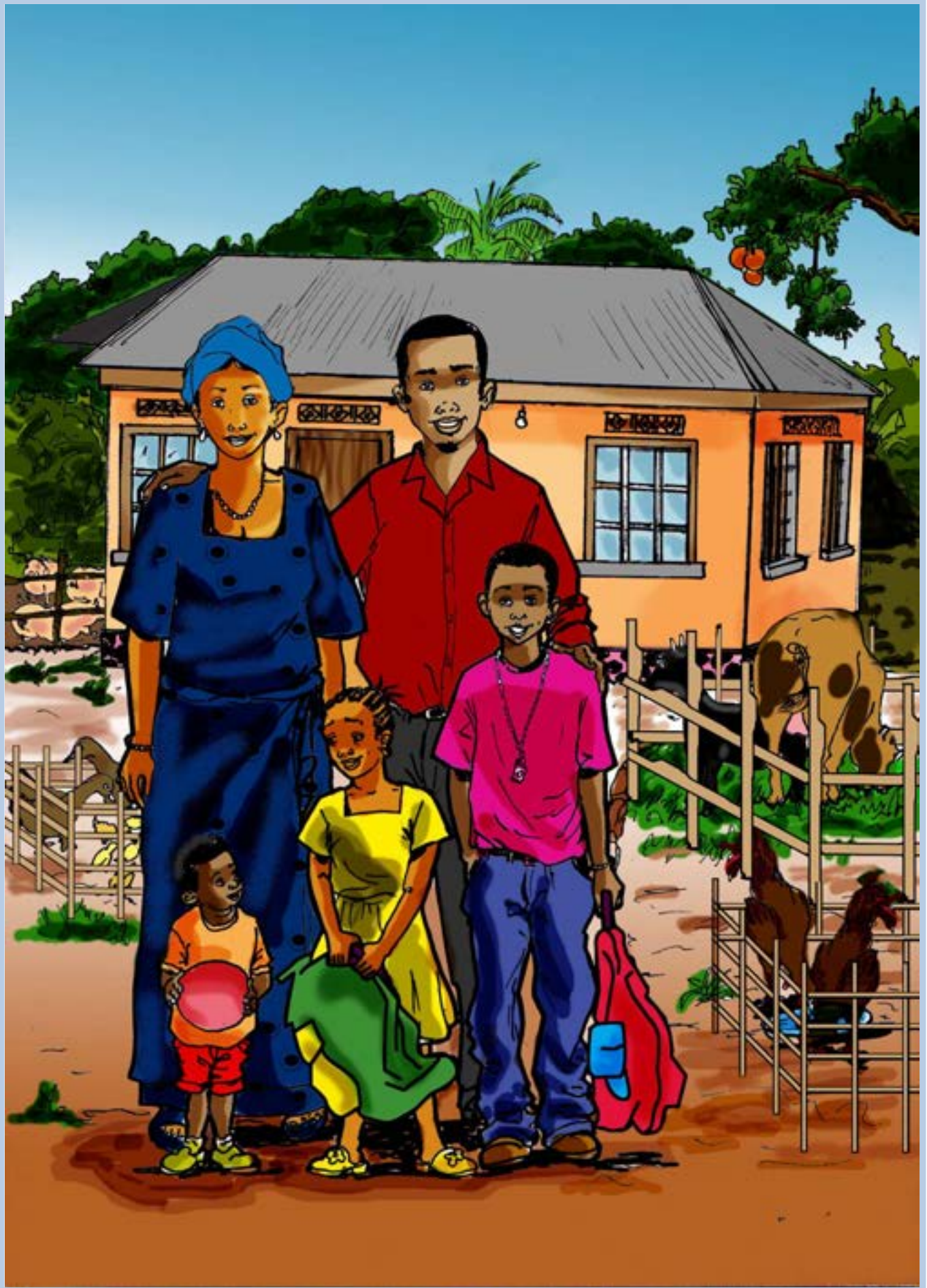


Family Planning: *A Key to Prosperity and Health for Your Family*

Family Planning Dialogue Guide for
Community Relays
Democratic Republic of the Congo, June 2010





A happy and prosperous family

Discussion question:

What do you see in this picture?

Here are some health benefits that this family enjoys:

- The mother has had easy pregnancies and maintains her youth.
- Children are strong and healthy.
- All the children have medical care when they need it.
- Everyone has enough food to eat.

