



Photo credit: Richard Lord

Ipas Ethiopia

August 2022

Who we are:

For nearly 50 years, Ipas has worked globally to ensure that women and girls have access to comprehensive reproductive health services, including contraception and abortion. We have always believed in a world where all people have the right and ability to determine their own sexuality and reproductive health. Ipas has programs and offices in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and North America.

Ipas has worked in Ethiopia since 2000. We have partnered with the public health system at all levels to increase access to high-quality comprehensive abortion care and contraception.

Where we work:

Ipas Ethiopia currently works in four regions—Amhara, Oromia, Southwest, and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region.



Our partners:

Ipas Ethiopia and our partners shape the abortion ecosystem—the complex environment around an individual who seeks to end an unwanted pregnancy. We collaborate with:

- The public health system, from the Ministry of Health to regional health bureaus to zonal health departments and woreda health offices
- Pre-service institutions and universities that teach health officers, midwives, and clinical nurses
- Community-based organizations, including development associations
- International non-governmental organizations, private practitioners, and professional associations

Five years of Ipas impact: 2015 – 2020

- **260,100** unsafe abortions averted.
- **859,500** unintended pregnancies averted.
- Over **520,600** Ethiopian women and girls accessed safe abortion services from Ipas-trained providers.
- In **77%** of these cases, women also chose a modern method of contraception after receiving abortion care.
- More than **5.1 million** contraceptive services were provided to clients at Ipas-supported facilities during this time period.

More than 15 years after abortion law reform, Ethiopia has seen great progress in safe abortion access.

However, our work is not yet done. Ministry of Health data shows that unsafe abortion still accounts for 10% of maternal mortality. Unmet need for family planning stands at 25% and Ethiopia is falling short of its FP2020 contraceptive prevalence goal.



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Our Strengths

Strengthening pathways to abortion care

Ipas Ethiopia is a key partner to the Ministry of Health, providing technical assistance, training, and capacity-strengthening. Our approach to abortion and contraceptive care emphasizes quality of care, accessibility, and sustainability. Key activities with public health actors include:

- Establishing and equipping training centers
- Training health-care providers on women-centered comprehensive abortion care and contraception services and providing supportive mentorship
- Educating women on sexual and reproductive health, including where and how to access services
- Building support for abortion access among health-care providers and facility staff
- Strengthening commodity supply forecasting, procurement, and distribution protocols
- Monitoring service provision and developing data-driven solutions to address challenges

Over the life of these health-system interventions, Ipas Ethiopia has established 13 hospital-based in-service training centers, now managed by each hospital's administration. We have also trained more than 7,000 health workers and provided post-training support for sustained service provision.

Evidence-based clinical standards and guidelines are critical to a sustainable abortion ecosystem. Ipas Ethiopia has worked with the Ministry of Health to shape policies that define the technical standards for abortion care, including the National Technical and Procedural Guidelines for Safe Abortion and First and Second Trimester Abortion Care Training Manuals. We also participate in key national working groups focused on sexual and reproductive health. This technical partnership has helped to reinforce the Ministry's commitment to reducing unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortion—and to translate this commitment to improved access for women and girls on the ground.

Ipas Ethiopia leads the Coalition for Comprehensive Abortion Care (CoCAC), a highly collaborative network of organizations working to support the Ministry of Health in implementing accessible abortion care. Members include the Consortium of Reproductive Health Associations in Ethiopia, Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia, Marie Stopes Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and EngenderHealth. CoCAC strives to sustain gains in comprehensive abortion care service delivery, address emerging issues in a changing political environment, and educate younger providers and health managers on the history of unsafe abortion and the importance of the abortion law.

Through CoCAC, Ipas Ethiopia and partners are developing strategies to increase support for self-managed abortion with pills—the use of abortion pills without a prescription, and with or without the involvement of a health provider. CoCAC members are advocating with the Ministry of Health for more supportive regulations around self-managed abortion. We are also working to re-register the mifepristone-misoprostol combipack—the gold standard for abortion with pills—for sale over the counter.

Raising the bar for care of survivors of sexual violence

Survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) need tailored health care, including access to emergency contraception and abortion but often face many obstacles to this care, including a lack of training among health-care providers and victim-blaming community norms. Ipas Ethiopia implements programming in SGBV prevention and support for survivors including building the evidence base for project improvement and policy/advocacy. Ipas is supporting the restoration of sexual and reproductive health services, including care for SGBV survivors, in humanitarian settings.

Ipas provides trauma-informed clinical training to humanitarian personnel. Ipas Ethiopia has worked with the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs and the UN High Commission on Refugees on abortion and contraceptive services for refugees in the regions of Gambella, Benshangul Gumuz, Tigray, and conflict-affected areas of Amhara. We are implementing research to assess gaps in SGBV care and to identify barriers to formal reporting of SGBV or sexual exploitation among survivors exposed to violence during the conflict in northern part of Ethiopia. The study outcome will provide a systematic and comprehensive assessment of the gaps and/or key needs to be addressed by the government, implementing partners, donors, researchers, and innovators.

Improving knowledge and social support



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Ipas Ethiopia works with community-based organizations to reach women and adolescents with information on sexual and reproductive health services. We also work to shift attitudes on these stigmatized topics and create positive discourse around abortion and contraception.

Ipas Ethiopia has built the capacity of Health Extension Workers and Women's Health Development Armies to provide information on avoiding unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortion. We also equip these trusted stakeholders to counsel women, girls, boys, and men on contraceptive options, provide short-acting contraceptive methods directly, and refer women and girls who need other contraceptive methods and abortion care services to health facilities that are providing these services.

Ipas Ethiopia has been working with universities to implement student-led interventions, mainly using a SMS-based mobile health platform called "Kiya." Kiya provides sexual and reproductive health information, free of charge, in English and the regional language Afan Oromo. In 2020, 8,798 messages from the platform reached nearly 4,000 students across four universities.



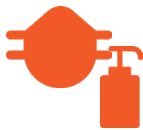
Our COVID-19 Response



Leveraging strong government partnerships to ensure that abortion and contraception remain essential health services



Embracing virtual training approaches and providing technical input on guidance for self-managed abortion with pills



Providing personal protective equipment to health facilities



Monitoring and responding to the anti-choice opposition, which was emboldened by the pandemic

Future Plans and Priorities

Ipas Ethiopia will continue building on our expertise, partnerships, and outcomes to ensure greater access to sustainable and high-quality comprehensive abortion and contraceptive care. We endeavor to:

- Expand current interventions into adjacent regions
- Strengthen CoCAC by expanding its membership and influence
- Expand pathways to sexual and reproductive health services through improved models of digital health, telemedicine, and self-managed abortion with pills
- Strengthen the capacity of communities, public health systems, and other stakeholders to prevent and respond to SGBV

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