

EMPTY SHELVES EMPTY HANDS



CON LAS MANOS VACÍAS

PARA QUE EL DERECHO A LA ANTICONCEPCIÓN SE HAGA REALIDAD

Con Las Manos Vacías / Empty Shelves, Empty Hands tells the story of women's struggles to access reproductive health services in Latin America. The film documents the inequalities in access and many challenges faced by women in the region, and calls for enhanced commitment to providing quality reproductive health supplies for all.

BACKGROUND

Despite dramatic improvements in family planning and sexual and reproductive health across Latin America and Caribbean (LAC), persistent socioeconomic disparities demand that governments address weak policy frameworks, legal and regulatory barriers, and an inconsistent range of contraceptive methods.

In 2012, nearly one-quarter of women in LAC who wanted to avoid getting pregnant lacked modern contraceptives. These same women also accounted for three-quarters of all unintended pregnancies across the region. This film shows the devastating consequences of the lack of access to contraceptives on women's lives:

Unintended Pregnancy

More than half the pregnancies in the LAC region are unintended. LAC is the only region in the world where unintended pregnancies outnumber intended pregnancies (72 per 1,000 pregnancies are unintended; 52 per 1,000 are intended).

Abortion

In 2008 there were an estimated 4.2 million unsafe abortions in the LAC region. For the region as a whole, the estimated number of unsafe abortions was 31 per 1,000 women aged 15-44, surpassing both Africa and Asia.

Maternal Mortality

Poor maternal and infant health, especially among low-income women has resulted in unacceptably high maternal mortality and infant mortality rates. For LAC as a whole, the maternal mortality rate is 63 women per 100,000 births, while the infant mortality rate is 13 per 1,000 live births.

HOW TO USE *CON LAS MANOS VACÍAS/EMPTY SHELVES, EMPTY HANDS*

- Organize a film screening and discussion for key decision makers and community leaders, advocacy allies, or journalists. Have a clear policy or funding ask ready.
- Show and disseminate the film in coalition meetings, trainings, presentations, and conferences.
- Share the film with colleagues and friends via social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter.
- Post a link to the film on your organization's website.
- Blog or write a letter to the editor about issues raised in the film and how they relate to your local or national situation.

Adolescent Pregnancy and Contraceptive Use

Adolescent women account for nearly one-fifth of all births in Latin America and the Caribbean. Between 30 and 40 percent of adolescent pregnancies across the LAC region are unwanted, and up to 30 percent end in abortion. Of the 1.2 million unintended pregnancies among adolescents in LAC, 83 percent occurred among those who were not using a contraceptive method.

THE CONTRACEPTIVE SUPPLY CHAIN

Many challenges along the supply chain contribute to women's lack of access to contraceptives. Limited human resource capacity, weak transportation infrastructure and outdated

GUATEMALA FACTS:

- Guatemala has a maternal mortality ratio of 120 deaths per 100,000 live births—one of the highest among countries in Central America.
- A woman will have an average of 3.6 children during her lifetime.
- 21.1 percent of adolescents in Guatemala are pregnant or already have at least one child.
- 31 percent of married women in Guatemala want to prevent pregnancy, but lack modern contraception.
- Use of family planning methods is very high among married women in the wealthiest quintile—72 percent—but only 36 percent of married women in the lowest quintile use any form of family planning.

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inventory and information systems all hinder the shipment of supplies from the central to local level, causing frequent stockouts.

Inadequate funding for family planning and reproductive health services in many LAC countries is a serious obstacle. Reproductive health supplies often compete for funding with other domestic health priorities, do not have their own official budget line, or lack comprehensive estimates for distribution costs. Even in countries where governments allocate a budget line for contraceptives, such as Guatemala, purchase of contraceptives is insufficient and irregular, and the amount is often not fully spent.

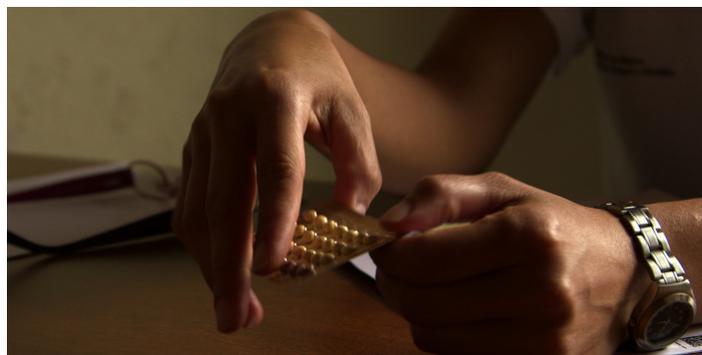
THE BENEFITS OF INVESTING IN FAMILY PLANNING

Meeting women's demand for contraceptives increases the health and stability of their families, and results in major savings over time. Every dollar invested in family planning and reproductive health globally saves money in other development areas such as education, immunization, water and sanitation, and malaria. Savings range from \$2 in Ethiopia to up to \$9 in Bolivia for every dollar invested.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

National Government

- Strengthen and/or implement the policy framework for family planning.
- Remove legal and regulatory barriers to accessing reproductive health services and supplies, especially by adolescents.
- Expand method choice to ensure access to a broad range of quality modern contraceptives.
- Create a national strategy for and finance the distribution of reproductive health supplies.
- Strengthen each component of the supply chain, particularly in decentralized systems.
- Invest in human resources to manage all aspects of supply chain management.



- Increase coordination among all governmental agencies involved in forecasting, procurement and distribution of contraceptives.
- Include district officials, local facilities and civil society in decision-making, and work closely with them to implement supply delivery systems.
- Meet the agreed-upon funding levels for family planning.

Regional and Local

- Incorporate supply distribution costs into budgets and disburse funds effectively.
- Work closely with national government to ensure timely delivery of supplies to local health facilities.
- Communicate with the district regarding local needs.
- Educate community members about reproductive health services.

Civil Society Organizations

- Build relationships with decision-makers and advocate for local needs.
- Follow-up and work with governments to implement policies.



LAC Forum

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH COMMODITY SECURITY
A Forum of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition

The ForoLAC is a Spanish-speaking regional network within the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition. ForoLAC partners work together to ensure that all women and men in Latin America and the Caribbean can choose, access and use affordable, high-quality supplies.

For further information about the film and reproductive health supplies in the LAC region in general, please contact ForoLAC's Regional Facilitator, Milka Dinev at mdinev@rhsupplies.org or visit <http://www.rhsupplies.org/sp/grupos-de-trabajo/foro-lac.html>