Here is how this family is happy:

- The couple has enough means to raise and educate their children.
- The couple has enough time to look after the family.
- The couple has enough time to create a small business.
- The couple has a respectable status in the community.

Review Question:

According to you, why do you think that this couple enjoys all these benefits?

Answer:

One of the reasons is because the couple has chosen to practice family planning by spacing the births of their children.



What is family planning?

Review question:

What do you observe regarding the age of the children?

Answer:

The parents have spaced the births of their children three years apart.

Spacing births is the key to family planning:

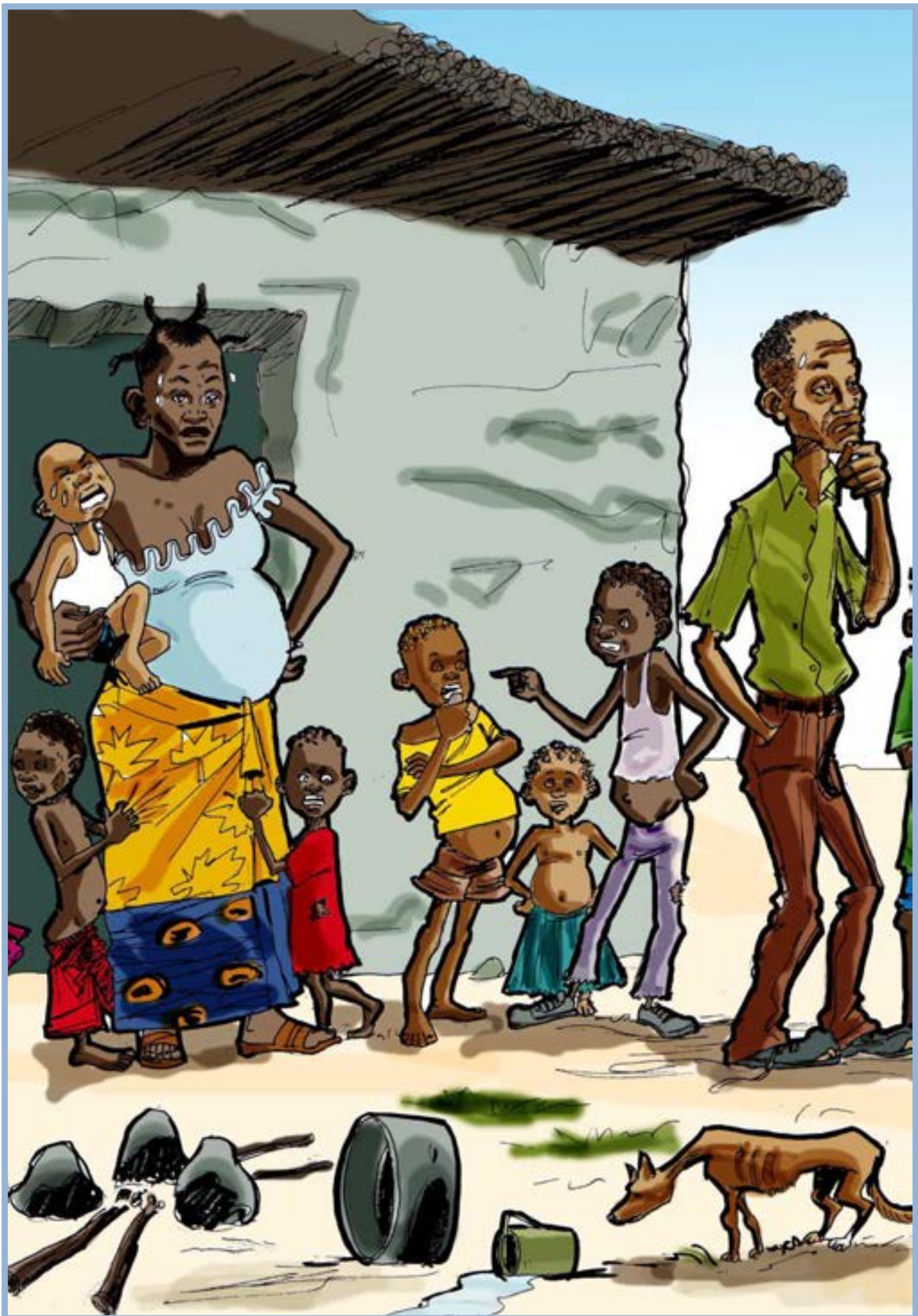
- This means there should be at least three years between each birth.
- The couple waits at least 2 years before looking for another pregnancy.
- Spacing births gives the mother the time to rest her body before becoming pregnant again.
- This ensures that these children are born healthy.

