

# Faith and Family Planning

## Conversations with Religious Leaders



For more than 35 years, Marie Stopes International (MSI) has delivered quality family planning and reproductive healthcare to the world's poorest and most vulnerable people. In an effort to reach the people who need services the most, MSI's approach and outreach efforts are adapted to the places where services are delivered. In many country programs, MSI works with religious leaders to educate community members about family planning and the importance and availability of modern contraceptives. Religious leaders provide critical outreach and education through community meetings and individual counseling in remote areas. MSI is on the forefront of developing these partnerships in local communities by raising awareness at church and mosque events. These activities are crucial to dispelling the myths about contraceptive use, gaining community support for family planning, and educating underserved communities about how to use and access these services.

With funding from the UN Foundation through its Universal Access Project, MSI-US hired national photographers to work with MSI field staff in four countries—Mali, Tanzania, Uganda, and Yemen. These teams chronicled efforts by faith-based leaders and organizations to engage others in family planning services through photographs and interviews. The stories they captured are documented in the photos displayed here.



Reverend Dickson Kasirye and Marie Stopes Uganda staff conduct community counseling before providing services.



Pastor Kainerugaba leads an educational training as part of Marie Stopes Uganda's village health team service delivery model.

**“Religious leaders who are against family planning should change their perception because family planning has so many benefits to the men and women as well as our communities. If we do not encourage men and women to have the number of children they can manage, it will be an injustice to them, ourselves, the children, communities and country.”** Reverend Dickson Kasirye, Uganda

**“Religious leaders everywhere should help people access family planning information and services that lead to their stability and development. If a home is not stable, the church will not be stable. Church starts in a home and if people are not happy in their homes, even our churches will not be happy.”** Pastor James Kainerugaba, Uganda



**“We work with MSI to make the Muslim community aware that Islam is not against family planning. It’s our role as religious leaders to inform and educate community members to make informed choices on matters relating to their health and well-being.”**

Fousseïni Doumbia, Mali

← Fousseïni Doumbia, Imam

**“Family planning is crucial to society because it guarantees good health between children and their mother... appropriate birth spacing gives enough time for parents to engage in other socio-economic activities because they need less time to take care of family.”**

Abdalla Rashidi Juma and Ali Omary, Tanzania

Abdalla Juma distributes family planning information to clients in the Chake-Chake District. →



**“Islam inspires [good] health and a strong society. Therefore, when maternal health is improved through family planning, the health of a new generation will likewise be improved, thus making a stronger Islamic society.”**

Jamal Mohamed and Omar Ali, Tanzania

← Omar Ali disseminates materials to clients in the Wete District.

**“We held seminars and sermons [to encourage people to adopt family planning], and people are usually convinced, especially imams.”**

Sheikh Muhammad Abdulghani, Yemen

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