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# ASSESSMENT OF THE BRIDGE PROJECT

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## ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
BRIDGE	Bringing Information to Decisionmakers for Global Effectiveness
CA	Cooperating agency
CoP	Community of Practice
CS	Contraceptive security
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
D-NY	Democrat – New York
FGM/C	Female genital mutilation and cutting
FHI	Family Health International
FP	Family planning
GBV	Gender -based violence
GH	Global Health Bureau, USAID
GH Tech	Global Health Technical Assistance Project
GLP	Global Leadership Priority
HIDN	Health, Infectious Disease and Nutrition Office
HPN	Health, Population and Nutrition
IGWG	Interagency Gender Working Group
IR	Intermediate Result
JSI	John Snow International
KENPOP	Kenya Population
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NCAPD	National Coordinating Agency on Population and Development
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
OHA	HIV/AIDS Office, USAID
PAA	Population Association of America
PATH	Program for Appropriate Technologies for Health
PEC	Policy, Evaluation, and Communication Division, USAID
PHE	Population, health, environment
POP	Population
PRB	Population Reference Bureau
PRH	Population and Reproductive Health Office, USAID
RH	Reproductive health
SAGA	Semi-autonomous governmental organization

SO	Strategic Objective
TA	Technical assistance
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WE	Women's Edition

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Global Health (GH) Office of Population and Reproductive Health (PRH) Policy Evaluation and Communication Division (PEC) commissioned this final assessment of the Bringing Information to Decisionmakers for Global Effectiveness (BRIDGE) Project. It has two major tasks: (1) determine the extent to which the BRIDGE project has achieved its strategic objective and intermediate results (IRs) and (2) determine the contributions of the Population Reference Bureau (PRB) and the BRIDGE project to PRH and family planning/ reproductive health. The assessment team interviewed over 70 informants, analyzed surveys of over 890 beneficiaries, reviewed documents and publications, and prepared two case studies.

The BRIDGE Project's Strategic Objective is: **Contribute to improved health, population, and nutrition policies and programs through effective policy-learning activities.** It accomplishes this through IR1: Effective dissemination of health, population, and nutrition information to priority policy audiences supported; IR2: Quantity and quality of news coverage of key health, population, and nutrition issues enhanced; and IR3: Individual and institutional capacity to disseminate policy-relevant health, population, and nutrition (HPN) data and information strengthened. BRIDGE, a global project, was based on an unsolicited proposal and awarded to the Population Reference Bureau on September 27, 2003, as a 5-year cooperative agreement for \$9.5 million. In June 2007 the agreement was extended until September 30, 2010, and the budget increased to \$16.2 million.

## FINDINGS

**The BRIDGE project is well-designed and has contributed to significant improvements in FP/RH policies and programs:** The BRIDGE project closes the gap between FP/RH policy and research. The project has trained 65 researchers to effectively communicate their research to policy makers; developed and disseminated over 184 information products in formats and languages that clearly present the policy implications of FP/RH data and research; trained 349 FP/RH champions to successfully advocate for better FP/RH policies and programs; and increased the quantity and quality of FP/RH media coverage—at least 1,510 articles can be attributed to the project. All these activities have raised awareness of FP/RH issues among both policy makers and general audiences and improved the use of quality data in FP/RH policy making and program planning. While it is difficult to directly attribute policy and program improvements to these activities, there are examples of direct impact, such as the legislation against female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C) in Enugu State, Nigeria, which resulted from the advocacy of BRIDGE trainee Edith Mwamguma.

**PRB's approach to implementing the BRIDGE project has maximized its impact:** **Leveraging donor funds** has made project electronic dissemination more effective, increased the project's training and publication capacity, and enhanced the skills of its staff. For example, PRB matched USAID funding dollar for dollar in putting together the *2008 Annual World Population Data Sheet*. BRIDGE further maximizes project impact by **sharing with other cooperating agencies (CAs) the costs** of outreach events, publications, and trainings. Finally, BRIDGE has built a **cadre of regional policy communication trainers** that it uses to provide cost effective south-to-south technical assistance and training.

**BRIDGE has effectively supported dissemination of health, population, and nutrition information to priority policy audiences:** BRIDGE policy communication strategies get the right information to the right audiences. The project has created over 184 informational products that present data and research, their policy implications, and actionable policy solutions in formats that reach policymakers. BRIDGE publications like *Family Planning Saves Lives*, the *So What?* report, and the *Repositioning Family Planning: Guidelines for Advocacy Action* toolkit have been widely disseminated and used to advocate for FP/RH programs and improve FP/RH policies. The most requested publications are the *2007* and *2008 World Population Data Sheets*.

BRIDGE has a track record of gathering the best information, working easily with researchers to synthesize and clearly present technical concepts, and effectively communicating policy solutions to nontechnical audiences. However, there is some concern about the project's ability to sustain that track record. Topics of publications, which are selected through an ad hoc rather than strategic process, include gender, FGM/C, population health and environment (PHE), repositioning FP, contraceptive security, youth, and poverty and equity. BRIDGE responds to the changing information needs of its policy audiences by issuing more regional and topic-specific publications, more content-rich policy briefs and web articles, and fewer in-depth reports.

BRIDGE disseminates information to a diverse audience by using multiple channels. It has a conventional mail list of 17,700 and an electronic listserv of over 11,000 as well as using the PRB website. Visits to this award-winning website, which is updated twice a month, tripled after 2007, reaching 1.3 million visits in 2008. So far BRIDGE has also disseminated over 496,000 print copies and over 535,000 electronic copies of its publications. While demand for electronic copies is high, BRIDGE continues to print key publications because priority policy audiences, particularly in Africa, prefer them. BRIDGE publications, especially the data sheets, can be found in clinics and offices in remote locations all over the world. Reportedly, some are seen by as many as 1,000 people a year. Finally, BRIDGE disseminates FP/RH information through high-profile events, its Policy Communication Seminars, on-line audiocasts, and lectures. BRIDGE is experimenting with ways to reach new audiences through such formats as audiocast interviews, webcasts, webinars, online events, online discussions, and blogs.

**BRIDGE has enhanced the quantity and quality of news coverage of HPN issues through its unique and highly valued approach of mentoring journalists:** BRIDGE works with global media by organizing publicity events and press coverage to announce new publications and disseminate conference proceedings. It also supports four networks of experienced journalists and editors as “go-to groups” for reporting on FP/RH issues. BRIDGE builds their knowledge of FP/RH, improves the quality of their reporting, and strengthens their ability to use data. BRIDGE's unique approach of working with journalists for one and two years and forming professional networks through which they mentor one another has resulted in improved, expanded, and continuous reporting on FP/RH issues.

BRIDGE also supports journalists who report on international conferences, serve as trainers in Policy Communication Seminars, and report on the FP/RH activities of other CAs. Journalists who work with BRIDGE become committed FP/RH champions; though their number is limited, their impact is substantial. For example, the 12 media professionals who participated in the global network, Women's Edition (WE), in 2007 reached an audience of 67 million and produced hundreds of news reports, supplements, and radio and TV programs on FP/RH issues. Several received awards and promotions. This improved media coverage not only informs policy makers and general audiences but also often compels them to act. For example, the daughter of the president of Malawi asked how she could help to develop “safe houses” for rape victims after reading an article by a WE journalist.

**BRIDGE has built up individual capacity to disseminate policy-relevant HPN data and information and shaped future FP/RH leaders:** Through thorough recruiting efforts, BRIDGE selects trainees who are committed to FP/RH issues and become active advocates and FP/RH leaders. BRIDGE has trained 349 FP/RH champions in its Policy Communication Seminars, building their advocacy and policy communication skills while at the same time improving their understanding of critical FP/RH issues such as gender-based violence (GBV), repositioning FP, FGM/C, and PHE linkages. Of the 65 doctoral candidates from developing countries who participated in the Policy Communication Fellows program, more than 30 presented their research to policymakers after the training. The International Program Fellows make valued contributions to USAID directly, and several have continued to make important contributions through positions with organizations working on FP/RH.

**BRIDGE has reinforced institutional capacity to disseminate policy-relevant HPN data and information:** Over the last six-years, BRIDGE revitalized Kenya's National Coordinating Agency for Population and Development (NCAPD) from a "moribund institution" to an important contributor to Kenya's RH program by reorienting it toward a multisectoral approach and helping it to become a semi-autonomous government agency. Currently the NCAPD partners with other CAs, is a major advocate for FP/RH issues in Kenya, and through its quarterly newsletter and website gathers, synthesizes, and shares research and lessons learned among local FP/RH programs. Recently, it presented successful policy communications workshops for 36–40 Kenyan health professionals. NCAPD staff praised BRIDGE highly for its partnership approach, thorough work, and excellent follow-up. They thought that BRIDGE's work could serve as a model for other national FP/RH programs.

**PRB and BRIDGE have made major contributions to both PRH and the FP/RH community more generally:** BRIDGE has made valued contributions to PRH by supporting several of its global leadership priorities (GLP). BRIDGE is a lead partner both in gender activities, providing comprehensive support and knowledge management to the Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG), and in promoting population, health, and environment (PHE) linkages. It has also contributed to contraceptive security, repositioning FP, youth, and FGM/C work by creating publications and organizing outreach events and trainings. GLP champions request BRIDGE support because the project does good work and is "easy to work with," "responsive," and "a value for money." BRIDGE also provides useful support to the field through its widely used publications. Finally, it has implemented a comprehensive country program in Kenya, with which both the Mission and the local partner, the NCAPD, are extremely satisfied.

