

Why Christians Support Strong Global Health Programs

Inspired by faith. Committed to evidence-based practice.

Christian Connections for International Health (CCIH) is a global network of organizations, individuals, and affiliates that unites the broad spectrum of Christians working in global health. Inspired by our shared faith and committed to evidence-based practice, CCIH seeks to improve access to quality health services for those most in need. We do this by working with and through our members, magnifying their work by building capacity, advocating for resources, and creating opportunities for networking and fellowship.



Investments in Global Health Programs Are Vital to U.S. Interests and the Global Economy

Global health investment yields economic benefits that promote financial growth and human flourishing. Globally, the World Bank estimates that economic productivity is reduced 40% due to poor health and education. According to a Lancet study in 2013, the investment of \$1 in global health can yield a 10 to 20-fold return in economic benefits. By strengthening country economies, we create the potential for local funding for health programs to be self-sustaining. Success breeds success.



Faith-Based Organizations are Strategic Partners in Global Health

Faith institutions and faith-based organizations are among the most strategic global health assets to address gaps in services and ensure access to health information to empower communities to take care of their own health. Leaders of faith institutions (clergy and lay leaders) are enormously important for health as they are trusted by their communities. We know the impact of reaching religious leaders for HIV programs and other areas of health promotion are the key to ensuring long term buy-in for these initiatives.

Furthermore, our faith-based members are often the only organizations who care for the most underserved and vulnerable populations in remote rural areas and marginalized urban slums. Through the leadership and support of the U.S. Government, faith-based organizations receive vital technical and fiscal resources to provide health services for those in need through U.S.-funded global health initiatives - USAID, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as well as organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (Global Fund).



Our mapping efforts in 2020 revealed that CCIH members work in 110 countries.



Strong Local Health Systems Provide the Structure for Success

One of the major lessons learned from the West Africa Ebola outbreak in 2014 was the importance of strong local health systems. Ebola ravaged communities, costing thousands of lives. We had clear contrasts between countries that had global health investment, such as Nigeria, in which they were able to adapt testing, tracing, and treatment protocols to help curb and eliminate Ebola before it spun out of control.

Neither Sierra Leone nor Liberia had these types of investments, and their health systems became quickly overwhelmed. It became necessary for CDC and U.S. military personnel to be deployed and put their lives in danger to help stabilize these communities. For literal pennies invested in stronger local health systems, we can exponentially save dollars in emergency relief.



Planning Helps Families Thrive

The term “Family Planning,” as used by CCIH means enabling couples to determine the number and timing of pregnancies, including the voluntary use of methods for preventing pregnancy – not including abortion – and harmonious with their values and religious beliefs. Due to poverty and lack of knowledge about healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies (HTSP), many families in developing nations are not able to plan pregnancies to protect the health of mother and child.

Families in developing countries often struggle to feed and clothe their children. Enabling these families to reach their desired healthy family size is a matter of life and death and is an answer to our Christian calling to serve. HTSP enables families to space births so mothers can recover and care for their newborns. Studies have shown that adverse maternal and perinatal outcomes are related to closely spaced pregnancies, while appropriate intervals between pregnancies reduced both infant and child mortality significantly.



Transparency, Accountability and Inclusion

Through U.S. leadership, global health initiatives – like PEPFAR, Gavi, *the Vaccine Alliance*, and the Global Fund – provide a platform and mechanism to foster good governance principles. The support provided by those entities requires vigorous reporting, accounting, and most importantly, results. Local communities know their governments are being held accountable to the U.S. and multilateral donors, which gives them the leverage to demand access to affordable quality healthcare.

By championing a country ownership model, the U.S. has highlighted the importance of a multisectoral approach, including government officials, the private sector, and communities of faith who are working together to address global health challenges. By urging country partners to prioritize strategies to improve the lives of vulnerable populations, the U.S. is living up to the ideals that all are created equal and have an inherent God-given worth and potential that should be nourished and protected.

Learn more about faith-based organizations and global health at www.ccih.org