The Health Policy Initiative in Tanzania (HPI/Tanzania) supports government, civil society, and private sector partners to build an enabling environment to scale up HIV prevention, care, and treatment and improve family planning and reproductive health (FP/RH) policies in Tanzania. To achieve this goal, HPI/Tanzania carries out advocacy, technical assistance, and capacity building in four broad areas described below.

Leadership and Governance: HPI/Tanzania strengthens leadership and governance on priority HIV and FP/RH issues. Implicit in the project’s work is fostering ownership and sustainability of the national HIV response and FP/RH program. The project works in consultation and collaboration with the Ministry of Health, TACAIDS, and other key government agencies. The project also promotes momentum for change by building the capacity of (1) parliamentarians, to advocate on HIV and FP/RH issues within the government and to the people; (2) the media, to report accurately on HIV issues so that Tanzanians can expect the best possible national HIV response as well as play their part in reducing stigma; (3) people living with HIV (PLHIV), to hold the government accountable for implementing the most effective possible response to HIV; and (4) religious leaders, to extend their voice as ambassadors for change and accountability in all matters concerning HIV and AIDS.

Policies, Plans, and Guidelines: HPI/Tanzania fosters accelerated, well-informed formulation and dissemination of priority policies, plans, and guidelines for the scale-up of HIV and FP/RH programs. Key issues that the project is addressing are widespread HIV-related stigma and discrimination; pervasive gender-based violence and teen pregnancy; uninformed and/or fragmented representation of PLHIV and senior leaders, champions, and advocates; and limited government financial contributions for HIV and FP/RH programs.

Information and Data for Decisionmaking: HPI/Tanzania promotes increased generation and use of evidence-based information and data for decisionmaking, planning, and advocacy for HIV and FP/RH issues. The project has applied its internationally recognized Spectrum Suite of computer applications for national FP simulation models (RAPID) and FP costing (FamPlan), and looks forward to working with Tanzanian partners on similar modeling when the 2010 Demographic and Health Survey is completed.

Financial Resources: The project works with champions, leaders, and key stakeholders to increase Tanzanian financial resources for priority FP/RH and HIV needs. In 2009, HPI/Tanzania and partners trained NGOs in a Public Expenditure Tracking System for improved financial oversight and advocacy, and plans to expand this work. In FP/RH, the project provided emergency advocacy assistance to key champions, notably parliamentarians, to mobilize resources when the national FP program was at risk of a stock-out of contraceptives. The project’s planned collaboration with the government to implement the National Family Planning Costed Implementation Plan in 2010 will help mitigate such emergencies in the future.

A Rights-based Approach

In 2009, HPI/Tanzania supported the Tanzania Network of Religious Leaders Living with HIV or Affected by HIV/AIDS (TANERELA) to undertake a workshop that led to the “Dodoma Declaration,” in which leaders agreed to unite their efforts to fight HIV and related stigma and to promote voluntary counseling and testing (VCT). HPI/Tanzania has also worked with the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) to develop a web-driven database that will provide improved evidence for leaders and stakeholders on the levels and types of stigma, discrimination, and gender-based violence (GBV) cases. The project is collaborating with the Ministry of Health and others to incorporate use of this information in the implementation of key stigma, discrimination, and GBV provisions in Tanzania’s AIDS Law.

For More Information
The Health Policy Initiative is implemented by the Futures Group. It is funded by USAID/Tanzania through the mission’s Health and Population Office (for FP/RH activities) and the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) (for HIV activities). To learn more, please contact:

Millicent Obaso
Chief of Party
Health Policy Initiative in Tanzania
Email: MObaso@futuresgroup.com

Health Policy Initiative in Action | Among the project’s key achievements in Tanzania are mobilizing faith-based leaders to combat HIV stigma and discrimination; promoting evidence-based advocacy and planning to improve FP/RH access; and empowering civil society groups representing women, orphans, people living with HIV, and other vulnerable groups. Photos by Leah Samike.