

Health Actions for Women

**Practical Strategies
to Mobilize for Change**

Melissa Smith

Sarah Shannon

Kathleen Vickery



Copyright © 2015 by Hesperian Health Guides
First edition: January 2015
ISBN: 978-0-942364-68-2

Hesperian encourages you to copy, reproduce, or adapt any or all parts of this book, including the illustrations, provided that you do this for non-commercial purposes, credit Hesperian, and follow the other requirements of Hesperian's Open Copyright License (see www.hesperian.org/about/open-copyright).

For certain kinds of adaptation and distribution, we ask that you first obtain permission from Hesperian. Contact permissions@hesperian.org to use any part of this book for commercial purposes; in quantities more than 100 print copies; in any digital format; or with an organizational budget more than US\$1 million.

We also ask that you contact Hesperian for permission before beginning any translation, to avoid duplication of efforts, and for suggestions about adapting the information in this book. Please send Hesperian a copy of any materials in which text or illustrations from this book have been used.

THIS EDITION CAN BE IMPROVED WITH YOUR HELP. If you are a health worker, community organizer, student, teacher, mother, or anyone with ideas or suggestions for ways this book could be changed to better meet the needs of your community, please write to Hesperian. Thank you for your help.

This book has been printed in Canada by Friesens, an employee-owned corporation, on 100% post-consumer, chlorine-free, recycled paper.



Hesperian Health Guides
2680 Telegraph Avenue
Oakland, California 94609 • USA
hesperian@hesperian.org • www.hesperian.org

Credits

Additional writing and editing:

Aryn Faur, Todd Jailer, Jane Maxwell, Susan McCallister, Julia Nakad, Cynthia Peters, and Janey Skinner

Copy editors: Cynthia Peters and Todd Jailer

Design and production: Kathleen Tandy

Art coordination: Jane Maxwell with Kathleen Tandy

Field testing and review coordination: Jane Maxwell

Editorial oversight: Sarah Shannon

Proofreader: Sunah Cherwin

Cover design: Kathleen Tandy

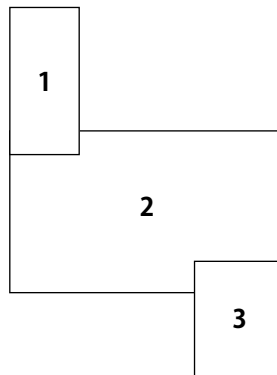
Illustrations:

We gratefully acknowledge the artists who have so gracefully illustrated this book: Namrata Bali, Sara Boore, Heidi Broner, May Florence Cadiente, Barbara Carter, Elizabeth Clark-Sutton, Andrew Crane, Regina Doyle, Sandy Frank, Jesse Hamm, Haris Ichwan, Anna Kallis, Joyce Knezevitch, Jipé Le-Bars, Susan McCallister, Lori Nadaskay, Gabriela Nuñez, Am Reaksmel, Sara Reilly-Baldeschwieler, Petra Rohr-Röuendaal, Lucy Sargeant, Mona Sfeir, Sofia Smith Hale, Chengyu Song, Kathleen Tandy, Arunadha Thakur, Dorj Tsedevdamba, Josefa Uluinaceva, Panapasa Belena Vesikula, Leah Wong, and Mary Ann Zapalac.

In addition, we thank the following publishers who gave us permission to use illustrations from their publications for no charge: International HIV/AIDS Alliance from *Keep the best, change the rest: Participatory tools for working with communities on gender and sexuality*; Practical Action Publishing from *Where There Is No Artist: Development drawings and how to use them*; South African AIDS Training Programme from *Basic AIDS Counselling Guidelines*; South Pacific Community Nutrition Training Project, Fiji, from *Developing Community Nutrition Programmes*; Stepping Stones from *Pacific Regional HIV/AIDS Project*; UNDP Cambodia and the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo from *Talking About Domestic Violence: A Handbook for Village Facilitators*.

