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## HEALTH REPORTER: focus on DFID health strategy: working together for better health 15 June 2007

produced by the [IDS Health and Development Information](#) team  
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This is our monthly email bulletin, bringing together research to inform policy debates on health in developing countries. The Health Reporter aims to provide readers with a more in-depth look at a particular area of health policy. This month's theme is [DFID health strategy: working together for better health](#). The bulletin also features summaries of new documents and other additions to the [Health Resource Guide](#)

[Health Reporter archive](#) - an archive is now available on the Health Resource Guide. See previous issues of the Health Reporter at [www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health/health-reporter](http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health/health-reporter)

All documents listed below are available free on the web. If you are unable to access any of these materials online and would like to receive a copy of a document as an email attachment, please contact [r.wolfe@ids.ac.uk](mailto:r.wolfe@ids.ac.uk)

### Contents:

- [Feature: DFID health strategy: working together for better health](#)
  - [Recommended readings on DFID health strategy: working together for better health](#)
    1. [DFID health strategy: Working together for better health](#)
    2. [Health is Global: Proposals for a UK government wide strategy](#)
    3. [Global health partnerships: the UK contribution to health in developing countries](#)
    4. [Medicines without Doctors: why the Global Fund must fund salaries of health workers to expand AIDS treatment](#)
  - [Other recommended readings](#)
    1. [Young people's sexual and reproductive health in the Middle East and North Africa](#)
    2. [Non-communicable diseases and global health governance: enhancing global processes to improve health development](#)
    3. [Global perspectives on the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents: patterns, prevention, and potential](#)
    4. [State of the World's Mothers Report](#)
    5. [Global Drug Facility achievements report](#)
  - [Announcements](#)
-

## Feature: DFID health strategy: Working together for better health

In June 2007, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) set out its strategy to support developing countries in improving the health of poor people and reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The strategy is developed around four priorities.

The first priority is to **deliver more resources** to finance health services and to help governments to plan and use these resources effectively. The department sets out different strategies including funding through sector budget support, targeting poor people with better access to services and providing essential drugs. Importantly, it commits to delivering 'more flexible, longer-term and increasingly predictable financing for the health sector'.

DFID's second priority is to **expand access to basic services** by strengthening national health systems so that they can deliver integrated and high quality services. This requires investing in human resources for health, strengthening national health information systems, and improving how services are managed. The strategy acknowledges that priority must be given to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, with integrated HIV prevention and access to family planning and safe abortions.

The third priority is to **improve the effectiveness of international funding for health**. This means promoting better cooperation between UN agencies, global funds and health partnerships and strengthening the performance and accountability of individual donor institutions. Whilst Global Health Initiatives provide vital sources of revenue, DFID recognises that they must support strengthening health systems that deliver services more broadly, rather than focus on vertical programmes. In addition, Global initiatives need to be more closely aligned to existing country health priorities and collaborate better with national processes.

The final priority set out by DFID is to **demonstrate results and build evidence of what works**. Emphasis on sector-wide investments and budget support rather than vertical programmes, means that results are measured in terms of improvements in the overall performance of countries' health sectors. DFID commits to supporting countries efforts to improve the tracking of progress in the health sector.

This DFID health strategy focuses on strengthening overall health systems rather than specific programmes and targets. Providing sustainable and flexible financing contributes towards this goal as it provides governments with the security and confidence to plan strategically and adapt plans to meet the specific needs of their populations. Investments in human resources for health are especially important and more emphasis needs to be placed on tackling the human resources crisis in Africa, which is undermining progress made in other areas (see 'Medicines without Doctors'). Finally, DFID should continue to direct its efforts towards ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and information, which is essential for achieving many, if not all, of the MDGs, especially those on maternal health, child survival, HIV and AIDS, and gender equality.

