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Government of Nepal, Ministry  
of Health and Population



# Planning for Nepal's Demographic Dividend

Investments in Family Planning,  
Gender Equality, and Education



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# Context



Nepal has reached the window of opportunity for a demographic dividend—accelerated economic growth driven by changes in the population age structure and achieved through strategic investments and policies. But a demographic dividend will not come automatically. The benefits are greatest when multisectoral investments are made in family planning, education, and gender equality. Such investments ensure an educated workforce and greater economic opportunities for women and girls.



*"My husband is from Kavre district. He [works for] a trekking [company] in Kathmandu, and I see him about once every three months. We are planning on having another child soon."*

— Sarita

# Family Planning



Family planning (FP) has many benefits for individuals and society. Achieving Nepal's FP2020 and Costed Implementation Plan goals for family planning will save the lives of women and children, improve the health of families, and generate significant cost savings. These health improvements can have great impacts on the lives of the poorest and most disadvantaged women, as well as the national economy.

# Incremental Cost Effectiveness

*Just an additional...*

\$2 on FP

...to avert one unintended pregnancy


\$91 on FP

... to save one child's life

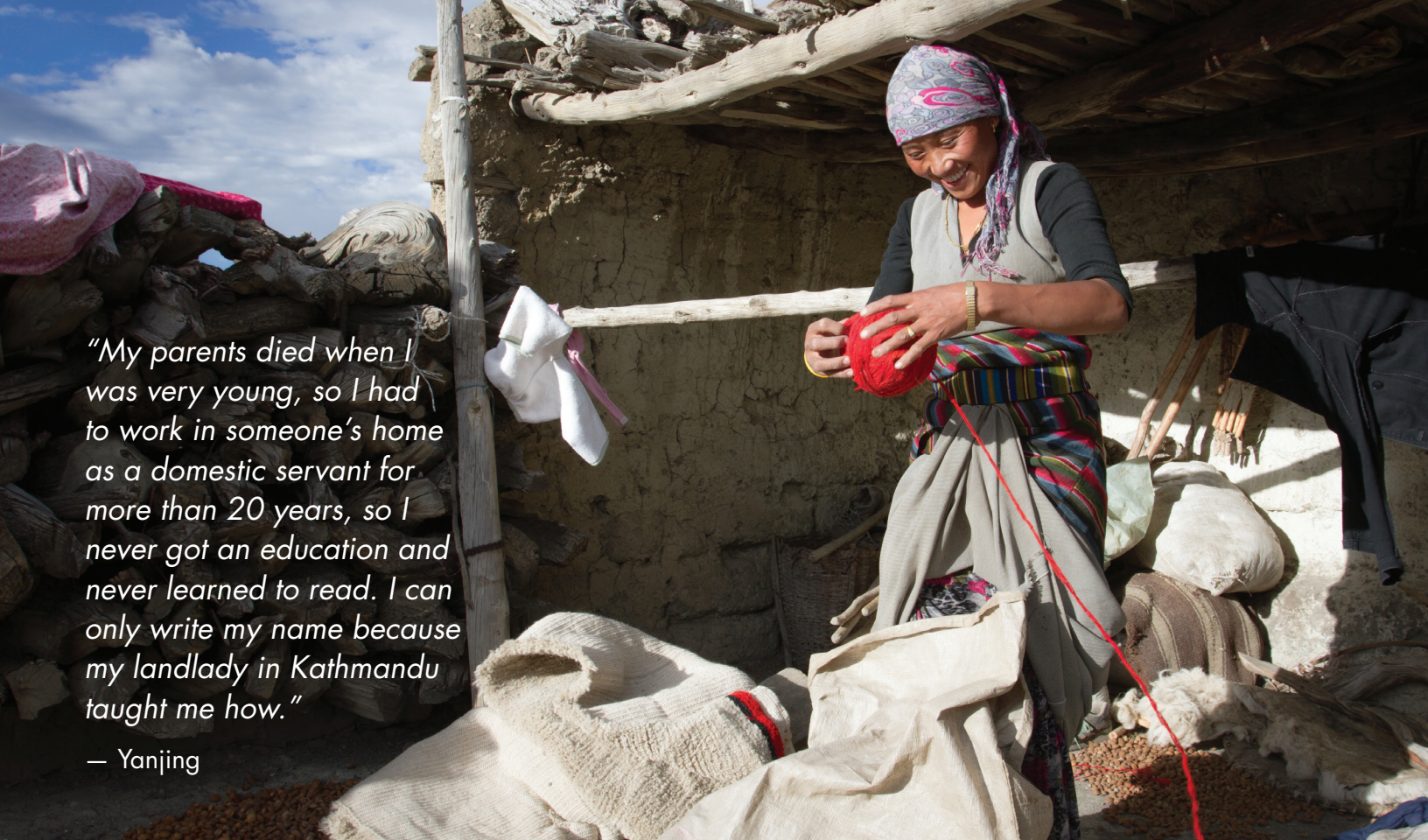
\$906 on FP

... to prevent one maternal death





Family planning prevents unintended pregnancies, reduces high-risk births, and protects the health of women and children. In Nepal, 1 in 200 women will die from pregnancy- or delivery-related causes in her lifetime (World Bank, 2015). The risks are higher for poor, rural, and disadvantaged women, who face more challenges accessing family planning and maternal healthcare.

A woman wearing a colorful patterned headscarf and a grey vest over a dark long-sleeved shirt is smiling as she spins a ball of red wool. She is standing in a rustic, open-air structure with a mud-brick wall and a wooden roof. The background shows a clear blue sky with some clouds. In the foreground, there are several large, light-colored sacks, some containing wool or other fibers. A white cloth is hanging from a wooden pole in the background. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

*"My parents died when I was very young, so I had to work in someone's home as a domestic servant for more than 20 years, so I never got an education and never learned to read. I can only write my name because my landlady in Kathmandu taught me how."*

