

GENDER, VIOLENCE, AND RIGHTS

New Program Sharpens PATH's Focus On Gender Issues

Violence against women, or “gender-based violence,” is the most common yet least recognized human rights abuse in the world, affecting as many as one in three women globally. Domestic violence, sexual assault, female genital mutilation, and trafficking are among the forms of such abuse.

The health consequences of gender-based violence and gender disparities are profound. Violence increases

women's risk for injury, unwanted pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, depression, gynecological disorders, and low birth weight infants. Women's subordinate position in many cultures limits their access to health services as well as their ability to make decisions regarding health care and fertility.

PATH has worked to promote gender equity in health and prevent gender-based violence in many projects over the years. Now, these issues will receive even greater emphasis through the establishment of our Gender, Violence, and Rights Strategic Program.

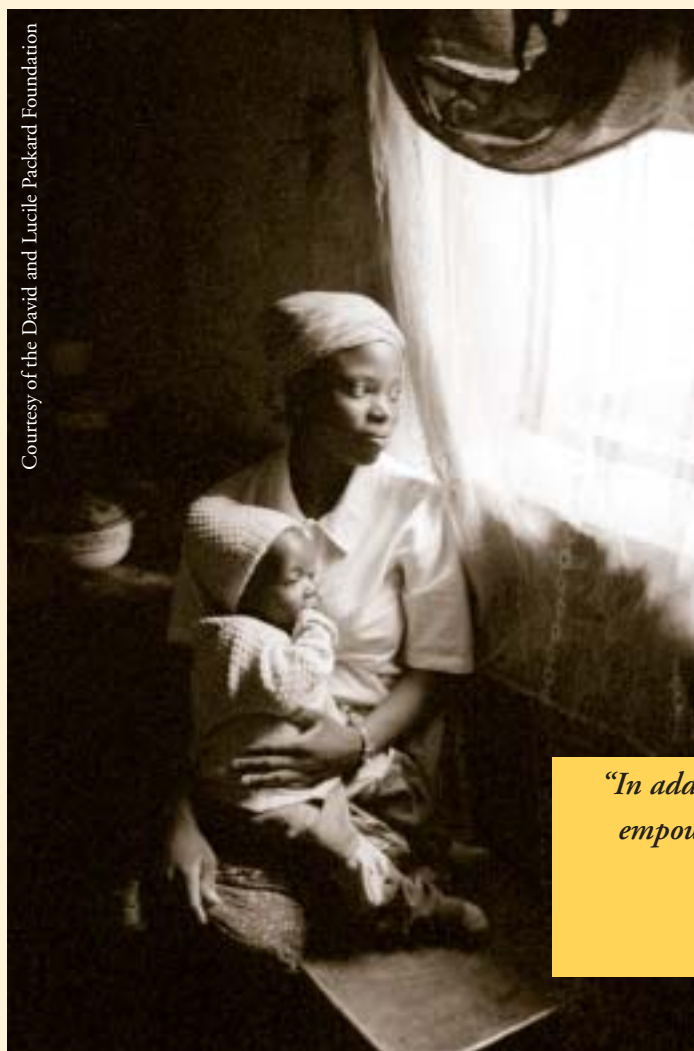
PATH's new strategic program has four inter-related components:

- **Research:** Expanding the quality and quantity of research on gender equity and gender-based violence from a public health perspective.
- **Advocacy:** Using evidence from research to influence international policy and programs and inform catalysts of change at the local level.
- **Health Services:** Strengthening the capacity of health systems and providers to respond to gender-based violence.
- **Communication:** Empowering communities to prevent gender-based discrimination and violence through innovative communications solutions.

Continued inside

“In addressing gender equity we aim to promote the empowerment of women and girls in all of PATH's programs.”

Mary Ellsberg, Ph.D.
Director
Gender, Violence, and Rights Strategic Program



For this issue, I asked board member Vincent McGee to share some thoughts about his recent visit to PATH's programs in Asia. Thank you, Vinny, for your enthusiastic service on PATH's board.

Christopher J. Elias, President

In June, I accompanied Chris Elias on a two-week trip to PATH's offices in the Mekong Region. Coordinated from Bangkok, PATH's regional program encompasses activities in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam.

The best part for me was being able to observe and participate in PATH's work, not just get a "show and tell" in a stuffed schedule. Certainly the main lesson is that the goal of PATH and similar organizations is to put ourselves out of business over time by transmitting skills to local people. It was exciting to meet the marvelous staff in each office who have grown up and been educated in the country and community being served. Through them, PATH's international expertise is absorbed and applied to meet local needs.

It was a wonderful trip that fulfilled what all nonprofit board members should strive to do, namely, see the work in the field. I now have a much fuller understanding of the important work PATH does.



Vincent McGee

Vincent McGee joined PATH's board in 2001. Based in New York, Vinny has had a long career advising foundation, corporate, and individual donors and has been an active volunteer in the nonviolence and human rights fields.

For example, PATH is assisting the World Health Organization to conduct a study of violence and women's health in eight countries in Asia, South America, and Africa. The study will produce data on the prevalence and health consequences of domestic violence against women and could be used to influence international policy and programs in the future.

In Central America, PATH is providing technical support for the Pan American Health Organization's gender-based violence project. The project focuses on developing norms and protocols for identifying and treating victims of abuse, tracking incidents of violence, and training primary care givers in countries throughout the region.

