



Weekly News Review – 16 June 2017

A round-up of the week's most important, Africa-focused Family Planning and Reproductive Health reporting

Demographic Dividend?

How will the “Demographic Dividend” pay out? The question got a lot of attention as the Day of the African Child approached. At a [G20 conference](#), Jamie Drummond, a co-founder of ONE, highlighted that “Africa’s population doubled in size since 1985 – and will double again by 2050 to 2.5bn. By then the young population of Africa will be 10 times the size of the EU’s youth population, and equal that of the entire rest of g20 put together.” In Kenya, cognizant of the need to manage the youth boom, the [Centre for the Study of Adolescents](#) was clear: “African governments including Kenya have the opportunity to refocus their attention to the provision of comprehensive sexuality education as a social vaccine to most health related problems facing children.” The [Population Reference Bureau](#) released a video as part of the campaign with a similar message to the 15 million young Kenyans, calling for access to contraceptives and reduced fertility rates. An upbeat video from [Uganda](#) followed a community health worker providing family planning information village to village. In [Ghana](#), former president Rawlings urged a slowdown in the birth rate. A chilling commentary came from Lesotho, where the “[population bomb](#)”, and a lack of planning, has led to near starvation for a third of the population over the past two years.

US FP Funding

The debate over US international family planning funding continues to draw attention. US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson heard [concerns from Congress](#) about the impact not just by [putting women in jeopardy](#), but on the detriment to US national security. A [Guttmacher study](#) noted the US was out of step with the rest of the world: “The United States remains stuck in its counterproductive pattern of lurching back and forth depending on the prevailing politics, even as the world advances sexual and reproductive health and rights.” The [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) takes a deep dive into the numbers and comes up with the potential consequences of the budget cuts: “Additional new HIV infections would range from 69,200 to 280,100; the number of people on antiretrovirals could decline by almost one million in the steepest budget cut scenario; the number of women and couples receiving contraceptives would decline, ranging from 6.5 million to almost 25 million; the increase in the number of abortions would range between 819,000 to more than 3 million; and additional maternal, newborn, and child deaths would range between 7,000 and 31,300.” Yet some politicians feel that the administration has so overstepped that they are gaining momentum to [repeal the Global Gag Rule](#) forever. Reaching a new audience, American pop star [Halsey released a video](#) criticizing the Gag Rule.

[Europe alone cannot plug the funding gap](#), Sweden’s state secretary for international development warned. And the WHO regional director for Africa encouraged [more domestic spending in Africa](#): “As countries graduate into middle income states, they need to smartly invest more of their resources in health.”

HIV prevention

A generic version of the [HIV prevention drug](#) sold as Truvada has been approved by the FDA, “sparking a new debate about how far the drug should be included in combatting HIV”, while it was pointed out that the Achilles Heel of any such drug is [patient adherence](#). The CDC recommended [conception strategies for uninfected women whose male partner is HIV positive](#).

Postpartum Family Planning

A University of Michigan study which concludes that “[more new mothers are asking for long-term birth control](#)” – an increase from 1.86 per 10,000 deliveries in 2008 to 13.5 per 10,000 deliveries in 2013 – is getting attention.

The Abortion Debate

International Planned Parenthood Federation released two new videos, about [how to talk about abortion](#), and [how to educate about abortion](#). Eye on Design exhibited five design-led projects to “[redesign](#)” [how we communicate](#) about the topic. And from Angola to Zimbabwe, abortion laws were in the news; in the former country a [total ban was blocked](#), while in the latter [MPs clashed](#).

Ireland’s laws, which “[lock women up](#),” were criticized by the UN as “[cruel and inhumane](#)”, as a teenage girl who sought an abortion was [detained in a psychiatric unit](#).

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