



Suriname

# CAPACITY STATEMENT

Lobi Health Center Foundation



Stichting Lobi Health Center

**Lobi Health Center Foundation** joined IPPF in 2000 and became an accredited member in 2006. Its goal is to contribute to keeping the Surinamese population healthy by offering preventive, qualitative and integrated sexual and reproductive healthcare, and related services. Since its creation, it has been working in the field of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH).

Lobi Health Center Foundation is co-founder and an associate member of an umbrella organization known as the Caribbean Family Planning Affiliation Ltd (CFPA).

Lobi Health Center Foundation's specific objectives are:

- Strengthening clients in making informed decisions about sexual and reproductive health and rights and family planning.
- Promoting safe and responsible sexual behaviour.
- Prevention of unwanted pregnancies and the prevention of unsafe abortions.
- Prevention of cervical cancer.
- Early detection of abnormalities in the breasts and prostate (breast and prostate cancer).
- Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections including HIV.
- Promote participation of the man in sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Promote a healthy Lifestyle as part of optimizing reproductive functions.
- Promote and strengthen the mental wellbeing of clients.

## VISION

All people in Suriname are free to fulfil their choices about their sexuality, reproduction, and wellbeing without being discriminated.

## MISSION

To lead a locally broad-based supported, regionally, and globally connected civil society organization, with strong partners that provide integrated comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights services for all.



# COUNTRY STATISTICS

**53.9%**

adolescent fertility rate.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is not included in the education curriculum and is only provided through few organizations. Teachers, parents, religious organizations, and policy makers are not fully supportive of sexuality education in schools.

**Suriname is the second country in the Caribbean with more deaths due to cervical cancer.**

Suriname is one of twenty countries in the world to make abortion illegal under all circumstances, creating risk to the woman's life and pregnancy in the case of rape or incest.

Unmet need for family planning 15 – 19 years married/in union is

**59.7%**

Unmet need for family planning 15-19 unmarried and not in union 74.8% (MICS 2018)

## Cervical cancer

Is the second most common cancer and the leading cause of death amongst women with cancer in Suriname.

In the past three years, Suriname had a 300% devaluation and COVID-19 aggravated the economic situation. This position has had a significant impact on accessibility of health care.

Contraceptive prevalence:

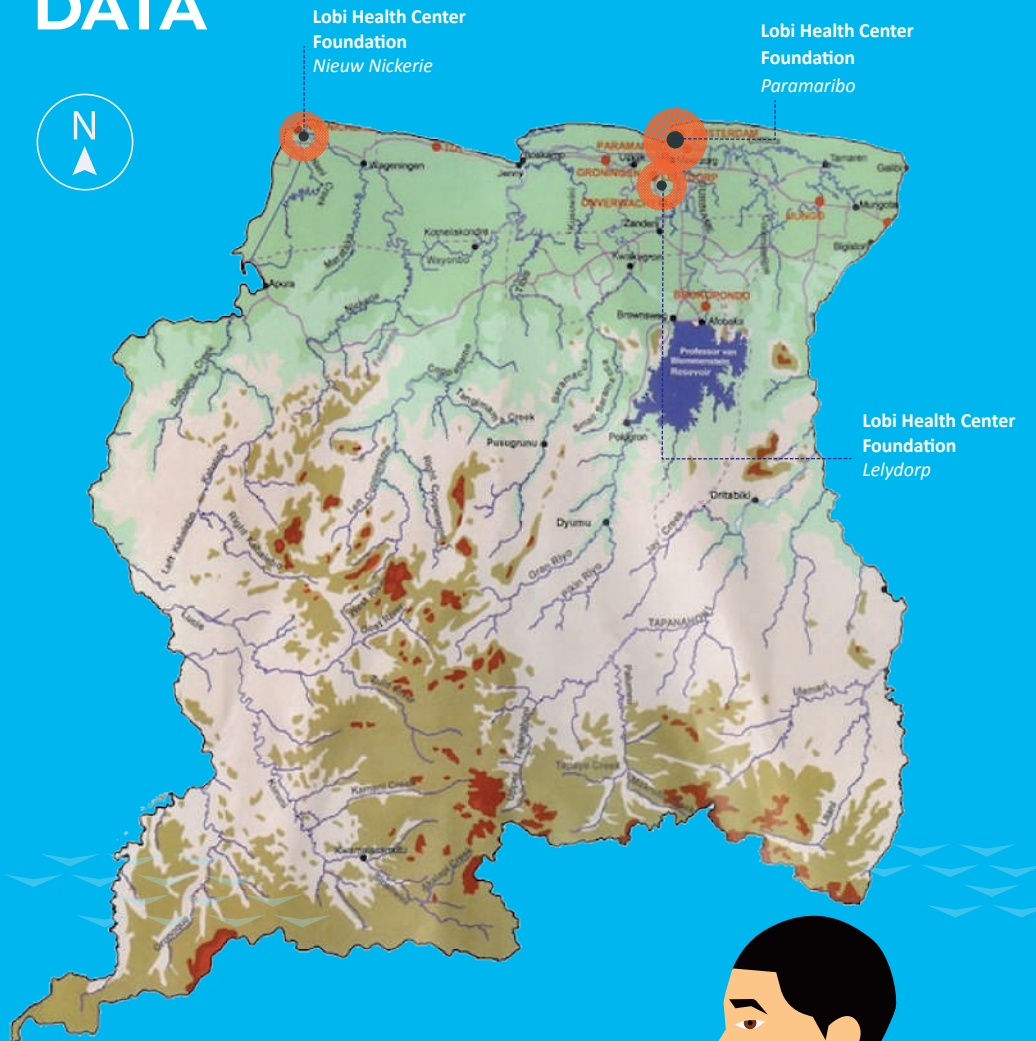
**23.3%**

In adolescent women 15-19 years old; 40.3% in women 20-49 years old.



Youth have little knowledge of sexuality and HIV-knowledge. A study with young women between 15 and 19 years, showed that 30.1% had some HIV-knowledge of those who admitted having sex. In 2020, only 9.7% had done an HIV test or knew of their HIV-status. Of the 36.6% of men aged 15 -19 years who had sex in the last year only 5.3% have done an HIV test or knew their HIV-status within the year of having sex.

# ORGANISATION DATA



Lobi Health Center Foundation has **three static clinics**, in Suriname.



Lobi has outreach programs with its mobile unit and/or mobile teams in 9 of the 10 districts, bringing SRHR-services closer to home for the most vulnerable populations.



# PROGRAMMES

## FAMILY PLANNING

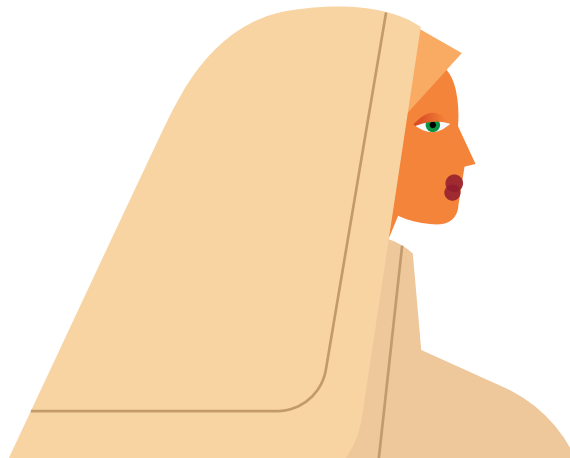
- Lobi provides counselling and guidance to clients to help them choose the contraceptive method that suits them best considering their social determinants of health.
- Lobi also offers pregnancy tests, counselling and guidance to couples who desire to have children, including HIV-positive couples.
- Lobi helps raise awareness about alternative contraceptives and offers women more choice in their sexual experience.
- Lobi facilitates women and girls with correct information to make an informed decision and promotes safe abortion.
- Lobi has stressed the need for the decriminalization of abortion as part of a shadow report for the 39th Universal Periodic Review (UPR) session and to facilitate a national debate on the development and implementation of comprehensive SRHR-policies.

