

# The National Composite Index for Family Planning (NCIFP)

## EL SALVADOR 2017 Scores and 2014-2017 Trends<sup>i</sup>

### What is the NCIFP?

A tool that supports FP2020's<sup>ii</sup> efforts to improve the policy environment for family planning (FP), the NCIFP provides information on FP program activities that are not readily available in national demographic or reproductive health surveys or service statistics systems. The NCIFP measures the existence of FP policies and program implementation based on 35 items that fall under five dimensions: **Strategy, Data, Quality, Equity, and Accountability**.

**Strategy** – whether a national FP strategy/plan exists that includes quantified objectives, targets to reach the poorest and most vulnerable, projected resource requirements, and support for wider stakeholder participation. Also included are two items that affect strategy implementation: high-level leadership and regulations that facilitate contraceptive importation or production.

**Data** – whether the government collects/uses data on special sub-groups (e.g. the poor) and their access, private sector commodities, and the quality of service statistics. It also includes data-based evaluation and research to improve the program.

**Quality** – whether the government uses WHO standards of practice (SOP), task-sharing guidelines, and quality of care indicators in public and private facilities. Quality of care (QOC) also considers the adequacy of structures for training, logistics, supervision, IUD and implant removal, and informed choice, including informing clients about the permanence of sterilization.

**Accountability** – whether mechanisms exist to monitor discrimination and free choice, review violations, report denial of services, enable facility-level feedback, and encourage communication between clients and providers.

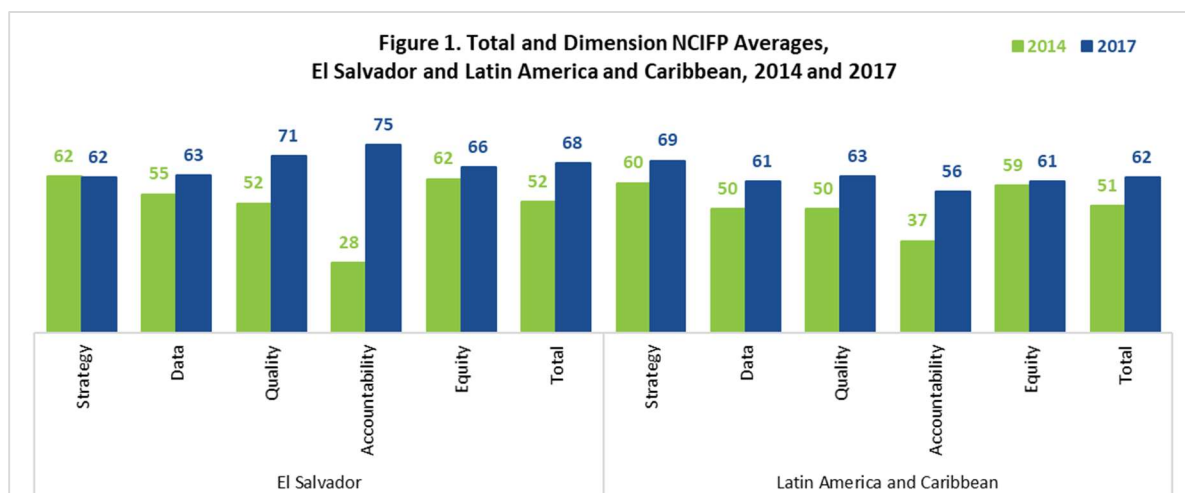
**Equity** - whether anti-discrimination policies exist, providers discriminate against special groups, the population has easy access to modern contraceptive methods (referring to STMs meaning short-term methods, or LAPMs meaning long-acting and permanent methods), and services are provided to underserved areas through community-based distribution (CBD).

First undertaken in 2014, the NCIFP builds on the long-standing National Family Planning Effort Index (FPE). In 2017 Avenir Health's Track20 project (funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to assist countries participating in the FP2020 Global Initiative) administered a new round of NCIFPs to assess current national FP program status and changes since 2014. NCIFP data are intended for policy and planning use by each country's FP stakeholders.

### El Salvador vs Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Results

Figure 1 shows El Salvador and the region with increasing total NCIFP scores between 2014 and 2017, but with El Salvador scoring slightly higher than the region in both years.

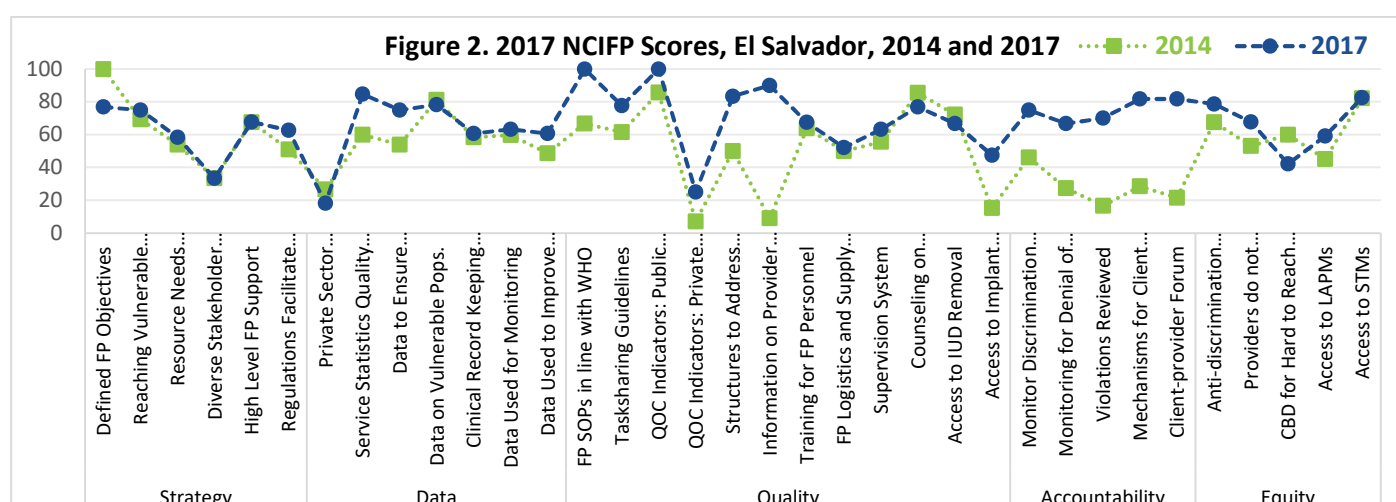
- El Salvador's lowest rated for 2014 was Accountability (with only 28 as average) but the dimension, followed by Quality, became the country's highest rated in 2017. Strategy and Data were the country's lowest ranked in 2017.
- The region's highest rated dimensions were Strategy and Equity in 2014 while Strategy alone took first place in 2017. Accountability persisted as the LAC's lowest ranked in both years.