In Nicaragua, PATH is working with local groups to develop and evaluate innovative media campaigns to promote reflection among men and women on gender stereotypes and violence prevention. One such partner is Puntos de Encuentro, a local group that produces a hit soap opera called "Sexto Sentido" (Sixth Sense) that deals with issues such as domestic violence, rape, and sexuality.

In Africa, PATH is a leader in promoting alternatives to female genital mutilation (FGM), a traditional



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One of the... lence is the traffi... ing at an alarmin... women and child... the Internet to li... ists, PATH supp... Stop-Traffic, that... national legislatio... trafficking, and s... victims.

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In Nicaragua, PATH collaborates on Sexto Sentido (Sixth Sense), a TV soap opera for teens that deals with such issues as unwanted pregnancy, HIV, and rape. The show challenges gender stereotypes and tells teens, "Es tu vida... ¡Atrévete! (It's your life... Go for it!)"



mobilize communities to end female genital mutilation.

As many as two million girls annually. In communities in Kenya, PATH developed a campaign of passage that eliminate physical harm to celebrate their entrance to womanhood. In helping to carry out a national advocacy intervention against FGM.

One of the most severe forms of gender-based violence is the trafficking of women and girls, which is increasing at an alarming rate. At least 700,000 people, mostly women and children, are bought and sold annually. Using a network of anti-trafficking researchers and activists, PATH supports a facilitated international list-serve, reviews pending international treaties and conventions, provides country-based news items on trafficking, and shares information about programs to help

PATH's programs have always been grounded in a human rights and gender perspective, the Violence, and Rights Strategic Program will continue to mobilize resources for these issues as well as its commitment to improve the health and well-being of women, children, and their communities.

Building rigor into reproductive health applied research...

PATH and the University of Washington (UW) are partners in a three-year project aimed at strengthening the rigor of applied research carried out in developing countries. The project links PATH staff who plan and implement field research with UW faculty and graduate students who have expertise in epidemiology, clinical research, and biostatistics. The collaboration strengthens PATH's research methodologies and enhances the validity of research results, which can better inform and influence health policy. At the same time, PATH's field experience helps ensure that UW's research and training meet the needs and realities in developing countries.

An important component of the project is a PATH internship program, including field work, for students enrolled in masters and doctoral programs at UW. Four internships have taken place so far, with more being planned. In March, intern Dary Mozaffarian, M.D., traveled to Indonesia to assist PATH's Healthy Start Plus Program, which seeks to improve vital health services for mothers and newborns. Dary's analysis of national health data sources relevant to project objectives strengthened the evaluation plan, thereby increasing the potential for positive influence on health policy and practice in Indonesia.

Other interns have assisted PATH family planning and adolescent health projects in the Philippines, Thailand, and Cambodia. Through the partnership, students work with UW faculty and PATH staff to plan and implement their internships, and contribute lessons learned to the partnership monitoring effort. Funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the PATH/UW collaboration is one of several Mellon-supported partnerships between universities and "practitioner" organizations like PATH.

Improving health services for mothers and children is the goal of PATH's Healthy Start Plus Program in Indonesia. The program benefited from research by PATH intern Dr. Dary Mozaffarian, a Master of Public Health candidate at the University of Washington. For Dary, "The PATH internship was a great experience that allowed me to tie my academic studies to a real-life, low-resource situation."



mission

develops, and applies appropriate and innovative solutions to public health problems, in partnership with governmental and nongovernmental partners in developing countries and with groups in need.

— Technology Solutions —

New Lab and Website for Diagnostics

In much of the developing world, testing for such prevalent diseases as malaria, hepatitis B, and HIV is problematic. Procedures used in developed countries are often too expensive, too complex, and not easily available. Patients who travel long distances to health centers are unlikely to return days later for test results, and opportunities for counseling and treatment are lost.

PATH's diagnostics development program develops simple, rapid, and inexpensive tests that can be used effectively in resource-limited settings. PATH does not commercially manufacture the tests it develops, but instead transfers the technical know-how to commercial manufacturers around the world. For example, PATH's HIV test is now produced by companies in Argentina, India, Indonesia, and Thailand.

In addition to developing its own tests, PATH promotes the use of suitable products from all manufacturers by performing such activities as market analyses, laboratory and field testing, demonstration projects, cost-effectiveness studies, and dissemination of information to clinicians and policy makers. PATH has undertaken these activities for a wide range of commercially available rapid malaria and rapid syphilis tests, for example.

Earlier this year, PATH moved its Seattle headquarters to a new building that provides an expanded and improved laboratory for diagnostics research and development activities. In the new lab, technical staff can produce as many as 10,000 tests in a week to meet



PATH's new lab accommodates diagnostics development as well as training of visiting scientists.

the needs of field evaluation studies. The larger space also enables PATH staff to train visiting scientists without disrupting regular work in the lab.

Another exciting milestone is PATH's recent launch of a Rapid Diagnostics Tests website (www.rapid-diagnostics.org). Designed for public health program managers and decision makers working in developing countries, the website provides in-depth information on rapid diagnostic tests, including contact information for manufacturers of available tests and links to peer-reviewed literature about the tests and their demonstrated field performance.



Program for Appropriate Technology in Health

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