

GATES NEWSLETTER

OF
THE BILL AND MELINDA GATES INSTITUTE FOR
POPULATION AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

SCHOLARSHIP & SCIENCE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

JANUARY 2009



Message from the Director

The Gates Institute sends its heartfelt greetings to all colleagues in all corners of the world. The Institute feels privileged to be collaborating with many talented individuals and institutions. Partners at Obafemi Awolowo University, University of Malawi, Addis Ababa University, University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Ibadan, Assiut University and Health Sciences Academy have been giving their utmost to bring about sustainable change in population and health indicators their own settings. We in Baltimore look forward to continuing to work with them so they can work us out of our jobs!

Colleagues here at Johns Hopkins have been extremely supportive of the Institute's efforts, generously sharing their knowledge, skills and time while they pursue answering some of the population and development questions. Our policy activities have accelerated recently, and we are seeing the scholarship and science creating the social change (aka the "social vaccine") we all desire.

To all our colleagues, many thanks and may the New Year bring much peace and prosperity and, of course, reproductive health to all.

Inside This Issue

- 1 Message from the Director
- 2 Research
- 3 Advocacy and Practice
- 4 Education & Training
- Institutional Development
- Visiting Scholars
- News & Notables
- 6 News from our Alumni
- 7 Upcoming Issue

A Research Feature: The Three-City Asian Youth Study

Members of the Three-City Asian Study of Adolescents and Youth team are now deeply immersed in the analysis and dissemination phases of the research. The research team includes Laurie Schwab Zabin, P.I., Mark Emerson, David Bishai and Robert W. Blum from PFRH and their colleagues: Nguyen Huu Minh in the Institute for Family and Gender Studies – Hanoi, Gao Ersheng and Lou Chaohua at the Shanghai Institute for Planned Parenthood Research, and Yi-Li Chuang and Baai-Shyun Hung in the Taiwan Health Department's Bureau of Health Promotion.

The lead article from this study is due to appear in the March 2009 issue of *Studies in Family Planning*; it focuses on the changes in romantic, sexual and risk behaviors of young people in Hanoi, Shanghai, and Taipei as these traditionally Confucian societies modernize and interact with the outside world at different rates and with different timetables.

*Three-City Asian Study of
Adolescents and Youth in
analysis and dissemination
phases of the research*

Three-City – Cont'd

The research teams are exploring proximal and distal determinants of youth sexual behavior.

A large number of additional articles are in various stages of preparation by the authors, including students, at the three sites and at Johns Hopkins. The topics are wide ranging, including the influences of many distal and proximate determinants on youthful behaviors – such as the role of media in shaping sexual attitudes, knowledge and behavior; parental behavior in relation to adolescent health; gender-role attitudes in association with premarital sexual permissiveness; and the influence of Confucian values and modernization on adolescent sexual behavior.

Investigators are also exploring factors associated with youths' own HIV prevention knowledge, smoking, and migration behaviors; the relationship between expectations and aspirations and sexual risk; the relationship between youths' perceptions their own and their peers' sexual behavior and the accuracy of youths' perceptions of their peers' behaviors. Preliminary findings suggest that these perceptions have considerable influence on adolescents' own behaviors. The relationship between social transitions and suicide proclivity – a serious issue in these cultures – is being examined, as is the relationship between leisure time use and behaviors that place youth at risk.



Preparing a birthing plan

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Social Support during Child Delivery: Pregnant Mothers Prefer to Have Birth Companions

Two new studies by Gates Institute partners at the University of Ibadan's Center for Population and Reproductive Health and the University of Malawi's Center for Reproductive Health show pregnant women's strong preferences to have birth companions have recently been disseminated. "Attitude and Preferences of Nigerian Antenatal Women to Social Support during Labour" by IO Morhason-Bello, O Olayemi, O Ojengbede, BO Adedokun, OO Okuyemi and B Orji, published in the *Journal of Biosocial Science* (40, 553-562, 2008) shows that 75% of 224 randomly selected antenatal women at the University College Hospital wanted companionship in child delivery, with 86% of them preferring their husbands. In Malawi, the *Nyasa Times* reported on November 20, 2008 on findings from a study by the Center for Reproductive Health at the College of Medicine that 99% of pregnant mothers preferred to have a companion. The study authors find mothers enthusiastic about having a companion to provide psychological and physical support during labour stress. Birth companionship may also increase antenatal clients' willingness to return to the health facility to deliver, rather than birthing at home. The Nigeria study also recommended social support during labour since nursing care resources are limited and husbands in particular can play a pivotal role. While husbands have been accepted in labour and delivery wards in industrialized countries for nearly 40 years, their presence is not as common in other regions.

Advocacy & Practice:

Investing in Young People's Health and Development

The Gates Institute with its partners—the Center for Population and Reproductive Health at the University of Ibadan and the Department of Community Health at Obafemi Awolowo University—hosted an international conference on youth. The conference gathered over 550 participants from 36 different countries, representing every region of the world. Over 200 participants were under 25 years of age.

