Resilient women
Resilient world
Women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights are human rights. Honoring these rights is essential to empowering women and girls and improving the health of our planet.

We have made great progress over the past several decades in empowering women to make the most important decisions of their lives—if or when to marry and start a family—but we still have so much work to do.

More than 200 million women around the world who do not wish to become pregnant are not using contraception. More than 800 women die each day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.

Over the past year, we have seen dangerous policies enacted to exacerbate these challenges and restrict sexual and reproductive rights—limiting the control millions of women and girls have over their own bodies and putting their health and lives at risk. Pathfinder remains steadfast in its commitment to stand up to these restrictive policies and to support women and girls in reaching their greatest potential.

Women who reach their greatest potential are poised to help save our planet. Women and girls, when they have reproductive autonomy, stay in school; overcome harmful social and gender norms that hold them back; can become leaders, change-makers, and innovators.

Through our population, health, and environment programs in East Africa, we have watched this transformation over and over. These programs engage entire communities—men and boys, traditional and religious leaders, health care professionals and community health workers, business owners, and school administrations—to support women and girls to reach their full potentials. The result is empowered women.

Empowered women propose and carry out solutions to reducing our carbon footprint and making our communities healthier. Empowered women help encourage other women and entire communities to adopt sustainable agricultural practices, to start environment-friendly businesses, to cook with energy-saving stoves, to plant trees, and to use contraception. Through their leadership, they make their families and communities more resilient to shocks from climate and poverty.

As a pioneer and leader in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights, Pathfinder is committed to partnering with individuals, faith-based and non-government organizations, the private sector, and governments that have missions aligned with our own—to increase our planet’s resiliency through the resiliency and contributions of healthy women and girls.

I invite you to join us.

Yours,

Lois Quam
President & Chief Executive Officer

Dear Pathfinders and partners worldwide,
Comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care is a human right.

We honor and support every woman's right to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care. This means access to modern contraception, safe abortion, and post-abortion care; care before, during, and after pregnancy; and the prevention and treatment of cervical cancer, HIV, and other sexually transmitted infections. High-quality sexual and reproductive health care is crucial to empowering women and girls around the world and making them more resilient.

Modern Contraception

Injectable contraceptives are one of the most popular ways to prevent pregnancy around the world, but until recently, women in India could not access them. In 2016, the Salaamti project introduced injectables for the first time in India through public health facilities in four districts of Haryana state. Through a partnership with the Haryana state government, Salaamti has been scaled up to seven districts in Haryana.

DONOR: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Safety

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Over the past year, more than 11,000 women have voluntarily adopted injectable contraceptives through Salaamti-supported health facilities in Haryana.

source: Ali & Markela Gale Foundation

From January to June of 2019, 13,416 HIV-positive individuals were reinitiated on ART.

DONOR: The Global Fund — Center for Collaboration in Global Health

Safe Abortion

A majority of the 20 million unsafe and often fatal abortions every year can be attributed to the fact that abortion remains illegal and unregulated in many countries. Through our Resonance project—launched in October of 2018—we are creating coalitions for safe abortion advocacy across Côte d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso, and Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Côte d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso, and DRC recently launched national advocacy coalitions for safe abortion.

source: Amplify Change (a pooled fund supported by a group of European donors)

HIV Prevention & Treatment

Pathfinder began working in this area in three of Mozambique’s provinces—Búzi, Mocuba, and Zambézia. Strengthening Adherence and Retention of Patients in Treatment for HIV and TB through Community Interventions project. The project increases Pathfinder’s presence long with HIV and TB services, helping to retain more patients, especially those who may have received ART at a health facility but stopped their treatment because of various reasons, including loss of money to pay for transport, distance to the health facility, and lack of and...
Because too many adolescents still cannot access modern contraception—due to discrimination, stigma, and lack of information—complications from pregnancy and childbirth remain a leading killer of adolescent girls globally. We reach adolescents and youth with information, support, and care that allows them to grow into healthy, productive, resilient adults. This includes helping them to delay pregnancies until they are ready through access to youth-friendly contraceptive, abortion, and post-abortion care services; increasing gender equity by transforming negative perceptions and practices that hold girls and boys back; and reaching young married women and couples with sexual and reproductive health information and services.

From January to June of 2019, more than 70,000 adolescent boys and girls have participated in discussions about sexual and reproductive health and gender at their schools.

With more than 13,000 adolescents reached in its first year, the program will reach up to 50,000 adolescents and their parents by 2022.