PRB has earned and maintains a reputation for successfully gathering, synthesizing, and translating data and research into easy-to-use, policy-relevant messages; reaching policymakers with those messages; and using the media effectively to reach policymakers and general audiences. As an independent organization respected by the academic and research communities, PRB collaborates effectively with researchers to broker information and help them communicate the relevance of their work to policymakers. PRB and BRIDGE have increased access to demographic data and research by crafting easy-to-use tools, such as wall charts, data sheets, and the web-based Data Finder and InfoShare, and becoming a source respected for high-quality data. PRB and BRIDGE have helped increase and improve the quality of media reporting on FP/RH issues and building the capacity and effectiveness of FP/RH advocates. Finally, together they have provided leadership in advancing gender and PHE linkages.



# I. INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSESSMENT

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Global Health (GH) Office of Population and Reproductive Health (PRH) Policy Evaluation and Communication Division (PEC) commissioned this final assessment of the Bringing Information to Decisionmakers for Global Effectiveness (BRIDGE) Project. BRIDGE contributes worldwide to improved health, population, and nutrition (HPN) policies and programs by implementing effective policy-learning activities, such as

- gathering, synthesizing, and translating data and research into policy-relevant information;
- packaging the information and communicating it to inform family planning (FP) and reproductive health (RH) policy making and program planning;
- building the capacity of researchers to communicate the policy relevance of their research and recommend policy actions to decision makers;
- building the capacity of media professionals to understand and communicate the importance of FP/RH issues to their readers; increase their coverage of FP/RH issues; and use data to improve the quality of their reporting;
- building the capacity of FP/RH champions to form coalitions, participate in policy dialogue, and promote policy reform; and, finally,
- building the capacity of host country institutions to implement policy-learning activities.

This final assessment has Two tasks:

1. Determine the extent to which the BRIDGE project has achieved its strategic objective (SO) and intermediate results (IRs).
2. Determine the contributions of the Population Reference Bureau (PRB) and the BRIDGE project to PRH and the FP/RH sector in general.

## METHODOLOGY

The assessment team had three members. The team leader has extensive experience in the design, management, and evaluation of FP/RH policy projects; the evaluation specialist is a communications expert with extensive experience developing, implementing, and evaluating FP/RH media and advocacy programs; and the research associate has solid experience in conducting interviews, analyzing data, and evaluating FP/RH activities.

The use of both quantitative and qualitative methods responds to the requirements of the scope of work from USAID/PRH (Appendix A). Activities included:

- **Interviews:** The team interviewed more than 70 people (Appendix B), among them:
  - BRIDGE project staff (9)
  - PRB corporate staff (2)
  - USAID/W staff: GH/PRH (18), Regional Bureau (1), GH/HIV/AIDS Office (OHA, 2), and the GH Health, Infectious Diseases, and Nutrition Office (HIDN, 1)

- USAID mission staff : Tanzania (1), Kenya (1), and Uganda (1)—BRIDGE has provided conducted extensive technical assistance (TA) in these countries. Information was collected from another 48 mission staff through a web-based survey.
- Other donors funding PRB (7)
- Partners and collaborating agencies (22)
- BRIDGE beneficiaries—BRIDGE media trainees (6). Web-based surveys gathered additional information from recipients of BRIDGE materials and training.

Guides used to conduct the interviews were drafted by the assessment team and reviewed by the USAID BRIDGE management team. Interviews were conducted in person and by phone.

- **Document review:** The team reviewed project documents, a sample of BRIDGE publications, and other relevant materials (Appendix C).
- **Web-based surveys:** The team analyzed results of nine web-based surveys conducted through Survey Monkey. The surveys were designed by PRH/PEC to collect information on (1) the usefulness of BRIDGE publications and training; 2) respondents’ use of BRIDGE information; and (3) views on additional information or training respondents would like to receive. Opportunities for in-depth data analysis were limited by questionnaire design and software constraints. Data were collected from
  - members of BRIDGE’s Listserv (English, 279; Spanish, 245; and French, 97)
  - members of the Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG) Listserv (93) and community of practice (CoP) (25)
  - East African journalists (11)
  - Women’s Edition (WE) journalists (24)
  - members of the population, health, and environment (PHE) network (5)
  - former Policy Communication Fellows (42)
  - HPN officers (48)
  - alumni of the Gender-Based Violence [GBV] Policy Communications Training Seminar (22)
- **Case studies of two BRIDGE publications:** Each BRIDGE publication has a unique trajectory of development and use. The team studied two publications, one data-rich and one interpretive, to assess how BRIDGE gathers and synthesizes information; formats and finalizes information presentation; produces, launches, and distributes publications; and monitors and evaluates publication impact. Criteria specified by the assessment team were used by BRIDGE staff and the BRIDGE management team to select the two publications

This report presents the views of many individuals who have worked with PRB and BRIDGE staff and benefited from their work. Due to the variety of BRIDGE activities and the wide range of partners with which its staff collaborate, the team selected a mix of interviewees who have worked with the project on publications, trainings, and media activities and donors who support PRB activities that complement those of BRIDGE. They were universally willing to participate.

To assess the views of the ultimate beneficiaries of BRIDGE’s work—trainees and recipients of its publications—the team used data from web-based surveys, the project’s own monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools, and interviews with beneficiaries. This report does not assess the technical content of project publications because BRIDGE has an M&E process for assuring the quality of its work. No field work was conducted for this assessment.



## II. BRIDGE PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

### OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

The BRIDGE project is a cooperative agreement that works globally to improve HPN policies and programs through effective policy-learning activities. USAID awarded it to PRB for an unsolicited proposal on September 27, 2003. The agreement was for \$9.5 million over a five-year period. In June 2007 the agreement was extended through September 30, 2010, and the budget increased to \$16.2 million.

The SO of the BRIDGE Project is to contribute to improved HPN policies and programs through effective policy-learning activities. Three IRs contribute to this SO:

IR1: Effective dissemination of HPN information to priority policy audiences supported

IR2: Quantity and quality of news coverage of key HPN issues enhanced

IR3: Individual and institutional capacity to disseminate policy-relevant HPN data and information strengthened

BRIDGE contributes to GH's SO1, **advance and support voluntary FP and RH programs worldwide by contributing to IR1, global leadership**, demonstrated in FP policy, advocacy, and services. It does this by strengthening evidence-based policy development, global advocacy, and agenda-setting. BRIDGE also contributes to IR 2, **knowledge generated, organized, and disseminated in response to program needs**. It does this by gathering, synthesizing, packaging, and disseminating knowledge to improve evidence-based FP/RH policy making and program planning. Finally, BRIDGE contributes to IR3, **support provided to the field to implement effective and sustainable FP programs** by providing publications and data and building the capacity of policy champions, policy makers, and program managers in the field to use information to improve FP/RH policies and programs.

### CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVED HPN POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

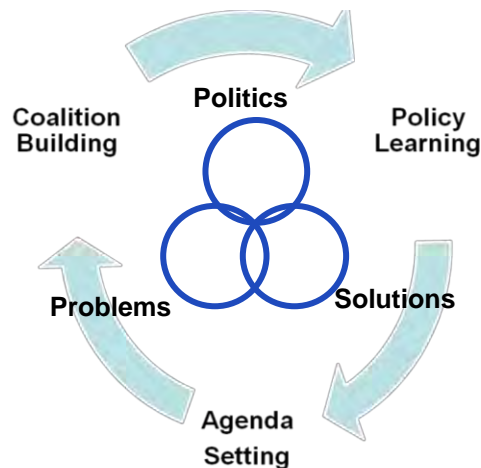
For several decades PRB has provided reliable and consistent data and has earned a far-reaching and loyal audience. Interview respondents invariably considered PRB to be an “independent,” “trusted source of reliable” and “up-to-date” data. One said that PRB “has the ability to look across research coming from multiple sources and all sectors to identify critical links.” The majority also noted that PRB has “good relations with the media” and is trusted by academics. Finally, they thought that PRB publications “serve an important need” for “general overviews” of technical concepts. Two donor representatives volunteered that “PRB has the ability to get the right information to the right people.” The success of BRIDGE's work is built on these qualities.

BRIDGE project policy-learning activities bridge the gap between technicians who collect data and conduct research and nontechnical data users who make policies that affect programs. BRIDGE's unique ability to do this stems from PRB's experience as a respected independent information broker that collaborates effectively with other groups and can translate complex material into easy-to-use formats for nontechnical and policy audiences. BRIDGE thus fills a useful niche in providing readily understandable high-quality information to nonspecialist audiences.

Figure 1 shows how this information contributes to policy formulation. BRIDGE works with partners and beneficiaries to identify problems that should be on the policy agenda; gathers data and research to describe the problems; identifies solutions and policy actions to address them; and

then communicates this information to policy makers to raise their awareness and understanding of problems and solutions, and what they can do to address the problems. The policymakers then engage in debate, consensus building, and policy reform. The process is continuous as policymakers constantly move in and out of the policy dialogue.

**Figure 1. BRIDGE's Approach to Policy Formulation**



**Focusing attention to get a problem on the policy agenda:** BRIDGE staff gather, review, and synthesize knowledge to identify critical problems, knowledge gaps, and policy solutions. They collaborate closely with data producers (Macro DHS and the Carolina Population Center); research organizations (Family Health International [FHI], Population Council, Appropriate Technologies for Health [PATH], John Snow International [JSI]); and policy projects (the Futures Group). They work with researchers, including the 65 alumni of their Policy Communication Fellows program, and with FP/RH advocates, including the 349 alumni of their Policy Communication Training Seminars. BRIDGE staff participate in technical meetings, and since the project began they have undertaken 196 outreach activities. They participate in professional groups like the IGWG; the USAID Bureau for Africa RH Working Group; and the Repositioning Family Planning Steering Committee, frequently taking leadership positions. Currently BRIDGE and PATH co-chair the GBV subcommittee of the IGWG. Staff also network with the international donor, academic, and research communities. All BRIDGE staff also implement activities funded by other donors, through which they gain experience and insight that informs their USAID-funded work. Thus they stay informed of critical issues, identify opportunities for exchange and collaboration, and identify information that decision-makers need.

