

SEPTEMBER 2010

ENHANCING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO ADVOCATE FOR FAMILY PLANNING

“The course was so enriching. It is well structured [and] equips one with skills that are vital in any institution. The teaching methods were well varied and the contents well organized.”

NCAPD Workshop
Participant

“PRB was instrumental in helping us gain semi-autonomous status and in developing our new institutional strategy.”

Dr. Richard Muga,
Former CEO, NCAPD

Why Institutional Capacity for Advocacy Matters

Policy change often depends on stakeholders who raise public awareness and hold governments accountable for basing decisions on the best available data. In sub-Saharan Africa, particularly strong institutions that are adept at evidence-based advocacy and effective communication with policymakers are the cornerstones upon which significant progress in reproductive health and family planning can be built. In Kenya, the U.S. Agency for International Development’s mission requested PRB’s assistance in stimulating institutional reform within Kenya’s National Coordinating Agency for Population & Development (NCAPD), to create a more influential, policy-relevant organization.

Lessons Learned

PRB’s work with NCAPD has demonstrated that strong parastatal organizations can be critical allies in helping governments recognize family planning and reproductive health as essential to economic development and social progress. PRB has learned that:

- Strengthening institutional capacity to design and implement effective policy and advocacy activities requires sustained technical assistance and skills transfer.
- Periodic stakeholder assessments conducted by external consultants stimulate internal reflection and change, helping redirect an institution’s program priorities and operations.
- Open and energetic leadership is critical for success.

PRB’s Comparative Advantage

As an organization internationally recognized and respected for interpreting data and research and communicating complex information to nontechnical audiences, PRB is positioned to assess organizational strengths and weaknesses and work with key stakeholders. PRB offers:

- More than 30 years of experience in providing training and technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of government, parastatal, and civil society groups to improve policy communication and the use of data for decisionmaking.
- Commitment to building institutional capacity in the medium term (three to five years).
- Dedication to working as partners and fostering local ownership.

Outstanding Results

Stakeholder assessment. In collaboration with NCAPD senior staff and local consultants, PRB led an institutional reform process to enhance NCAPD’s policy and advocacy role. The assessment, co-funded by USAID and DFID, comprised 56 interviews with representatives of international and local NGOs, government, and donors; and a focus group conducted with NCAPD’s District Population Officers. The stakeholder assessment led to the reorganization of NCAPD and to its designation as a semiautonomous government entity. NCAPD reoriented its mandate to include a stronger multisectoral perspective with a robust focus on repositioning family planning; attaining reproductive health commodity security; and analyzing policies around the linkages between population, health, and the environment (PHE).

With the stakeholder assessment serving as the spark for institutional reform, PRB worked with NCAPD to help mobilize funds and strengthen policy activities. PRB's role evolved from implementation partner to technical adviser. Today, NCAPD is a leader in policy advocacy for family planning/reproductive health in Kenya and was instrumental in a doubling of the government's budget for population-related activities. Here are a few additional examples of NCAPD's leadership:

Family planning documentary. NCAPD and PRB produced an 18-minute documentary—Family Planning in Kenya: Regaining a Lost Decade. The film portrays the early success of the program, its stagnation in the mid-1990s, and continuing challenges. Poignant testimonials from couples illustrate how family planning can help break the cycle of poverty at the household level in just one generation. The film was featured at regional parliamentary seminars and international events.

Policy communication workshops. Between 2005 and 2010, PRB's BRIDGE project provided guidance and support to NCAPD to conduct six policy communication workshops on a range of topics, including family planning, HIV/AIDS, and PHE. Participants learned to develop a policy-level communication strategy and action plan based on their own research and to prepare concise written materials and oral presentations that summarize research findings and present clear policy recommendations. Participants included ministry officials (Health, Youth, and Planning and National Development); and staff of NGOs, academic institutions, and donors. In 2010, NCAPD successfully carried out two, two-week trainings independently, receiving high marks from participants.

Policy briefs. NCAPD has disseminated thousands of copies of policy materials on topics related to reproductive health to decision-makers and stakeholders. With PRB assistance, NCAPD provided

reproductive health-related policy guidance to the government in these briefs:

- Migration, Urbanization and Environment in Kenya
- Women With Disabilities Need Reproductive Health Services Too
- Environmental Factors Affecting Persons With Disabilities

Recently, with PRB's technical support, NCAPD produced the first policy materials to disseminate results from the new 2008/2009 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey. As the titles of the policy briefs indicate, they urge government action in support of:

- Protecting the Reproductive Health of Young People—An Investment in Kenya's Future
- Fulfilling Unmet Need for Family Planning Can Help Kenya Achieve Vision 2030
- Equalizing Access to Family Planning Can Reduce Poverty and Improve Health
- Gaining Ground: Reclaiming the Lost Decade for Family Planning

Dissemination and training on Kenya's AIDS Indicators Survey (KAIS). NCAPD, with PRB assistance, produced a wallchart of national-level KAIS data, a press kit for the dissemination launch, and eight widely distributed provincial factsheets on survey results. To facilitate dissemination of the survey findings down to the district level, PRB supported a series of five provincial dissemination meetings led by NCAPD. These meetings were held in conjunction with training-of-trainers workshops for regional population officers, who in turn conducted seminars with district leaders to share the results.

The BRIDGE (BRinging Information to Decisionmakers for Global Effectiveness) Project, funded from September 2003 through September 2010 by USAID's Bureau for Global Health, contributed to improved health, population, and nutrition policies and programs through effective policy-learning activities. BRIDGE disseminated information on priority health and population issues to policy audiences; worked with news media to enhance the quality and quantity of coverage of key health and population issues; and strengthened the capacity of individuals and institutions to use data and research effectively in disseminating information to policy audiences.



POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU

The Population Reference Bureau **INFORMS** people around the world about population, health, and the environment, and **EMPOWERS** them to use that information to **ADVANCE** the well-being of current and future generations.

www.prb.org

POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU

1875 Connecticut Ave., NW
Suite 520
Washington, DC 20009 USA

202 483 1100 **PHONE**
202 328 3937 **FAX**
popref@prb.org **E-MAIL**