### For more information see:

- Department for International Development  
[www.dfid.gov.uk/](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/)
- Human resources for health dossier  
[www.eldis.org/go/topics/dossiers/human-resources-for-health](http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/dossiers/human-resources-for-health)
- Key issues guide: universal access to sexual and reproductive health  
[www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health/key-issues/universal-access-to-sexual-and-reproductive-health-services](http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health/key-issues/universal-access-to-sexual-and-reproductive-health-services)
- Global Initiatives section on the health systems resource guide  
[www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health-systems/global-initiatives-and-public-private-partnerships/global-initiatives](http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health-systems/global-initiatives-and-public-private-partnerships/global-initiatives)
- Health sector financing section on the health systems resource guide  
[www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health-systems/health-sector-financing](http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health-systems/health-sector-financing)

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## Recommended readings on DFID health strategy: working together for better health

### DFID health strategy: working together for better health

Authors: DFID

Produced by: UK Department for International Development (DFID) (2007)

This paper sets out DFID's strategy to support developing countries in improving the health of their people and reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The paper outlines three major challenges to improving the health of poor people including: slow progress in achieving the MDGs and addressing the major causes of disease; failure to invest in strengthening systems which can deliver essential health services; and poor co-ordination of international support leading to inefficiencies in delivering aid.

The strategy identifies four priorities to achieve better health for poor people:

- Delivering more resources for health
- Expanding access to basic services
- Improving the effectiveness of international funding for health
- Demonstrating results and building evidence of what works

The paper concludes that strengthening health systems, integrating efforts, focusing on the major causes of disease, and delivering more resources effectively, are essential factors for improving poor people's health. It recommends that governments and donors must link their ambitions on health with national plans for systems that deliver fair access to quality services, and also work to demonstrate the results of investment.

Available online at: [www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health&id=31849&type=Document](http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health&id=31849&type=Document)

[Back to list](#)

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### Health is Global: Proposals for a UK government wide strategy

Authors: S. Donaldson

Produced by: Department of Health, UK, (2007)

This report by the United Kingdom (UK) Department of Health provides the rationale for a UK global health strategy. It outlines the need for an international approach in order to protect the health of the UK population, reduce global poverty and harness the opportunities of globalisation. The report provides an overview of the current state of the world's health. It looks at the burden of communicable and non-communicable disease, and also describes key determinants of health, focusing in particular on climate change, health inequalities and inequity both within and between countries. The report also examines the implications of globalisation on human health including the effects of trade and investment, travel, migration and communication.

The report identifies areas to focus on in developing a global health strategy including health and development. It raises questions as to how the UK can work most effectively with developing countries on the emerging epidemics of chronic and non-communicable diseases, and how the UK can champion internationally coordinated action to address the factors leading to health staff migration. Other areas for action include health and foreign policy; health and the UK economy; and global threats to UK health.

Available online at: [www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health&id=23279&type=Document](http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health&id=23279&type=Document)

[Back to list](#)

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### Global health partnerships: the UK contribution to health in developing countries

Authors: N. Crisp

Produced by: Department of Health, UK, 2007

This report, published by the United Kingdom's (UK) Department of Health, examines how the UK's experience and expertise

in health can be used to best effect to support developing countries. It sets out examples of individual and National Health Service (NHS) partnerships working to improve health and share learning, and reviews the need to strengthen health systems in developing countries. The report finds that developing countries need to take the lead and own the solutions for improving health systems and services; support by international, national and local partnerships must be based on mutual respect; the UK and other developed countries have a responsibility to support scaling-up of training, education and employment of health workers in developing countries.

The report provides recommendations to help develop partnerships that fit in with country's plans, respond to their needs and enhance UK support. Specific recommendations are incorporated into broader categories including: stronger links between health and development; making the UK contribution more effective and sustainable; strengthening health systems through partnerships and learning; tackling the staffing crisis; and making evidence and best practice available to health workers, policy makers and the public.

Available online at: [www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health&id=24706&type=Document](http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health&id=24706&type=Document)

[Back to list](#)

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### **Medicines without Doctors: why the Global Fund must fund salaries of health workers to expand AIDS treatment**

Authors: G. Ooms; W. Van Damme; M. Temmerman,  
Produced by: Public Library of Science Medicine (2007)

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria was created to fight three of the world's most devastating diseases. Recent internal comments from the Global Fund suggest an intention to focus more on these diseases, and to leave the strengthening of health systems and support for the health workforce to others. This article, in PLoS Med, examines the implications of this strategy, and suggests that it could create a 'Medicines without Doctors' situation in which the medicines to fight AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria are available, but not the doctors or the nurses to prescribe those medicines adequately.