Critical issues BRIDGE has helped to put on the FP/RH policy agenda include gender; FGM/C; population, health, and environment (PHE); repositioning FP; contraceptive security; youth; and poverty and equity.

To package and disseminate knowledge BRIDGE has published more than 184 products in different formats and languages (Appendix A, Annex 2). The formats may be either data-rich (11 data sheets in multiple languages) or interpretive (25 policy briefs and 11 reports and CD-ROMS in multiple languages, and 2 toolkits). The most requested BRIDGE publications are the *2007 World Population Data Sheet* (22,531 print copies distributed and 148,654 downloaded electronically) and the *2008 World Population Data Sheet* (14,270 print copies distributed and 87,192 downloads). Interviewees observed that BRIDGE data sheets can be found in clinics and

offices in remote locations throughout the world, and an average of more than 1,000 people reportedly see some copies of the *2008 World Population Data Sheet*.

BRIDGE publications are used by advocates for FP/RH programs, planners, and teachers. BRIDGE often receives feedback from users via bounce-back questionnaires describing how the information has been used. For example, representatives of the David and Lucille Packard Foundation and of Save the Children in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, wrote that they use the 2008 *Family Planning Worldwide Data Sheet* as references for program planning and advocacy.

BRIDGE extends the reach of its information by engaging the media. The release of the *2008 World Population Data Sheet* was announced through organized press coverage that included a briefing carried on the Associated Press Financial Wire, Worldstream, and AP Online. Additional coverage was provided by Brazil's *VEJA* magazine, CNBC Africa, Yonhap (South Korea), USNEWS.com, Mexico's EFE News Service, and BBC Worldwide Monitoring.

BRIDGE not only disseminates information through global media outlets but also increases and improves reporting on FP/RH issues in the developing world by supporting four journalist networks. The 12 media professionals BRIDGE supported in 2007 through its global network, Women's Edition (WE), reached 67 million readers. Through their work with BRIDGE, the journalists become committed and effective FP/RH champions. For example, after attending a seminar held in conjunction with the Women Deliver conference in Africa, a WE participant from Peru debriefed Peru's Minister of Women's Affairs on the conference. A Ghanaian participant was asked by the Ghanaian Minister of Women's Affairs to help organize a follow-up to the conference that resulted in a daylong program moderated by the presidential advisor on HIV/AIDS and RH. Another Ghanaian WE journalist was recognized by local health officials for her extensive reporting on safe pregnancy issues.

**Building coalitions to sustain attention to an issue:** BRIDGE builds and supports networks of FP/RH champions around the world. It coordinates and supports the IGWG, a network of professionals working to ensure that FP/RH programs address gender issues. Since 1993 PRB, now through BRIDGE, has worked with global FP/RH media networks like WE. BRIDGE also supports regional networks like the RH journalist networks in East and West Africa; a national RH journalist network in Haiti; a 175-member network of PHE champions; and the East African PHE network, which promotes integration of PHE activities. Finally, BRIDGE has formed alumni networks of its Policy Fellows and Policy Communication seminar participants.

BRIDGE keeps these networks connected by maintaining and monitoring listservs; posting pertinent information on its web site; bringing people together for technical meetings; informing them of opportunities for collaboration; giving media professionals the latest data; and connecting trainees with professional opportunities. The networks often yield far-reaching and unexpected benefits: in 2007 Molly Melching, the head of the Tostan project, sent BRIDGE a letter she had received from a woman in Mumbai, India, who wrote that people should know that FGM/C was practiced not only in Africa but also in India. PRB forwarded the letter to an Indian editor, a WE alumna, who ran a four-page spread in her magazine on FGM/C in India. All the networks have resulted in participants pursuing new areas of research, finding new professional opportunities, exchanging information about issues and research, and supporting each other to keep issues high on the policy agenda.

**Increasing policymakers' knowledge about an issue:** To ensure that information is reaching priority audiences, BRIDGE strategic communication plans use multiple, mutually reinforcing, information products to reach both its primary audience of policy makers and program planners and its secondary audience of those who influence policy makers, such as researchers, academics, media, and advocates. BRIDGE disseminates information through numerous channels, including

its conventional mail list of 17,700; an electronic listserv of over 11,000, through which information can be pushed out to users; and its web site, which is updated twice monthly and received over 1.3 million visits in 2008, and from which information can be pulled by a very wide audience.

BRIDGE also disseminates information about FP/RH issues through high-profile events and its Policy Communication Seminars, and regularly hosts, both on-line and in person, lectures and audiocasts. In 2004 the project organized a congressional briefing, a symposium, and a media briefing on FGM/C. These activities strengthened a coalition working to eradicate FGM/C and led to formation of a donor working group. Recently, BRIDGE audiocast an interview with Molly Melching of Tostan. After only three weeks, as many as 30,000 people around the world had accessed the on-line discussion. BRIDGE effectively organizes events that draw the attention of diverse audiences, such as experts, to contribute to the policy debate and that raise awareness of FP/RH priorities.

Through the work of BRIDGE policymakers learn about an issue, learn why the issue is relevant to them, and, most important, learn what they can do to address it. Often the knowledge BRIDGE provides is so compelling that policymakers take action. For example, after attending the congressional briefing on FGC/M, the office of Congressman Eliot Engel (D-NY) office called to ask what he could do. After a Policy Communication seminar a participant successfully advocated for legislative reform in her home state of Enugu, Nigeria. After attending a WE seminar in Johannesburg, a Malawian journalist wrote a story comparing some of South Africa's —best practices" with the little that was done in Malawi. After her story ran the daughter of Malawi's president's told the reporter she wanted to be involved in efforts to create a one-stop rape-crisis center like those in South Africa. While it is difficult to directly link the work of BRIDGE with specific policy reforms, there is no doubt that it makes an important contribution to an enabling environment that fosters informed policy making.

### **Characteristics of BRIDGE's Work that Expand Its Impact**

**BRIDGE leverages donor support:** PRB staff leverage funds by working on a variety of projects supported by different donors. For example, PRB cost-shares production of the *Annual World Population Data Sheets* with multiple donors, matching USAID support dollar for dollar. PRB also supports research of the Policy Communications Fellows with funding from several donors and uses BRIDGE funds to reinforce their abilities to communicate the results of that research. Gates Foundation funding has enhanced PRB's ability to electronically disseminate information, which directly benefits BRIDGE. And as PRB staff progress in applying state-of-the-art dynamic multimedia presentation technologies with the ENGAGE Project, they will apply the lessons learned to BRIDGE activities. The synergy of these investments maximizes the impact of USAID funds and increases the value of each dollar of funding.

**BRIDGE collaborates to maximize impact:** BRIDGE collaborates extensively and where possible cost-shares with partners and stakeholders on publications, trainings, and events. For example, it joined its expertise in FP policy advocacy and communication training with AFRICA 2010's knowledge of content and design to produce the new toolkit, *Repositioning Family Planning: Guidelines for Advocacy Action*. BRIDGE further leveraged resources by obtaining support for dissemination and use of the toolkit from the USAID Africa Bureau and the World Health Organization's West Africa Health Office.

BRIDGE collaborates extensively with other cooperating agencies (CAs) and has formed effective technical partnerships, particularly in its gender and PHE activities. It collaborates with research CAs like FHI, Population Council, and JSI to translate their work into easy-to-use publications. Researchers are comfortable collaborating with BRIDGE because they know that it

will communicate their work effectively. BRIDGE then uses the research as content for its seminars and media work. It invites CAs like the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) to participate in its journalist training so that journalists become aware of the data and eventually report on the research. BRIDGE collaborates very closely with PATH and the Futures Group in its support to the IGWG and has partnered with other CAs to organize events like the Contraceptive Security Conference in Senegal, organized with DELIVER.

**BRIDGE builds the capacity of regional trainers:** BRIDGE enhances the skills of trainees, journalists, and staff of partner institutions to become facilitators and trainers in BRIDGE Policy Communication Seminars. The project often uses WE journalists or former seminar participants as trainers, and also uses staff of long-time partner institutions like the National Coordinating Agency for Population and Development (NCAPD) in Kenya, Mahidol University in Thailand, and Makerere University in Uganda, as resources for regional training. This has reduced the cost of training, expanded the project's training capacity, and created a cadre of region policy communication trainers.



### III. IR1: EFFECTIVE DISSEMINATION OF HPN INFORMATION TO PRIORITY POLICY AUDIENCES SUPPORTED

BRIDGE is able to generate and synthesize information in a way that makes it the “right” information and to target and reach the “right” people. When asked about its materials, interviewees made comments like, “Oh PRB, I see their wall charts all over the world!” They noted that BRIDGE materials meet a real need for publications that present complex issues in very basic formats. Several respondents also noted that some PRB reference materials are so useful that they keep them posted in their office for easy reference, take them when they travel, use them as teaching aids and training materials, and recommend them as resources to researchers and students.

**Developing the “right” information:** Most interview respondents commented that the quality of BRIDGE final publications is quite high. While some felt the publications were too simplistic, the majority felt that they fill a serious need and are written at the appropriate level to successfully present complex information clearly and simply. Respondents also stated that BRIDGE publications complement the more complex policy research reports developed by other CAs like the HPI Project or Macro DHS. They agreed that BRIDGE publications present the best information available, and people trust the information because they know that PRB has verified it.

Deciding what to publish can happen in several ways:

1. BRIDGE reviews research, sometimes analyzing it in new ways and making new connections, identifies an information gap, and makes a proposal to USAID.
2. BRIDGE tracks releases of new data and recommends that a publication be updated.
3. A USAID Global Leadership Priority (GLP) champion identifies an information gap and requests BRIDGE’s services.
4. Another CA has trouble synthesizing research information into a general easy-to-use document, and USAID asks BRIDGE for assistance.
5. USAID turns to BRIDGE as a convenient mechanism for printing and distributing a publication.

