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| Family planning providers in Rwanda emphasize the impact of individual women’s family size decision-making on the development of individuals, communities, and the nation |
| **Background/Objectives**Rwanda has experienced rapid growth in the use of modern contraceptives, from 17% in 2005 to 53% in 2015. In that time, Rwandan total fertility rate also decreased from 5.5 to 3.8. Success in family planning is rare in this region. The goal of this research was to uncover why and how the Rwandan government has experienced such great success in expanding the use of family planning.**Methods**This study utilized 8 focus group discussions with family planning providers in Rwanda, including health clinic nurses and rural community health workers in the districts of Musanze and Nyamasheke. **Results**One of the most commonly held and frequently communicated beliefs of family planning providers in Rwanda was that limiting family size through modern contraceptive use leads directly to the development of individual women, their community, and the entire nation. Nurses and community health workers frequently referenced the importance of reaching the *Vision 2020* Rwandan government goals through the use of family planning. Additionally, providers agreed limiting family size through the use of contraceptives has positive effects on improving children’s quality of life, discipline, and character; greater access to education for children; family fiscal management, including the ability to afford health insurance and contribute to the larger economic systems in Rwanda; and women as decision-makers and contributors to the family, community, and nation.**Discussion**The connection between the individual’s choice about family size was directly and quickly correlated to the impact on those beyond the individual. This belief affects the education and advice providers offer individuals and communities. In other contexts, family planning is often considered an individual’s decision, with limited recognition of the impact this choice has on broader contexts. This unique cultural value, along with other factors such as government leadership, could be a contributing factor to the steep increase in usage over the last decade. Should other nations adopt government family planning policies similar to Rwanda’s, provide leadership in this area, and educate individuals on the impact their family size decision-making has on national development, it is possible proper contraceptive use could increase similarly to what has happened in Rwanda.**Keywords: Rwanda, family planning, government** |