

Family Planning Champions: Concept, attributes and roles

Presentation

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Who is a Family Planning Champion?

- An influential or motivated person or authority with a public standing who uses his or her expertise and professional contacts to help influence policies and practices for promotion of Family Planning.
- Has the stature, skills and sufficient gravitas to effectively advance family planning among policy makers.
- Has sufficient clout and following in society to be real champions for promotion of Family Planning at the country, regional and global levels

FP Champions – the levels

- The FP Champions can be women and men selected from a wide spectrum of audiences at different levels:
 - International level Champions
 - National-level Champions
 - Regional or District-level Champions
 - Community-level Champions

Examples of FP Champions

- Former Government Presidents;
- Government Ministers (retired and serving);
- Good Will Ambassadors;
- Politicians;
- The clergy;
- Cultural leaders;
- The media, (journalists)
- Respected senior citizens;
- Retired government and civil society executives;
- Celebrities;
- Artists/entertainers and
- Activists.
- Community-based distributors, leaders of women/men/youth groups, opinion leaders, councilors, satisfied users.

Some of the attributes of a FP Champion

- Should be articulate, passionate and a charismatic crusader with a powerful belief system of family planning.
- Should demonstrate substantial level of knowledge and previous active participation in family planning issues.
- Should have credibility in the field of family planning - ability to lead by example.
- Should be results oriented with demonstrated leadership ability.
- Should maintain integrity and self discipline.
- Demonstrate willingness to learn so that they can sustain the debate and interest among the public.
- Should show willingness to elevate the family planning debate in country, as well as at regional and international levels

Some of the roles expected of FP Champions...

- Use his/her expertise and professional contacts to help bridge the gap between policy and practice.
- Drive the family planning agenda to policy makers, development partners and governments to increase funding for family planning.
- Increase awareness and knowledge of family planning; and influence the end users and providers to adopt positive attitudes, behaviors, and practices related to family planning.
- Use national, regional and global opportunities to make supportive statements for FP
- Advocate for improved family planning services especially in rural areas where they are most needed.
- Influence decision-makers to recognize that family planning is a critical public health intervention at global, regional, national, district and lower levels.
- Represent the “Voices from the South” in country, regional and global advocacy opportunities in support of family planning.

Who is the best FP Champion ?

- The level of change expected from a champion differs according to his or her sphere of influence and experience.
- For instance, the range of activities appropriate for a community champion will not be equivalent to the activities appropriate for a prominent and powerful national-level champion, such as a minister or a parliamentarian.
- Therefore, working and engaging with champions selected from a wide spectrum of audiences along a Family Planning issue helps facilitate and promote the needed synergies at varying levels.

Family Planning Advocacy – a multi-faceted effort!!

- Advocacy for Family Planning using the Champions approach is only additional to all other existing advocacy efforts.
- While the value of using champions has been well documented through experience, attributing changes in policy and practice to a champion's efforts is often difficult.
- The use of Family Planning Champions can successfully make a contribution in revitalizing FP and is a promising strategy for translating policy into practice.

Thank you.

