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The Advantages of Family Planning to Developing Countries
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Last week my mom asked me to get a birth control implant in my arm. As a 17-year-old girl who never had the sex talk with my parents, I was incredibly embarrassed and turned red immediately. Ever since I got into college, my mom has been trying to prepare me, and an implant would last for 4 years, freeing me from periods for all of college. In my home in Contra Costa County, birth control is easy to access, however, in developing countries many women struggle to access the same resources.

As the rate of birth increases and the global population reaches larger capacities, we must address that population growth is a major political issue that affects everyone. Family planning that can be provided globally may help solve that problem. According to the UN Population Fund and the Guttmacher Institute, "an estimated 225 million women, primarily in 69 of the world's poorest countries, lack access to family planning services. Meeting these current unmet needs for family planning and contraception could prevent 54 million unintended pregnancies, 26 million induced abortions (16 million of them unsafe), 1.1 million infant deaths, and 79,000 pregnancy-related deaths of women per year".

A major problem facing universal access to family planning is that many families who need family planning are uneducated on birth control, scared of the health risks, and culturally women are expected to be childbearers. Often women are pressured by family and their male partners to have children, as part of the culture of large families and the community it can provide, even if women don't feel they are ready yet. According to exploring environmental science for AP 1st edition, "largely because of cultural traditions, male domination, and poverty, one in every three

girls in less-developed countries is married before age 18 and one in nine is married before age 14. This occurs despite laws against child marriage. For a poor family, marrying off a daughter can relieve financial pressure". With access to birth control, we may be able to save many young women from having to give birth or have unsafe abortions. Within this patriarchal society, it is common to see men in control and pushing for children or sex, but then leaving the responsibility of the children to the woman. So what happens if we do provide family planning to developing countries? By educating women on the use of contraception, we allow them to take control of their own body, allowing for young women to have more career and educational opportunities that may have been taken away if they had children.

Providing family planning in developing countries can uplift women around the world. When we give women these resources, we can decrease the number of unsafe abortions, increase the number of women joining the workforce and continuing school, increase a country's GDP, and see population stability. We can teach families to wait until they can provide adequate resources for a child before they jump into a risky pregnancy.

My vision for a better future is one where we can uplift women and allow them to thrive in a world that doesn't view them as just childbearers. A world where all women have the same opportunities as men. I believe with the benefits of family planning to developing countries, we can help women all over the world stand up and break free from what society tells them. Women aren't only mothers but also doctors, politicians, CEOs, activists, teachers, and more. With family planning, we allow women the choice of what they want to do with their body, and we can help women gain more opportunities for career development in the future.