

# PATH's Guiding Principles for Achieving Programmatic Impact

PATH creates sustainable, culturally relevant solutions that enable communities worldwide to break longstanding cycles of poor health. Our mission is to improve the health of people around the world by advancing technologies, strengthening systems, and encouraging healthy behaviors.

Assessing the impact of our program efforts is a vital organizational concern. This document outlines the key principles that guide our efforts to achieve our mission and assess the impact of our efforts on global health. By incorporating these principles into our daily work, each of us contributes to PATH's mission and to providing leadership in global health.

PATH developed these guiding principles to:

- Articulate key institutional practices for achieving and assessing programmatic impact.
- Provide PATH staff with a practical orientation and framework for describing the impact of our work.
- Stimulate discussion with our global health partners concerning programmatic impact.
- Strengthen the link between our continuous monitoring and evaluation of specific projects and the broader context of social change required to improve the lives of those we serve.

## Principle 1:

PATH programs are based on a thorough assessment of the health needs of resource-poor communities and on our institutional capabilities for implementing appropriate, cost-effective, and innovative solutions with our partners.

Strategic needs assessments are essential to identifying opportunities that are likely to have the greatest impact on health and best match our organizational strengths. PATH pursues opportunities based on factors including:

- The burden of disease and its impact on the community.
- The potential of an intervention to stimulate behavior change, reduce disease burden, and promote health.
- The need for new interventions or technologies.
- The cost-effectiveness and affordability of any particular intervention.
- Its potential to lessen gender disparities, promote human rights, encourage positive health-seeking behavior, and change harmful social norms and cultural practices.

Within our areas of strategic focus, we respond to health needs that are most urgent, articulated as priorities by beneficiaries or communities, or best addressed through a coordinated global effort—and for which feasible solutions can be developed and successfully implemented.

To be effective, an intervention must significantly improve upon current practice and be acceptable to users. We therefore assess health priorities and the appropriateness of proposed solutions from the perspective of individuals and communities, including end users. We also assess the human resources and institutional capacity needed to implement an innovation; the quality of care required to deliver it; and the gender, equity, and sociocultural considerations that affect its appropriateness. We take well-calculated risks and value creativity and initiative as well as good judgment in staying “on mission.”

## **Principle 2:**

PATH establishes and joins strategic alliances to create synergy through collaboration and to leverage public and private resources to improve global health.

PATH is committed to increasing the level of resources and attention devoted to improving the health of the poor. Our experience has shown that strategic alliances can advance these efforts significantly. By establishing and managing alliances, we build on our own strengths as well as those of partner organizations and communities to create a comprehensive and synergistic response to global health problems. We continually explore new ways of collaborating with others and managing partnerships so we achieve the greatest benefit for our constituents. We particularly encourage private sector collaboration in the development and transfer of innovative technologies that the commercial sector would otherwise not address.

We believe that strong alliances are characterized by:

- A high degree of clarity and agreement on a common vision and desired results.
- Honest and direct communication.
- Participatory leadership that ensures commitment to vision, protects transparent decision-making, builds trust, and shares credit.
- A clear organizational structure in which roles and responsibilities are determined in a fair, open manner and members are able to influence the direction of the work.
- Shared responsibilities for resource mobilization and utilization and allocation of these resources in a transparent manner.
- A membership that is invested in fulfilling commitments in an effective and timely way and holding each member accountable for their performance.

## **Principle 3:**

PATH participates in capacity building and institutional strengthening to guarantee the long-term sustainability of our programs.

The success of our programs depends on the capacity of our partners—individuals, communities, organizations, and host-country governments—to carry out sustained health interventions.

- We place high priority on developing community capacity to identify and respond to health challenges, advocate for needed health services, and invest in appropriate solutions.