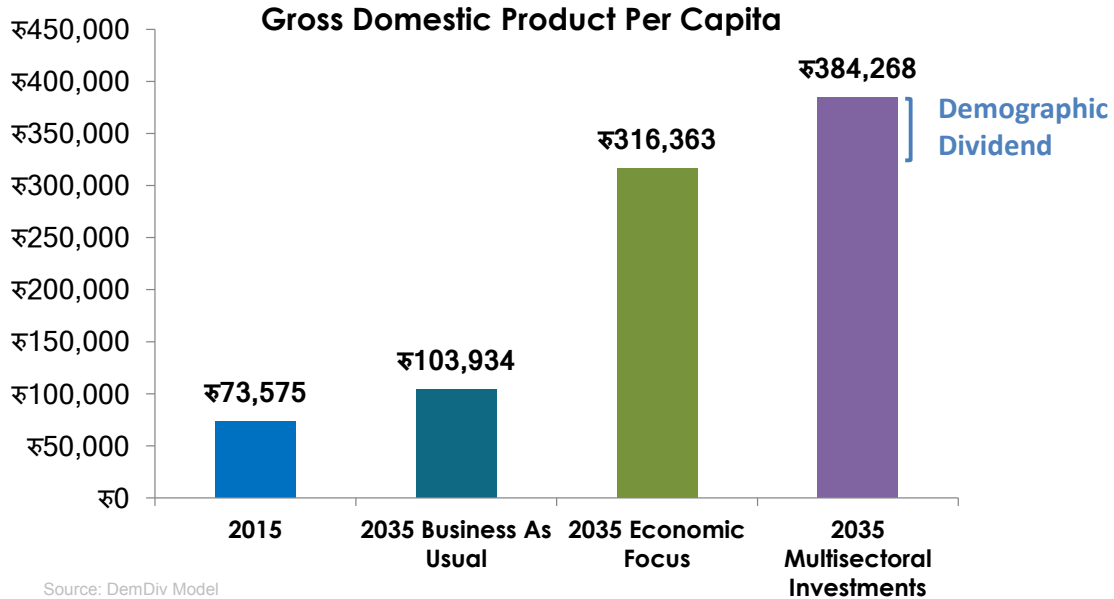
— Yanjing




# Education



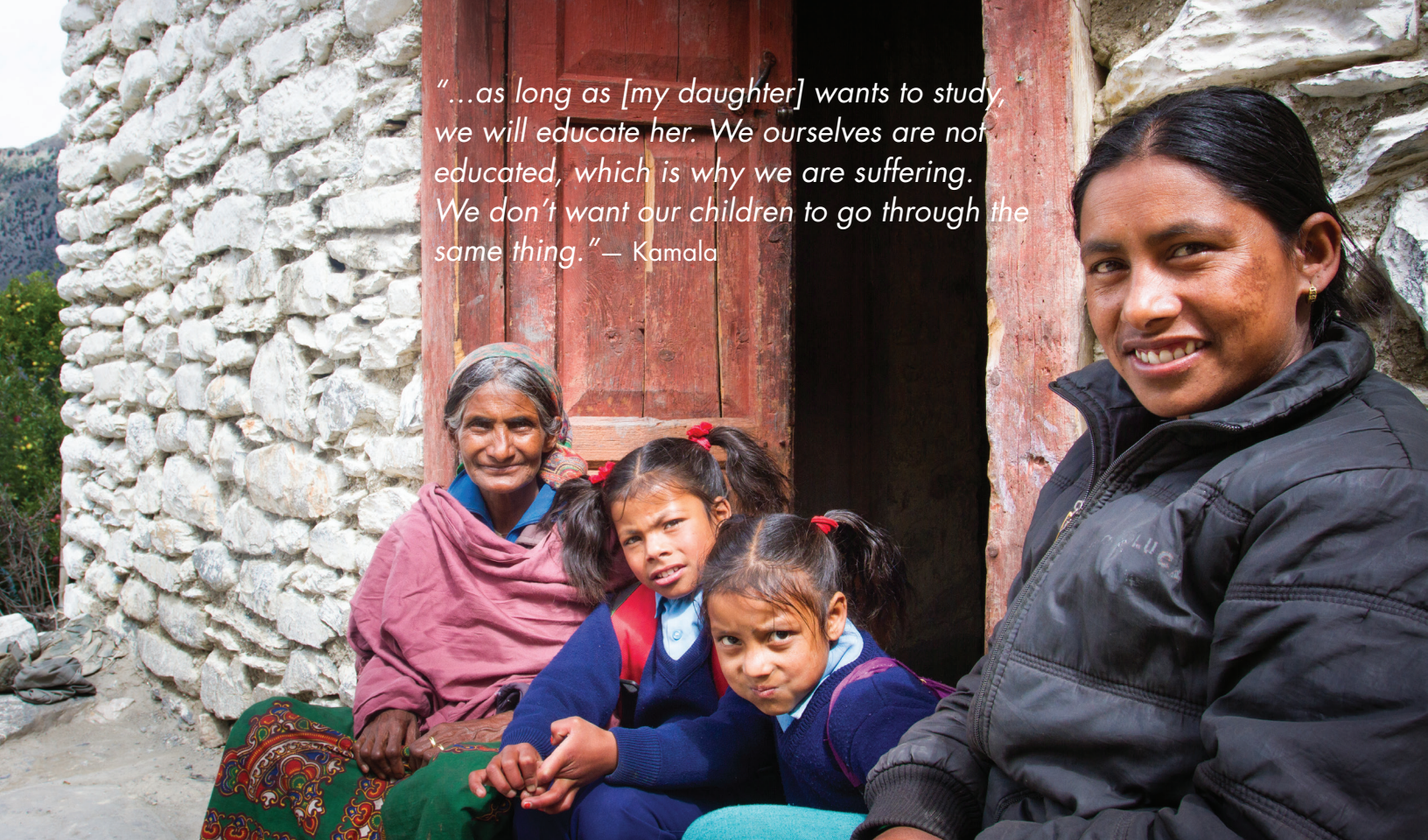
E ducation is important for many reasons, such as economic empowerment and better health and well-being. Investing in and encouraging education for girls to the secondary level and beyond will enable young women to maximize their social and economic opportunities and contributions. Education increases human capital and the productivity of Nepal's workforce, promoting national development. With combined investments in family planning, education, gender equality, and the economy, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita could rise to Rs 384,000 by 2035.