The BRIDGE publication portfolio is therefore not strategic; it covers some issues more than others. USAID interviewees familiar with the process commented that BRIDGE should be more proactive in proposing publication ideas.

BRIDGE often receives requests to develop publications from GLP champions who say the project provides “value for money” and is very responsive. It also has a proven record of gathering the best information, working easily with experts to synthesize information in clear and simple ways that remain true to the technical concepts, and producing attractive publications that people want to read. Most interviewees praised BRIDGE’s ability to gather information, build consensus among a wide variety of contributors, and highlight the policy relevance of the information. However, interviewees who have recently worked with BRIDGE on publications, especially policy briefs, observed that at times the process has been frustrating, the quality of initial drafts has been uneven, and the review process has taken too long. While it was acknowledged that some first drafts were good, there were concerns that others were poorly written, did not clearly articulate the policy relevance of the information and lacked actionable

policy recommendations. USAID respondents acknowledged that high turnover of USAID management, confusing communication, changing expectations, and lengthy delays in reviews because of multiple reviewers and slow turnaround cause frustration. BRIDGE needs to improve its communication with USAID and its quality control process.

Interviewees and survey respondents expressed a clear preference for data-rich documents over policy briefs and reports. When asked to identify which BRIDGE publications are most helpful to them, 86.7% of BRIDGE Listserv members cited the *Annual World Population Data Sheets*, 64.4% cited topic-specific data sheets, 60.4% research reports, and 54.3% policy briefs. Of mission respondents, 92.6% selected the *Annual World Population Data Sheets*, 44.4% selected topic-specific data sheets, 18.5% research reports, and 18.5% policy briefs. One volunteered that the data sheets have been very useful in preparing briefings for the ambassador.

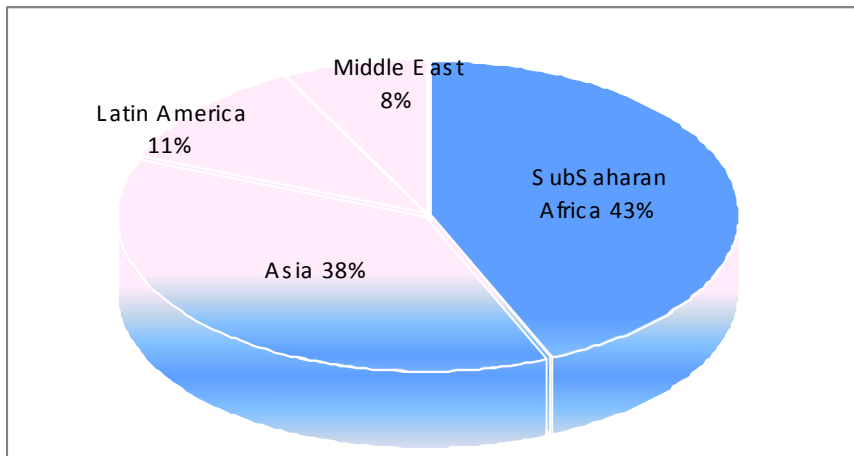
As seen in Table 1, the most frequently cited uses of BRIDGE publications were research, writing reports and speeches, and reference in daily work.

TABLE 1. TOP USES OF SELECTED BRIDGE PUBLICATIONS		
Publication Title	Respondents Finding the Publication Very Useful	Top Uses
Population & Economic Development Linkages 2007 Data Sheet (Eng., Fr., Sp.)	95%	Research (64%) Pass to library (60%) Writing reports/speeches (59%)
Family Planning Worldwide 2008 Data Sheet (Eng., Fr., Sp.)	93%	Reference in daily work (79%) Writing reports/speeches (79%) Pass to library (79%) Training (79%)
Ensuring a Wide Range of Family Planning Choices (Eng., Fr., Sp.)	92%	Reference in daily work (79%) Writing reports/speeches (79%) Pass to library (79%) Training (79%)
2008 World Population Data Sheet (Eng.)	95%	Writing reports/speeches (74%) Reference in daily work (66%) Research (60%)
Reproductive Health in Sub-Saharan Africa (Eng.)	85%	Research (78%) Writing reports/speeches (78%) Reference in daily work (76%)

**Reaching the “right” audiences:** Over the decades PRB has built up a very broad, diverse, and loyal audience, many of them primary policymakers, those who make and implement policies that shape FP/RH programs, and secondary policy makers, those who influence the primary policy makers. Target audiences include U.S. and international journalists, donors, government officials in the U.S. and the developing world, leaders of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the business community, religious leaders, and researchers and academic leaders. BRIDGE reaches these audiences through a variety of complementary and reinforcing formats. When the project recently released *Family Planning Saves Lives*, it issued notices on the PRB and USAID web sites, organized podcast interviews and on-line discussions of the report, and incorporated an announcement in the *USAID Repositioning Family Planning in Action E-Bulletin*.

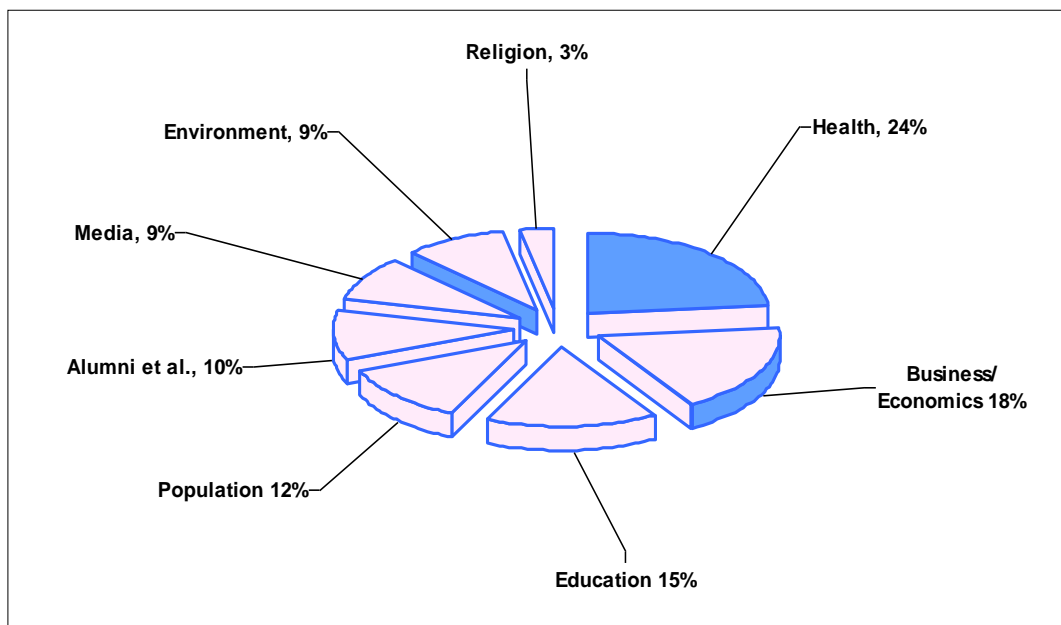
BRIDGE has conducted research to determine information needs of its target audiences and uses continuous bounce-back questionnaires to tailor publications to meet their needs. The research has consistently demonstrated that while many users will access and use the information electronically, it is still critical to provide certain publications in print. Developing country policymakers and program planners, especially in Africa, have more ready access to print publications and prefer to get information that way.

**Figure 2. Regional Distribution of PRB Print Publications**



Since the beginning of the BRIDGE Project over 481,000 copies of print materials have been distributed either by initial dissemination of a publication or in response to requests for additional copies. Since 2004 most have gone to sub-Saharan Africa, followed by Asia and then Latin America and the Caribbean (see Figure 2).

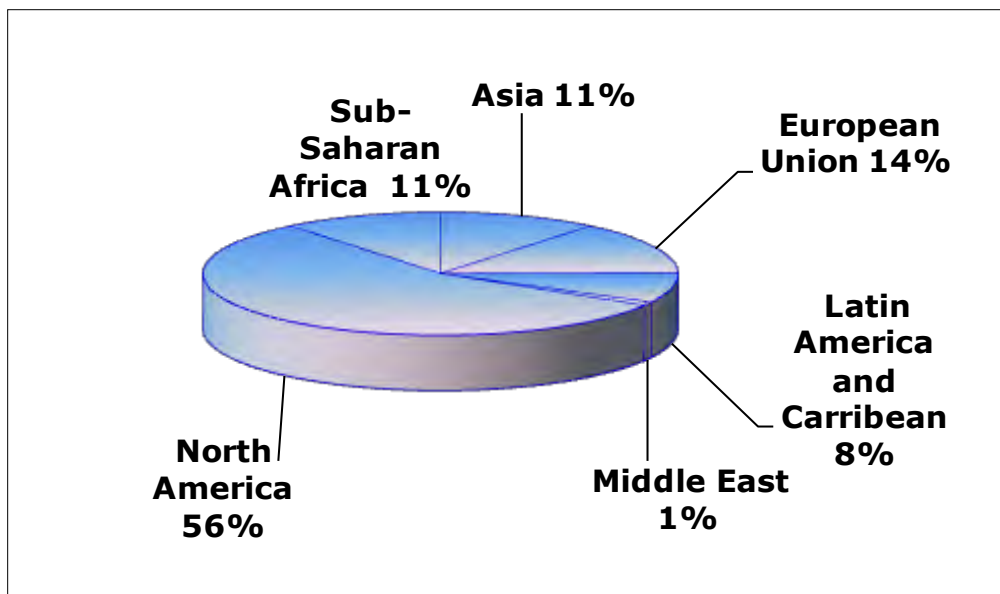
**Figure 3. Activities of Recipients of Mailings of BRIDGE Print Publications**



Currently BRIDGE has 17,700 members on its mailing list from over 100 countries. More than 67% are concentrated in USAID priority focus countries. Most of those on the mailing list work in health, followed by education and population (see Figure 3). The influential groups to whom BRIDGE mails include governmental and nongovernmental policy makers, faith-based organizations, and private companies. The mailing list has grown from 16,190 in 2004 to 17,607 in 2008—beyond the target—with equal growth across all job categories.