The paper uses examples of two countries – Mozambique and Malawi - to underline the crucial role of Global Fund support to the health workforce. The paper concludes that it is easier to remedy the shortage of medicines with external funding than it is to remedy the shortage of health workers: medicines can be bought, whereas health workers have to be trained first. This underlines the importance of starting emergency human resources programmes. The Global Fund is in a position to fund the salaries of health workers, but donors must give the Global Fund the resources to do so.

Available online at: [www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health&id=31505&type=Document](http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health&id=31505&type=Document)

[Back to list](#)

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## **Other recommended readings**

### **Young people's sexual and reproductive health in the Middle East and North Africa**

Authors: Jocelyn DeJong; Bonnie Shepard; Farzaneh Roudi-Fahimi  
Produced by: Population Reference Bureau , 2007

This policy brief highlights research results from the Middle East and North Africa region concerning young people's sexual and reproductive health (SRH). Whilst young people's experiences related to marriage and childbearing vary greatly across the region, they share a need for more and better information about sexual and reproductive health. The brief discusses barriers to SRH information and services including cultural taboos and young women's lack of mobility and decision making power, and draws attention to opportunities to provide young people with correct information about SRH in schools.

The brief concludes that while some countries have taken pioneering steps in reaching out to young people to address their needs, the region as a whole lacks the political commitment and institutional capacity to do so. Policy makers are often reluctant to enact policies and programmes to protect young people's sexual and reproductive health, because youth sexuality is a sensitive topic and many societies pay insufficient attention to the rights of young people. The authors recommend that governments need to enact policies and programmes that would: provide comprehensive sexuality education in schools; find ways to reach out-of-school youth who may be vulnerable to SRH risks; ensure the confidentiality of HIV testing; and integrate sexual and reproductive health services for young people into existing primary health care services.

Available online at: [www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health&id=31829&type=Document](http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health&id=31829&type=Document)

[Back to list](#)

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### **Non-communicable diseases and global health governance: enhancing global processes to improve health development**

Authors: R. Magnusson

Produced by: Globalization and Health, 2007

This paper in Globalisation and Health assesses progress in the development of a global framework for responding to non-communicable diseases, as reflected in the policies and initiatives of the World Health Organization (WHO), World Bank and the UN. Responding to the global burden of chronic disease requires an assessment of the global processes that are likely to be most effective in generating commitment to policy change at country level. The paper assesses the merits of the Millennium Development Goals and the WHO framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), and considers that lessons might be learned for enhancing the implementation of the Global Strategy on Diet.

The paper makes the case for the development of international legal standards in select areas of diet and nutrition, as a strategy for ensuring that the health of future generations does not become dependent on voluntary commitments. The authors recommend that a broad frame of reference for lifestyle-related chronic diseases is needed: one that draws together the WHO's work on tobacco, nutrition and physical activity, and that envisages selective use of international legal obligations, non-binding recommendations, advocacy and policy advice as tools of choice for promoting different elements of the strategy. [adapted from author].

Available online at: [www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health&id=31656&type=Document](http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health&id=31656&type=Document)

[Back to list](#)

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### **Global perspectives on the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents: patterns, prevention, and potential**

Authors: L. Bearinger; R. Sieving; J. Ferguson

Produced by: The Lancet, 2007

This is the second in the series of six Lancet articles about adolescent health. The article discusses the patterns and prevalence of adolescents' sexual behaviours and reproductive health outcomes, all of which show huge regional and country-level variation. It provides data on sexual activity and use of condoms amongst unmarried adolescents; birth and abortion rates; and sexually transmitted infections including HIV. The article presents strategies that have been shown to reduce threats to the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents such as sex education programmes and youth development and promotion of protective factors, and discusses key steps towards achieving goals relating to young people's reproductive rights.

The authors argue that continued investment in effective prevention and treatment strategies is essential to protect adolescents' sexual and reproductive health. All adolescents need access to quality youth-friendly services provided by clinicians trained to work with this population. Sex education programmes should offer accurate, comprehensive information whilst building skills for negotiating sexual behaviours. Girls and boys also need equal access to youth development programmes that connect them with supportive adults and with educational and economic opportunities.