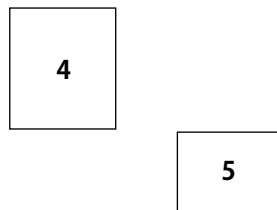
Cover photographs:

Front



1. Uganda: Heidi Brady
2. India: White Ribbon Alliance
3. Bolivia: Øystein Bryhni-Sassebo, Norsk Folkehjelp/Norwegian People's Aid

Back



4. Kenya: Rehma Ta Allah Community Development Group
5. Cambodia: Stéphane Janin, courtesy of Photoshare

Thanks

The creation of *Health Actions for Women* has been a labor of love initiated by a group of women devoted to ensuring that the world's poorest and most vulnerable women gain access to information and improve their lives. This effort grew out of the Hesperian newsletter, the *Women's Health Exchange*, a collaboration among community organizers and women's health educators. Dr. Melissa Smith, the medical editor of *Where Women Have No Doctor* and a contributor to the *Exchange*, convened a steering group with Hesperian staff members to shape and guide the project. Our deep appreciation goes to this international group of remarkable women — Lucille Atkin along with Deborah Billings, Mirai Chatterjee, Jill Hackett, May Haddad, Catherine Muthoni, Pallavi Patel, Paula Rojas, Paola Sesia, and Aruna Uprety — who so generously contributed their knowledge, experience, creativity and time to move this project from a dream to a reality. Jane Maxwell deserves special recognition for nurturing this project and its process, passionately engaging the participation of a wide and varied international network of community-based groups and individuals.

Field testing by 41 community-based partners in 23 countries brought together diverse groups of younger and older women, groups that combined adolescent girls with young married women, and mixed gender groups. An astounding 1,400 people participated in discussions, tried out activities, and submitted their feedback and insights about the issues most important to their communities.

Many thanks to the following community-based groups who contributed so much of their hearts, time, and experiences to help us make this book as useful as possible to women all over the world:

Bangladesh: Change Associates

Cambodia: Women's Resource Center

China: Yunnan Health and Development Association (YHDRA)

Ethiopia: Venture Strategies Innovations (VSI)

Ghana: One Africa Research Development and Extension Programme, Village Exchange Ghana, Widows Fight

Guatemala: Centro EcuMénico de Integración Pastoral Quetzaltenango, Centro de Educación y Recuperación Nutricional Emmanuel (CERNE), Asociación de Servicios Comunitarios de Salud (ASECSA), Tan Ux'il

Guinea: Today's Women International Network (TWIN)

India: Centre for Health Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness (CHETNA), Jamkhed Institute for Training in Community Health and Development, SAMA Health Forum, Self-employed Women's Association (SEWA), Tathapi Trust

Kenya: National Organization of Peer Educators (NOPE), Rehma Ta Allah Community Development Group

Lebanon: Women's Humanitarian Organization (WHO)

Liberia: Women's Solidarity Inc. (WOSI), Planning, Empowering, Advocating for Community Endeavors (PEACE)

Malawi: Girls Empowerment Network (GENET)

Mexico: Comité por una Maternidad Sin Riesgos Oaxaca, Grupos de Estudio sobre la Mujer Rosario Castellanos

Mongolia: Princess Center

Nepal: Rural Health Education Services Trust (RHEST)

Nicaragua: ATRAVES

Nigeria: Family-Centered Initiatives for Challenged Persons (FACICP)

Pakistan: Social Transformation and Educational Prosperity (STEP), Women in Need (WIN)

Philippines: Likhaan

Rwanda: The Ihangane Project

Sierra Leone: Midwives on Missions of Service (MOMs)

US/Choctaw Nation: JourneyWomen

Zambia: Central Action on HIV/AIDS (CAHA)

These organizations have been invaluable in supporting the development of this book in many ways: Ipas, The Youth Leadership in Sexual and Reproductive Health Program (GOJoven) and Adolescent Girls' Advocacy & Leadership Initiative (AGALI) of the Public Health Institute, Global Fund for Women, and CARE, Peru.

