

Addressing gender and gender-based violence to improve health

One of the ways PATH improves health is by identifying gender-based constraints, such as women’s unequal socioeconomic status and decision-making power in relationships, and creating strategies to address them. We engage women directly in developing new technologies, and we advance solutions for health issues that disproportionately affect women and girls. We promote gender-equitable behaviors for men as well as women and build approaches to address gender-based violence (GBV) and other gender-related factors affecting HIV risk.

ENGAGING MEN

PATH is at the cutting edge in designing and implementing successful behavior change communication interventions to reduce inequitable gender norms and behaviors by working with men in a variety of settings. In China, for example, PATH worked with the China Family Planning Association and its affiliates in Chongqing and local districts, as well as vocational schools and factories, to foster development of more gender-equitable young men. PATH did this by designing a curriculum focused on positive notions of masculinity and offering participatory educational activities for young men in school or at work. Evaluation showed significant positive changes in gender-related attitudes and behaviors for both students and workers. PATH’s work also reduced reported support for, and use of, violence against women, including intimate partners.

PATH believes that engaging men can improve nutrition status within households. We have piloted innovative approaches for involving men in community-based programming—bringing increased understanding of their roles in influencing feeding practices. In several countries, we have successfully facilitated community theater performances and trained community leaders and men’s groups to encourage men to be more supportive of optimal infant nutrition and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT).



Aurelio Ayala III

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY

PATH recognizes that local organizations and communities are best suited to address their own challenges related to gender. We provide technical assistance to bolster local capacities to conduct research, provide services, change harmful behaviors, and share knowledge and best practices in gender and GBV programming and research.

To define standards for research on violence against women, PATH and the World Health Organization (WHO) produced *Researching Violence Against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists*. The guide explains survey methods and qualitative research on GBV in low-resource settings and offers guidelines for ensuring women’s safety during research. Thousands of copies are in use worldwide. PATH also supported the GBV Prevention Network to organize annual trainings for African researchers, activists, service providers, and policymakers.

ProVIC, led by PATH, is the flagship project of the US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Funded by the US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief through the US Agency for International Development, ProVIC operates in five provinces. In two provinces, the project is

integrating GBV prevention and response efforts at the community level and in health facilities. ProVIC leverages resources within existing PMTCT services to increase GBV survivors' access to screening, high-quality care, and referrals. It also provides GBV-related training and supplies to PMTCT facilities and trains community leaders to increase awareness of available services.

PATH serves as the technical secretariat of InterCambios in Latin America (www.alianzaintercambios.org) to facilitate greater collaboration and institutional coordination, strengthen advocacy, inform policies and programs, and build capacity to respond to GBV. PATH and other InterCambios members created a Spanish-language adaptation of *In Her Shoes*, an innovative training tool that raises awareness among service providers and community members about day-to-day realities for women experiencing abuse. Through InterCambios, PATH has also supported efforts to document femicide and prepare testimony for the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS

One of the best ways to improve health outcomes for women and girls is to put the power of protection in their own hands and increase their agency over their own bodies and futures. To expand women's options for protection against unwanted pregnancy, PATH has developed a range of woman-initiated contraceptives, including the Woman's Condom and a one-size-fits-most diaphragm. To ensure these products meet women's needs, we gathered women's input on prototypes, based on testing in real-life situations. As a result, we have created products that are acceptable and comfortable for women and their partners.

In partnership with the China Children and Teenagers' Fund and the Guangxi Women's Federation, PATH designed and implemented the Spring Bud Healthy Development Project to empower disadvantaged rural girls and enhance their health and well-being. This project added health and life-planning skills training to an existing program. The modules addressed gender equity, self-esteem, decision-making, health, and development. Project staff also implemented a curriculum for out-of-school youth. Over two years, the project reached 126 schools and more than 85,000 girls.

In Kenya's Coast Province, PATH worked with the Kenya Scouts Association (KSA) and local government agencies to reach adolescent Scouts, Scout leaders, and other community members with information and interactive discussions to stimulate critical thinking on topics relating

to gender norms, GBV, and communication between partners. The intervention led not only to significant positive changes in gender norms but also to increased girls' self-efficacy and decreased violence against girls. For junior Scouts, PATH and KSA developed a gender equity curriculum and badge that have been used countrywide.

RESEARCHING AND EVALUATING NEW APPROACHES

PATH conducts rigorous monitoring and evaluation, often using community-based participatory research, to identify effective approaches for transforming gender norms and preventing GBV. PATH was a core member of the research team for the 2005 *WHO Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women*, managing oversight for the study and providing technical assistance to country teams. This landmark study provides the first internationally comparable evidence on domestic violence and women's health in diverse settings and is recognized as a best practice example in this area. Advocates, policymakers, researchers, and media outlets worldwide have used the findings to bring attention to the heavy burden of domestic violence and to advocate for change.

PATH also led an evaluation of a PEPFAR initiative in Ethiopia, Namibia, and Tanzania that worked with men to challenge inequitable gender norms and redefine the way men interact with their partners. PATH used rigorous quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the impact of program interventions. We employed the innovative Gender Equitable Men Scale to assess changes in attitudes related to sexuality, relationships, violence, and health. Findings highlighted the value of engaging men to address gender dynamics around condom use, partner communication, and violence to help prevent HIV infection.

In Senegal, PATH is now assessing the impact of a community-based health and human rights program on levels of intimate partner violence and other forms of GBV. Qualitative and quantitative data will measure changes in gender-related attitudes, violent behaviors, and women's empowerment attributable to the intervention.

LOOKING AHEAD

PATH's extensive and wide-ranging experience in addressing gender inequities and gender-based violence will help us continue to develop solutions hand-in-hand with the communities that use them. Together, we will build a future where women, men, girls, and boys enjoy the same opportunities and realize their full potential.



PATH is an international nonprofit organization that transforms global health through innovation. We take an entrepreneurial approach to developing and delivering high-impact, low-cost solutions, from lifesaving vaccines and devices to collaborative programs with communities. Through our work in more than 70 countries, PATH and our partners empower people to achieve their full potential.

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