As for electronic distribution, PRB has an award-winning web site that provides access to all of PRB’s work, including the BRIDGE Project. The web site offers access to Data Finder, an easy-to-use tool for finding demographic and other information, and InfoShare, PRB’s electronic library of publications and documents. Since 2006 PRB has hosted monthly or bimonthly forums, PRB Discuss Online, through which visitors ask experts questions on specific PHE topics. In 2008 PRB launched —Behind the Numbers,” a blog that includes informal essays or commentaries on PHE. Another blog, —PRB in the Field,” includes comments from PRB staff or associates about their experience at international site visits, conferences, and training sessions. PRB also supports Spanish and French language web sites.

**Figure 4. Website Visits by Region**



Since 2008 PRB has used Google Analytics to track the country of origin of web site visitors (Figure 4). Of 1,306,300 visits in 2008, the majority came from North America (56%) and Europe and Eurasia (14%). However, the preponderance of visits from these regions reflects not only users accessing PRB’s extensive domestic work but also users in the developing world whose e-mails are routed through providers in North America and Europe.

Since 2008 PRB has required people who wish to download publications to register and subscribe to its e-Newsletter. Over 2,800 people have subscribed, of whom 35% are students, 16% are demographers or researchers, 12% are educators, 10% are program managers, and 7% are journalists. From 2007 to 2008 web site visits more than tripled and downloads doubled for all document categories. The average length of a Web site visit is seven minutes and the average number of page views is three. Downloads averaged about 1,300 a day.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** BRIDGE uses bounce-back questionnaires to collect the following information from publication recipients: (1) how useful the publications are; (2) what they will be

used for; (3) how many people in that organization might see the publication and how they might use the information; and (4) suggestions for topics for new publications. This information is stored in a database, analyzed, and used in developing new publications.

One critical drawback of this system is that it does not collect information from people who do not currently receive project publications. To better understand the information needs of potential users, BRIDGE has recently surveyed the needs of demographic data users in Ethiopia and Uganda. This research must be continued and expanded.

**General trends in dissemination:** BRIDGE has identified three notable trends:

1. Although many publications provide an overview of general RH topics, BRIDGE has increasingly responded to requests for more regional or topic-specific information Kohls (2009) and others have identified similar trends.
2. BRIDGE is publishing fewer in-depth reports and more content-rich policy briefs and web articles because donors and users have more interest in and use for these and there is increased demand for easy-to-access formats. More than 70% of BRIDGE Listserv participants want information electronically. BRIDGE is responding by regularly updating information on its web site and making it available in formats that developing countries constrained by limited bandwidth can access easily.
3. BRIDGE is also experimenting with new digital formats for presenting information, such as audiocast interviews, webcasts, webinars, on-line events, online discussions, and PRB blogs. For maximum effectiveness, BRIDGE continues to strategically communicate its information in multiple formats, including print, to reach the varied needs of its diverse audiences.

**Achievement of project targets:** BRIDGE has met or exceeded all the process indicators established in its Strategic Framework for IR 1. It has a clean mailing list with 17,700 individuals, 1,700 more than the target. It has produced 184 publications, achieving 172% of its target; and 91% of respondents rate BRIDGE materials as useful or very useful (the target was 80%). BRIDGE staff have carried out 196 outreach activities, almost double the target of 30 outreach activities and 70 ad hoc requests. And the project has exceeded its goal of 15 in-country activities, having implemented 20 activities in Kenya and 5 in Haiti. BRIDGE has also exceeded its target for its outcome indicators, having met requests for 50% more copies of print materials after initial mailings and received 402,000 requests for paper-free policy files—against a target of only 1,000.



#### IV. IR2: QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF NEWS COVERAGE OF KEY HEALTH POPULATION AND NUTRITION ISSUES ENHANCED

As a BRIDGE trainee put it, reporters can ~~have~~ have a leading role to make health care one of the priorities in life,” and, as BRIDGE recognizes, the press is ~~the~~ the voice of the people.” It influences what policy makers think and helps shape the policies they make. BRIDGE mobilizes the media for policy reform by educating journalists about the importance of FP/RH issues and showing them how to make these issues front-page news. It does this by forming networks of experienced journalists and editors and building their FH/RP knowledge and their ability to use data so that they become the ~~go-to~~ “go-to” group for reporting on these issues. BRIDGE’s media work has raised awareness of FP/RH issues among a very broad audience, improved the quality of reporting on FP/RH issues, and raised the status of women journalists.

While newspaper readership in developed countries is in decline, in many developing countries the newspaper business is booming—newspaper sales in Brazil increased by 12% last year and by more than 22% over the previous five years. In India, sales rose by 11%, bringing the five-year increase to more than 35%. Readership in Pakistan, Asia, and Latin America also grew rapidly. The number of radio and TV channels has also increased dramatically. In countries with low literacy, broadcast media play a vital role in influencing people and policymakers. As one journalist said, ~~Once~~ “Once the media highlight the problems, any listening government would take action. So many people will get involved—NGOs, the international community, etc.—but it has to get out to the media first.”

BRIDGE’s work with the media is unique because it aims to improve the quality of journalism and increase coverage of FP/RH issues by providing personalized training based on continuing professional relationships. BRIDGE staff are themselves journalists who mentor network participants, encouraging them to talk frankly about their successes and things they should have done differently and offering them a continuing and reliable source for information and ideas. As Chinyere Fred-Adegbulugbe, senior correspondent at *The Punch* in Nigeria, noted,

The training has made it more obvious to me that there is a need to get creative as a journalist in order to get community members and policymakers to pay attention to these issues. The training also empowered me by giving me information on issues to enable me to discuss and write on them with better clarity.

BRIDGE also builds journalists’ confidence about asking questions, raising awareness about sensitive issues, and convincing their editors to support reporting on FP/RH issues. In the developed world women journalists are expected and trained to ask questions, but this is often not the case for women journalists in developing countries. Catherine Mwesigwa Kizza, features editor at the *New Vision*, Uganda’s largest-circulation newspaper, said,

One fundamental challenge for us in Uganda is that we operate in an environment dominated by men ... most of our readers are men. Most of the literate in the population are men. Very few women can afford to buy a newspaper, so this affects the balance in coverage of issues because the media tend to focus on issues that ~~sell~~ “sell.” Issues that affect women therefore may not easily get prominence in terms of front-page coverage.

BRIDGE teaches journalists the importance of analyzing data and using statistics to strengthen reporting and at the same time humanizing issues to provide the power and relevance that personal stories bring to the news. Study tours and site visits are used for training because they

illuminate the issues in a much more engaging way and give journalists more story ideas than traditional workshops. Participants explore issues in the context of one country, later translating what they learn to their own country. Discussions between participants, which often prove to be as important as the presentations, enable them to share their personal stories and come to see the journalists' role as integral to educating women and addressing their FP/RH concerns.

### **Women's Edition Network**

WE, the centerpiece of BRIDGE's media work, brings together 10–12 senior women journalists from influential media outlets in developing countries to improve coverage of FP/RH issues. The highly competitive selection process—there were 200 applications for the first 12 openings—results in high-caliber participants who commit two years to the program. In two two-week seminars they learn the latest information about FP/RH issues and why the issues are important for their readers, and share ideas about how best to report on them. Between the seminars BRIDGE stays connected with the journalists through a listserv, provides them with information, encourages them to share experiences, and mentors them. Finally, as opportunities arise BRIDGE sends the journalists to report on international conferences.

WE journalists work in print and television and hail from all USAID regions. In 2007 members came from Bolivia, Peru, Romania, Nepal, India, Kenya, Ghana, Malawi, Uganda, and South Africa. Combined, their organizations reached more than 52 million readers and viewers. After their first two seminars, these journalists produced at least 47 print articles and 7 TV programs addressing FP/RH issues. The class of 2004–05 consisted of 12 editors, reporters, and producers representing 11 countries who together had the potential to reach some 67 million people. These journalists published and broadcast nearly 90 stories and programs.

BRIDGE training builds abilities and confidence. Four of the 12 WE members in the class of 2004–05 have been promoted. One of them persuaded her TV channel to launch a daily health report; another began highlighting RH issues in a mid-week editorial she was assigned to write; a third sparked the interest of a member of Parliament with a story on women's shelters; and still another reports that her country's Minister of Gender calls her regularly for advice.