In addition to spacing births, family planning also includes:

- Deciding when to start having children
- Deciding how many children to have

Discussion question:

What comes to your mind when you think about birth spacing?



A family that does not practice family planning

Discussion question:

What do you see in this picture?

Here are some challenges that this family faces because it does not use family planning:

- The mother is worried about her pregnancy and the situation of the family.
- Children are not happy.
- The family does not have money to pay for the health care of their sick child.
- The family does not have land to produce enough food for everyone.
- The family does not have enough means to send their children to school.
- The father is unhappy, stressed and frail.

Review question:

Do you think that the births of the children in this picture have been spaced three years apart?

Answer:

No, they are born without the recommended spacing.



Meet Ilunga and Kapinga

Ilunga and Kapinga are in love. They are married with a child – a baby. They are interested in planning their future.

Discussion question:

In order to plan their future, what do you think Ilunga and Kapinga are talking about?

Here are some ideas that they are sharing:

- The type of farm that they would like to have.
- The house in which they would like to live.
- How to protect their baby.
- What they want for their children.



Ilunga and Kapinga learn about family planning services

One day Ilunga and Kapinga were visited by a Community Relay who told them about family planning counseling. The Relay explained:

- During family planning counseling, the health worker can help you properly plan your pregnancies.
- Everybody can visit the nearest health care center for family planning counseling.
- Counseling is free of charge.
- Men and women can attend separately or as a couple.

Discussion question:

Do you think Ilunga and Kapinga will attend family planning counseling together?



Ilunga and Kapinga go together to the health care center for family planning counseling

When Ilunga and Kapinga make it to the health care center:

- The health worker welcomes them.
- They are registered by the family planning counseling health worker.
- The health worker explains to them that Kapinga can still safely have children because her age is between 18 and 34 years.
- Having children can be more dangerous for women if they; start too early -before the age of 18-, have births too closely spaced by less than 2 years, or have too many children. It can also be dangerous if they have children too late (after the age of 35).

Review question:

At which age can a woman appropriately start having children?

Answer:

A woman can start having children after she is 18 years-old.