- We strengthen the capabilities of partner organizations by facilitating strategic planning; strengthening management and procurement systems; developing program and communication strategies; and providing technical information, supplies, and equipment.
- We foster public-private sector partnerships aimed at strengthening local capacities.
- We invest in people to build sustainable institutions. Through training, materials development, and knowledge management, we strengthen the technical and managerial skills of local partners.
- We work with host-country partners, including governments and communities, to apply established approaches to health issues and develop appropriate, multicomponent responses.

We consider capacity to be established when:

- Communities and constituents set priorities, identify and contribute to developing solutions, and establish networks for diffusing solutions.
- Management, procurement, production, quality assurance, and monitoring systems are in place and operational.
- All personnel—including health service providers, educators, manufacturers, and managers—have adequate knowledge and skills to carry out health interventions.

## Principle 4:

PATH carefully evaluates our investments in global health programs.

Program evaluation is the bedrock for understanding and increasing our overall organizational impact. Evaluation enables us to improve our own work and demonstrate the effectiveness of our approaches for replication, adaptation, and scaling up. It also enables us to contribute to the global evidence base on health programs, practices, and technologies. Since the broader health impact of new technologies cannot be assessed until proven products have been introduced, evaluation of technological progress requires clear timelines and benchmarks. By evaluating our work, we obtain tangible information that reflects our progress, guides subsequent work, and ensures accountability to stakeholders, including end users and donors.

Sound evaluation requires that:

- Project goals and objectives are well defined.
- Stakeholders are involved at all stages to enhance relevancy and accuracy.
- Data are collected and analyzed in a systematic and unbiased way, with proper regard for the interests, rights, and safety of all participants.
- Results are shared with stakeholders, including program participants, in a timely and understandable manner.
- Findings are used to make decisions about future programs or policies.

We identify the technical assistance needed to develop and carry out appropriate evaluation strategies, and we commit sufficient resources to evaluate and disseminate the results of our work. We also systematically monitor the extent to which we achieve project goals—including increasing capacity and sustainability, influencing policy, and building alliances—and document the impact that is reasonably attributable to these efforts.

## Principle 5:

PATH influences national and international policy processes to promote greater health equity and the scaling up of successful innovations.

To achieve programmatic impact at a population level, successful programs and technologies must be sustainable and replicated on a large scale. PATH engages in national and international dialogue with influential political and organizational leaders to encourage the commitment that sustainability and scaling up require. We promote stakeholder involvement in the policy process at the community level and advocate at all levels for increased attention to human rights and social justice.

We foster political will to improve health equity and to scale up and sustain programs by:

- Identifying the information gaps and needs of policymakers and program managers.
- Generating and disseminating evidence-based research that demonstrates the effectiveness and impact of successful innovations.
- Establishing close working relationships with the specialized agencies of the United Nations.
- Developing and contributing to guidelines, policy documents, and training materials to help shape national and international policies.
- Working effectively with influential national and global networks, including the media, to raise awareness of health problems and appropriate solutions.
- Advocating for a rights-based approach to gender equity and improved quality of care.
- Collaborating with country programs to further sustainability and information exchange.
- Mobilizing and leveraging human and financial resources for improving the health of the poor.

## Principle 6:

PATH shares accurate and timely information about our programs to stimulate cross-fertilization of ideas, innovation, collaboration, and replication of successful programs.

Timely communication is essential to fostering a well coordinated and informed response to global health problems. We seek to maximize the impact of our work by communicating effectively with all audiences who may benefit from our efforts.

- PATH is committed to disseminating the results of our work to all relevant partners, including end users, collaborators, donors, national and international organizations, the media, and policymakers.
- We articulate PATH's vision, strategic emphases, and impact through channels and formats that are most accessible to each audience.
- We disseminate project results to project participants and stakeholders and ensure that our materials are developed in user-friendly formats, with appropriate language and level of detail.

Within PATH, we strive to foster a rich dialogue between our strategic and country programs and to draw upon that exchange to further assess needs and identify innovative solutions as outlined in Principle 1. Our breadth of experience in communications enhances our ability to successfully uphold the other principles—including building alliances, strengthening capacity, and influencing policy—that are so integral to our efforts to achieve an impact on global health.