

...Background

In response to these significant changes, nations committed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which grew out of the agreements and resolutions of world conferences organized by the United Nations in the past decade. These goals have been commonly accepted as a framework for measuring development progress and encompass several pressing health needs. These health needs are: reducing childhood mortality, improving maternal health and reducing the number of unintended pregnancies, and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, TB, and other infectious diseases, as well as the crucial importance of gender equality in achieving these goals.

Achieving the MDGs related to reproductive health and gender in the context of health sector reforms and the PRSP process require an understanding of the linkages among them and how they influence each other, as well as new tools and strategies for applying this understanding. Understandably, managers, decision-makers, and others from the international development community have expressed an increased demand for more skills in designing health services in light of this changing policy environment. To meet this growing demand for assistance, the World Bank Institute (WBI) has a mandate to complement WB lending programs with effective *learning programs*. WBI has selected *Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Poverty Reduction, Reproductive Health and Health Sector Reform* as a priority area and has developed an innovative, intensive learning program as a service to client countries and Development Agencies.



THE WORLD BANK
INSTITUTE

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals:

*Poverty Reduction, Reproductive
Health and Health Sector Reform*

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Background...

Changes in the policy and lending environment have altered substantially the design of health services and programs.

At the country level, in the face of severe financial and organizational constraints in all the social sectors, governments and donors are making difficult choices about how and where to allocate human and financial resources. Except for AIDS funding, they have moved away from the implementation of narrowly directed health programs to a broader approach of health system development and reform. This includes instituting new organizational and financing arrangements for health care; implementing sector-based rather than project-based donor funding; changing public and private roles and responsibilities; and promoting accountability in health systems.

At the same time, in partnership with the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), countries are also centering their development agenda not on single social or health targets, but on the broader goal of poverty reduction as exemplified by the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process.