Ilunga and Kapinga plan their family

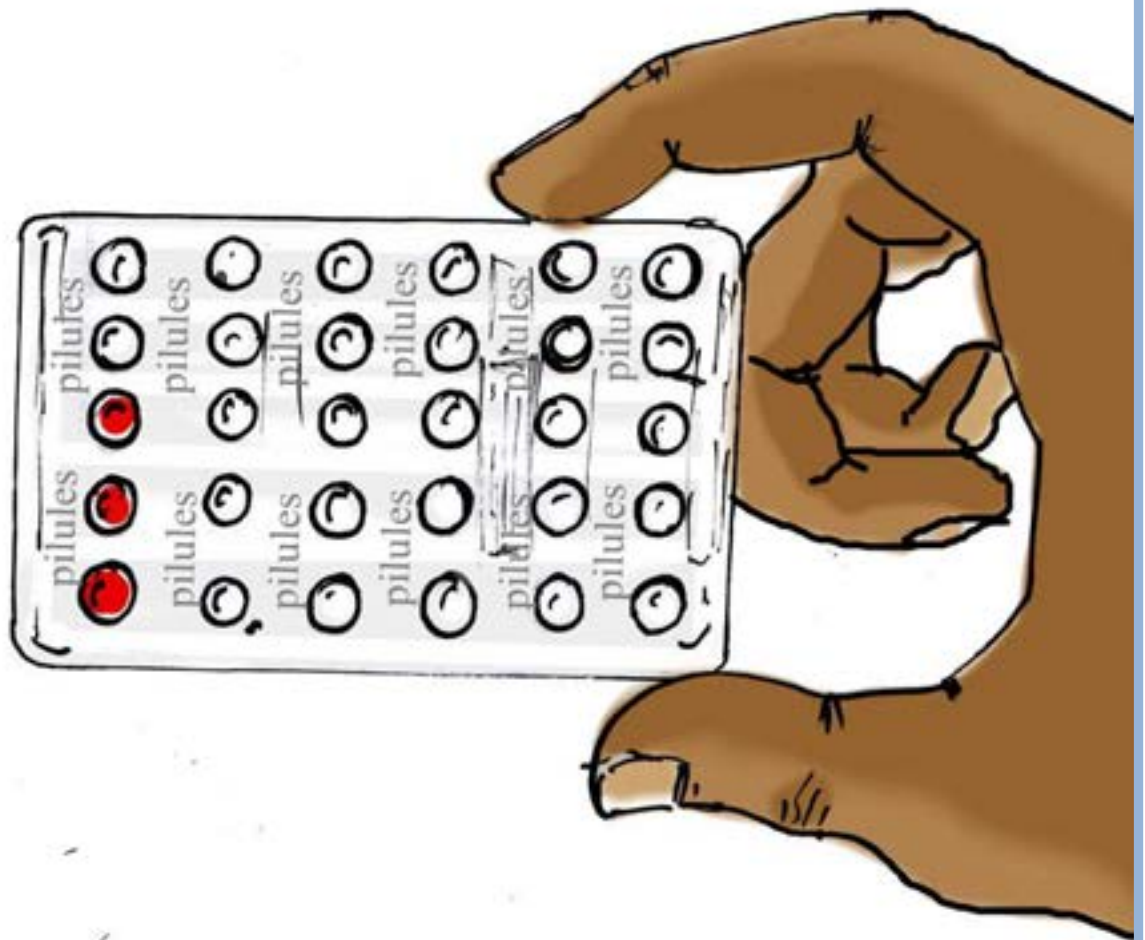
The nurse asks Ilunga and Kapinga key questions:

- When would they like to have their other child?
- How many children would they like to have?

After the exchange, Kapinga and Ilunga decide to have 3 children with 3 years between them. They will wait another 2 years before having a second child.

Discussion question:

How can Ilunga and Kapinga wait another 2 years to have a child?



Kapinga and Ilunga learn how to space births using the contraceptive pill

The health worker explains that there are many methods to space pregnancies. She talks about particularly effective methods.

The health worker explains that contraceptive pills:

- Are extremely effective
- Are taken with water every day by women to prevent unexpected pregnancies
- Have side effects on some women but such effects are quite weak.

Review question:

What is the name of this family planning method?

Answer:

The contraceptive pill



Kapinga and Ilunga learn about condoms

The health worker explains:

- There are condoms that women wear and condoms that men wear
- They are highly effective in avoiding unexpected pregnancies and preventing sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS
- Male condoms are used by men on the penis during sexual intercourses
- They are used one time each
- They are disposed of immediately after use
- They have virtually no side effects.

Review question:

What do condoms prevent?

Answer:

Unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

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Kapinga and Ilunga are informed about injections (Depo Provera)

The health worker talks to the couple about an injectable, efficient and easy-to-use, family planning method, namely the Depo provera which is:

- Administered through a small needle in the arm of the woman at the health care center
- Lasts for three months.

The health worker asks Kapinga what method she would like to use.

Kapinga says she would like the Depo Provera because it is the simplest of all.

The provider administers the injection on the spot which takes a few minutes.

The health worker advises her to come back after 3 months for another injection or before if she has side effects.