### Individual NCIFP Trends, 2014 and 2017

Ratings of individual NCIFP items over time indicate which FP program activities are progressing, stagnant, or deteriorating. El Salvador's NCIFP results predominantly improved in 2017 (Figure 2). Around 30 items scored at least 60, including 17 items rated 70 or higher. However, four items had scores only in the 40s or even lower in 2017.

- **Strategy** – Except for a declining mark for the FP strategy’s objectives (from 100 down to 77), the ratings of the five other items hardly changed, with 2017 scores of 75 for the strategy’s focus on vulnerable groups, 58 for its estimate of resource needs, 60s for high-level support, and regulations facilitating contraceptive imports, but only 33 for its support for diverse participation.
- **Data** – 2017 ratings included 85 for service statistics quality control, 70s for data on population sub-groups and the use of data to ensure the most vulnerable have access, and 60s for clinic recordkeeping and feedback to clients and data-based monitoring and program improvement efforts. However, the score for data on private sector commodities dropped from 27 to 18.
- **Quality** – 2017 scores improved for 10 of the 12 Quality items, with 2017 scores that included 100 for the use of WHO SOPs and QOC indicators in the public sector, 90 for provider bias monitoring (from only 9 in 2014), around 80 for the use of tasksharing guidelines and clinic/community monitoring structures, 60s for training and supervision, around 50 for logistics and access to implant removal, and the lowest, a score of 25 (from only 7 in 2014) for the use of QOC indicators in private facilities. The two items with declining ratings in 2017 were sterilization counseling (77) and access to IUD removal (67).
- **Accountability** – All five Accountability mechanisms were rated much higher in 2017: 67 for reporting denial of services, 70s for discrimination and free choice monitoring and violations review, and 80s for soliciting client feedback and ensuring client-provider dialogue.
- **Equity** –The score for STM access hardly changed to 83 in 2017 while ratings improved for anti-discrimination policies (79), providers not discriminating against population sub-groups (68), and LAPM access (59). The score for CBD coverage fell to 42.



## Implications

El Salvador has a total population over 6.4 million at present, of which 45% are less than 25 years of age. The country’s total fertility rate is estimated to be at the replacement level of 2.1 lifetime births per woman.<sup>iii</sup> The economy has grown at about 2.5% annually since 2010 but the poverty headcount based on the national poverty line was 29% in 2018.<sup>iv</sup> The UNFPA Country Programme Document 2016-2020 cited various challenges that the country faces, including high socioeconomic and gender inequity, high emigration rates (due to gang violence, social inequities and discrimination), and vulnerability to natural disasters. Moreover, approximately one third of all births occur to women under age 19. The maternal mortality ratio in 2014 was 47.5 deaths per 100,000 live births, with women aged 10-24 years accounting for almost half of all maternal deaths. The National Family Health Survey of 2008 calculated the unmet need for FP at 12% among women in union aged 15-49 years, but significantly higher among rural residents, the poorest, the least educated, and those aged 15-19 years.<sup>v</sup>

El Salvador’s predominantly improved and many high NCIFP scores in 2017 attest to the country’s efforts to strengthen the national FP program. Only a few NCIFP items had declining scores or continued to have very low ratings, most notably regarding the FP strategy’s objectives, government collection of data on private sector commodities, and the use of quality indicators in private facilities. These FP program challenges are for El Salvador’s stakeholders to consider in their efforts to ensure accessible, high-quality FP services and reach the most vulnerable sectors of the population, especially the youth.

<sup>i</sup> Suggested citation: Avenir Health Track20. “The National Composite Index for Family Planning (NCIFP): EL SALVADOR 2017 Scores and 2014-2017 Trends”. 2017 NCIFP Policy Brief Series (2019).

<sup>ii</sup> FP2020 is a global initiative through which governments, civil society, multilateral organizations, donors, the private sector, and the research and development community work together to enable more women and girls to use contraceptives by 2020. (See: <https://www.familyplanning2020.org/>)

<sup>iii</sup> UN World Population Prospects, 2019 Revision. <https://population.un.org/wpp/DataQuery/>

<sup>iv</sup> El Salvador country profile from [https://data.worldbank.org/country/El Salvador?view=chart](https://data.worldbank.org/country/El%20Salvador?view=chart)

<sup>v</sup> UNFPA Country Programme Document ([https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/portal-document/El%20Salvador%20CPD%20-ODS.%20pdf\\_0.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/portal-document/El%20Salvador%20CPD%20-ODS.%20pdf_0.pdf))