And a heartfelt thanks to the countless others who gave so freely of their time, talents and support, especially:

Oladayo Afolabi
Maria Aguilar
Sajida Arif
Sarah Arshad
Ximena Avellaneda Diaz
Magdalena Bacalando
Erick Ballena
Memory Banda
Maggie Bangser
Enhjargal Banzragch
Esther Barajas
John Bergez
Deborah Bickel
Patricia Ravelo Blancas
Sera Bonds
James Briggs
James Brooks
Hallie Brown
August Burns
Jenna Burton
Sarah Buttrey
Blanca Castanon
Emma Delfina Chirix
Haile Eshe Cole
Kellee Coleman

Gina Conde
Elizabeth Cox
Miatta Darwolor
Junice Demeterio-Melgar
Meagan Demitz
Karin DeNevi
Ivonne Diaz del Valle
Milka Dinev
Hector Dominguez
Lina Echeverri
Shalini Eddens
Christina Ekpedor
Mary Ellsberg
Teresa Emeterio
Greta-Stina Engelbert
Elena Esquiche
Kurt Eulau,
Paul Farmer
Rudy A. Felipe
Audrey Fernandes
Miriam Ford
Latanya Mapp Frett
Graciela Freyermuth
Edith Friedman
Alanna Galati

Del Garcia
Iris Garcia
Daria Garina
Michela Garrison
Connie Gates
Araceli Gil
Jaclyn Gilstrap
Anna Giske
Maenna Glenn
Laura Goldman
Jacob Goolkasian
Ishan Gordon
Miriam Bird Greenberg
Flora Gutiérrez
Any Gutman
Pham Bich Ha
Paula Hammond
Leigh Haynes
Zena Herman
Ana Maria Hernandez
Cárdenas
Lorena Herrera
Leila Hessini
Shobha Hiatt
Nazneen Huq

Alyson Hyman
Andrea Irvin
Sharon Ishcomer-Fleming
Ellen Israel
Megan Ivankovich
Zeina Jamaladdine
Peg Johnston
Dorcas Khasowa
Pisey Khim
Jasmine Kaur
Laura Kirkpatrick
Paul Kivel
Michael Klitsch
Beatrice Korto
Kranti and Sabala
Miriam Lara-Meloy
BA Laris
Clara Lawal
Wendy Leonard
Eduardo Liendro
Rebecca Lightsey
Chona Lobitana
Claire Long
Ronnie Lovich
Irene Lu
Christine Lungu
Brinton Lykes
Jay MacGillivray
Gina Margillo
Tara Mathur
Eileen McCormick
Laurie McWhorter
Elvia Mendoza
Christiane Milev
Sierra Miley-Boland
Pilar Montalvo
Jennifer Moss
Katie Muller

Sonia Navani
Meira Neggaz
Candice Newman
Kofi Nyalimba
Josephat Nyamwaya
Dollina Odera
Helen Abazie Ogechi
Thank-God Okosun
Rebecca Okuamoah
Magdalena Olivera
Ramirez
Jen Olson
Yesenia Ortega
Alana Ortez
Jessica Osorio
Deborah Ottenheimer
Emma Ottolenghi
Waela Oweity
Nancy Owen Lewis
Foyeke Oyedokun
Sana Patel
Alissa Petrites
Ha Pham Bich
Ndola Prata
Helen Pu
Minal Rahimtoola
Pilar Ramirez
Dee Redwine
Cecile Richards
Janie Riley
Luciane Rocha
José Ros
Patricia Ross
Antonieta Rued
Dan Rutz
Ada Ruzer
Yinusa Olanrewaju Saheed
Tahira Saleem

