

Population Dynamics and Reproductive Health Research Theme

The Population Dynamics and Reproductive Health (PDRH) theme's overriding goal is provide scientific evidence and articulate policy and program priorities for sustainable population growth and improved reproductive health in sub-Saharan Africa. Work in the Population Dynamics theme is categorized into four sub-thematic areas namely, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Fertility and Population Growth, Maternal and Child Health, and Monitoring of Population and Reproductive Health Programs. Some of the projects being implemented under this theme are captured below.

Under the Sexual and Reproductive Health category, the team continued implementing the five year DFID funded research program on sexual and reproductive health and rights. Under this program, which is implemented in partnership with the Institute of Development Studies (Sussex), London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, BRAC University and INDEPTH Network, the theme carried out a number of dissemination activities and engaged policy makers (including parliamentarians) in Eastern and Southern Africa. Under this program, the theme also carried out a number of projects and activities including: scoping study on use of menstrual cups by young women; study on gender based violence; and assessment of how various organizations are dealing with challenges related to the interface between research, policy, and practice.

Other projects that the theme implemented in this category include:

- Family planning needs of HIV discordant couples (funded by WHO)
- Masculinity project to understand how men and boys in slum settlements realize their masculinity, and interrogate the implications for health and wellbeing (funded by Ford Foundation)
- Global Research Training in Population and Health – to improve the research capacity of junior scholars in population studies and public health (funded by NIH Fogarty through the University of Colorado)

Under the Fertility and Population Growth component the theme provided leadership in producing the first ever comparative study monograph on fertility involving 25 INDEPTH Network DSS sites. The book will be finalized during the first quarter of 2010. The theme also initiated another comparative study involving five DSS sites to understand the impact of birth intervals on child survival. The theme successfully completed implementation of the project on Reproductive Norms in Nigeria (funded by Packard Foundation) and initiated a new project on abortion and unwanted pregnancies among the urban poor in Nairobi (funded by DFID through Ipas). Apart from these structured research projects, theme members and other researchers at the Center carried out extensive analyses of other secondary data, wrote papers for publication, and made conference and policy-oriented presentations on various aspects of fertility and population dynamics in Africa.

The theme remains committed to expanding the scope of the Center's work on population dynamics and has embarked on development of proposals to seek funding for this work in the coming year, including forming a panel of African scholars to re-visit the application of various fertility transition theories on Africa. As noted above, the Population Dynamics theme members provided leadership in the implementation of the UPHD's Maternal and Child Health project.

Under the Monitoring of Population and Reproductive Health Programs category, a major milestone was achieved with the approval and initiation of a six-year program – the Gates funded Measurement, Learning & Evaluation program that APHRC will implement in partnership with the University of North Carolina and the Population Reference Bureau. The primary objective of the program is to monitor and evaluate the impact of the Urban Reproductive Health Initiative within and across target

countries (Nigeria, Kenya, Senegal, and India). This project is very central to the Center's mission and efforts to expand the regional scope of its work, expand its partnership base around the continent, and increase emphasis on implementation research and projects that provide evidence on how to address development challenges. Another major project that the theme developed and initiated is a Packard Foundation funded three-year project seeking to reverse the stall in contraceptive use and fertility in Western and Nyanza provinces in Kenya. APHRC is working with Great Lakes University of Kisumu to monitor and evaluate the impact of the interventions to be implemented by Marie Stopes-Kenya and the Family Health Options of Kenya. The long-term nature of the Gates and Packard evaluation projects will also help to stabilize and consolidate the Population Dynamics theme's activities and reduce fragmentation. Under this category, the theme also completed the following projects:

- Ten-year Evaluation of the Packard Population Program in Ethiopia
- Assessment of the Maputo Program of Action – baseline study to assess the progress of nine African countries in implementing the Maputo Plan of Action (funded by IPPF).

Over the next year and beyond, the Population Dynamics theme's priorities include: development of a new long-term program to replace the DFID realizing rights program (which is ending next year), developing a new program to focus on fertility and population growth, and implementation of the ongoing projects.