

UNLOCKING FAMILY PLANNING UPTAKE THROUGH MATERNAL NUTRITION

LESSONS FROM FRANCHISED SABZ SITARA CLINICS IN URBAN PAKISTAN

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BACKGROUND & SIGNIFICANCE

Despite decades of progress, Pakistan continues to face high levels of unmet need for family planning (FP), especially among low-income women. Pregnant and lactating women (PLWs) face additional challenges such as undernutrition, which exacerbates health issues and limits reproductive autonomy.

Greenstar Social Marketing Pakistan, with support from the Gates Foundation and technical assistance from Hystra Consulting, piloted an integrated model positioning maternal nutrition as a gateway to FP engagement. Through franchised Sabz Sitara Clinics and trusted outreach channels, the program introduced Balanced Energy Protein (BEP) and Multiple Micronutrient Supplements (MMS) alongside FP counselling and services in urban Karachi and Rawalpindi.

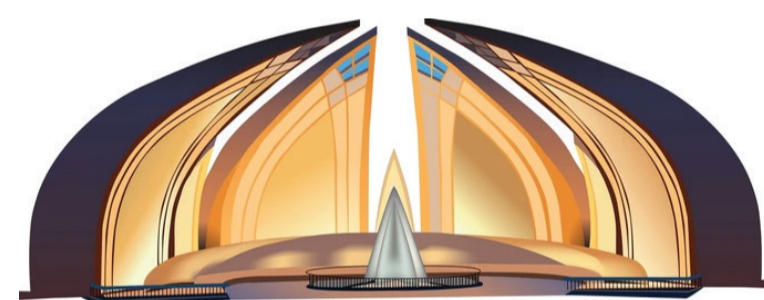
PROGRAM INTERVENTION

This pilot tested whether maternal nutrition services could act as effective entry points to increase modern family planning (FP) uptake among undernourished women in low-income urban areas of Pakistan. Implemented through franchised Sabz Sitara Clinics and community outreach, the initiative introduced Balanced Energy Protein (BEP) and Multiple Micronutrient Supplements (MMS) as accessible, health-positive platforms for engaging pregnant and lactating women. Each nutrition touchpoint was paired with client-centered counselling focused on postpartum family planning (PPFP). The approach aimed to foster trusted, sustained provider-client relationships, making FP discussions more organic and acceptable—particularly for first-time or postpartum users. The underlying hypothesis was that repeated, stigma-free nutrition interactions could reduce barriers such as undernutrition, provider mistrust, and access gaps, while positioning FP as a natural and essential component of maternal care, thereby supporting informed choices and advancing life-course sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

Locations:

Karachi & Rawalpindi (low-income urban areas)



Timeline:

March 2022 – December 2024

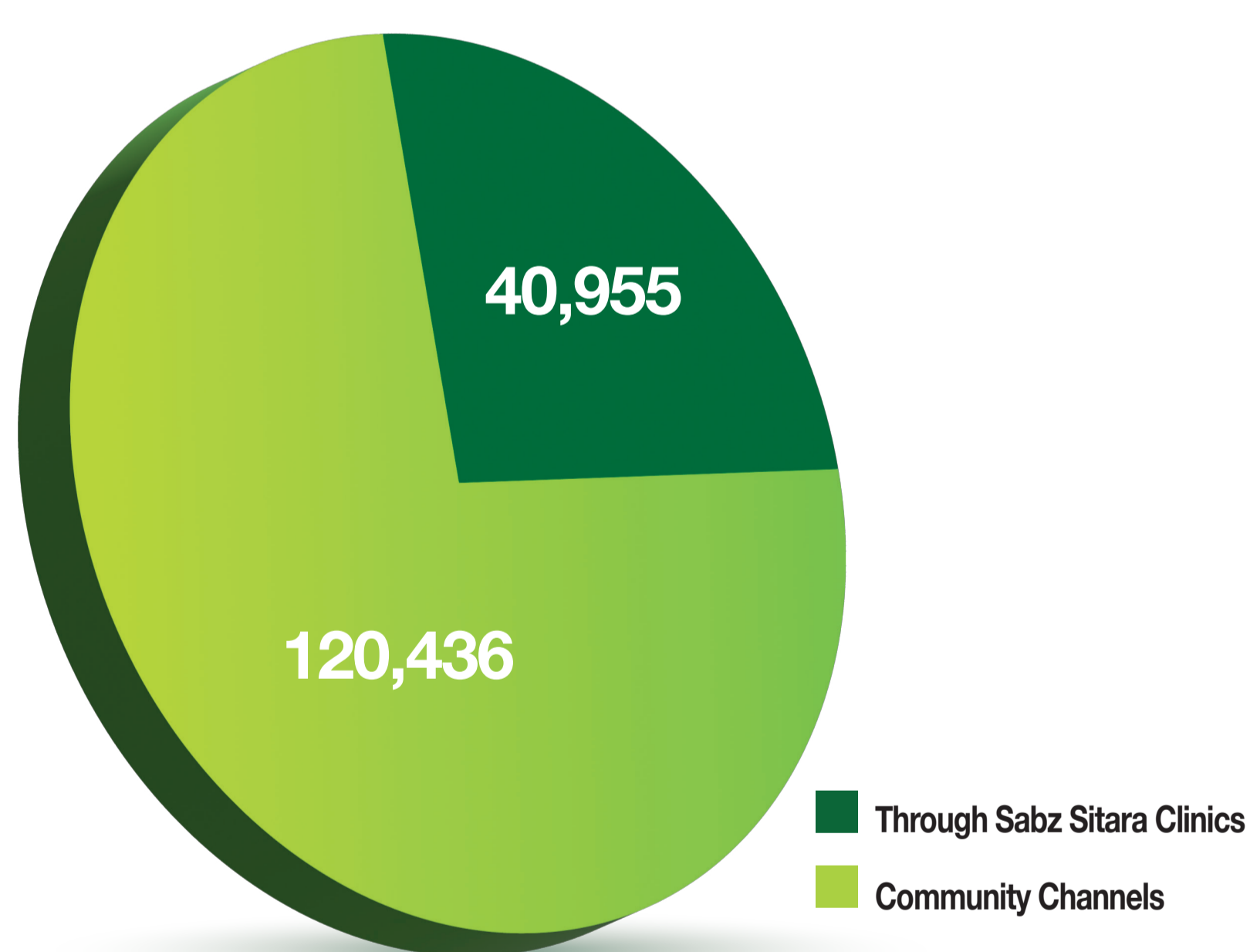


Delivery Channels: Franchised Sabz Sitara Clinics, Partner pharmacies, Trained community mobilizers, Medical camps

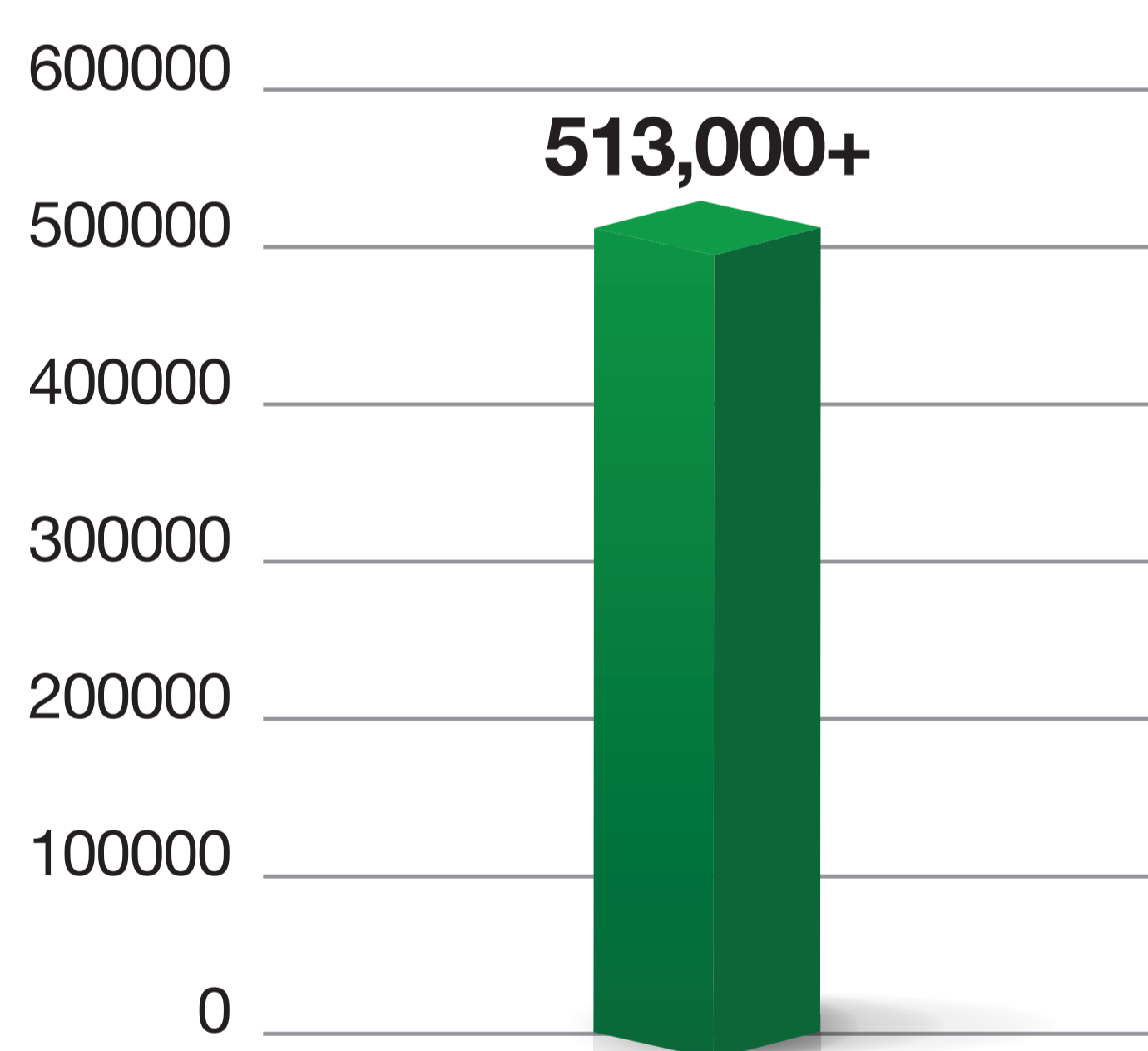
Data Source: Greenstar's Management Information System (MIS)