Diana Santana
Rene Castro Santoro
N.B. Sarojini
Hallie Sekoff
Katharine Shapiro
Lonny Shavelson
Leslie Shipman
José Ros Silvestre
Josefina Simbajon
Amrita Singh
Anuradha Singh
Megan Sloat
Maia Small
CP Smitha
Barbara de Souza
Peggy Stern
Dayna Stimson
A.O. Sule-Odu
Esther Tahrir
Dorothy Tegeler
Cabbell Tennis II
Claire Tibbits
Oyungerel Tsedekdamba
Laura Turiano
Leah Uberseder
Ekeate Umoh
Irma Valasquez
Valerie Varco
Marvin Vásquez
Arnold Vega
Adrian Velasquez
Lily Walkover
Curt Wands-Bourdoiseau
Glen Williams
Paula Worby
Robin Young
Sandra Zerbo
Victor Zubeldia

For their generous financial support of this project, we thank the following foundations: AHS Foundation; Arntz Family Foundation; Cogan Family Foundation; Conservation, Food and Health Foundation; Cornell Douglas Foundation; Flora Family Foundation; Ford Foundation; Grousbeck Family Foundation; International Foundation; Ipas; Kadoorie Charitable Foundation; Lalor Foundation; Lakeshore Foundation; May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust; New Field Foundation; North Star Fund; Overbrook Foundation; Partnership Foundation; School for Advanced Research; United Methodist Church Women's Division; Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation; West Foundation; and WestWind Foundation.

We are also grateful for the generosity of the many individuals who contributed financially to this project, with special thanks to: Carolyn Bain, Fam Bayless, Sally and Alan Black, Marjorie Boetter, Betty

Bottler, Paula Brentlinger, Kay Bullitt, Tina Bullitt, Morry Cater, Lynn Chapman, Karen Daubert and Jared Smith, Ann Dittmar, Barbara and Paul Freeman, Meg Fuell, Leslie Grace, Caroline Hale, Charles A. Hale and Lenore Hale, Roger Hale, Theodore Held, Jun Hurt, Elizabeth and Jeff Klein, Jim Krieger and Kimberly Wicklund, William Lankford, George Martin, Linda Mason, Jane Maxwell, Gary and Linda Oman, Wenda O'Reilly, Joana and L. Scott Ramos, Margaret Rosenfeld, Ollie Royer, Ruth Sherer, Michael Shimkin, Roslyn Solomon and David Groff, Alec and Jane Stevens, Margaret and David Thouless, Barbara Trenary, Jean Walkinshaw and Diana Weihs.



Melissa Smith thanks Charles Hale, and Amalia and Sofia Smith Hale for their abiding support, wise counsel, love and accompaniment throughout the book development process; and my parents, Dorothy and Palmer Smith, for their example of working for the common good. I also thank the community health workers and midwives who I have had the privilege of working with in Central America and Mexico, whose creativity and passion for social justice have guided my own life's path. Sarah Shannon thanks the women of El Salvador, whose tireless work for social justice and gender equality has inspired me and so many others; and Pedro, Mercedes, Phyllis, Robin and other colleagues from Conta for all you taught me about being a popular educator. Kathleen Vickery thanks the remarkable women who founded Isis International in Santiago, Chile, and all who have shared their wisdom, struggles and visions of change through the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network. Their pioneering advocacy helped midwife the global women's health movement and inspired my contributions to this book.

How to use this book

Health Actions for Women was written to help women and men move their communities from recognition of a problem, to discussion of how it affects us, to action for change to improve women's and girl's health. The book is organized to help that process along. You do not need to read the chapters in the order they are listed on the next page. Start wherever you find the content or topics that best address your needs and your issues.

Chapter 2: Communities Organize for Women's Health, and Chapter 10: Building a Women's Health Movement, can help you think about the process of creating plans for action and community organizing. Both Chapter 3: Gender and Health and Chapter 4: Sexuality and Sexual Health contain important information, analysis, and activities that provide a foundation for the education and organizing work on the issues covered in the other chapters.