Although many reproductive health programs have sought to delay early pregnancies and early marriage among adolescent girls, fewer have focused on encouraging young women who have already become pregnant to delay and space subsequent pregnancies. Naya Qadam operates in six districts of Pakistan’s Sindh and Punjab provinces to increase the access of young women, ages 15 to 24, to high-quality post-pregnancy and post-abortion family planning care. These are opportune times to engage young women in contraceptive counseling—when they are already at the health facility. This approach has included building the capacity of health providers, lady health workers, community midwives, lady health visitors, and youth champions to educate people about, refer, or offer these services.

“Naya Qadam gave me the opportunity to step outside my house for the first time and interact with the outside world. Not only has it increased my self-confidence, but also provided me the goals I need to work towards in life.”
— Zubaria Latif, Youth Champion, Nawabshah

DONOR: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Junt@s engages entire communities to support adolescent health and wellbeing. Its adolescent-led groups participate in discussions about sexual and reproductive health and gender equality, including the merits of delaying marriage and pregnancy. School corners connect health providers who offer contraceptive information and services to adolescents, and local health clinics offer contraceptive methods, HIV counseling and testing, safe abortion care, and gender-based violence services. Police ensure that gender-based violence cases are martialed through the judicial system. Parents and neighbors support the adolescents in their lives to make healthy decisions and succeed.

“In relation to adolescent pregnancies, I can say that this is a successful story. Since we are working with the boys and girls, we haven’t registered any cases of pregnancy. I am sure the project’s activities are influencing.”
— Mentor Teacher, Maputo Province

DONOR: Royal Norwegian Embassy

A girl’s ability to make positive choices and to benefit from key health, education, and economic opportunities throughout her life is closely linked to how gender norms are perpetuated in her society and how others view her worth, rights, and future. Act with Her partners with adolescent girls and boys, families, communities, and the systems girls rely on to increase adolescent empowerment and gender equity in societies where girls are typically disempowered. Mentor-led groups in the Amhara, Oromia, and Afar regions help girls and boys develop the self-confidence, agency, and economic empowerment they need to take control of their lives.

One girl reported that she “was considering myself as less than men… but it’s wrong. I can do what boys do.”

DONOR: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
We go where the need is greatest.

Pathfinder is driven by the conviction that all people, regardless of where they live, have the right to decide whether and when to have children, to exist free from fear and stigma, and to lead the lives they choose.

We collaborate closely with our partners around the world to offer lifesaving reproductive and maternal and newborn care, integrate health and environment work to address the holistic needs of communities, and reach the most vulnerable populations, including those who have been displaced due to conflict and natural disasters.

Support to Rohingya Refugees

Since August 2017, Pathfinder has supported a local partner, Research Training and Management International, to provide critical sexual and reproductive health services for the Rohingya in Camp 22 of Cox’s Bazaar, Bangladesh, and to the growing number of Rohingya in host communities of Teknaf Upazila.

DONOR: The David and Lucille Packard Foundation

These gender-responsive sexual and reproductive health services include contraception, menstrual regulation care, and gender-based violence prevention and response—services essential to the health of these displaced populations.

Savings Mothers, Giving Life

Through a suite of evidence-based interventions and upgrades to health facilities, the Saving Mothers, Giving Life Program in Cross River State, Nigeria, drastically reduced the number of women and newborns dying from complications during childbirth.

Pathfinder engaged communities and strengthened health systems to transport women to health facilities in time for delivery, trained health providers to offer the saving services, and equipped health facilities for safe deliveries.

“In Nigeria, sometimes they didn’t have electricity; we supplied them with solar cell phone flashlights,” said Dr. Farouk Jega, Pathfinder’s country director in Nigeria. “Pathfinder took solar panels.”

Through our partnership with We Care Solar, 150 health facilities received solar suitcases to power them up.

“Without it, emergency obstetric and newborn care couldn’t have been done in the night,” said Dr. Jega.

DONOR: USAID and Merck for Mothers

Cyclone Idai

Cyclone Idai—one of the worst storms in recorded history in the Southern Hemisphere—struck Mozambique in late March. Given our strong partnership with the Government of Mozambique and development partners in the country, we were able to assist with the recovery effort in Sofala and Cabo Delgado, two hard-hit regions.

Deployed emergency services beyond the scope of family planning, with included supporting an estimated 43,000 expecting mothers in flood-affected areas.

Assisted with distributing 900,000 cholera vaccines to prevent an outbreak and further risk.

Partnered with peer organizations to call the spread of cholera from stagnant flood waters.

Made repairs to health centers and provided crucial support for patients, children, and families affected by the storm.