Of the WE journalists surveyed, 41% had published at least four articles or radio productions in the previous month. Over 73% stated that the training they received through the program increased their ability to report on RH issues, 61% stated the training improved their understanding of key issues, and almost 48% responded that the training improved their understanding of RH policies and programs and their ability to negotiate story topics and assignments with superiors. All WE trainees said they benefited from the FP training and 90% reported that the site visits were either very or extremely useful in helping them understand the importance of issues like contraceptive security in ensuring access to RH services. All respondents said the mentoring support and feedback they received was either extremely or very useful. Over 52% responded that their FP/RH articles have been mentioned by a decision or policy maker. Participants also said that they gained knowledge of new media; learned how to market news stories; joined a valuable network of women journalists; and became empowered to write on FP/RH issues with better clarity. Their testimonials are impressive:

Some of these issues have been around but relegated to the back. My job has been to constantly pull them out of there and push it in the peoples' faces again until something...is done. This goes for domestic violence, girl child education, women and HIV /AIDS etc. Today our country now has favorable laws that tackle all these issues; even if challenges remain, new policies are in place. This has been a joint effort with other women in both the public and private sector with whom we complement our

efforts...I'm now a consultant on the media and women's rights, health, and on children for both government and the private sector. *Lindah, Uganda*

The most important impact has been the “child brides” cover story in Frontline, particularly the story on reproductive and other health problems when girls marry very young. Following the story, the State government has set up awareness-generation campaigns and health units in the villages of districts such as Kishnagiri and Dharmapuri, known for child marriages. The government has also set up mobile health units in these areas and posted women doctors in the taluk hospitals. Several NGOs have also been provided grants to create awareness in the areas about the problems of early marriage. The government has also initiated a new programme that provides free education for children up to the college level. This, the government hopes, will raise the age at marriage for girls. The government campaign, according to local reports, is yielding results. *Asha, India*

The training and experience that I have gotten from Women's Edition has significantly improved and changed my journalistic life. The wealth of resources and information that it has given me has raised the bar in my reporting as well as my desire and ability to make a change in some of the major issues that are affecting women. For example, the training that I got last year supplied me with so much information and challenged my thinking to more out of the box ideas, so I could come up with fresh and different story angles to tackle issues such as reproductive health and women with AIDS. As a result I won two awards from the Pan American Health Organization in September 2005. One was for best feature print series for my story on an AIDS victim's last wish and the other the CARICOM Award for coverage of HIV/AIDS. Both stories were done drawing on information provided by WE. The two stories were also commended at the Press Association of Jamaica's Fairplay awards for being very well researched and presented, even though they did not place in the finals. I have also been able to share some of the information with other reporters in my newsroom for other stories. *Indi, Jamaica*

The biggest achievement in so far as this programme is concerned is that I have managed to train subordinates to write on health matters as they affect women and am pleased that I have at least four reporters who I constantly brief on what matters to highlight. There have been a lot of sexual abuse cases that we have published and my role is to write comments/editorials to create some awareness among authorities to act accordingly. One particular item that stirred debate was about a woman who appeared on national television purporting to represent the girl child who said girls should choose wealthy or educated men for marriage. I wrote a comment to that and the feedback was overwhelming. I have a letter written to me by Girl Child Network in response to some of the issues raised by readers and myself. I have been invited to be part of a talk show that will speak on child sexual abuse and HIV transmission ...I can proudly say that I have managed to streamline gender issues, sexual reproductive health, HIV and AIDS into the main paper. Gone are the days when Health and Women's Issues were a once-a-week affair. *Ropa, Zimbabwe*

### **Other Forms of Media Training**

BRIDGE supports two regional media networks: the East African Reproductive Health Journalists Network of 25 journalists from Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda and the West African Francophone Network, which has members from Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Mali. Participants are selected based on their commitment and motivation. BRIDGE supports them for one year, presenting periodic technical workshops that rotate through members' home countries and give them an opportunity both to exchange experiences and to understand how RH issues affect them

at home. BRIDGE is also supporting a national journalist network in Haiti that participates in exchanges with the West African Francophone network.

Of the East African Reproductive Health Journalist Network members surveyed, 64% had published three or more articles or radio productions in the previous month. Over 82% of respondents stated that the training they received through the network increased their ability to report on FP/RH issues, 55% stated it improved their understanding of key issues, and more than 45% stated it gave them access to a network of journalists interested in FP/RH issues and improved their understanding of FP/RH policies and programs; moreover, 90% said the mentoring support and feedback they received was either extremely or very useful. Over 45% said that their FP/RH articles had been mentioned by a decision or policy maker.

BRIDGE activities have not only increased coverage but also increased the knowledge of the journalists and the quality of their reporting. For example, the reporting on RH issues of a Ugandan journalist who began working with BRIDGE in 2006 has spurred public policy debates. In June 2008 he wrote a series examining the poor state of the country's public hospitals, including FP/RH areas. His series became a prime topic for discussion on radio and TV talk shows, including a very popular political show. He says:

My work has created a love-hate relationship with the Ministry of Health. The *Daily Monitor* is nowadays publishing a lot of stories on health, including reproductive health issues, and [because of] my persistence on writing about these issues after being inspired by BRIDGE workshops, I managed to convince management to make me a full-time health writer.

BRIDGE sent the best of the journalists to cover two international conferences. In a competition run by organizers of one conference, BRIDGE-sponsored journalists won five of the eight prizes, including the top awards in both the print and broadcast categories. The 24 journalists produced 115 print and broadcast stories on RH topics.

**Using the journalist network to enhance coverage of key events:** BRIDGE took 11 journalists to Maputo, Mozambique, in September 2006 to cover an African Union (AU) Health Ministers' meeting on reproductive health. This successful seminar—during which two newspapers were produced on-site to provide instant feedback to the assembled ministers and expert—brought sophisticated African journalists together to cover the conference and increase their knowledge of the issues. More than 35 FP/RH articles were produced immediately after the conference and others continue to emerge.

Contraceptive security (CS) was addressed in Saly, Senegal, where BRIDGE, in collaboration with JSI (DELIVER Project) and Africa Consultants International, facilitated a one-week workshop, “No Product? No Program!: Working Together to Improve Reproductive Health.” The workshop brought together 36 journalists, technical experts, and parliamentarians from Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal. During the conference, country teams were formed to implement action plans to sustain media coverage and policy dialogue on CS and advocate for a line item in national budgets to help cover the gap in contraceptive costs. Media outcomes to date include production of a 30-minute radio program on “Repositioning FP” for broadcast on national radio stations. The group also developed “Media Mash,” a guide to CS reporting, and coproduced a 6-page newsletter on CS that was distributed widely to media professionals, RH experts, policymakers, and donors in the region.

BRIDGE has also increased reporting on PHE linkages in influential media outlets in the Caribbean. Since June 2005 Caribbean journalists who participated in BRIDGE training have filed more than 30 news stories and radio broadcasts highlighting PHE links, which have been

disseminated in St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica, Suriname, Guyana, and Grenada as well as through regional and international news outlets. The stories covered the links between FP, population growth, sustainable tourism, climate change, solid waste disposal, urbanization, environmental health, biodiversity, coastal resource management, and biodiversity prospecting. These journalists continue to work together and consult BRIDGE for advice and information on how to report on PHE links and to get information to the public and to policymakers.

PRB has been helping USAID/Uganda encourage journalists to produce articles and broadcast programs on FP in advance of the International Conference on Family Planning: Research and Best Practices being held in Uganda November 15–18, 2009.

Interviewees highly valued BRIDGE's work with the media. They appreciate the increased visibility journalists give to FP/RH issues and international conferences, as well as the work of other CAs. Respondents also valued the BRIDGE approach to improving the quality of reporting and the fact that it supports USAID's broader goal of strengthening democracy and transparency. While the project works with a limited number of journalists, their reach is great. They have produced hundreds of news reports, supplements, and radio and TV programs on such RH topics as FP, GBV and HIV/AIDS. Within a single year journalists in the East Africa Reproductive Health Network alone wrote over 100 news stories, including some that won awards. USAID/Uganda commented that PRB's work is "amazing." All interview respondents also commented that BRIDGE's work with the media needs to be increased.

Other CAs work with the press to publicize recent research results and conference proceedings. For example, DHS trains journalists to report findings from recently completed surveys. This technical training aims to ensure that journalists understand the information and report on it accurately. K4H and HPI work with journalists to encourage them to report on results of project work, conferences, or release of new reports. BRIDGE meanwhile establishes continuing relationships with journalists, working with them as professional colleagues toward the shared objective of improving reporting and meeting the information needs of readers. BRIDGE shows them how to verify the information they are reporting, use new data to substantiate their stories, and be better reporters, not only on FP/RH issues, but on all issues. This supports the goals not only of G/PRH but also USAID as a whole.

USAID's investment in journalist training averages \$257,550 a year for WE and \$172,300 for the East African RH Network. The latter program was completely funded by the Africa Bureau. Most of the support funds workshop participation and attendance at international conferences. BRIDGE maximizes the investment it makes in building journalist capacity not only by supporting them to attend and cover international conferences but also by involving them as trainers in Policy Communication Seminars. BRIDGE also works to link them with other CAs to give their work more visibility. The project is currently looking for ways to increase the sustainability of its own networks by working with other networks, such as the Uganda Health Communication Alliance and the Association of Journalists Against AIDS in Tanzania rather than creating separate networks.

### **Achievement of Project Targets**

BRIDGE is on track to meet all its targets for IR2 .It has conducted 37 seminars (128% of target) and trained 284 (135% of target) journalists. Halfway through the project's fifth year BRIDGE is aware of 1,510 articles written by journalists with whom the project has worked (the seven-year target is 2,000). That the quality of reporting is improving is substantiated by the fact that 10 journalists have received awards for their reporting and 4 have been promoted.



## V. IR3: INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO DISSEMINATE POLICY-RELEVANT HPN DATA AND INFORMATION STRENGTHENED

BRIDGE has built the capacity of researchers to identify the policy implications of their work and present their findings to policy makers. As a donor representative put it, “BRIDGE’s work strengthening the capacity of researchers to present the policy implications of their research not only provides value in terms of increased policy communication and advocacy but it also increases the value of the research funding by increasing the impact that research will have on policies and programs.” BRIDGE’s work also has had major impact on the FP/RH community because it has helped to develop future leaders in the field.