## CANCER PREVENTION AND EARLY DETECTION

- Less than 20% is the estimated cervical cancer screening coverage in the country. Among the women diagnosed with cervical cancer, 80% were in a late stage, 50% of which had no prior preventive screening.
- Lobi is the only organization to provide cervical cancer screening as a preventive service, which accounts for 17% of national screening.
- Lobi is advocating for a National Cervical Cancer Prevention Programme. Since 2017 a model for a national screening program has been developed, piloted, and evaluated. The National Cancer Control Plan 2019-2028 has integrated the results.
- On an annual basis, Lobi conducts on average 17,700 clinical breast, prostate, and cervical cancer exams, and refers one thousand persons with an abnormal result for further examination.

## COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

- Lobi is advocating for the incorporation of CSE into the National Curriculum.
- Lobi started CSE training sessions for schools and youth groups in 2017 and it has continued since. It has reached 3,002 young people during 93 training and educational sessions. These included young-teenage mothers, health students, public-sector leaders, Red Cross Youth, and peer educators.
- Lobi initiated focus groups meetings amongst 126 youth in 2019-2020. The focus was on sexual education, knowledge and access to contraceptives, and the use of the health card. The findings were filmed in a storytelling format and aired on TV. In 2022, Lobi aims at generating dialogue with different stakeholders like parents, youth, teachers, religious leaders, policy makers and health workers to discuss potential policy options to limit the barriers young people experience in accessing family planning methods.



## PROGRAMMES FOR YOUTH

- Lobi's Youth Advocacy Movement (YAM) encourages young people's participation in youth programmes. The members, between the ages of 10 and 24 years old, design educational strategies for young people about sexual and reproductive health.
- They also work towards putting peers at ease as much as possible to lower the threshold for use of available services.
- The organization employs methodologies specifically geared towards youth. These methods stimulate critical thinking, making responsible choices, developing a sense of belonging, safe sexual behaviour, the prevention of unplanned teenage pregnancies, the prevention of STI's as well as the prevention of related social excesses. It educates through the provision of training, information sessions and medical-technical lectures on the preventive services offered.



### SEXUAL TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS, INCLUDING HIV

- Lobi is working to prevent and investigate sexually transmitted infections (STI's).
- 8,000 STD screenings are done annually, of which 320 cases are referred for follow-up.
- Lobi has an HIV Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) site operated under the supervision of the Ministry of Health. Lobi's integrated SRHR-approach includes HIV as part of the overall service provision that deals with taboo and guarantees confidentiality and privacy.

# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

## DURING THE PAST 4 YEARS

Roll-out Cervical Cancer Project in Wanica district (phase 1 & 2). Lobi's recommendations, from a screening survey that was part of this community-based project, were included in the National Cancer Prevention Programme 2019-2028.

The Cervical Cancer Project in Saramacca district (cervical cancer screening per district) identified the barriers that prevent women from getting screened. Its results were presented to stakeholders in a national Symposium and sent to the Ministry of Health.

### 665,767 services (2017-2021)

- 172,607 STI/HIV services.
- 14,460 couple years of protection provided.
- 112,078 first time users (unique clients).
- 752 youth provided with access to CSE.
- 15.28 % services delivered to young people under 25 years old.

### During COVID, Lobi managed to:

- Maintain its volume of Family Planning/Contraceptive services as opposed to the other services.
- Introduce and work with online services and is now integrating those services in its regular service package and looking at extending that to the intended introduction of Pre Exposure Prophylaxis (PREP) for vulnerable target groups who are at higher risk for becoming HIV-infected.



# WORK DURING COVID-19

- Lobi was able to continue its work during lockdowns and curfews due to COVID-19 by switching to online service provision.
- It was able to reach people and provide content online. Women were able to continue having access to contraceptives without having to go to the clinic.
- It also worked with an external organization for the delivery of contraceptives at home in the city.
- Its CSE programmes continued online although the economic problems in the country made it difficult.
- Lobi continued its mental health counselling through online platforms providing information on gender-based violence. It also collaborated with teachers on how to deal with cases of suicide or encountering incidences of gender-based violence.



# SUSTAINABILITY

- Lobi began its journey to transform its identity from a Family Planning Organization to a Public Health Organization. During the official rebranding ceremony, representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Chairwomen of the Parliament, IPPF and PAHO were present.
- Lobi meets 50% of the country's family planning needs, providing most of the contraceptives in the country.
- Lobi works with insurance companies and private physicians to cover their clients' needs and requirements.



# KEY PARTNERS



# CONTACT INFORMATION


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