



STRATEGIC PLAN

2016–2020

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I. INTRODUCTION

Now in its fifth decade, the Guttmacher Institute is a leading research and policy organization dedicated to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)¹ in the United States and globally. Believing strongly that good reproductive health policy starts with credible research, the Institute combines high-quality research on topics relevant to the policy debate with sophisticated communications and advocacy designed to bring evidence to bear on policy and program development.

This five-year strategic plan begins by taking stock of the current context—the political and policy backdrop against which our goals have been shaped. It continues with the mission, vision and values that guide our work. Finally, at the heart of the plan, are the goals and priorities that will mark the Institute’s next five years of work. A more detailed version of this Strategic Plan is available that provides information on the context in which we are working and also specifies strategies the Institute will pursue to achieve each of the goals and priorities.

II. CONTEXT

The Guttmacher Institute’s Strategic Plan has been informed by an assessment of the current landscape for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and key developments that we expect will shape this landscape over the next five years, taking into account the global and U.S. political context, the funding environment, and taking into account key aspects of the global and U.S. context.

The start of our plan coincides with the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals, a new set of global development goals, adopted by the UN in September 2015, which will guide and shape much of the policy agenda and donor priorities for the next 15 years. The SRHR targets and indicators that are included in this new set of goals—and, crucially, those that are left out—will inform the work of the SRHR community generally, and Guttmacher specifically, over the coming five years. Globally, we expect to see continued attention to meeting women’s needs for contraception, as well as opportunities for progress in the traditionally stigmatized areas of abortion and adolescent sexuality. Similar opportunities are likely to arise at the national level, although progress is likely to be incremental, and opposition to policy change will be strong in many countries.

In the United States, the next five years will continue to be marked by intense ideological divides on virtually every aspect of our agenda, with particular challenges to abortion access. In states under solid conservative control, the constant barrage of legislation to restrict abortion is likely to continue, and barring dramatic changes in the composition of Congress, legislative prospects at the federal level are uncertain at best. Many programs and policies that are core to the Institute’s agenda, including Title X, Medicaid, comprehensive sex education and support for family planning programs overseas, will continue to be threatened, and stark disparities along socioeconomic and racial/ethnic lines will persist. The results of the November 2016 elections will have far-reaching implications for these policy issues, shaping everything from control over key government agencies to the future composition of the Supreme Court.

All these challenges highlight the incontrovertible need for the Guttmacher Institute’s policy-relevant research and evidence-based advocacy. Interviews with a wide range of external stakeholders emphasize that the Guttmacher Institute occupies—and must continue to occupy—a critical niche within the SRHR field. The Institute’s current work is widely viewed as being high-quality, high-impact and urgently needed. Further, our commitment to unbiased research and analysis remains at the forefront of our Strategic Plan. We see opportunities ahead to carry forward our mission by innovating strategically around our core work, while significantly expanding our reach and impact.

Definition: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) encompass the rights of all individuals to make decisions concerning their sexual activity and reproduction, free from discrimination, coercion and violence. Specifically, access to SRHR ensures individuals are able to choose whether, when and with whom to engage in sexual activity; to choose whether and when to have children; and to have access to the information and means to do so.

SRHR includes the rights of all persons to

- » Seek, receive and impart information related to sexuality
- » Receive sexuality education
- » Have bodily integrity
- » Choose their partner
- » Decide to be sexually active or not
- » Have consensual sexual relations
- » Have consensual marriage
- » Decide whether or not, and when, to have children
- » Pursue a satisfying, safe and pleasurable sexual life

Comprehensive sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services include

- » Contraceptive information and services, including emergency contraception and a range of modern contraceptive methods
- » Maternity care, including antenatal, postnatal and delivery care, particularly skilled birth attendance and emergency obstetric care
- » Prevention and appropriate treatment of infertility
- » Safe abortion and postabortion care
- » Prevention, care and treatment of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, reproductive tract infections and reproductive cancers
- » Information, education, and counseling; prevention; and surveillance related to violence against women and care for survivors of violence
- » Actions to eliminate harmful practices such as female genital cutting and early and forced marriage

III. MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

Mission

The Guttmacher Institute is a leading research and policy organization committed to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights in the United States and globally.

Vision

A world in which all people are able to exercise their rights and responsibilities regarding sexual behavior and reproduction freely and with dignity.

Values

Guttmacher's program is guided by four overarching institutional values:

- » **Commitment to rigor** in our research and analysis and to publication of our findings, whatever the ramifications may be for policies and programs
- » **Prioritizing the needs of disadvantaged groups** and addressing inequities in access to and use of information and services
- » **Addressing emerging questions** to promote understanding and shape the public debate
- » **Collaborating with others** to maximize the reach and impact of our research and analysis

IV. FOCUS AREAS FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

In the next five years, the Institute will continue its work in areas that have been core to the organization since its founding. Simultaneously, we will launch, expand or reinvigorate work on topics closely related to our core issues that are emerging as relevant to the global and domestic SRHR policy agenda.

The following are the Institute's core areas of work. Although progress has been made in each area, large inequities persist both across state and national borders and by socioeconomic subgroups, with the poorest and most vulnerable often experiencing the widest deficits in access.

