

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH PROGRAM: FROM RESEARCH TO SERVICE DELIVERY

Founded in 1952, the Population Council is an international, nonprofit, nongovernmental organization that seeks to improve the wellbeing and reproductive health of current and future generations. The Council has a staff of more than 500 who work in three program areas—reproductive health; HIV and AIDS; and poverty, gender, and youth—to:

- produce high quality scientific evidence to improve policies and programs;
- strengthen the capacity of individuals and institutions to address population and health issues through training and technical assistance;
- discover, develop, test, and introduce new and improved health technologies, including contraceptives and microbicides; and
- synthesize and communicate evidence to guide practitioners, policymakers, and donors toward better programming decisions and allocation of resources.

In addition to our headquarters and Center for Biomedical Research in New York and an interregional office in Washington, DC, the Population Council has offices in 17 countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America with programs in more than 50 countries. Our global presence allows us to establish effective and enduring collaboration in both the public and private sectors. The Population Council's Reproductive Health program is directed by John W. Townsend, Vice President.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Partnering with key stakeholders, the Population Council has a distinct, comprehensive approach to improving sexual, reproductive, and maternal health globally, especially in developing countries. Our work runs the gamut from basic science and exploration of new technologies in the laboratory, to the strengthening of health systems and policies, and the delivery of priority reproductive health (RH) services at clinic and community levels.

Our work aims to improve the availability, quality and use of RH technologies and services for women and men,



particularly the poor and marginalized. The relationships we have cultivated enable us to tackle sensitive issues, give voice to groups most in need, and contribute significant impacts towards achieving Millennium Development Goal 5, reducing maternal mortality. Our current program priorities include:

Increasing access to family planning and other RH services

With more than 130 million women in developing countries not wanting to get pregnant but not practicing family planning, meeting the unmet need, and increasing access to family planning and other reproductive health services, is central to ensuring the well-being of families worldwide. Our work increases access to a range of RH services in countries with substantial unmet need, including services for contraception, sexually transmitted infections (including HIV), maternal and newborn care, safe abortion and post-abortion care. We strive towards this goal through research that develops and tests innovative service-delivery and financing approaches, and implementation of evidence-based best practices.

Reducing maternal mortality and morbidity

For many years, the Council has actively sought to reduce maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity, through the following types of activities:

- understanding the determinants of maternal and newborn health-seeking behavior;
- designing and pilot-testing strategies to deliver essential and emergency obstetric care;
- providing rigorous evaluation of national safe motherhood program strategies; and
- scaling up proven delivery models for maternal and newborn health.

The Council seeks to improve quality and effectiveness throughout the continuum of care, including antenatal, delivery, and postpartum care (for mothers and newborns), as well as preventing and managing complications associated with unsafe abortion. The needs of women living with HIV and AIDS are a particular focus.

Reducing inequalities in use of services by wealth, age and gender groups

For health programs to meet the basic human right of health for all, access to information and services must be available to everyone. Conventional health services often fail to reach marginalized populations and those at highest risk. The Council identifies and engages with hard-to-reach populations, implements research to expand access to services for these groups, and partners with governments to reduce inequities in access to and use of services due to income, age, gender, ethnicity, residence and other discriminating factors.

Developing and testing new RH technologies

The Population Council explores new biological targets for male and female contraception and develops and tests



the effectiveness and acceptability of new RH technologies designed to benefit women and men in developing countries. Several highly effective long-acting contraceptive technologies developed by the Council have been marketed and used by millions of women worldwide: three models of copper-bearing intrauterine devices, including ParaGard®; Mirena®, a levonorgestrel-releasing intrauterine system; Norplant®, a 6-capsule levonorgestrel-releasing implant; Jadelle®, a two-rod levonorgestrel implant; and Progering®, a progesterone-only vaginal ring.

Building relationships to improve access to RH technologies

The Population Council encourages licensing, registration, manufacturing and distribution of contraceptives and other RH technologies developed by the Council through both commercial and social marketing. One example of such a partnership is that with Watson Pharmaceuticals Inc., whereby Watson has gained licensing rights to commercialize a Council-developed long-term user-controlled vaginal ring, the Nestorone®/ethinyl estradiol ring, in North America. In addition to commercial sector distribution, special provisions are ensured to provide products to public-sector organizations at a lower price, making affordable technologies and improved health care available to people living in the world's poorest regions.

These strategic objectives reflect our long-term commitment to the scale-up and sustainability of efforts to improve human welfare, particularly for those most in need, and are built on the voices and courage of people around the world.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE POPULATION COUNCIL'S REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH PROGRAM, VISIT WWW.POPCOUNCIL.ORG/RH