



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FAMILY PLANNING

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International Conference on Family Planning Announces New Dates for Sixth Conference in Pattaya City, Thailand: 8-11 November 2021

The Secretariat for the sixth [International Conference on Family Planning \(ICFP\)](#) announced that the conference will now take place 8-11 November 2021 in Pattaya City, Thailand (*originally to take place 1-4 February 2021*) and will be co-hosted by the [Bill & Melinda Gates Institute for Population and Reproductive Health](#), the [Kingdom of Thailand's Ministry of Public Health](#), [The Royal Thai College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists](#), and the [Population and Community Development Association](#).

As the battle with COVID-19 turns into weeks and months, and due to the uncertainty surrounding this novel virus and its immense impact upon mass gatherings, the ICFP Secretariat, in coordination with the experts who constructed the World Health Organization's Mass Gathering Guidelines, the ICFP Core Organizing Group, International Steering Committee, National Steering Committee Secretariat, and ICFP subcommittees, made the difficult but necessary decision to postpone the conference for the health and safety of conference delegates and Thai nationals.

This is a challenging and frustrating time, but it also offers a window of opportunity for extraordinary leadership. The sexual and reproductive health community has the unique opportunity to play a significant role in the dissemination of information about and the containment and mitigation of this global pandemic, and the sixth ICFP remains committed to ensuring that family planning and reproductive health remain at the forefront of the global health agenda.

To support these efforts, the ICFP 2021 will include "[Impact of COVID-19 on Family Planning and Reproductive Health](#)" as a new track during the upcoming conference. The ICFP Secretariat team also created a "[COVID-19 and Reproductive Health](#)" page on the ICFP website, which highlights the innovative resources, tools, solutions, and best practices from the ICFP community that are helping us push forward through these uncertain times. Despite the change in dates, the ICFP Secretariat maintains their commitment to hosting this important global gathering of reproductive health and family planning professionals in Pattaya City.

Thailand, through its partnerships with local organizations, political will of the government, and bold imagination in designing its family planning program, increased contraceptive use among all women from 15 to 70 percent since passing its national population policy in 1971. What started as a pilot study among rural women transformed into a full-fledged national family planning program over the two decades following its implementation, reducing the population total fertility rate from 6.1 to 1.5. Thailand's family planning program has been so successful, in part, because of the novel ways in which it popularized family planning early in its launch (wherever you see *cabbages* you see *condoms*), and the critical role that the government played in making services available closer to the people, especially through district hospitals linked to community-based programs.

Thailand serves as an example for other low- to middle-income countries about the great strides that are possible in reproductive health, HIV, and other development indicators when you invest in women by investing in family planning. Knowledge creation, social mobilization, and policy advocacy are the three angles of Thailand's tri-power strategy for successful family planning programming. This allows the Thai government and its people to utilize their limited resources for universal health coverage in the most efficient ways.

As the larger family planning community looks "beyond 2020" to realign their goals and reposition for the future of family planning, Thailand's family planning and reproductive health programs represent what is possible when government, public health groups, and civil society organizations work in tandem on health, rights, and poverty issues.

"Thailand's population and reproductive health program, begun in the early 1970s, has been a model for the world. From the early 1970s to 1987, contraceptive prevalence increased from 14.8 to 70.6%. Thailand's success is the charisma and creativity of its family planning leadership," said Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health Mr. Anutin Charnvirakul. "The Thai program has stated a clear delineation of roles for nongovernment organizations. Success is also due to the program's demographic-economic approach, which stresses the economic implications of population growth. Finally, the availability and accessibility to family planning services has greatly contributed to the success of the program. All government hospitals have a family planning clinic, and midwives, nurses, and doctors all receive family planning training. The Thai population program has evolved from a purely family planning contraceptive service to a community development program designed to improve the productivity of individuals. This could be a model for many other countries. We are happy to share our experiences with the world and look forward to welcoming delegates to Thailand."

"It is such a great honor and pleasure to cohost the ICFP 2021. It will be a great opportunity for us to discuss groundbreaking ideas in the field of modern family planning, solidify our challenging goals and move forward towards the next decades." said Karun Kengsakul M.D., M.S. Ed., FRTCOG, President of The Royal Thai College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. "Expertise in medicine, excellent collaboration, and professional management have successfully lowered the birth rate of Thailand. We are eager to learn more from other countries about issues relating to new contraceptive technologies and better access to family planning services, especially among adolescents and minorities.