» Contraception

Documenting need for, access to and use of contraceptives, and supporting investment in family planning services that address elements of quality and accessibility, including access to a full range of methods, comprehensive and accurate information, effective counseling and affordability.



» Unintended pregnancy

Estimating the incidence, consequences and costs of unintended pregnancy; understanding what drives unintended pregnancy rates and trends; and promoting strategies that enable women to time and space their pregnancies.

» Abortion

Documenting the incidence of abortion; examining the factors underlying women's decisions to terminate their pregnancies, the characteristics of women who have abortions and the conditions under which women obtain them; estimating the health, social and economic consequences of unsafe abortion; and assessing and promoting access to safe abortion services.

» Adolescent sexual and reproductive health

Estimating adolescent pregnancy rates, documenting adolescents' access to SRH information and services, and promoting fact-based, comprehensive sex education and youth-friendly, confidential services.

Although other topic areas may arise, we have identified the following areas for exploration over the next five years for our domestic and international work, based on an assessment of emerging challenges in the field, staff discussions, engagement with the Board of Directors and interviews with external colleagues. In each of these areas, there are gaps in knowledge that must be filled in order to address these issues through evidence-based policies and programs.

» The reproductive justice framework*

Conducting research, advocacy and communications informed by the reproductive justice perspective and in consultation with leaders in the reproductive justice community.

» Men and SRHR

Increasing understanding of men's sexual and reproductive health needs, as well as men's influence on women's behaviors and access to services.

» STIs and HIV/AIDS

Exploring linkages between access to prevention, treatment and care for sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS and other aspects of SRHR.

» SRHR of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) populations

Conducting research and analysis to better understand SRHR challenges and needs of LGBT populations and how and to what extent existing services, programs and policies are meeting their needs.

» Sexual rights

Incorporating a greater focus on sexual rights[†] into our research, advocacy and communications work.

*Reproductive justice focuses on addressing the structural and institutional barriers that are at the root of reproductive health disparities. It encompasses a broad view of women's reproductive health needs, focusing not just on enabling women to avoid unwanted childbearing, but also on their right to have healthy pregnancies and births when they so desire, and to parent their children in safe and healthy environments.

[†]Respect for bodily integrity and freedom from violence or coercion, choice in sexual activity and partner selection, and access to information and education concerning sexuality.



V. GOALS AND PRIORITIES

This section lays out the goals and priorities of the Institute's 2016–2020 Strategic Plan. The four strategic goals are interconnected and interdependent: Goals 1, 2 and 3 embody the Institute's three programmatic areas of work (research, public policy and communications), while Goal 4 recognizes that a strong organization is needed to achieve the programmatic aims.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

Conduct high-quality, rigorous research on our core issues while incorporating new research topics and questions and innovative methodologies.

Priorities

Promote innovative research that addresses “why” questions and trends; explore new topic areas that intersect with our core areas of work; and deepen and expand our partnerships with research organizations in the United States and internationally

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

Ensure timely, targeted information dissemination and outreach while maximizing responsiveness to, and impact on, key audiences, including policymakers, advocates, the media, researchers and health care providers.

Priorities

Diversify our use of communications channels, formats and voices to reach new audiences; improve the efficiency of our operations to disseminate findings in the timeliest manner; and build and enhance partnerships with global, in-country, regional and U.S. communications and advocacy organizations

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

Promote effective policies and programs that are rooted in solid evidence, engaging our strategic allies and partners in the United States and globally.

Priorities

Strengthen and advance evidence-based advocacy for SRHR policies and programs; increase engagement with colleague organizations; and expand outreach beyond the SRHR community

STRATEGIC GOAL 4

Ensure a strong, innovative and financially healthy organization, promoting linkages across divisions, a supportive work environment and effective use of resources.

Priorities

Organize strategies, operations, structure, tools and resources around the Strategic Plan goals and priorities; refine the staffing model and staff orientation processes; foster staff's ability to innovate, achieve professional growth and be publicly engaged; foster diversity at all levels and across all divisions; strengthen Board engagement in line with the Strategic Plan; and ensure the financial health of the Institution

VI. ASSESSING PROGRESS

This five-year Strategic Plan is ambitious and far-reaching; we recognize that the Institute will not be able to move forward on all the priorities and strategies at the same rate. We also recognize that it is important to monitor our progress toward implementing the plan and achieving the vision and goals outlined above.

To do so, the Institute will

- » create annual implementation plans specific to each of the Institute’s divisions that identify the priorities and strategies on which efforts will focus for that year and that define the set of activities these efforts will entail;
- » track quantitative output and outcome indicators and compare these over time, and
- » identify and analyze higher-level outcomes to which Guttmacher’s work has contributed, including new funding commitments made or initiatives launched.

VII. CONCLUSION

Each of the goals and priorities above will be important in its own right over the next five years. At the same time, each element of the plan represents a step we expect to take toward realizing our long-term vision. Guttmacher has long been a key source for the evidence needed to improve policies and advance SRHR, and our blend of science and action remains as vital and powerful today as it has been for the last 47 years. In the next five years, while we will strive to explore innovative new topics and methods, strengthen our partnerships, and expand our audiences and our reach, we will not waver from our commitment to sexual and reproductive health, freedom and fulfillment for all.