More than 160 experts from the field of adolescent health shared the results of their research and program efforts on population, development, sexual and reproductive health, poverty reduction and gender equity issues as these affect young people. Heads of national adolescent health programs were invited from ministries of health including representatives from Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria and Sudan. They participated in a special session to discuss issues around scaling up interventions. Nigerian legislators, including **Hon. Saudatu Sani** and former **Senator Daisy Danjuma**, also engaged in direct dialogue with youth. A Call to Action drafted at the conference, distilled the meeting's key findings and actions needed to invest in youth was shared at the closing plenary. Currently, several research papers presented at the conference are under peer review with the *Journal of Adolescence* and *International Family Planning Perspectives*.

All conference documents including presentations, the Call to Action, and the final report can be found on the conference website at www.jhsph.edu/gatesinstitute.

Experts from the field shared research and programmatic efforts on issues affecting adolescent health.



Youth Conference Bloggers: (f) Jaya, Ola, Andreea; (b) Chizoba, Hilary, Angela, and Jianhua; photo credit: David Colwell

Expanding the public and reproductive health workforce through capacity building at Haramaya, Gondar and Jimma Universities



Education & Training: Institutional Development

The Gates Institutes hosted six faculty from Haramaya, Gondar and Jimma Universities in Ethiopia between September and December 2008 who attended a range of population and reproductive health courses at JHSPH and developed their research plans. These faculty will be teaching PRH courses in a new one-year masters degree program focused on reproductive health at their universities. Two faculty from each university attended: from Jimma, **Prof. Abebe Gebremariam** and **Lecturer Yohannes Wado**; from Haramaya, Mr. **Melake Demena** and Mr. **Nega Assefa**, and from Gondar, Mr. **Abebaw Gebeyehu** and Mr. **Telake Azale**. Each updated course syllabi and prepared teaching materials, as well as took analytic skill development courses.

The new RH masters program will be launched in Addis Ababa in February 2009 with 30 students from the three universities out of Addis Continental Institute of Public Health. In the second year, the degree program will revert to being offered at each of the three university sites. For more information on the program at Gondar University contact Mr. Gebeyehu at abebawgebeyehu@yahoo.com, for Haramaya University email Mr. Nega Assefa at negaassefa@yahoo.com, and for Jimma University, please contact Kifle Wolde-Michael at bethy.kifle@yahoo.com.

Internships & Dissertation Awards

In the 2007-2008 academic year, the Gates Institute provided 7 internship and dissertation awards to Hopkins students to conduct work in developing countries on population and reproductive health issues. These opportunities afforded the students supervised practical field experience in conducting research. It also provided their hosts, the Gates Institute's partner institutions, with assistance with teaching and research. The 7 awardees conducted their work in Malawi, Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, Jamaica and the Philippines:

Carie Muntifering, a PhD candidate in the Population, Family and Reproductive Health (PFRH) department worked on a qualitative pilot study on couple's home-based family planning counseling (CFP) and HIV voluntary counseling and testing (CVCT) with Dr. Frank Tauro, Director of the Center of Reproductive Health, University of Malawi. Some of her activities included assisting with staff training, preparing consent and outcome forms, monitoring data collection and recording data for quality assurance and timeliness.

Internship and dissertation awards afforded students practical field experience in developing countries.

Education & Training: Internships cont'd

Daesha Ramachandran, an MHS candidate in PFRH worked with Miz-Hasab Research Center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on an outcomes evaluation study for the Men as Partners (MAP) program. She also conducted qualitative and quantitative data analysis of a collaborative research study on HIV/VCT and family planning service integration. Her work was supervised by **Dr. Aklilu Kidanu** and **Ms. Heather Bradley**, a PhD candidate in PFRH who is completing her dissertation work there. Daesha also worked with **Dr. Getnet Mitike** at Addis Ababa University on a quality of reproductive health care study



Courtesy: Carie Muntifering

Terri-Ann Thompson, PhD candidate, PFRH, worked with Dr. Patricia Anderson at the University of the West Indies, Jamaica to conduct extensive literature review on the subject of gender identity and factors associated with the social construction of self. Information from this review will be used in a later project to develop a female gender identity scale.

Jessica Fehringer, PhD candidate, PFRH, will be heading to the University of San Carlos, Office of Population Studies, Cebu, Philippines in January of 2009 to begin her work in examining the relationship between marital power and female intimate partner perpetration and its context in the Philippines.



Photo credit: T. Thompson

Under the supervision of **Prof. Kwabena Danso**, then Head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Komfo-Anokye Teaching Hospital and now Dean of the School of Medical Sciences, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and **Prof. Tsiri Agbenyega**, the School's former Dean, **Dr. Andreea Creanga** and **Ms. Hilary Schwandt**, doctoral candidates in the PFRH, conducted research on emergency contraception and on family planning counseling respectively.

Esther Kaggwa received a dissertation award to support her field research in Uganda. Her research topic was "Sexual Experience of Young People in Uganda: Does Orphanhood Play a Role?"

Upon return, each award recipient shared their practical internship experience at a Gates sponsored seminar. To obtain a copy of their reports, please contact **Dr. Gbola Oni** at goni@jhsph.edu.



