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Emerging Social Issues Division

Social Policy and Population Section

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Article **A Strategic Approach to Reproductive Health Programme Development**

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Abstract This article describes a strategic approach to reproductive health programme development. In the early 1990s, the UNDP/UNFPA/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction of the World Health Organization developed a strategic approach to the introduction of contraceptives comprising a three-stage process that focused on improving the quality of care in a reproductive health context. Subsequently, the approach has been adapted to address specific reproductive health issues as well as to develop a framework for comprehensive reproductive health programmes. The three stages are strategic assessment, pilot projects with user-perspective and service delivery research, and use of research findings for policy and programme development. The approach is guided by a framework that considers users' needs and perspectives, available technologies and the capabilities of the service delivery system as well as their interactions; all in the broad context of the health, socio-cultural, political and resource settings. Key features of the approach include a participatory process involving multiple stakeholders, country ownership, flexibility and adaptability.

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