**Population Policy Communication Fellows:** BRIDGE has supported 65 Policy Communication Fellows. The project works with doctoral candidates from developing countries studying in the U.S. to better understand how policy is formulated, identify and communicate the policy relevance of their research, and learn how to present their work to policy audiences. BRIDGE chooses 10 to 14 fellows through a highly selective recruiting process. It first brings them to a one-week seminar in Washington, DC, where they learn the role of research in the policy formulation process. The students then receive training and support to draft briefs and 12-minute oral presentations on the relevance of their research for policies and programs. Finally, BRIDGE supports the students attend professional meetings, such as that of the Population Association of America, and present their briefs.

This highly selective program attracts candidates who will continue to contribute to the FP/RH field; it effectively leverages donor resources; and it increases the value of the investment dollar spent on research by increasing the impact the research will have on policy. However, the program has very little visibility among USAID officials. It could have much more impact if BRIDGE routinely informed USAID officials about research being done by the fellows.

This program costs \$182,600 annually. Several interviewees commented on the need to groom future leaders to champion FP/RH programs in the developing world. USAID has always been committed to encouraging future FP/RH leaders. The fellows program is a small way that USAID can fill that commitment.

**International Policy Fellows:** This program builds the capacity of future US leaders to contribute to the FP/RH community. BRIDGE funds a recent college graduate to work in the offices of USAID for one year. The fellow learns how a major donor in international health and development operates; travels and sees programs in action; and learns how to work in an office. The recruiting effort is very thorough—over 70 highly qualified candidates applied for the most recent fellowship. BRIDGE ranks the top candidates, and USAID makes the final selection. Once the fellowship is awarded, BRIDGE’s involvement with the fellow consists primarily of administrative support, such as ensuring that he or she has the proper clearances for work in the Ronald Reagan Building. If fellows are interested in learning more about PRB, PRB will accommodate them if possible, but typically there is little contact. This program costs \$95,450 a year.

BRIDGE always finds extremely qualified individuals who make significant contributions to the FP/RH field. Fellows typically support the Front Office, so they see how US policies affect USAID-supported FP/ RH programs. The Policy Fellows interviewed said the experience was “fabulous.” They praised the opportunity it gave them to learn a ton about RH and HIV/AIDS.”

and to learn about working in a large bureaucracy, how to “multi-task,” and how to “be good at a job.” They also observed that the experience is largely shaped by the fellows’ own ability to be organized and keep up with multiple tasks; take initiative and pursue new opportunities; and find good mentors. USAID officials highly value this program, recognizing that the fellows bring new ideas and energy into the office. Several former fellows still make contributions to the RH field. However, one weakness that was identified was that travel funding was inadequate to support meaningful field experiences.

**Policy Communications Workshops:** In its Policy Communication Workshops BRIDGE has trained 349 policymakers, program managers, NGO representatives, government officials, donor representatives, and journalists. The workshops build capacity in understanding data, the skills required to identify the policy implications of data and research, the ability to make presentations to policy-makers, and familiarity with issues like FGC/M, CS, and GBV. These participants will go on to be advocates for FP/RH programs and the workshops build the skills they need to do that effectively. Over 61% of participants in the GBV Policy Communication Workshop reported that after participating they had advocated for FP/RH to key decision makers and had helped change communication approaches in their institutions. However, a weakness is that the length of the workshops can be a problem for participants.

**The Kenya National Coordinating Agency for Population and Development:** Over the last six years BRIDGE TA has transformed the NCAPD from a “moribund institution” to a semi-autonomous government agency (SAGA) that partners with other CAs and now provides PRB-like services to Kenya. PRB began by conducting an institutional and stakeholder assessment that reoriented the NCAPD toward a multi-sectoral approach for addressing FP/RH issues and set it on the path for gaining SAGA status. That status has liberated the organization from bureaucratic inefficiencies that earlier hindered its work.

Currently, with limited BRIDGE assistance NCAPD is producing a video documenting FP successes and challenges in Kenya that will be launched at a regional parliamentarians’ seminar. NCAPD, again with limited TA from BRIDGE, also serves in a knowledge management capacity for the Kenyan RH program, collecting and disseminating research and lessons learned from local HIV/AIDS and RH programs, including the Kenya AIDS Information Survey. Other NCAPD activities include publication and dissemination of 5,000 copies of a quarterly newsletter, *KENPOP News*, and maintenance of a web site. Finally, with no technical support from BRIDGE, NCAPD successfully presented Policy Communication Workshops to train 36–40 Kenyan health professionals.

NCAPD staff highly praised the TA they received from BRIDGE, commenting that BRIDGE worked with them in a partnership. They also observed that BRIDGE was extremely thorough and provided excellent follow-up. USAID/Kenya stated that BRIDGE was able to “revitalize” the NCAPD so that it is now an important contributor to Kenya’s RH program. They also felt that BRIDGE’s work with the NCAPD could be a model for other developing countries.

### **Achievement of Project Targets**

BRIDGE has exceeded its targets for IR3. It has supported 3 International Program Fellows (target: 3– 5) and 65 Policy Communication Fellows (target: 60), 51 of whom were supported by BRIDGE funds and 14 by other donors; and trained 175 people on PHE (target: 50) and 174 on RH and gender (target : 50). BRIDGE has exceeded outcome indicators for individuals, with 65% of participants reporting that they used the skill within one year (target: 60%); and met the indicator for institutional training, with 22 % providing examples of institutional capacity within one year of the training

## Cross-cutting Activities

**Gender:** BRIDGE implements a comprehensive knowledge management program for IGWG that includes gathering, synthesizing, and sharing knowledge to keep gender on the policy agenda. BRIDGE published the “Women of Our World 2005” and the “Female Genital Mutilation / Cutting: Data and Trends” data sheets and has produced, updated, and disseminated an array of publications, such as policy briefs (e.g. “Taking Stock of Women’s Progress” and “Do Empowered Mothers Foster Gender Equity?”) and several reports that are fundamental to the IGWG’s work, such as the *So What? Report*, a review of gender activities and whether they have in fact had an impact on women’s health; *A Manual for Integrating Gender into Reproductive Health and HIV Programs: From Commitment to Action*, and *A Guide for Incorporating Gender Considerations in USAID’s Family Planning, Reproductive Health RFAs and RFPs*. Currently, BRIDGE is working with the Futures Group and the IGWG GLP champions to increase mission and field use of these materials and improve their programming from a gender perspective.

As the IGWG —“Master of Ceremonies,” BRIDGE coordinates, ensures the quality of work and information, and facilitates communication and knowledge sharing. It keeps current the IGWG web site ([www.igwg.org](http://www.igwg.org)), which provides a library of research and other information. BRIDGE also maintains the IGWG listserv, keeping over 800 members apprised of new research, web postings, and coming events, and supports an active IGWG community of practice. In 2007 the IGWG web site was visited by 26,000 users and recorded nearly 78,000 page views; it has received 8,844 requests for the *Addressing Cross-Generational Sex* desk review alone. BRIDGE keeps the web site relevant by frequently posting new articles and periodically surveying users and incorporating their recommendations. Interviewees value the IGWG web site for keeping them abreast of new publications, coming events, and technical updates. One commented, —“I know I can always find what I am looking for on the IGWG web site.” Over 50% of IGWG members surveyed visit the web site, 44% read every e-mail they receive from the listserv, and another 46% read more than half.

As co-chair with PATH of the GBV Task Force, BRIDGE helps to strategize new activities to promote knowledge-sharing. BRIDGE has disseminated several publications on GBV, among them *Strengthening Regional Work on GBV*, *Addressing GBV through USAID’s Health Programs*, and *Addressing GBV from the RH/HIV Sector*.

Finally, BRIDGE has built the capacity of both media professionals and workshop participants by creating and conducting three regional two-week Policy Communication workshops on GBV. To build institutional capacity to conduct these trainings, all workshops were conducted jointly with host country training institutions. BRIDGE included journalists in these and other workshops to build their knowledge of gender issues, strengthen their ability to use data and communicate effectively to inform the policy debate, and increase their coverage of FP/RH issues.

In this work BRIDGE collaborates closely with several partners, especially the Futures Group, FHI, the Population Council, and PATH. BRIDGE leads the knowledge management activities and the Futures Group leads the IGWG training activities. Interviewees called BRIDGE’s collaboration “flawless.” USAID gender champions highly value the project’s work. They attributed the strength of BRIDGE’s gender work to the dedication of its staff, as well as PRB’s long-standing commitment to the topic.

**Population, Health, and Environment:** BRIDGE has highlighted the links between PHN issues by including environmental indicators in *World Population Data Sheets* and disseminating such publications as the *Population Bulletin Critical Links: Population, Health, and the Environment*. Recently, BRIDGE has issued policy briefs and web articles highlighting the results of Integrated PHE Program Assessments in four African countries.

BRIDGE has organized international conferences in the Philippines and East Africa to convene practitioners and researchers; coordinated sessions at international meetings, such as IUCN World Conservation Congress; and collaborated with the PHE Policy and Practice Group. At an IUCN World Conservation Congress meeting, BRIDGE collaborated with the Environment Change and Security Program to organize a panel that presented an overview of integrated program approaches, examples of field projects, and an evaluation of strategies and lessons learned. In the Philippines BRIDGE increased awareness among regional policy makers of the importance of an integrated PHE approach. BRIDGE has formed a regional PHE network that connects NGO officials, policy makers, government officials, and donor representatives from Uganda, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Kenya so that they can exchange information and experiences. One outcome has been a national PHE assessments methodology that explores the issues within a country, makes recommendations for coordinating integrated programs, and highlights successful projects. Briefs based on application of the methodology have been written and disseminated for Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Rwanda..