SERVICE UPTAKE SUMMARY

Pregnant & Lactating Women (PLWs) Registered

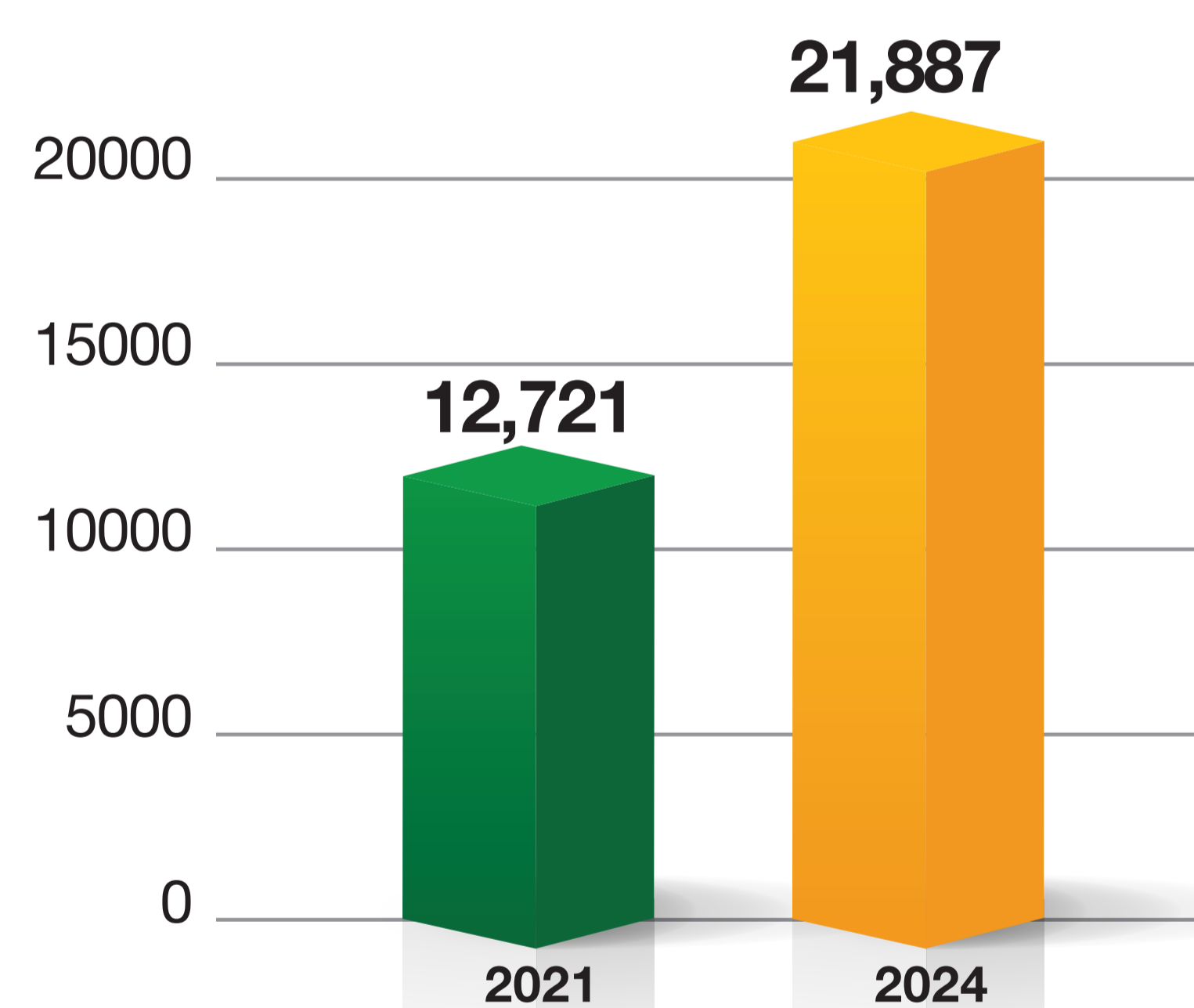


Balance Energy Protein (BEP) Sachets Consumed

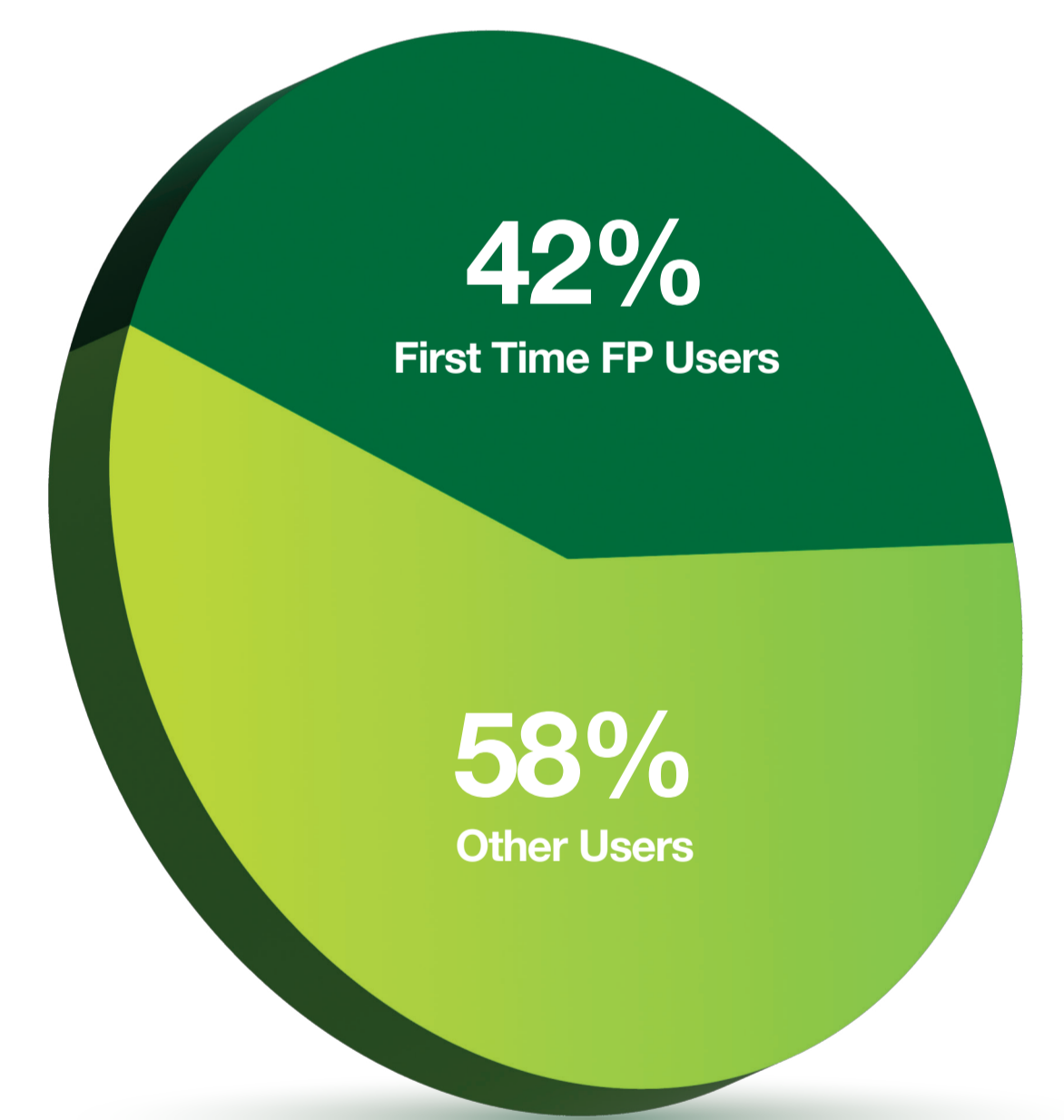


KEY RESULTS & IMPACT

Contraceptive Uptake (3 Month Injectable)



Modern FP Method Adoption Among Women Reached



Glimpses of Project Activities, Advocacy and Community Engagements

LESSONS LEARNED

Maternal nutrition creates a natural, stigma-free entry point for initiating sensitive family planning (FP) conversations, especially with first-time or hesitant users.

Repeated, trust-based interactions through nutrition services significantly enhance **informed contraceptive decision-making** and client engagement

Franchised, community-based platforms offer strong potential for **cost-effective scale-up** across public and private sectors.

Integrated service delivery is more impactful than siloed approaches