Provided fuel, cars, and solar lamps so that health care could continue despite damaged infrastructure.

DONOR: The David and Lucille Packard Foundation

After the Cyclone Hit, Pathfinder:

Between 2016 and 2019, 66% fewer women and 44% fewer newborns died from complications during childbirth in Cross River State’s health facilities than during a previous comparable period.

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Pathfinder’s population, health, and environment (PHE) approach addresses some of the most pressing issues affecting rural, vulnerable populations: the effects of climate change, food security, nutrition, livelihoods, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender inequities. Our PHE programs support women to be innovators and change-makers who build resilient communities that can thrive through the most formidable global challenges—including climate change. We do this by supporting women and girls to make the most important decisions about their lives and their bodies, receive quality health care, get education, earn an income, and manage natural resources sustainably.

TANZANIA

Landscape Conservation in Western Tanzania

Pathfinder began partnering with the Jane Goodall Institute this year, launching a community-centered conservation program in western Tanzania. The program seeks to protect endangered chimpanzee populations and their habitats while encouraging sustainably managed natural resources and increasing communities’ access to sexual and reproductive health care.

“The Jane Goodall Institute’s community-centered conservation work in Tanzania over nearly 20 years and continues today. We believe in the power of local communities and work to protect wildlife and habitats in the region.”
—Dr. Jane Goodall, Founder, Jane Goodall Institute

DONOR: USAID

NIGER

RISE

Zinder, Niger, is at the forefront—a place that is extremely susceptible to climate-induced shocks. In partnership with a resilience organization, the Evidence to Action/Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) project trained conservation farming groups to encourage use of family planning services and community-based distributors of family planning services to provide information on conservation farming techniques, water, sanitation, hygiene, and nutrition.

Through these integrated activities, conservation farming leaders—the majority who are men—reached 1,822 men in Zinder with information and referrals for family planning services over nine months.

DONOR: USAID

KENYA, UGANDA, EAST AFRICA REGION

HoPE-LVB & PHE Learning Lab

Over the past seven years, Pathfinder has played a catalytic role in advancing PHE programs in East Africa. Two major initiatives have been Pathfinder’s PHE Learning Lab and the Health of People and Environment (HoPE-LVB) project. Together with our PHE projects in Tanzania, these initiatives have led to governments adopting PHE policies and dedicating resources to PHE programs, and toignon support for extending PHE models across East Africa.

DONOR: Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies & John Swift

Regional PHE policy developed by the East Africa Community (Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, and Uganda)

National PHE policies developed in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania

PHE WINS IN EAST AFRICA

Regional PHE strategy developed by the East Africa Community (Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, and Uganda)

National PHE policies developed in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania

County governments in Kenya and East Africa support community-led PHE programming.

41 community-based PHE programs established across the Lake Victoria Basin region.

East African universities rolled out PHE curricula.
George and Sarah Todd

As a founding family planning organization, Pathfinder has been part of the Todd legacy since the 1960s. George Todd’s father, a Congressman from Michigan, was part of an effort that first allotted US Government funds to voluntary family planning programs. After his term in Congress, he then became CEO of Planned Parenthood and later joined Pathfinder’s board of directors. George’s step-mother, Caroline Ham, remains on the board of Planned Parenthood of Michigan. The Todd family continues to support Pathfinder: “Pathfinder’s projects are incredibly diverse…an adaptability, Pathfinder focuses on each country and makes sure programs are sensitive to different cultures. Pathfinder really showed me that when women have the right to make that decision themselves, the amount of success is exponential.”

“Pathfinder’s mission is particularly moving for me because in my profession I help people and create opportunities for them to succeed. The mission at Pathfinder brings opportunities to women, men, and families around the world where there are none,” Brian said.

“Pathfinder’s global programs include me as a Pathfinder Watertown staff member because they bring desperately needed services to women, men, and families that are easily and readily accessible to me and that sometimes take for granted.”

George’s daughter, Sarah, did the same work as her mother directly connected to Pathfinder’s mission, referring to women’s access to contraception as “a superpower.”

“[Contraception] is completing high school, it’s advancing in a career, escaping an abusive relationship, managing health conditions, being able to provide for the children a woman wants to have. It is so many things; it’s a superpower.”

As a school, I saw how having access to safe, reliable, and acceptable contraception is at the very foundation of gender equality. We have different challenges to face in this area, depending on where you are. We have to show that if we provide contraception, there is more hope for a better playing field,” she continued.

Sarah plans to take her daughter, Rose, to visit Pathfinder’s programs in Ethiopia.

