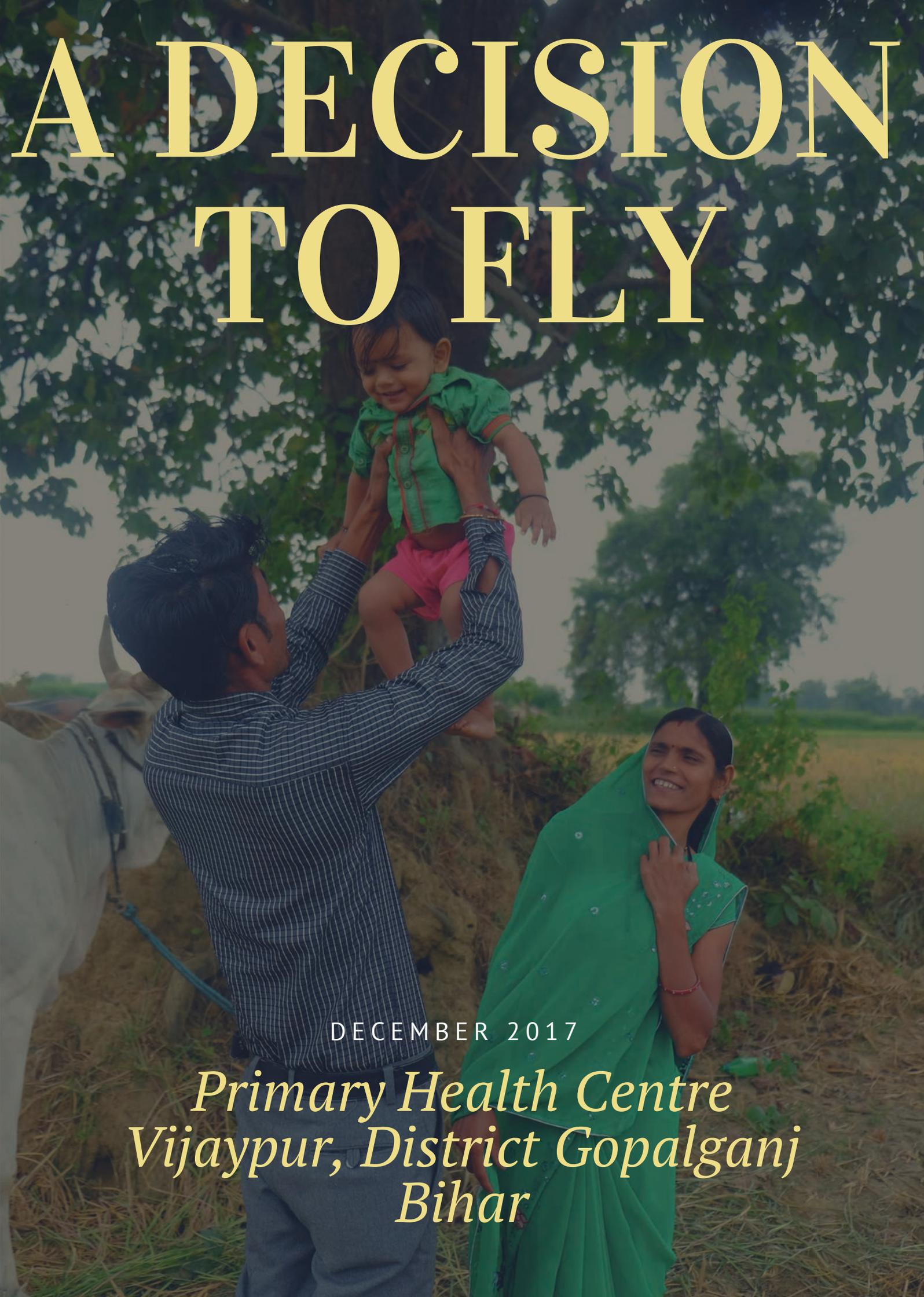


# A DECISION TO FLY

A photograph of a man in a striped shirt lifting a young child in a green shirt and pink shorts. A woman in a green sari stands to the right, smiling. The background shows a rural landscape with trees and a field. A white bull is partially visible on the left.

DECEMBER 2017

*Primary Health Centre  
Vijaypur, District Gopalganj  
Bihar*



Sunita Kumari was married for two years, a new mother and just touching twenty when she took the biggest decision of her life to pursue her studies further. While she was prepared to study alongside caring for her newborn, she was sure that she wouldn't be able to handle another pregnancy for a few years. This is when she made another decision, to get an intrauterine contraceptive device as a method to, to protect her from unintended pregnancy, and guarantee her a life that she was trying to build for herself and her family.

Sunita was working in New Delhi with her husband when one day she visited a dispensary to get her newborn immunized. On meeting the doctor and while discussing using a condom, he told her about the 'Copper T', an IUCD that could prevent her from getting pregnant for upto ten years and that she could get removed whenever she decided to get pregnant again. Sunita could envision how this sounded perfect for her to be able to pursue her lifelong dream of becoming an Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM), a dream she had seen since long, and so she decided to pay Rs. 3500 at a private facility and went for it and never looked back.

**“I wanted to take the ANM training and I knew if I had another child I would not be able to concentrate on my training. I got an IUCD inserted for seven years so that my studies wouldn't get interrupted and I could finally become an ANM”, says Sunita.**



Now 28, Sunita Kumari, works as an ANM at the Vijaypur Public Health Center in Gopalganj district of Bihar, a facility supported by Jhpiego through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to strengthen IUCD services. She is a proud advocate for family planning.

In 2014, when she was trained by Jhpiego on family planning and the correct technique of IUCD insertions, she learnt about counselling in detail and how these can help reduce failure and expulsion rates of the IUCD. She understood then that counselling was the key that dispelled many of her own myths and misconceptions and she uses that learning while reaching out to other women. She decided that she would take the lessons she learnt in life to women in Bihar who could adopt a family planning method of their choice for free at any public health facility.

**“When I was going to get my IUCD even I was apprehensive. I had heard of myths that it can cause cancer and a lot of other problems. But the doctor counselled me so nicely that I got convinced. She told me if I have these doubts I can get an ultrasound as well. This reinstated my confidence”, says Sunita.**

When Sunita meets a client for a counselling session she talks to them about the basket of family planning methods made available by the Government of India and discusses the merits and demerits of each method and also the impact of using a family planning method for both the mother and the child. Using the flipbook she shows them pictures of each method available and talks to them about each of their misconceptions. Her counselling technique also includes talking of her own experience of using an FP method and how it gave her wings to achieve her dreams. If Sunita feels a client is inclined towards the IUCD she takes their basic demographic information and tells them about her experience as an IUCD user, misconceptions she had when she first got it inserted. This she feels increases the trust level with her clients.



**By instilling trust and confidence in the client, I tell her that in case of any problem, like bleeding or pain, she can come to me”, adds Sunita.**

Since 2013, in the two states- Uttar Pradesh and Bihar- driven healthcare providers like Sunita have helped increase access of the IUCD to more than 800,000 women who have accepted the IUCD as their preferred method of choice.

While concluding, Sunita talks about how the IUCD helped her fly and accomplish all her dreams and how she wishes that by counselling the women to opt for a family planning choice she would put the right of decision making right back into their hands.