



*Bill and Melinda Gates Institute for
Population and Reproductive Health*

PRESS RELEASE

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New Project Will Strengthen Voices from the Developing World in Support for Family Planning

KAMPALA, UGANDA— A collaborative effort to launch a project to revitalize the family planning and reproductive health global agenda was announced today in Kampala by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, with support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The goal of the three-year project is to empower developing countries to advocate for universal access to reproductive health as a critical component in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in health through increased funding, an improved policy environment, and increased visibility for family planning at the local, national, and global levels.

Supported by both the Bill & Melinda Gates and the David and Lucile Packard Foundations with combined grants totaling \$12 million, the project will reach governments, international donors, and multilateral agencies about the urgent need to invest in family planning to reach the 200 million women who wish to delay or end childbearing, but do not have access to family planning services and supplies.

“The Bloomberg School of Public Health is proud to be a part of this collaborative effort as we continue on our long-term path and commitment to improving the health and well-being of women throughout the developing world,” said Michael J. Klag, MD, MPH, Dean of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

As stated by William H. Gates, Sr., Co-Chair, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, in his welcome remarks at the International Conference on Family Planning: Research and Best Practices conference in Kampala on November 15th, “Bill, Melinda, and I believe that universal access to family planning and reproductive health is essential to a better future. Men and women should be able to freely choose the number and timing of their children.”

The project will build on past investments in family planning and ongoing activities in reproductive health advocacy, leadership development, knowledge generation, and innovative service delivery projects. The project’s momentum will be fueled by the re-emergence of the United States and the continuing and growing interest of European donors in the issue of family planning.

“The success of this initiative will depend on strong leadership from local champions and political support for family planning,” noted Musimbi Kanyoro, director of the Population and Reproductive Health Program at the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. “We believe the

initiative's focus on the global South could prove to be empowering for local communities in the South and also serve to transform the global conversation about family planning."

A unique aspect of the new evidence-based project is its emphasis on harnessing the voices of women and men in the global South to demand access to family planning and reproductive health services. The project will increase the volume of these voices from the South so they are heard at the local, national, regional, and global levels. It will also create platforms for advocates in the global South to network and organize, enabling organizations to more effectively collaborate and share best practices and lessons learned.

"The project is designed to create a sense of ownership about the importance of family planning among developing countries, especially in countries with the highest maternal and neonatal death rates as well as unmet need," said Jotham Musinguzi, the Director of the Kampala office of the Partners in Population and Development (PPD).

The project will be implemented in nine countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia by a consortium of core partners, including the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health; Partners in Population and Development (PPD), an inter-governmental agency of 26 countries representing the voices for population and family planning from the South; the African Women's Development Fund based in Ghana; and the Futures Group International. The consortium will collaborate closely with USAID, other bilateral donors, international and local non-governmental organizations, and the private sector in advocating for increased political commitment and resources. Additionally, the project will work closely with USAID's Repositioning Family Planning Initiative to draw on lessons learned and to potentially replicate and scale up successful initiatives.

"President Obama has demonstrated his support for family planning and reproductive health (FP/RH) by proposing the largest budget for FP/RH in USAID's history. He has also established family planning as a priority under the new Global Health Initiative, which seeks to build strong partnerships at the country and international levels, said Dr. Scott Radloff, Director of the Office of Population and Reproductive Health. "This consortium is an excellent example of just such a partnership."

The project will also help establish a sustainable African Women for Reproductive Health Network to harness the energy, talents, and needs of women at the community level. In past decades, women have become change agents at the national and global levels.

"The women in the Network, like this consortium, understand that if we do not address the unmet need for family planning, the other global health goals of improving maternal, infant, and child deaths and combating infectious disease will be difficult to achieve by 2015," concluded Professor Duff Gillespie at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

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