

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and the U.S. Global Health Initiative

October 2011

WHAT IS THE U.S. GLOBAL HEALTH INITIATIVE?

The U.S. Global Health Initiative (GHI) is a comprehensive policy approach that seeks to strengthen, streamline, and increase the efficiency of *existing* U.S. global health funding programs – to achieve greater impact with every dollar.

WHY ARE GHI PRINCIPLES CRITICAL TO ADVANCING SRHR?

GHI principles important to SRHR include:

- **Promoting a focus on women, girls, and gender equality.** This approach recognizes and addresses the disparate needs and conditions of women that result from gender discrimination and socio-cultural barriers. Focusing on women, including ensuring women's SRHR needs are met, has a direct effect on the health of their children, families, and communities, increasing self-sufficiency and program sustainability.
- **Prioritizing strategic coordination and integration.** Integrating HIV, family planning, and maternal health programming at the service-delivery level establishes a holistic approach to SRHR that increases access to essential services, such as HIV prevention, care, treatment and counseling; prenatal and emergency obstetric care; comprehensive sex education; and contraceptive commodities for preventing disease and planning families.
- **Encouraging country ownership and building on existing country platforms to develop priorities and strengthen health systems.** Meaningfully engaging country governments and non-governmental, local, and indigenous organizations encourages a human rights framework that reflects country priorities and provides a voice to marginalized populations. Strengthening health infrastructure and the health work force has the potential to afford more women access to family planning, prenatal and emergency obstetric care, and the assistance of a skilled attendant in childbirth.
- **Scaling-up evidence-based programs that work.** By promoting accountability through monitoring, evaluation, research and innovation, the GHI focuses on impact and outcomes, rather than expenditure or input-based indicators. This approach aims to increase the efficacy of SRHR programming and eliminate programs that have not proven to be effective, such as sex education programs that exclusively teach abstinence.

WHAT DOES THE GHI HAVE TO DO WITH SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR)?

The GHI includes targets to confront and measure impact on all the major sexual and reproductive health issues, including HIV, maternal health, and family planning.

Access to SRHR is essential to the success of the GHI. Without attention to SRHR, the U.S. cannot meet its global health targets, including those in PEPFAR. Women account for 52 percent of people living with HIV,¹ which is the leading cause of death and disease in women of reproductive age.² Complications from unintended pregnancies are a major factor in maternal mortality and morbidity, yet 215 million women who want to plan families have no access to modern effective contraception.³

GHI principles are critical to ensuring access to SRHR. The sexual and reproductive health issues of women and girls, including HIV/AIDS, maternal health, and family planning, overlap. GHI principles focus on meeting women's needs comprehensively through prevention, integration, coordination, and scaling-up approaches that work. Implementing these principles has the potential to increase women's access to services they need, when and where they need them.

¹UNAIDS. *UNAIDS Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic: 2010*. Geneva: UNAIDS, 2010.

²World Health Organization. *Women and Health: Today's Evidence, Tomorrow's Agenda*. Geneva: WHO, 2009.

³Guttmacher Institute. *Facts on Investing in Family Planning and Maternal and Newborn Health*. New York, NY: Guttmacher Institute, 2010.