

MAKING A CASE for REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH THROUGH DEMOGRAPHIC DATA: INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDIES of SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY COALITIONS

The role of civil society networks and coalitions in shaping reproductive health (RH) policymaking rose to prominence when NGOs advocated for improved access to services during the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Program of Action. Since then, civil society-led initiatives have been stressed in efforts to affect RH policy development at the country- level.

This paper describes how civil society networks in three countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America used demographic data and traditional demographic analysis - highlighting population size and magnitude as well as the composition and distribution of populations affected by reproductive health problems – to bring across the point that reproductive health problems affect large segments of the population, and that population concerns should continue to be high priority for governments.

The paper first starts with an analytical framework on policy development, followed by case studies of three countries starting with a brief description of their demographic and reproductive health challenges, then a discussion on the civil society networks that took on these challenges as issues for advocacy and how they used data to advocate for policy reform.

The results of the country case studies indicate that reproductive health and related development concerns - presented in terms of current and projected demographic magnitudes – can generate broad public support which in turn proved pivotal in influencing policymakers to act and approve policies intended to improve access to family planning and reproductive health services.