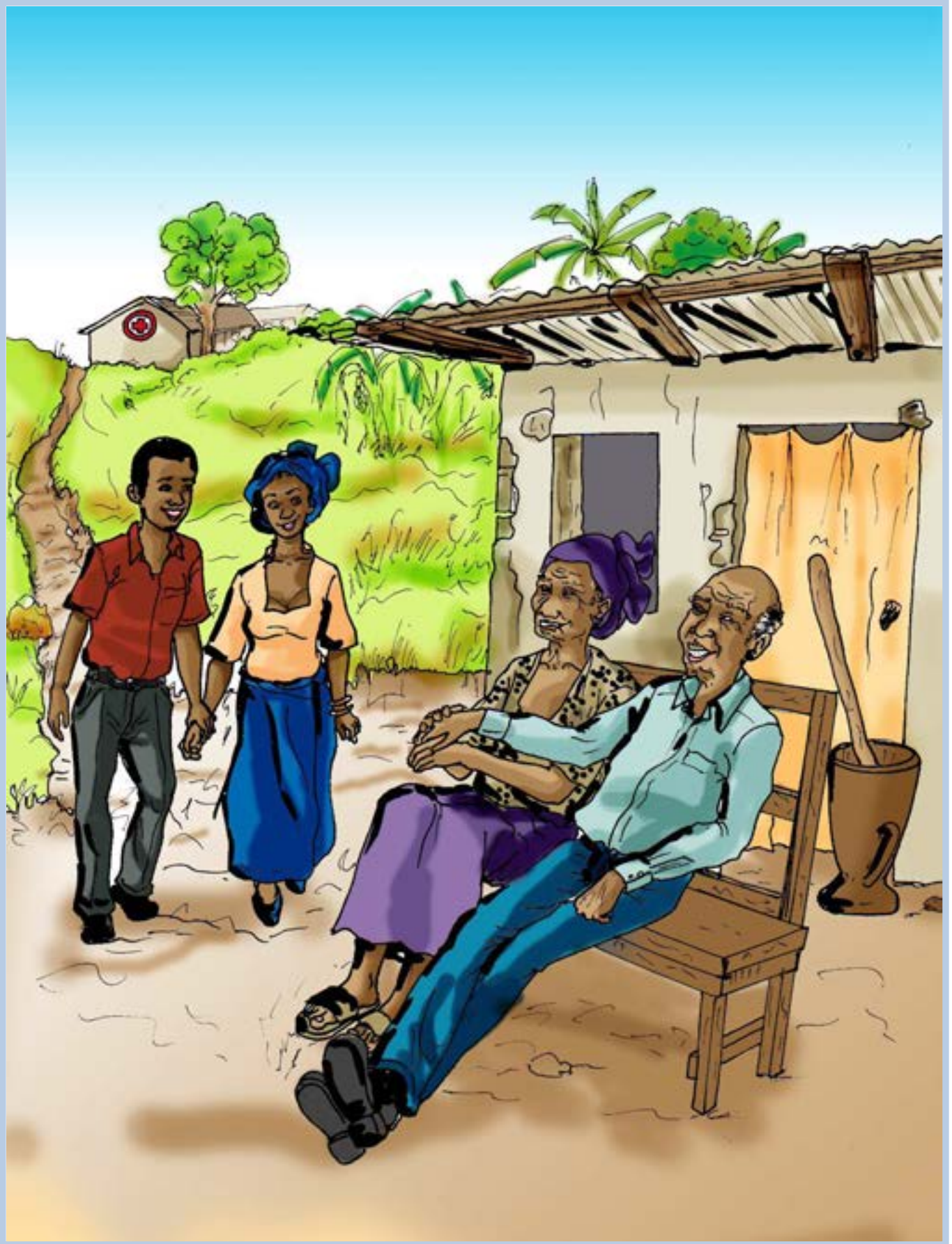
If she has side effects, the health worker can find a more appropriate method for her.

Review question:

For how long does the Depo Provera injection last?

Answer:

3 months.



Kapinga and Ilunga share their family planning project

Kapinga and Ilunga return from the health care center, when they meet Ilunga's parents on the way. Kapinga and Ilunga tell them about their family planning decision.