Photo credit: A. Creanga

For internship and dissertation award guidelines and eligibility criteria, please check our website at www.jhsph.edu/gatesinstitute. Click on Education and Training.

News & Notables from our alumni in the field



Photo credit: A. Heminthavong

Hemkothang Lungdim, PhD and Senior Lecturer at the International Institute of Population Sciences, Mumbai India, (Summer Institute (SI) 2005) continues to teach reproductive health modules to the Diploma and Master students. Hem has been involved in two major surveys, round three of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3) and the CHARCHA Endline Survey, a joint UN project on Reducing Young Women's Vulnerability to STI. Findings from both surveys have been published and disseminated. For more information about the reports, please contact Hem at lhungdim_hem@yahoo.com.



Photo credit: A. Heminthavong

Abdullahi Maiwada, Reproductive Health-Program Manager of *People to People*, USAID-Nigeria and 2006 SI participant, received National Honors for distinguished service in the various fields of Human Endeavor. The honor, enacted in 1979 by the government, will be conferred to him and 210 other honorees by the President of the Republic of Nigeria. There were 980 nominees. Moreover, Abdullahi was also recognized and turbaned as Jekadan Gusau (Ambassador of Gusau) by His Royal Highness the Emir of Gusau-Alhaji Muhammadu kabir Danbaba at his Palace on Saturday, May 31st 2008. Many congratulations to Abdullahi for his major accomplishments.



Photo credit: A. Heminthavong

After a productive visit at the Gates Institute as a Visiting Scholar (June 2008), **Abhishek Singh**, Lecturer in the Department of Public Health and Mortality Studies at IIPS, Mumbai India, completed all his requirements for his degree. He was duly conferred his Doctor of Philosophy in Demography in August 2008 upon his return to IIPS. Dr. Singh's dissertation is entitled: *'Male Involvement in Family Planning and Maternal Care: Evidence from Rural Ahmadnagar, Maharashtra'*. He continues his teaching and research work at IIPS. He is also continuing his collaboration with Professor Stan Becker at the Bloomberg School on couples' reproductive health.

Recently, our colleague **Dr. Hassan Awad Allah** shared with us the good news of **Dr. Ahmed Elamin's (SI 2008)** promotion to Deputy Director for Sudan National AIDS control Programme (SNAP) within the Federal Ministry of Health.

Capt. (Retd.) Dr. Ruquiya Saeed, a Member of the Provincial Assembly of Balochistan, Pakistan, since 2002 and Gates Parliamentarian Leadership Seminar participant in 2004, was one of the first to respond to the recent [Quetta Earthquake](#). She chaired the UN agencies and Provincial Disaster Management Authority team and was instrumental in organizing one of the first international press conferences seeking international humanitarian assistance.



Photo credits: R. Saeed



SI 2007 participant, **Alain Koffi** (alaink-tmdu@hotmail.com) recently published research from his thesis in BMC Public Health (2008, 8: 408), "Sexual abstinence behavior among never-married youths in a generalized HIV epidemic country: Evidence from the 2005 Cote d'Ivoire AIDS Indicator Survey". He is at work on another analysis of inequity in child mortality in 21 countries, that includes concentration index calculations, which he learned here!

JANUARY 2009

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Courtesy: Dave Colwell

Upcoming Training/ Workshops/Events

FP & RH Competency Training at the International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai, India, scheduled for January 12-24, 2009. This workshop is co-sponsored by IIPS and the Gates Institute. For more information on the workshop, please contact Dr. Usha Ram, Coordinator at: usharam@iips.net or (91) 22-25563254/5/6 ext 127.

Addis Ababa University – short course in reproductive health & development, with a thematic focus on family planning, is scheduled for March 16-27, 2009. For information, please contact Dr. Mesganaw Fantahun Afework, mesganaw.f@gmail.com.

7th Annual Summer Institute for Reproductive Health and Development at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, will be held **June 1 -12, 2009 in Baltimore**. For those seeking funding support or require a visa to enter the country are encouraged to submit an application on or before February 20, 2009. Application materials will be available on our website shortly. Please check www.jhsph.edu/gatesinstitute for updates.

Upcoming Issue – March 2009

- Research on couples reproductive health in Malawi
- Training activities in Gates Partner Institutions
- Advocacy activities of the Gates Institute
- News from and accolades to Gates Alumni

We look forward to hearing from you, our alumni network! The newsletter serves as one of the mechanisms we have to share current work, lessons learned, challenges and achievements. Please feel free to send updates to Natalie Culbertson (nculbert@jhsph.edu) or Monnie Heminthavong (aheminth@jhsph.edu). Feel free to share this newsletter with your colleagues and let us know how we can improve it so that it is relevant and useful to you.

To subscribe or unsubscribe to the Gates Institute e-newsletter, or if you have questions, comments or contributions, please send an e-mail to Natalie Culbertson at nculbert@jhsph.edu.

If your contact information has changed since you participated in a Gates Institute program, please send us your correct information so we can update our records.

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