

Carana Community Based Contraception Program

In Carana, there is a small village called Ambara which has a population of around 1,000 people set in a remote part of a remote province (Caranga). The provincial capital (Caranga Town) is about a two-hour drive away. The main source of income for Ambarans is subsistence farming. There is a problem of poor health and nutrition, especially among women and children, resulting primarily from lack of birth spacing. Most women of reproductive age in Ambara do not use any form of contraception other than traditional means, and by the end of their childbearing years, most women have had more than eight children.



Ambara has become a pilot site for a creative new program involving community-based distribution of contraceptive pills. The Community Based Contraceptive Program (CBCP) is funded by Australia through an international NGO and aims to increase the access to, and use of, contraceptive pills to improve birth spacing practices. It is thought that this will contribute significantly to improved health and nutrition of women and children in Ambara.

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The pilot involves providing free contraceptives and bicycles to identified women in the village and training them to sell the contraceptives to their neighbours and friends. Along with the contraceptive pills, the village distributors provide basic reproductive health information and importantly referral to the community health centre in Carana Town. By implementing the pilot, it is hoped that three things will happen:

- The village distributors will make some income and be able to continue the distribution
- The village women will use contraceptives to space their children, and have fewer children overall
- They will use the community health centre when they are ill, thereby improving their health

Once the pilot program is completed in 12 months, the Government of Carana wants to see the results in order to be able to consider whether this is an appropriate program for other parts of Carana.