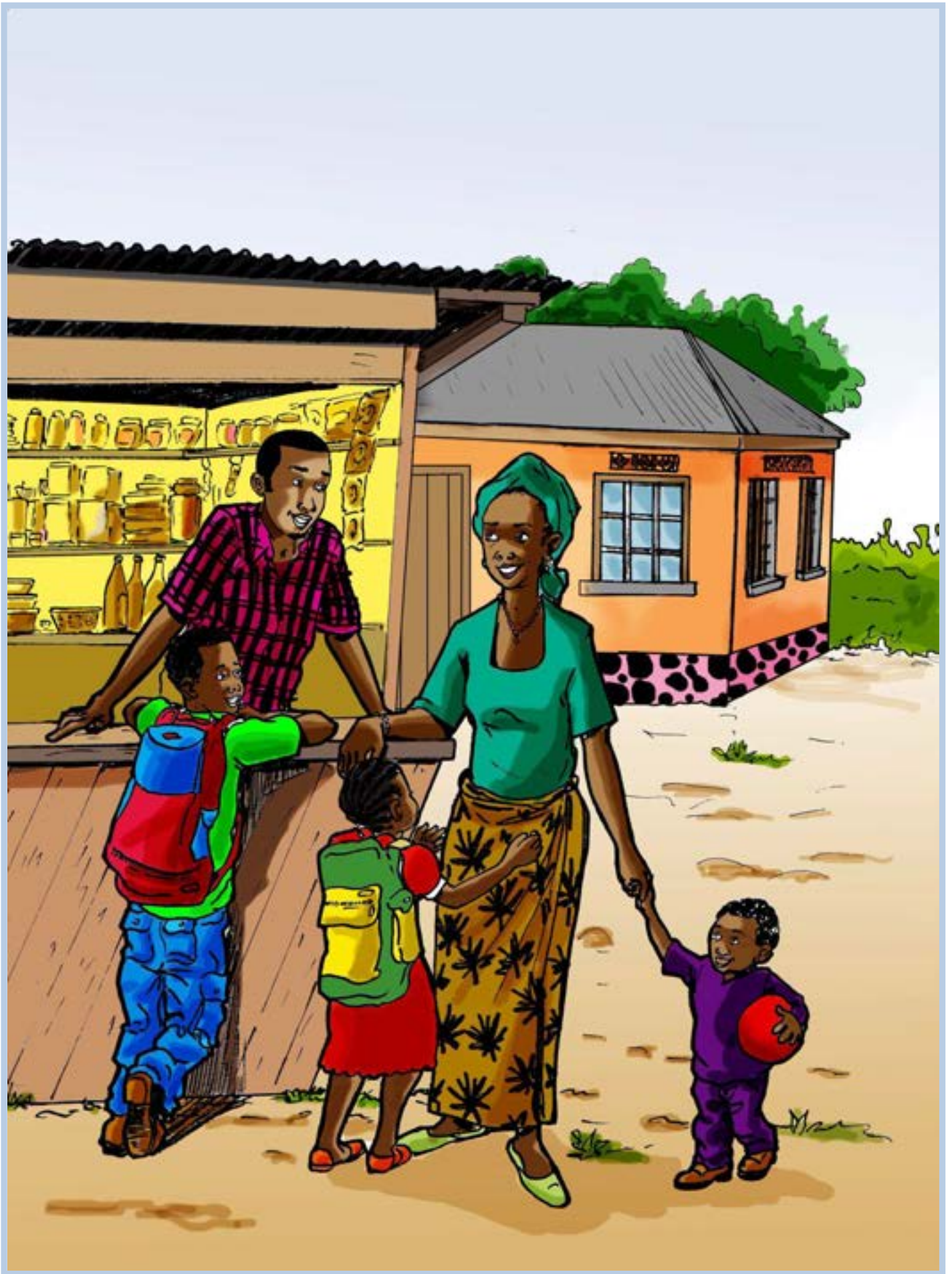
Kapinga and Ilunga listen to the views of the family. Then, they explain:

- They have consulted family planning counseling at the health center.
- They have decided to have 3 children with who will be born 3 years apart.
- They explain that this will improve the health and the education of their children; they will have more money to invest in each child.
- They explain how this will improve their capacity to secure the future of the extended family.

Discussion question:

How will family planning yield benefits to the extended family?

One of the benefits is that the couple will have more resources to help the larger family, since they will have fewer children.



Kapinga goes back to the health center for family planning methods

Every 3 months Kapinga returns to the health center to receive the Depo Provera injection.

A few years later, Kapinga and Ilunga achieve their family project as planned:

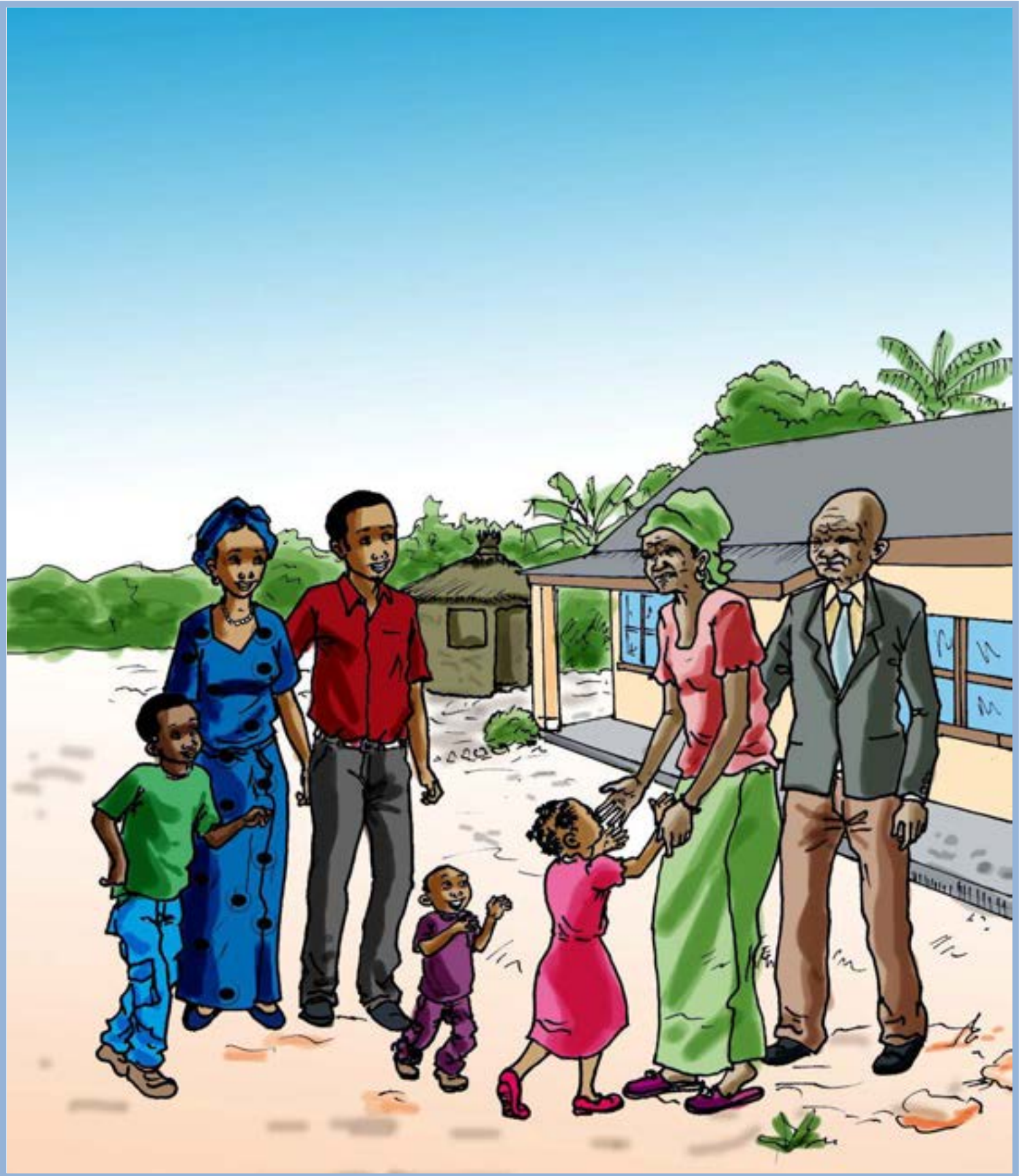
- They have used family planning methods to space the births of their children three years apart.
- They have limited the number of children to 3.

Discussion question:

How has family planning contributed to improving Kapinga and Ilunga's life?

The benefits that Kapinga and Ilunga were able to gain:

- Good health of all the family
- A good relationship between each other (harmony at home)
- Enough means to send their children to school and look after them
- Some savings to extend their farm and start a small business.



