

USAID: Investing in People

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Global Health

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) programs in global health represent the commitment and determination of the U.S. government to prevent suffering, save lives, and create a brighter future for families in the developing world. USAID's objective is to improve global health, including child, maternal, and reproductive health, and reduce abortion and disease, especially HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis.

The Bureau for Global Health (GH) supports field health programs, advances research and innovation in selected areas relevant to overall Agency health objectives, and transfers new technologies to the field through its own staff work, coordination with other donors, and a portfolio of grants and contracts with an annual budget in excess of \$1.6 billion. Global health issues have global consequences that not only affect citizens of developing nations, but also directly affect the interests of American citizens.

HIV/AIDS

The U.S. government has made the fight against HIV/AIDS a top priority, not only for humanitarian reasons, but also because the HIV/AIDS crisis threatens the prosperity, stability, and development of nations around the world. USAID began its HIV/AIDS programs in 1986 and is now a key partner in the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the largest commitment ever by any nation for an international health initiative dedicated to a single disease. The Emergency Plan is a \$15 billion multifaceted approach to combating the disease in more than 120 countries, using the largest and most diverse HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment strategy in the world. Through the New Partners Initiative, the Emergency Plan is providing \$200 million to faith- and community-based organizations for HIV/AIDS prevention and care services. In addition, the Supply Chain Management System is an Emergency Plan-funded project administered by USAID that is helping host nations increase the capacity to deliver an uninterrupted supply of essential HIV/AIDS medicines and supplies. Currently, USAID implements more than 60 percent of Emergency Plan programs.

Child Survival

Most preventable child deaths are from malnutrition, diarrhea, pneumonia, infections of newborns, and malaria. The United States has contributed more than \$1.5 billion in the last five years to treat almost five billion episodes of child diarrhea with lifesaving oral rehydration therapy, reducing deaths from diarrheal disease by more than half since 1990. USAID also supports zinc supplementation to decrease the duration and severity of diarrheal diseases in children under age 5. Studies have demonstrated that an inexpensive 7- to 10-day course of 20-mg zinc supplements can reduce diarrhea severity by 40 percent and its duration by 20 percent, while also reducing the likelihood of future occurrences. Zinc is also a part of USAID-supported food fortification initiatives. Almost half a billion children have received basic immunizations, and more than 375 million cases of child pneumonia were treated by health workers. Child malnutrition has been reduced by 25 percent to 1 in 4, and an estimated 500,000 children were saved last year by micronutrient supplementation. In the developing world, these efforts and others save the lives of 6 million children under age 5 each year.

Maternal Health

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Each year, more than 500,000 women die from pregnancy and childbirth-related complications, and an additional 15 to 20 million women suffer debilitating consequences of pregnancy. USAID has sharpened its focus on a set of effective interventions targeting specific high-mortality complications of pregnancy and birth - hemorrhage, hypertension, infections, anemia, and prolonged labor. Across all USAID-assisted countries, deliveries attended by skilled health workers have increased from an average of 37 percent in 1990 to 50 percent today.

Family Planning

USAID is the acknowledged leader in implementing the United States' global population program and leveraging support from other donors. USAID delivers family planning assistance to more than 65 countries through a combination of over 470 local organizations, universities, private companies, and faith-based groups. As a result of the U.S. voluntary family planning program, more than 50 million couples in the developing world now use family planning. Over the past 20 years in USAID-assisted countries, voluntary family planning use has increased from 15 percent to 38 percent, and the average number of children per family has declined from six to four. Because couples can plan their births, families are better able to feed, clothe, educate, and provide health care for their children. Family planning has also dramatically reduced abortion in the countries USAID assists.

Newborn Health

Each year, 4 million newborns die in the first four weeks of life, accounting for 40 percent of all deaths among children under the age of 5. USAID assists newborn care programs in 27 countries, covering the full spectrum of approaches, ranging from community-based activities to outreach and clinic care.

Polio

In 2005, USAID-supported polio campaigns immunized more than 350 million children under age 5 in Africa and Asia. The Polio Eradication Initiative has saved five million children from death or paralysis, who will now have productive lives free from disability and disfigurement.

Tuberculosis

About 1.6 million people die each year due to tuberculosis. The United States is working to eliminate tuberculosis (TB) as a public health threat to humankind and over the past six years has helped to provide effective treatment for 10 million people with TB in 78 countries. USAID is committed to addressing the global burden of TB in close collaboration with global, regional, and developing country partners. In 1998, USAID developed a focused program on TB as part of its new strategy to expand efforts to address infectious and reemerging diseases. Since 1998, resources available for TB have increased each year and now total over \$408 million in funding. USAID's goal is to make a significant contribution to global, regional, and national efforts to prevent and control TB and to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with the disease. USAID is strengthening the ability of countries most affected by TB to expand the use of proven and cost-effective interventions.

Avian Influenza

Outbreaks of avian influenza (AI) intensified in Southeast Asia in 2005, spreading to other regions, carrying with them an ever-present risk of a deadly global flu pandemic in humans. Along with partners in the international community and the U.S. Government, USAID launched an aggressive global response to the AI threat, providing urgent assistance and support to help a number of countries prevent and contain outbreaks. Fifty-five countries are receiving support from USAID for AI task forces and preparedness plans, 25 of which are targeting development and improvement of animal veterinary capacity. USAID is also promoting better biosecurity practices in poultry-raising settings in 20 countries and supporting AI-related communications. Most notably, poultry outbreaks in Thailand and Vietnam - which accounted for 88 percent of outbreaks between 2003 and 2005 - were reduced dramatically in 2006. Poultry outbreaks fell from more than 1,500 in 2005 to just 209 in 2006, and human cases dropped from 75 to three over the same period.

Immunization

Immunization programs represent one of the great public health success stories for USAID. The Agency has provided technical and commodity assistance to more than 100 countries in support of child immunization programs.

USAID Fact Sheet

This assistance has been directed at increasing demand for immunization services, training health workers, strengthening planning capacity, improving the quality of services delivered, and upgrading vaccine logistics. USAID is also working closely with its international partners to bring more attention to this important child health intervention and generate greater resources, from both the public and private sectors, to help countries improve their capacity to deliver lifesaving vaccines. A major element in this effort has been USAID's participation in the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization and the Vaccine Fund as well as collaboration with private sector groups such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. USAID remains committed to providing technical support to national immunization programs through the "Boost Immunization Initiative" bilateral and regional programs and support for nongovernmental and private voluntary organizations.

Safe Water

About 1.6 million children under age 5 died last year from diarrheal diseases caused by unsafe water and sanitation in developing countries, and millions more were put at significant risk of exposure to water-borne infections, such as cholera, typhoid fever, and dysentery. Household-level or point-of-use (POU) chlorination is one approach that has been tested on a national scale and has a demonstrated public health impact on diarrhea at a low cost, allowing for wide coverage. USAID is promoting two approaches to POU chlorination: the Safe Water System, developed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and PuR, developed by Procter and Gamble. These disinfection technologies have been shown to reduce disease and death from 35 to 50 percent.

Food Fortification

More than 2 billion people worldwide have insufficient intake of zinc, vitamin A, iron, and iodine, which are now being added to processed foods such as rice and sugar under USAID-supported programs. USAID is improving the micronutrient content of basic foods by expanding research into supplementation and the development and dissemination of biofortified crops. This research includes investigation of vitamin A-, iron-, and zinc-enhanced maize; iron- and zinc-enhanced beans; and vitamin A-enhanced sweet potatoes. In 2005, USAID supported 22 food fortification programs with the potential to reach nearly 500 million people in 19 countries.