

DevInfo in Action

UNFPA: Using DevInfo to Strengthen Reproductive Health Analysis

Editor's note: This is the second in a two-part series on the use of DevInfo technology within the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

With the countdown towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 under way, global attention is turning to the most off-track of all MDGs: Target 5b, which is universal access to reproductive health.

In response, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is highlighting the need for re-examining current population-related policies in the light of reliable data. One of the agency's new tools to support these efforts is [MDG 5b+ Info](#), an online UNFPA database designed to track global progress towards achieving MDG Target 5B as well as priority indicators of the agency. Built on the UN-endorsed [DevInfo](#) platform, the tool has been introduced in various UNFPA-organized training workshops across the globe, intended to help decision-makers identify coverage gaps and develop data-driven interventions to support wider access to reproductive health.

Nowhere was this more evident than at a targeted workshop convened by UNFPA in Johannesburg, South Africa from 1-4 November 2011. Over 30 staff, mainly from UNFPA, national health ministries and National Statistical Offices, gathered to learn how MDG 5b+ Info could directly contribute to strengthening reproductive health analyses at the national and regional levels.

Over the course of four days, workshop participants first familiarized themselves with the data available in the MDG 5b+ Info database and then learned how to generate maps, graphs and tables to communicate trends, progress and gaps. After mastering these foundations, each country team worked on a Reproductive Health Situation Analysis presentation and paper, with contents generated from and undergirded by the database. These country presentations delivered at the end of the workshop clearly communicated to all participants the elegant utility of the MDG 5b+ tool in supporting analysis of reproductive health data.

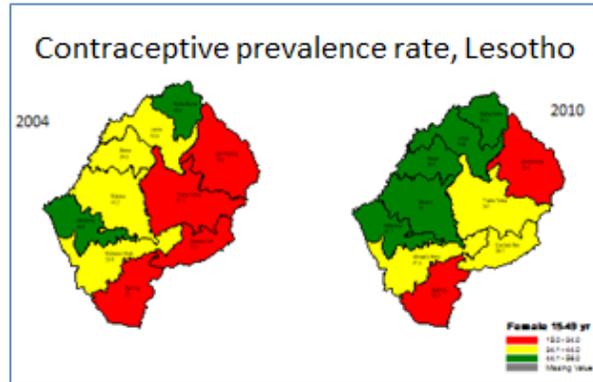


MDG 5b+ online database



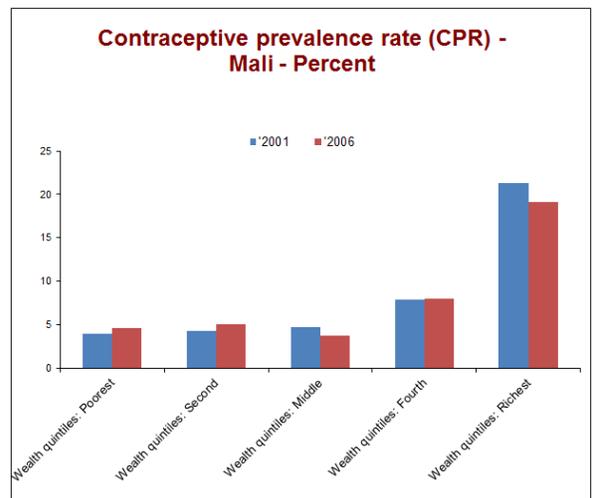
MDG 5b+ Info training workshop, Johannesburg, South Africa. Fourteen countries participated: Botswana, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and United Republic of Tanzania.

For example, the Lesotho delegation used the database to map progress in achievement over time in the western region of the country, as well as the significant need to boost efforts in the lagging eastern region. According to Mahlape Ramoseme of Lesotho’s Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, these maps showing data disaggregated by sub-national areas will assist the country in determining resource allocation, as the agency prepares its next Country Programme Action Plan.



Sample MDG 5b+ Info output, Lesotho

As another example, Modibo Traore of Mali’s Statistics Department of Agriculture and Environment capitalized on the database’s ability to present data disaggregated by wealth quintile, to generate a series of thought-provoking graphs. Disparities in access to reproductive health among the various wealth quintiles became markedly clear, as well as surprising trends in urban and rural areas – all important findings that can be used to support a more nuanced approach to policy-making and programme implementation in Mali.



Sample MDG 5b+ Info output, Mali

Recognizing the obvious advantages afforded by the MDG 5b+ Info database at facilitating the linkage of programme/policy knowledge with current and historical data, Edilberto Loaiza, Senior Advisor for Monitoring and Evaluation, UNFPA, stated, “These country presentations prove the

need for doing this kind of data analysis. Without access to disaggregated data, one cannot use data to supply evidence for decision-making. The next step is to ensure that this kind of analysis is performed on a regular basis.”

In his closing statements at the end of the workshop, Mady Biaye, Regional Technical Advisor, UNFPA Sub-Regional Office, Johannesburg , affirmed, “This training couldn't have come at a better time, because now is the time that countries are tracking MDG 5b, and with MDG 5b+ Info we can make use of the extensive research already done.”

With MDG 5b+Info in place, UNFPA officials and their national partners can look forward to strengthening their analyses of reproductive health data – all the more critical, in light of our expanding global population.

Data making a difference.

For more information, please contact Edilberto Loaiza, Senior Advisor for Monitoring and Evaluation, UNFPA, at loaiza@unfpa.org or Mady Biaye, Ph.D., Regional Technical Advisor, UNFPA SRO Johannesburg, at biaye@unfpa.org.