The entire family including the grandparents are in good health and prosperous

Kapinga and Ilunga visit Ilunga's parents. The parents greet their grandchildren and are happy to know that:

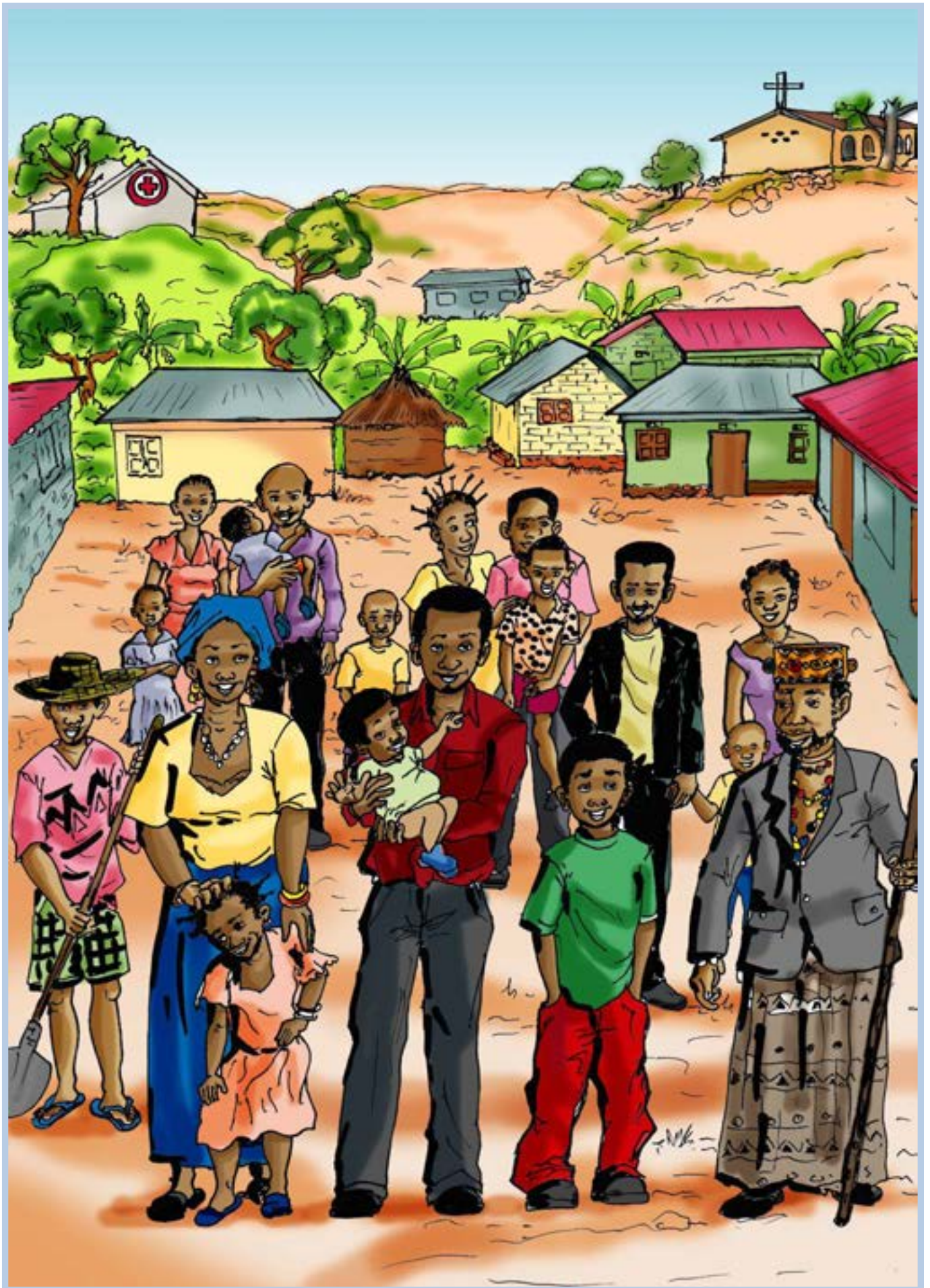
- Everybody is healthy.
- Children are well educated.
- The entire family enjoys financial security.

Review question:

What can the grandparents do to encourage other couples to practice family planning?

Answer:

They can explain the benefits to others and encourage them to visit the health center for the family planning counseling.



The whole community practices family planning

The family of Kapinga and Ilunga share its success with other families around them in the community.

Gradually, all the families in the village start practicing family planning.

The benefits are:

- The village is more prosperous
- All children are educated
- All the community is healthy and developing.

Discussion questions:

Who do you know who could attend family planning counseling?

How can family planning improve your family?

What can you do today to start planning your family?

Talk about advantages of family planning with your family and your partner. Then plan to visit the health center for free counseling.

Family planning: for the health and prosperity of your family!

Thank you for your time.



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