Educational attainment has improved significantly in Nepal in recent years. Children entering school today are expected to complete more than 12 years of education. As these young people enter the labor force, they will be better positioned for new manufacturing, service, and knowledge-based industries that provide higher wages and will vault Nepal into middle-income status.

*"...as long as [my daughter] wants to study, we will educate her. We ourselves are not educated, which is why we are suffering. We don't want our children to go through the same thing." — Kamala*





# Gender



Some social and cultural norms hinder women from accessing the resources and services they need to protect their health and improve their well-being for themselves and their families. The April and May 2015 earthquakes have further increased the risks faced by women and girls. Women in poor and rural areas of Nepal face inequities in education, gender-based violence, and family planning, all of which affect their health and economic opportunities.

# Among women in the lowest wealth quintile in Nepal...

12

16.5%


*have attained  
secondary  
education*

27.5%

*say wife beating  
is justified*

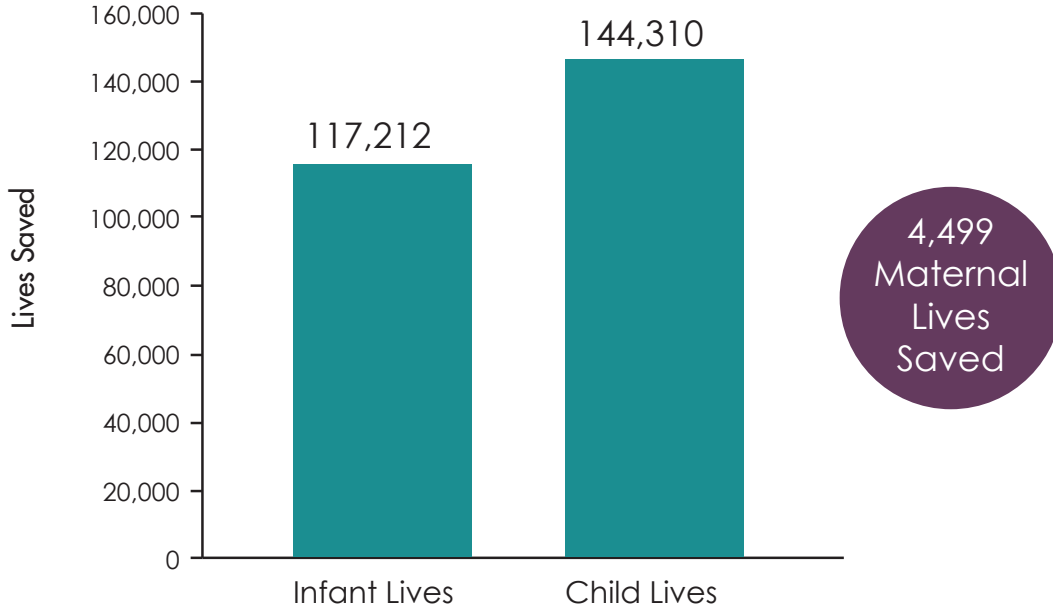
31.1%

*have an unmet  
need for FP*



Investments to address the family planning needs of poor women will be most effective when combined with investments in women-centered strategies such as education. Investments to prevent gender-based violence and provide services to those affected by it not only improve and save women's lives, but also help to change harmful gender norms.

# Lives Saved, 2015–2035



Source: RAPIDWomen model



# Call to Action

A demographic dividend will bring positive outcomes for Nepal and its people. Family planning, education, and gender equality can boost national development to new heights.

- Invest simultaneously across the health, education, and economic sectors to maximize the potential demographic dividend
- Improve accessibility of family planning services for poor and rural areas
- Provide a diverse range of contraceptive methods to increase use of long-acting reversible contraception
- Meet the commitment to increase funding for family planning by 7 percent annually
- Increase enrollment, recruit and train teachers, and improve the quality of education for all students
- Increase educational opportunities for girls to increase economic opportunities



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Photos by Jacob Kasell, Health Policy Project, RTI International

