

# Community Health Workers

In Pakistan, there are two types of Community Health Workers – Lady Health Workers (LHWs) and Family Welfare Assistants (FWAs). LHWs are paid by the Department of Health and are responsible for generating demand for maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) services, including family planning, through household visits. FWAs play a similar role but are overseen by the Population Welfare Department (PWD).



## Step 1: Identify existing CHWs who can provide family planning information and services

Although CHWs may have received an initial training on family planning, more in-depth training is often required to further capacitate them so that they can provide quality family planning counseling and be integrated within the Basic Health Units and Family Health Centers for referrals.



## Step 2: Train the CHWs

Consult with a sample of LHWs/FWAs in your district to see what level of knowledge they have about family planning and what their comfort level is in providing family planning counseling. Then, increase their capacity by conducting training sessions on family planning skills, such as interpersonal communication, counselling skills, creating referrals, collecting data and provision of short-term contraceptives.



## Step 3: Provide CHWs with adequate equipment and supplies

CHWs conduct door-to-door visits for demand generation activities and awareness about MNCH services, and also create referrals to clinics for service delivery. Department of Health and PWD is responsible for providing necessary equipment to their frontline field workforce. Government should provide IEC materials in local languages to its frontline field staff for their door-to-door visits and demand generation activities.



## Step 4: Offer supportive supervision

Through bi-monthly and quarterly visits, check the completeness of CHWs data and make recommendations related to their delivery of counseling and service provision, ensure infection prevention controls are in place, and equipment handling. Monthly meetings are held for all LHWs at the medical facility to which they are assigned to refer clients, to evaluate their data and progress related to family planning service provision and discuss any challenges.



## Step 5: Consider using CHWs creatively for demand generation activities

CHWs can conduct demand generation activities through puppetry, local theater, and other community forums. CHWs can be trained to facilitate discussion groups among community members to reinforce family planning information received from radio programs, TV dramas, theater performances and other communication materials.

## Tips

- Work within existing Ministry of Health and community structures.
- Incorporate community family planning activities into the Ministry of Health's annual work plans and budget.
- CHWs should be treated as part of the overall health system—as an extension of health facilities—rather than a separate group.
- Male engagement is crucial for family planning and informed choices. Male FWAs can help to conduct demand generation activities among males to engage them as supportive partners and family planning clients.