Each chapter begins with a Table of Contents listing the main sections and activities included in that chapter. You can also use the Activities list that follows the Table of Contents on the next page to find your way directly to activities throughout the book. Appendix B: Good Meetings, from Start to Finish, and Appendix C: Activities to Encourage Participation contain more activities as well as tips on how to facilitate meetings, guide difficult discussions, and help a group of people become comfortable meeting and working together.



The women in my organization tried out several of the activities in this book. We sent in suggestions about what worked and did not work for us, and how we changed the activities to fit our culture. I am glad to see our advice and suggestions included in the book along with the activities — maybe they will help you too.

A list of all the groups who shared their experiences in promoting women's health and empowerment with us is found on pages 328 to 330, along with their contact information. A collection of print and online resources that we have found helpful, and we hope may help you too, is on pages 331 to 338.

A book like this is never done. To share your activities, experiences, and other good resources you have found or developed with Hesperian and other health educators and community organizers, please use the website: **healthactions.hesperian.org**. We can't wait to hear from you!

Contents

Chapter	page
1 Taking Action for Women’s Health.....	1
2 Communities Organize for Women’s Health	17
3 Gender and Health.....	41
4 Sexuality and Sexual Health	75
5 Preventing Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)	107
6 Ending Gender-based Violence.....	141
7 Protecting Women’s Health with Family Planning.....	179
8 Healthy Pregnancies and Safe Births	211
9 Preventing Deaths from Unsafe Abortion	247
10 Building a Women’s Health Movement	275
Appendix A: Advocate for Women’s Rights Using International Law	300
Appendix B: Good Meetings, from Start to Finish.....	305
Appendix C: Activities to Encourage Participation	317
Adapted activities credits	327
Groups and projects described in this book.....	328
Where to get more information	331

Activities

Sex and gender roles: what is the difference?	42
Gender boxes	44
What if there were no gender boxes?	46
A day in the life	48
The way we were	51
The balance of burdens	54
The dominoes game	56
How to make an “I” statement	59
Image theater	63
Changing the rules	65
Reaching your dreams	67
The world of ads — sexy women and manly men	68
Reproductive aprons	78
Find yourself in the spectrum	79
Sexy bingo	86
Where do we feel pleasure	89
What is sex for a man? What is sex for a woman?	94
Changing stories, changing lives	96
Practice talking about sex with a partner	100
Want, Willing and Won’t: Exploring our desires and boundaries	102
Secret questions	109
Handshake game	112
An STI drama	123
An STI board game	124
Playing with condoms	131
A treasure hunt to find resources for community STI prevention	135
Role play: Gender-based violence affects everyone	148
Pass the cabbage	149
Explore the causes of gender-based violence	152
“Happy ending” role plays to think about change	153
More powerful vs. less powerful	154
The power shuffle	156

Activities *(continued)*

Role play the bystander	160
Group investigation about roles and duties of local authorities	172
Use drawings to discuss benefits of family planning	180
Story game: A tale of 2 families	182
Practice talking about birth control	184
A fishbowl to help youth and adults talk about birth control	186
Crossing the river to health	188
A family planning board game	197
A Problem Tree to discuss obstacles to family planning	202
A yarn toss to brainstorm solutions	205
Role play a panel discussion on family planning	206
Build a house for healthy pregnancy	217
A map to safe motherhood	218
“But why?” game	222
Building a chain of causes	223
Voting with dots	225
Role play why pregnant women do not get care	229
A fishbowl about birth experiences	234
Head, heart, hands	236
A guessing game with skits: it’s an emergency!	241
A walk in her shoes	254
A Problem Tree to discuss unintended pregnancy	256
Many points of view!	259
A board game about safe abortion	260
Taking a stand	261
Saying no to blaming and shaming	262
Replay drama: Saving lives after an abortion	265
What would women’s ideal health services be like?	279
Make a power map	284
Make an opinion map	288
Making advocacy messages that work	290