BRIDGE's work in this area has highlighted the role health interventions can play in protecting biodiversity and ecosystems. Interviewees observed that this is the first time that many environmental advocates and policy makers have considered the beneficial role health programs can play in shaping the impact of environmental activities. One commented that PRB's work is particularly useful because it has raised awareness of successful integrated PHE programs that can serve as models for donors and decision makers in Washington. In fact, one donor decided to increase its country support for integrated PHE programs in response to the information it gained at the Ethiopia conference. All interviewees thought that BRIDGE's work in strengthening linkages between academic researchers and practitioners in the field will continue to yield benefits in terms of improved programming and opportunities for rural communities in environmentally sensitive areas to access RH services.

## **VI. ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES**

Three issues have affected the performance of the project. The first is staff turnover at both USAID and BRIDGE. The project has had four project directors in four years, and there has been turnover in technical staff. These transitions meant that for long periods when positions were vacant there were delays in project activities. Interviewees noted, however, that throughout the quality of BRIDGE work has remained high. In addition to transitions at PRB, significant turnover on the USAID BRIDGE management team added to difficulties with project implementation. Recently, a new USAID management team has been put into place, as has a new BRIDGE project Director.

The second issue is that the low ceiling for field support limits BRIDGE's ability to provide in-country TA. From its inception BRIDGE has received funds from the Africa Bureau and the Kenya mission. It also received some support from the Haiti mission. While missions familiar with BRIDGE have been very complimentary of its TA, the project has been limited in the field work it can undertake. In fact, recently BRIDGE was not able to accept the full budget request from the Kenya mission. Nevertheless, BRIDGE continues to provide high-quality support to the field by working with its extensive networks of donor contacts, partners, and beneficiaries to keep informed and effectively meet current needs.

The third issue is the lack of name recognition for BRIDGE and its work, especially among missions. When asked to identify its weakness, BRIDGE staff highlighted self-promotion. This lack of visibility is compounded by the narrow technical focus of the project, its limited field presence, and the large numbers of new USAID staff. Both BRIDGE staff and the USAID BRIDGE management team need to promote the project's work so that there will continue to be high demand for its services.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LAST YEAR OF BRIDGE**

BRIDGE should

- review and improve its quality control process for policy briefs.
- continue collecting and analyzing feedback from its beneficiaries and information from potential beneficiaries to strengthen its policy communication strategies and ensure they meet the needs of target audiences.
- increase its visibility.



## VII. CONTRIBUTIONS TO PRH AND THE FP AND RH SECTORS GENERALLY

All donor respondents value PRB as an independent, trusted source of reliable data. They believe that PRB has earned its reputation by providing dependable information over the years, and they appreciate the fact that PRB is respected by the academic and research communities. One PRH official commented that USAID's association with PRB brings credibility to USAID.

Donor respondents also agree that PRB successfully fills a useful niche of gathering, synthesizing, and translating data and research into easy-to-use publications that clearly communicate the policy relevance of the information. PRB's position as an independent organization enables it to be an information broker that collaborates effectively with researchers to translate research findings into easy-to-use documents that clearly communicate the policy-relevance of the information. PRB has published classic advocacy materials, such as *Family Planning Saves Lives* and *Rumors and Realities*, and also publishes materials, such as the *Annual World Population Data Sheets*, the *Family Planning Data Sheet*, and *The Population Handbook*, that are widely considered essential references. Graduate training programs refer their students to PRB as a technical resource and use PRB publications to introduce students to new concepts and issues.

PRB gathers information from many sources, thoroughly verifies and validates it, and analyzes it to identify and illustrate linkages that otherwise might not have been recognized. Users have confidence in the quality of the data it releases. Its easy-to-use tools make demographic data and research accessible to a wide range of data users, such as the wall charts, data sheets, Data Finder, and InfoShare. Interviewees commented that the wall chart is an invaluable resource that can be found globally in clinics and Ministry of Health offices, even in remote areas. Every person interviewed, if they did not have a wall chart displayed themselves, knew exactly where it was and used it for reference. Several respondents commented that they had recently used DataFinder in research papers and briefing documents.

Donor officials familiar with PRB's media work are extremely impressed and said it should be expanded. PRH staff who had seen BRIDGE journalists in action at the Repositioning Family Planning Conference in Maputo commented on how well BRIDGE briefed them before the conference, how effectively their reporting facilitated information exchange during the conference, how well organized the press briefings were, and how press coverage after the conference increased the impact of the conference.

All donors value the expertise and information resources PRB brings in the areas of gender, PHN linkages, and FP policy communication. They value the work BRIDGE does to build the capacity of FP/RH champions and researchers to strategically communicate the policy implications of what they do, and state that this work significantly increases the impact of the information and helps to build future FP/RH leaders. Not only has BRIDGE built the capacity of individuals, it has also institutionalized training skills so that more and more FP/RH champions can be trained in the critical skills of understanding data, identifying its policy implications, and effectively presenting actionable policy recommendations to policymakers.

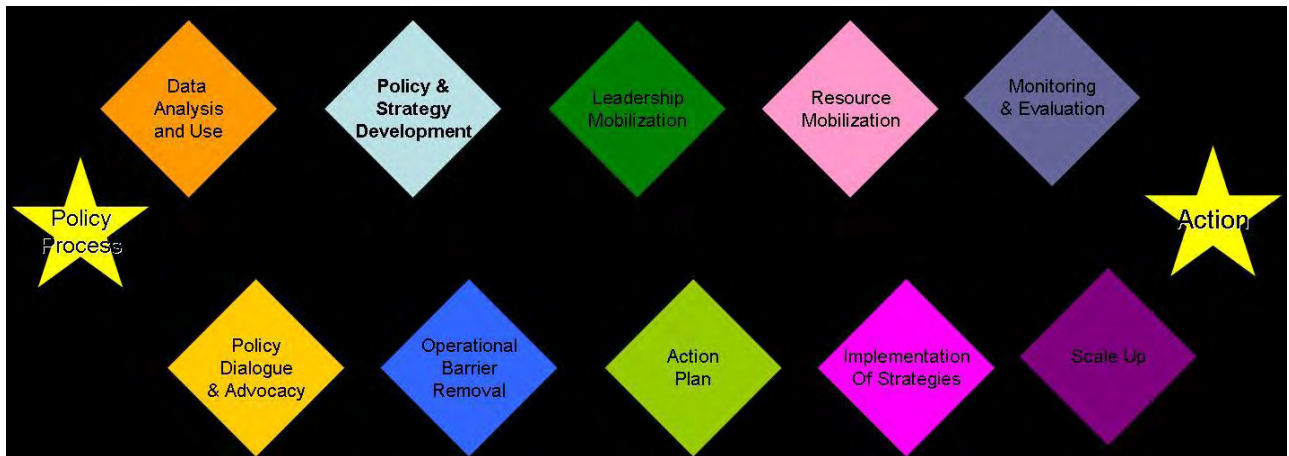
Finally, PRH staff unanimously commented on the cost-effectiveness of BRIDGE assistance, the ease of working with BRIDGE and the responsiveness of its staff. PRH has used BRIDGE strategically by supporting it to do the work it does best—improving access to and use of quality data; working with the media to improve and increase reporting on FP/RH issues; developing

general, easy-to-use publications that clearly present the policy relevance of data and research; and building the capacity of researchers to communicate effectively to policymakers.

PRB receives substantial support from other donors. In the last five years PRB has evolved from being 70% reliant on USAID support to only 40%. This shift shows that other donors supporting FP/RH efforts also value PRB's work. Many of the activities supported by other donors complement the work of BRIDGE and BRIDGE leverages this support to maximize its impact. As PRB has diversified its funding base, it has been able to add depth and breadth to its portfolio and to the expertise of its staff.

Figure 5 presents the HPI Policy to Action Framework, which is a useful structure for looking at the role of a number of FP/RH projects. Table 2 illustrates how BRIDGE relates to other PRH projects. While the information is general and does not fully reflect the breadth and depth of these projects, it is useful nevertheless to illustrate how projects complement and support one another. As can be seen, BRIDGE is clearly advancing FP/RH policy dialogue and advocacy.

**Figure 5. HPI Policy to Action Framework**



**TABLE 2. FP/RH PROJECT COMPARISON**

	<b>DHS</b>	<b>BRIDGE</b>	<b>HPI</b>	<b>K4H</b>	<b>MEval</b>	<b>ENGAGE</b>
<b>Primary Approach</b>	Data analysis and use	FP/RH policy dialogue and advocacy	FP/RH policy and strategy development	Operational barrier removal	Monitoring and evaluation	FP/RH policy and strategy development
<b>Primary Objective</b>	Collect and disseminate HPN data.	Support FP/RH policy communication activities and capacity building for FP/RH policy communication.	Develop and implement national, regional, and district FP/RH policies.	Develop and operationalize FP/RH service delivery guidelines and procedures.	Improve M&E of HPN programs.	Develop and implement national and regional FP/RH policies.
<b>Primary Target Audiences</b>	Data users	Non-governmental, governmental policymakers, FP/RH champions	Non-governmental and governmental policymakers	FP/RH program managers and service providers	Program managers and researchers	Multisectoral, non-governmental, governmental policymakers, FP/RH champions
<b>Media</b>	Training to understand and report on DHS data	Continuing training to improve quantity and quality of reporting on FP/RH issues	Report on conferences and project activities	Training to use project resources, such as POPINFO		



## **APPENDIX A. PERSONS CONTACTED**

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- 2008 World Population Data Sheet (English)\*\*
- Africa’s Youthful Population: Risk or Opportunity? (English, French)\*\*
- Addressing Population in Poverty Reduction Strategies (English, French, Spanish)\*\*
- Ensuring a Wide Range of Family Planning Choices (English, French, Spanish)\*\*
- Cross-Generational Sex: Risks and Opportunities (English) \*\*
- Designing Health & Population Programs to Reach the Poor (English, French, Spanish)\*\*
- The —SoWhat?” Report (English, French, Spanish) \*\*
- Critical Links: Population, Health, and the Environment (English) \*\*

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