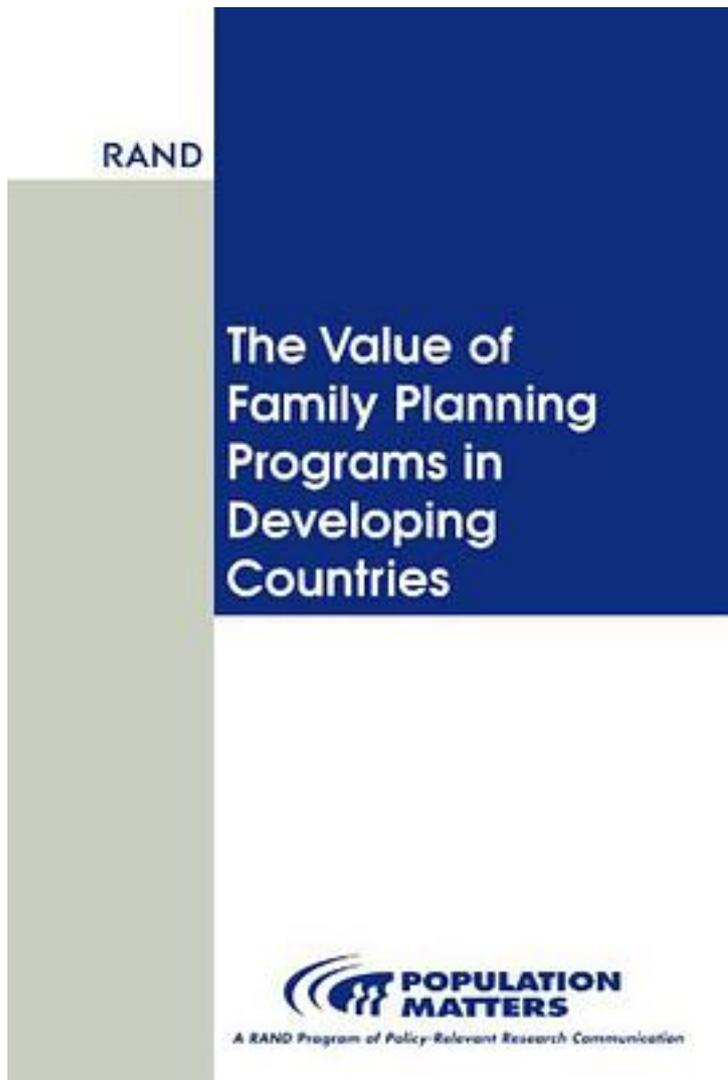


The Value of Family Planning Programs in Developing Countries



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Family planning programs have been highly successful over the past 30 years in providing women in developing countries with desired access to contraceptive services and helping to reduce fertility rates. Notwithstanding this success, there is still an urgent need for these programs. The world's population is increasing, with annual population growth still approximately 80 million people. Nearly all of this growth is occurring in developing nations, where fertility rates remain relatively high. This high fertility runs counter to the preferences expressed by millions of women, who actually want to have smaller families. Family planning programs are also desirable because they are associated with a range of other benefits, most notably improvements in women's and children's health. Host countries provide about 60 to 75 percent of funding for family planning. However, funding and technical assistance from donor nations, especially the United States, have been crucial to the past success of family planning programs and are equally important for strengthening and expanding program efforts to meet future challenges.

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