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GETTING THE RIGHT INFORMATION TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE: PRB'S PUBLICATIONS

"This [2008 World Population Data Sheet] enables our organization to integrate regional issues and global concerns in local interventions. . . . Advocating for healthier families requires [current] statistics and this will provide us with the needed data."

Kenya Red Cross Society,
Nairobi

Why Information Matters

To make informed decisions about health and population issues, policymakers need timely and accurate information about key national and regional indicators. Advocates and members of civil society also need evidence-based information to guide changes in health policies and priorities. Journalists need understandable and easy-to-use data analysis and interesting illustrations and formats for their stories. And teachers need analyses and creative tools to inspire students to learn about their world and its population and environmental challenges.

Lessons Learned

Advancing population, family planning, and reproductive health policies and programs requires getting the right information to people in ways they can use. Through decades of creating and disseminating millions of copies of policy-oriented informational materials, PRB has learned critical lessons for reaching policy audiences:

Timely, policy-relevant information. When policymakers have concise information in the right format, they can make better decisions about how to allocate scarce resources wisely and equitably. PRB provides policymakers with evidence they need for sound decisions about pressing issues related to health, population, the environment, gender, and equity.

User-friendly formats. PRB tailors its publications to meet the needs of key policy audiences. Policy briefs—which provide summaries of relevant data, examples from the field, and policy recommendations—are intended for policymakers and advocates who need to understand the big picture. Data sheets—providing a wealth of comparative data on global and regional population and health issues—are among our most popular publications, especially among policymakers, advocates, teachers, and

students. Web articles and blogs introduce readers to field experiences or emerging issues, and entice them to seek more information.

Policy-relevant content. Policymakers need publications that interpret data and research and guide them toward better policies. By distilling complex information into accessible formats without compromising accuracy, PRB reaches policymakers with balanced and useful publications on a range of policy-relevant health and population topics. The inclusion of complete references and additional resources enable readers to explore issues of interest in greater depth.

Strategic dissemination. As global access to electronic information grows, many policymakers, especially in developing countries, still require or prefer printed materials. To effectively meet the needs of our diverse audiences, key PRB publications are in multiple print and electronic formats, and available in English, French, and Spanish. Publications are disseminated electronically through e-mail lists, websites, and knowledge management portals as part of a targeted outreach and marketing strategy.

PRB's Comparative Advantage

PRB is a globally recognized and trusted source for data and policy-relevant publications. For 80 years, PRB has analyzed the most current and relevant data, synthesized the work of researchers around the world, and created compelling publications. PRB publications are lauded by users around the world who draw on their content to support advocating for family planning and reproductive health programs; building the case for gender-equitable policies and programs; and stressing the links between health, environmental sustainability, and population change.

Outstanding Results

Under BRIDGE, PRB prepared and disseminated more than 240 publications in different formats and languages, responding to global needs for data on reproductive health and population issues. Here are a few examples:

The World Population Data Sheet (WPDS), published annually since 1962, remains PRB's most widely recognized publication, with 692,000 copies disseminated in print and electronically over the past five years. The WPDS responds to the global demand for a tool that summarizes critical health and population indicators for each country and major region of the world. Each year, a specific topic is highlighted—recently youth, the environment, and aging. The high demand for the WPDS is a testament to the needs of a global audience for a trustworthy and easy-to-use publication useful to governments, advocates, and teachers alike.

Family Planning Saves Lives (FPSL), in its fourth edition since 1986, continues to provide health sector officials and advocates with the evidence to support critical investments in family planning and reproductive health. FPSL explains the health benefits of breastfeeding and adequate birth spacing, the potential for family planning to prevent maternal and infant deaths, and the priority actions needed to eliminate high levels of unmet need. FPSL is considered such a valuable resource that it was distributed to all 1,200 participants at the International Family Planning Conference in Uganda in November 2009.

Contraceptive Security for Policy Audiences demystifies much of the complexity surrounding contraceptive security, an issue that has become critically important as contraceptive use increases and development assistance for contraception declines. The toolkit explains to policy audiences how to plan for and achieve contraceptive security by focusing on financing, procurement, and supply chain challenges and the policy environment.

Abandoning Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: An In-depth Look at Promising Practices is a groundbreaking report that builds on global efforts to eliminate FGM/C. Recognized as a violation of human rights and with life-long consequences for the health of women and children, FGM/C has been the target of numerous interventions in the Middle East and Africa. This report summarizes data from three evaluated interventions and creates a platform for advocates to share project materials, experiences, and lessons learned.

Country-level publications, including policy briefs and data sheets that focus on country-specific health and population needs, provide national stakeholders with the tools they need to advocate for and support policy change. In Kenya, PRB provided technical support for the development of a data sheet on findings from the AIDS Impact Survey. To help garner greater political commitment to health and population, PRB worked with the National Coordinating Agency on Population and Development on policy briefs that were the first to disseminate data from the 2008/9 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey. And to advance an integrated approach to development, PRB developed briefs on the status of population, health, and environment in five East African countries, giving local stakeholders an evidence-based advocacy tool for sharing with policymakers.

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.

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