“I want Rose to witness this work firsthand, and see how the lives of women and girls are being changed for the better, how futures are being created, not because we are exporting our beliefs, but because we are honoring a belief that transcends culture and borders: the belief that women and girls deserve to be equal, healthy, whole and to have a say in their futures.”

Sabah Husain

Sabah Husain is a first-generation American from Minnesota with Pakistani roots. Realizing the opportunities she has been afforded because of how she grew up, Sabah dedicates her volunteer time to Pathfinder in an effort to give back. “I am a first-generation American and my parents are from Pakistan. As I’ve gotten older and had to take care of my own health insurance and my own body, I realize how different it is for myself and my relatives who live in Pakistan. There are such discrepancies—and I want to give back.” Sabah is especially motivated by the diversity and cultural sensitivity of Pathfinder programming.

“Pathfinder’s projects are incredibly diverse, so adaptable. Pathfinder focuses on each country and makes sure programs are sensitive to different cultures. Pathfinder really shows me that when women have the right to make that decision themselves, the amount of success is exponential.”

George and Sarah Todd (left) and Tabinda Sarosh, Pathfinder’s Country Director in Pakistan

Brian Cunningham

For the past 15 years, Brian Cunningham has been a Pathfinder employee in Watertown, Massachusetts, where he currently serves as the Financial Systems Director. Compelled by Pathfinder’s mission, he also supports the organization through monthly giving. “Pathfinder’s programs are incredibly diverse…an adaptability, Pathfinder focuses on each country and makes sure programs are sensitive to different cultures. Pathfinder really shows me that when women have the right to make that decision themselves, the amount of success is exponential.”

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He recalled a fond memory of working for Pathfinder, when he participated in a week-long global leadership summit in Mombasa, Kenya.

“Working long days as a problem solver for staff who are on the ground executing Pathfinder’s programs is one of the most humbling and rewarding experiences of my life.”

Thank you for your commitment.
To my fellow Pathfinder supporters,

Pathfinder has always been at the forefront of advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights in the countries where we work. For more than 60 years, we have worked hand in hand with communities and the public health systems that serve them to allow women, men, and young people to be involved in the creation of a more equal and just society. Pathfinder remains steadfast in its commitment to continue this work, despite the formidable challenges we face.

Throughout our history, we have seen shifts in politics, technologies, global health priorities, and the environment, which have required us to shift the way we operate. One thing that has not changed, however, is the locally driven nature of our programs. Our programs reflect the local communities we serve and are not reliant on us — they see the solutions.

We work with more than 1,200 staff around the world, almost 90 percent work in the countries they know and love. They grew up with the customs and systems in which they operate, hearing about the hopes and dreams of the people they serve. They make us ideally positioned to observe both the social and gender norms that continue to hold women and girls back and to strengthen the public systems that our partner countries rely on.

As board members, we support our programs like Act with Girls in Ethiopia and Justice in Mozambique. These programs champion radical gender norms that hold girls back and make these beliefs less popular than they were.

These programs not only engage adolescent boys and girls in transformative discussions, they engage entire communities and systems to support their health, education, and growth. Through these programs, we are giving girls the power to believe in themselves, the world, and to strengthen the public systems that our partner countries rely on.

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Empowering women and girls and investing in them as leaders and role models is central to the transformative trajectory of our planet.

For much of the world, particularly as Pathfinder’s partner communities depend on populations’ health, and environment (PHE) programs are important in and girls to drive the health of entire communities and ecosystems and how effective this approach has been. It has fostered gender equality, mitigated the effects of climate change, increased food security, and improved nutrition in some of the most vulnerable communities on this planet.

Our programs have taken other forms. That’s why the three countries where we’ve been able to build significant PHE programs — Tanzania, and Uganda — have all adopted national PHE policies. That’s only the first step. Changing the trajectory of our planet.

Empowering women and girls and investing in them as leaders and role models is crucial to the future of our planet.

The world is rapidly changing. Investing in women and girls is a moral imperative, but also a strategy to mitigate the effects of climate change and lead us on a path toward a better tomorrow. Please join us in ensuring Pathfinder can continue to uplift women and girls around the world. Our world depends on it.

I’ve watched over the past decade as Pathfinder’s impact on adolescent health, education, and rights in the countries where we work. For more than 60 years, we have worked hand in hand with communities and the public health systems that serve them to allow women, men, and young people to be involved in the creation of a more equal and just society. Pathfinder remains steadfast in its commitment to continue this work, despite the formidable challenges we face.

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As an Ethiopian girl told an Act with Her mentor "I can do what boys do."