Available online at: [www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health&id=31654&type=Document](http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health&id=31654&type=Document)

[Back to list](#)

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### **State of the World's Mothers Report**

Authors: Save the Children Fund

Produced by: Save the Children Fund, 2007

This Save the Children publication reports on child mortality rates in developing countries. The report includes Child Survival Progress Rankings of 60 countries, which together account for 94 per cent of all child deaths worldwide. According to the report, Iraq's child mortality rate has increased by 150 per cent since 1990: 122,000 Iraqi children died in 2005 before reaching their fifth birthday. Egypt has achieved a 68 per cent decline in child deaths in the past 15 years. Investments in health services for mothers and children have helped improve care for pregnant women, make childbirth safer and increased the use of family planning services.

The report also includes a Mothers' Index, which identifies the best and worst countries to be a mother and child-based on a comprehensive look at child and maternal well-being in 140 countries. Sweden, Iceland and Norway top the rankings, while

Niger ranks last. To succeed in saving the lives of children under 5, Save the Children recommends that countries: ensure the well-being of mothers; invest in basic, low-cost solutions to save children's lives; make health care available to the poorest and most vulnerable mothers and children; increase funding and improve strategies to provide basic, effective, lifesaving services to those who most need it. [adapted from authors]

Available online at: [www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health&id=31500&type=Document](http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health&id=31500&type=Document)

[Back to list](#)

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### **Global Drug Facility achievements report**

Authors: Stop TB Partnership

Produced by: Stop TB Partnership, 2007

This report highlights the accomplishments of the Global Drug facility (GDF) – the drug supply arm for the Stop TB partnership which works to eliminate Tuberculosis (TB). The GDF provides countries with the drugs and supplies needed to diagnose and treat adults and children with both drug-sensitive and drug-resistant TB. Along with drug provision it provides direct technical assistance on drug management. The GDF focuses on improving access to medicines for poor and underprivileged communities by providing drugs free of charge to patients and grants to low income countries.

The report reveals that the GDF has provided anti-TB drug treatments for 10 million people to 78 countries in the past six years. This reliable supply of drugs has been crucial both for preventing deaths and for fighting the spread of drug-resistant TB. The report also discusses other achievements of the GDF. These include: helping to build the capacity of national TB programmes world wide; responding quickly to emergencies and urgent needs for drugs; and promoting better standards of treatment for TB patients.

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC23155>

[Back to list](#)

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## **Announcements**

### **Call for case studies and testimonies: Global Health Watch 2007-2008**

The Global Health Watch is a non-government initiative aimed at supporting civil society to more effectively campaign and lobby for "health for all" and equitable access to health care. The initiative is putting out a call for the submission of local country or region-specific case studies and testimonies. These will contribute to the development of the GHW 2007-2008 Report, due to be launched in early 2008.

Possible case studies include: positive and negative examples of policies and actions to secure improved and equitable access to health care; interventions to address public sector corruption and inefficiency; good and bad processes of decentralisation; and civil society resistance to the effects of privatised public services.

For more information go to: [www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health/health-events-and-announcements&id=31783&type=Item](http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health/health-events-and-announcements&id=31783&type=Item)

### **Conference: Women Deliver: A Global Conference, London, 18-20 October, 2007**

This conference marks the 20th anniversary of the global Safe Motherhood Initiative by bringing together experts and creative thinkers in maternal health and mortality, human rights, gender, HIV and AIDS, education, micro-enterprise, sexual and reproductive health, including family planning, and more.

The conference will consist of interactive workshops, presentations, and exhibits undertaken by attendees from at least 30 countries, including parliamentarians, Ministers of Finance, Ministers of Planning, and civil society representatives.

For more information go to: [www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health/health-events-and-announcements&id=31774&type=Item](http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health/health-events-and-announcements&id=31774&type=Item)

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See the complete list of new additions, announcements, job adverts at: [www.eldis.org/health](http://www.eldis.org/health)

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- Health Resource Guide - [www.eldis.org/health](http://www.eldis.org/health)
- Health Systems Resource Guide - [www.eldis.org/healthsystems](http://www.eldis.org/healthsystems)
- HIV and AIDS Resource Guide - [www.eldis.org/hivaids](http://www.eldis.org/hivaids)

The HRC provides access to technical assistance and information for the Department for International Development (DFID UK), and its partners, in support of pro-poor health policies as well as health systems, service delivery and public health topics and programmes.

Eldis currently includes descriptions and links to over 4,500 organisations and over 16,000 full-text online documents covering development and environmental issues. It can be searched or browsed free over the Internet.

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