

USAID Transform: Primary Health Care Activity Expanding Contraceptive Choice for Women in Ethiopia

Family planning (FP) is essential health care that can be provided to women to determine the number and spacing of their children. USAID Transform: Primary Health Care works with the Government of Ethiopia to increase FP access and utilization at the health facility and community levels.

Wubit Argaw is a 29-year-old woman residing in Yeabtar kebele (ward), located 70 kilometers (44 miles) from Gonder town in Amhara Region. Wubit has three children that were spaced seven years apart between the first child and the second child, and two years apart between the second and third child. She was on a short-acting FP method before she switched to a long-acting reversible contraceptive (LARC).

She regularly visits Yeabtar Health Post (HP) and Woken Health Center (HC) to receive information on FP services. After she was counseled by a health extension worker (HEW), Wubit received the Implanon contraceptive implant at the Yeabtar HP. "Initially, I was concerned about the long-acting FP because I thought it might have side effects. But after receiving the insertion, I am comfortable and not experiencing anything," Wubit said. When asked about what her husband thought about her decision to use FP, she said, "We made the decision together."

Yeabtar HP is under the supervision of Woken HC and is located five kilometers (3 miles) apart. The HP is staffed with three HEWs who are level-V in training. The HP relies on the HC for technical and administrative support, including back-up support services. Almaz Assefa, a HEW who provides back-up support at the Yeabtar HP said, "we inserted Implanon before the back-up support began and then referred clients to Woken HC for the removal service and insertion of Implanon Next."



Wubit Argaw, a client receiving family planning services. Photo: USAID Transform Primary Health Care Activity

Thanks to USAID Transform: Primary Care Activity's support, Almaz and other HEWs were trained by health workers from Woken HC to insert Implanon Next. "After the training, we performed eight procedures of Implanon Next insertions at the HP level," Almaz said.

"Before the onsite training, HEWs were unable to insert Implanon Next, and clients were coming to the HC from far places to get the service," said Abel Shiferaw, the head of Woken HC. The onsite training provided to the HEWs solved many existing problems, ensured the availability of alternative contraceptive methods, and increased the use of LARCs. Abel added, "cost sharing and time management are the two major lessons learned from the onsite training." The training was provided to HEWs by the health workers who attended the training of trainers offered at the woreda (district) level. The woreda health office shared the cost of training.