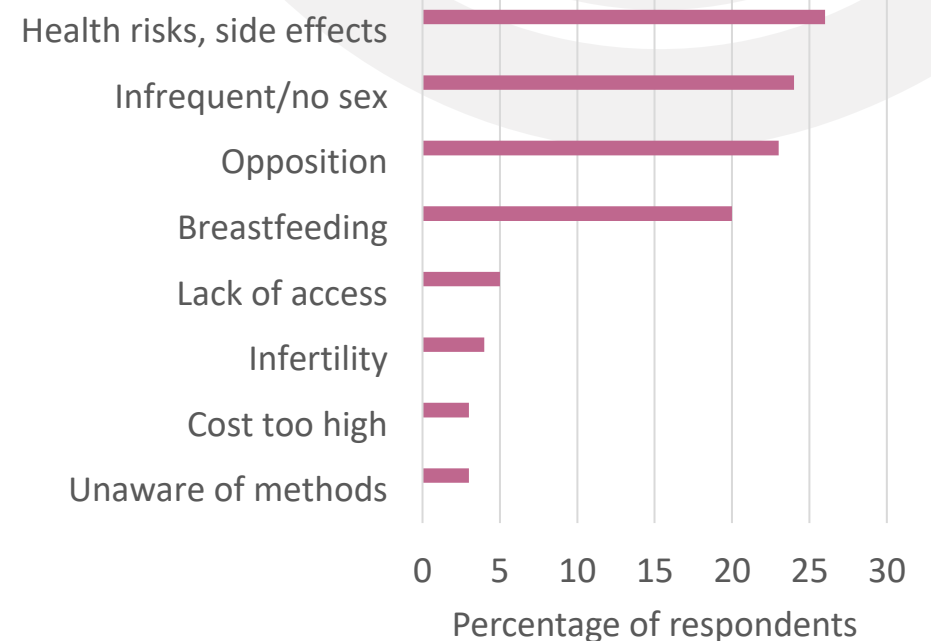
“More than 200 million women [those with “unmet need”] want to prevent a pregnancy but cannot access modern contraceptive information and services.”



GUTTMACHER

“Women with unmet need for contraception rarely say that they are unaware of contraception, that they do not have access to a source of supply, or that it costs too much.”

Reasons for “unmet need” in developing countries



Source: Sedgh G et al., *Unmet Need for Contraception in Developing Countries: Examining Women’s Reasons for Not Using a Method*, New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2016

THE HOPE AND MIRAGE OF ELIMINATING UNMET NEED



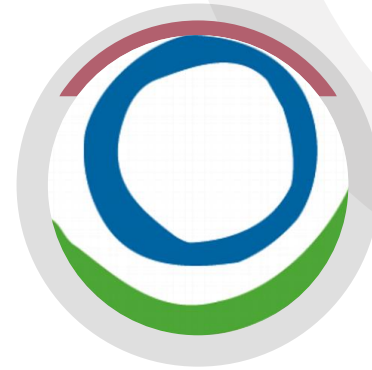
MATERNAL HEALTH

UK government: UK aid prevented 80,100 maternal deaths between 2011-2015, **62% of which were by family planning (preventing pregnancy)**



ECONOMIC SAVINGS

“With reduced requirements for maternal health care and delivery, child health care, education and other services, **the savings will be many times larger than the expenditure on family planning**”



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Population Connection: “**Fully addressing the unmet need for family planning services will help address a variety of global issues, ranging from development and human rights to climate change mitigation.**”



NEWBORN/CHILD HEALTH

Child lives saved from demographic impact: “the projected impact of family planning interventions on reducing the number of deaths due to fewer unintended pregnancies.” **Accounted for a third of projected child deaths averted in 2014** *Acting On the Call report*

THE GATES FOUNDATION AND FP2020

THE SALES PITCH



To empower 120 million more women and girls with **access** to contraceptives by 2020

Increasing contraceptive **use** by 120 million new users (or even a 215 million “high aspiration”)

Result: an increase of 60 million additional users since 2012



THE FINE PRINT

THE LINK WITH ABORTION

- The dominant discourse in the family planning movement is explicitly pro-abortion
- Even organizations that reject abortion as a method of family planning (often faith-based) embrace “unmet need” metrics
- The claim: more contraceptive use means fewer unintended pregnancies, which means fewer abortions
- However: “Increases in contraceptive use over recent decades have reduced the risk of unintended pregnancies, but this effect has been moderated in many regions of the world by **increased propensity to terminate such pregnancies.**”

-John Cleland (2020)



WHOSE PRIORITIES MATTER?





THANK YOU !



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