



RAPID

An Evidence-Based Advocacy Tool to Build Commitment for Family Planning

Photo by Beth Robinson

Demonstrating the Benefits of Family Planning

RAPID shows—in the long term—the impact of demographic changes on the health, education, economic, agricultural, and urbanization sectors.

It supports advocacy for investments in family planning programs that can contribute to the achievement of a country's overall development goals.

NEW!

RAPID App: Helping decisionmakers visualize future problems, today! Available now at virtual stores everywhere.

To increase commitment to family planning (FP) among decisionmakers, it is critical to demonstrate how such investments improve individual health and well-being and also generate broader societal benefits. For nearly 40 years, the RAPID model has helped project the effects of demographic change on multiple sectors, including health, education, and the economy. In more than 40 countries, RAPID results have been used to inform policymakers of the importance and impact of population growth on their development goals.

How Does It Work?

Developed in 1978, the RAPID model is part of the Spectrum suite of policy models, designed at Futures Group and housed at Avenir Health. RAPID combines socioeconomic data with population projections generated by the DemProj model, also contained in Spectrum, to analyze what resources will be required across multiple sectors as population size and structure change. Users can design several scenarios—closely linked to a national development plan or strategy—and project their impact up to 50 years into the future. By default, RAPID produces results for the agriculture, economic, education, health, and urbanization sectors, and users can add other sectors if desired.

RAPID can be downloaded for free and applied in any country, although it is intended for countries with medium to high fertility rates. It has a user-friendly interface and can be used without advanced training. The model includes regularly updated default data for each input, but users can customize RAPID with country-specific, local data when available.

The application process is participatory, actively involving local leaders to help build capacity and country ownership. Local leaders then disseminate the results, which strengthens their validity and lends credibility to the associated policy recommendations.

What Can It Do?

The goal of RAPID is to build broad support for FP programs among influential leaders by illustrating the impact of population factors on social and economic development. RAPID presentations and booklets, based on the analyses, convey key information to policymakers concisely and simply. The model can be used with diverse audiences (e.g., senior decisionmakers, budget planners, religious leaders); for various sectors (e.g., environment, health, education, economy); and at different levels (e.g., national, decentralized).

The results of RAPID applications have been presented to 15 heads of state. In many countries, advocacy using RAPID has led to policy and programmatic change.

In **Ghana**, RAPID is playing a role in FP advocacy at both the national and subnational levels. The model is an important component of the National Population Council's (NPC) targeted advocacy plan to increase political and financial support for family planning. At the national level, NPC convened seminars on RAPID for parliamentarians and representatives of the private sector, ministries, departments, and agencies to discuss the role of population growth and family planning in Ghana's development. At the regional level, NPC trained representatives from the ministries of agriculture, health, education, and local government; the Regional Coordinating Council; and other bodies on RAPID to garner regional support for family planning. It also developed RAPID presentations and briefs with local data for the country's 10 regions. The expansion of RAPID from the national to regional levels has deepened support for family planning within the country.

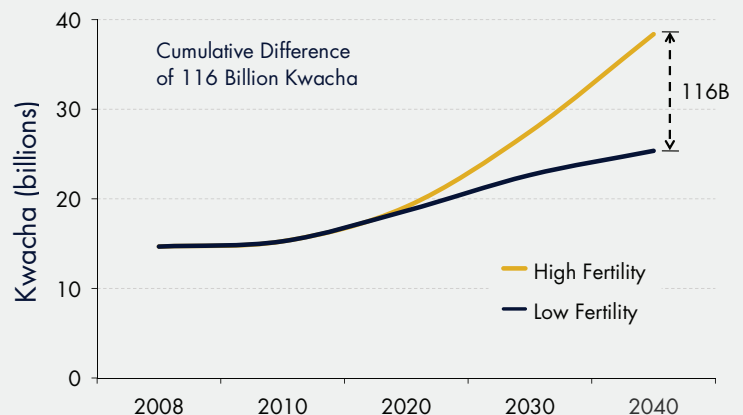
In **Rwanda**, RAPID played a key role in motivating changes in attitudes toward family planning. Between 2005 and 2007, the model was presented to the president and Cabinet members, parliamentarians, Ministry of Health officials, and others, sparking high-level political commitment for family planning. The government subsequently designed a National Family Planning Strategy, included FP programs in Rwanda's Vision for 2020, and created an FP technical working group. Furthermore, use of modern contraceptives among married women increased dramatically from 10 percent in 2005 to 45 percent in 2010.

The RAPID model and its user's manual can be downloaded from www.avenirhealth.org. Briefs and presentations from RAPID applications in many countries are available at www.healthpolicyproject.com.

RAPID Malawi

In 2011, HPP worked with the Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM), the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, and the Demographic Unit of Chancellor's College at the University of Malawi to introduce RAPID and generate projections of the socioeconomic impacts of population change in various sectors, including the economy, education, health, urbanization, and agriculture. In 2012, FPAM, with support from HPP, presented the RAPID results to the Parliamentary Committee on Population and Development. At that time, Malawi had no national budget line for family planning commodities, relying instead on donor support. This powerful approach to communicating RAPID data galvanized parliamentary support for creating an FP line item in the national budget. Members of Parliament, some of whom had also participated in HPP-sponsored trainings on advocacy strategy development, successfully led a concerted effort to create Malawi's first national contraceptive budget line, ensure it was funded, and secure increases in the budget line for each of the subsequent two years.

Expenditures on primary school education, 2008–2040



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