"For a country that prides itself in its determination to solve its population problem, it is a great delight to learn the 2021 ICFP will be held in Thailand. It has been a long and hard road with obstacles along the way, but the results of significantly bringing down our population growth has been most gratifying" said Mechai Viravaidya, Founder and Chairman, Population and Community Development Association. "Some of us who

joined together to launch this endeavor are still alive and active. Much of the world is probably aware that without a strong and determined effort in community supported family planning, our efforts to stem the rapid spread of HIV would not have been achieved. The 90 percent decline in new infections is testimony to the strong and successful public-private partnership family planning program which was started in the early 1970s. Since those days we have moved on to efforts to stem poverty, improve education and the active participation of elderly citizens in self-improvement and active learning. What a great opportunity this event will provide for likeminded friends to catch-up with the next set of challenges.”

“We are delighted to partner with Thailand’s Ministry of Public Health, the Royal Thai College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and the Population and Community Development Association, to co-host the 2021 ICFP,” said Jose “Oying” Rimon II, Chair of the International Steering Committee of the ICFP and Director of the Bill & Melinda Gates Institute for Population and Reproductive Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. “We are proud to co-sponsor this conference with not only the government of the host country, but also a renowned reproductive health training institution and a local NGO known globally for its novel approaches to some of society’s most pressing issues. The world can learn from Thailand’s spectacular advances in family planning and reproductive health, its experience in achieving and harnessing the benefits of demographic dividend and its leadership in achieving universal health.

Held biennially since 2009, the ICFP serves as a strategic inflection point for the family planning and reproductive health community worldwide. It provides an opportunity for political leaders, scientists, researchers, policymakers, advocates, and youth to disseminate knowledge, celebrate successes, and identify next steps toward reaching the goal of enabling an additional 120 million women to access voluntary, quality contraception by 2020 – and beyond. The Family Planning 2030 goals will be set moving into the 2021 ICFP, providing new opportunities to disseminate knowledge and celebrate successes in the field.

COVID-19 will have lasting implications for all sectors of the reproductive health field including research, resource and commodity mobilization, service delivery, communication, gender-based violence, humanitarian settings, advocacy efforts, and reproductive health policy. The greater reproductive health community is resilient and must unite to confront the pandemic by modifying and sharing applicable best practices, creating innovative solutions, and accruing knowledge about the immediate and long-term effects of this virus on the global SRHR community. These activities are essential for swiftly identifying and addressing the obstacles our community faces and making immediate improvements to better prepare and protect our communities worldwide to ensure they continue to receive the quality reproductive healthcare they need.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FAMILY PLANNING (ICFP):

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The ICFP also serves as an international platform from which countries, organizations and individuals can make public commitments to family planning and can be recognized for their achievements. Dozens of side events are organized around the conference by many institutions and groups from around the world.

The International Conference on Family Planning (ICFP) is more than a conference; it is a movement and a platform for strategic inflection points in the family planning agenda.

The first conference was held in Kampala, Uganda, in 2009 and convened more than 1,300 participants around the topic of family planning for the first time in fifteen years, sparking positive change for family planning policies in Uganda. With more than 2,200 participants, the second conference was held in 2011 in Dakar, Senegal, and highlighted family planning issues in Francophone Africa. The 2013 ICFP drew more than 3,400 attendees from 110 countries to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with the theme of *Full Access, Full Choice*. The 2016 ICFP was held in Nusa Dua, Indonesia and attracted over 3,500 delegates and participants from nearly 100 countries. Its theme was *Global Commitments, Local Actions*. The 2018 ICFP held in Kigali, Rwanda hosted over 4,000 people from 124 countries. The 2018 theme, “Investing for a Lifetime of Returns,” highlighted the multitude of ways countries can harness benefits of the [demographic dividend](#) as Thailand has as a result of its successful family planning program over the last four decades. ([Download the *International Conference on Family Planning 2018 Evaluation Report*.](#))

ABOUT THE CO-HOSTS AND CORE ORGANIZING GROUP

The 2021 International Conference on Family Planning is co-hosted by the [Bill & Melinda Gates Institute for Population and Reproductive Health](#), based at the Department of Population, Family and Reproductive Health at the [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health](#), the [Kingdom of Thailand’s Ministry of Public Health](#), [The Royal Thai College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists](#), and the [Population and Community Development Association](#).

The 2021 ICFP is made possible with support from the ICFP Core Organizing Group—[Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#), [David and Lucile Packard Foundation](#), [William and Flora Hewlett Foundation](#), [United Nations Population Fund \(UNFPA\)](#), [United Nations Foundation \(UNF\)](#), [Family Planning 2020 \(FP2020\)](#), [Population Services International \(PSI\)](#), [Marie Stopes International \(MSI\)](#), [International Youth Alliance for Family Planning](#), [International Planned Parenthood Federation \(IPPF\)](#), [Department for International Development of the United Kingdom \(DfID\)](#) and [Government of Canada](#), as well as the [International Steering Committee](#), comprised of more than 50 partner organizations, and the National Steering Committee of the ICFP.

For more information about the ICFP, please visit [ICFP2021.org](#).