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Part six of the blog series: [Spotlight on Global Health Initiative Plus Countries](#) [6] Amid grave health statistics, the Global Health Initiative (GHI) brings hope of a healthier future in Mali.

Mali is one of the ten poorest countries in the world, ranking 173 out of 175 countries on the 2007 Human Development index of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Mali has highest percentage of people living on less than a dollar a day. And, Mali has some of the worst demographic indicators in the sub-Saharan region: a population growth rate of 2.6%, a 6.6 fertility rate (the highest in the sub-Saharan Africa after Niger, at 6.8), and a birth rate of 49.8 per 1,000. The population is very young, with more than 50% of Malians under 15 years old and 17% under 5 years old.

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Health Financing: The Foundation of a Strong Health System [8]

[Jonathan D. Quick, MD, MPH](#) [9]

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Millions of people around the world die each year from preventable diseases because they cannot access affordable health care. Developing countries often struggle with insufficient resources and they face numerous challenges trying to strengthen weak health systems. A strong health system working well at all levels, from the household to the community to health facilities to national authorities, can provide effective services to improve the health of the people they serve.

Health financing is the critical foundation for strengthening health systems and ultimately for achieving health impact. Health financing is the starting point ? money is the fuel to start and keep a strong health system running. Health financing includes generating funds, distributing those funds, ensuring effective and efficiency use of funds, and protecting the poor from the financial hardship of accessing health services. Without financial resources and proper management of these resources, health workers, health facilities, and medicines would not exist. In difficult economic times, generating those resources seems an insurmountable task. Yet some countries are showing how it can be done [10].

[Read more](#) [8]
January 31, 2011
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MSH Applauds New Rapid Tuberculosis Test [12]

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The World Health Organization (WHO) recently endorsed a new and novel rapid test for tuberculosis (TB) [13], especially relevant in countries most affected by the disease, and is calling for widespread use of this test and its incorporation into national plans.

MSH applauds the research and development experts who developed this new TB test and the WHO for endorsing it so quickly. The test could revolutionize TB care and control by providing an accurate diagnosis in less than two hours, compared to current tests that can take up to three months to produce results.

Evidence suggests that use of this test could result in a three-fold increase in the diagnosis of patients with drug-resistant TB and a doubling in the number of HIV-associated TB cases diagnosed in areas with high rates of TB and HIV. Finally, the test is easy and safe to use and also allows for testing in non-health facility settings, including in people's homes.

[Read more](#) [12]
January 24, 2011
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Women & Gender ^[17]

The Global Health Initiative (GHI) and its approach of integrating health programs with HIV & AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, maternal, newborn, and child health, nutrition, and family planning and reproductive health is in line with the current approaches and health priorities of the Government of Malawi.

Malawi, with a population of slightly over 13 million people, has 83% of its people living in the rural hard to reach, underserved areas. The biggest health challenge facing the country is access to basic health services by the rural population. The problem of access to health services is multifaceted. For instance, family planning services are mostly facility-based, contributing to a low Contraceptive Prevalence Rate of 28% and high unmet family planning need of 28% (Malawi Demographic and Health Survey, 2004).

However, there is also a critical shortage of trained health service providers and availability of contraceptives is a logistical nightmare in Malawi. Making a routine mix of all contraceptives accessible to women of reproductive age regularly in rural communities can avert unwanted pregnancies and maternal deaths, and reduce high total fertility rate and infant mortality rate. Rural people walk long distances to seek health services, sometimes only to return without a service due to shortage of health personnel and stock-out of supplies.

Read more ^[15]

January 22, 2011

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The Hidden Epidemic: AIDS, Human Rights, and Vulnerable Populations ^[19]

Jonathan D. Quick, MD, MPH ^[9]

HIV & AIDS ^[20]



Human rights are no longer considered peripheral to the AIDS response. Human rights are an essential tool of public health. 80% of countries explicitly acknowledge or address human rights in their national AIDS strategies. However, 80 countries still have punitive laws against people with HIV which pose significant challenges to the AIDS response

In the past decade, there have been some major developments in the HIV epidemic. New cases have decreased, 5 million people are now on treatment, and people are discussing the importance of human rights in relation to the disease. However, 33 million people are infected and only one-third of those in need of treatment are receiving it.

[Read more](#) ^[19]

January 18, 2011

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A Turning Point in History for Southern Sudan ^[22]

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For the past week, we in Southern Sudan have crowded polling stations to vote on a referendum that, if passed, would declare Southern Sudan the world's newest nation. Observers have declared the voting "broadly fair," and the 60 percent voter turnout required for the vote to pass has been reached. We are optimistic that this referendum will bring us closer to a peaceful, prosperous future.

The mood in Juba (the capital city of Southern Sudan) is bright as we await the results of the polls, set to be announced February 1. But our government and people realize that secession will bring new challenges along with its opportunities. About 150,000 of our Southern Sudanese brothers and sisters have returned home in recent weeks and still more are expected. While we welcome them joyfully and are delighted to see extended families reunited, this great influx of people will put additional strain on a health system that already struggles to meet the needs of the people it serves.

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Ryan Cherlin, USAID, wrote this blog after a recent visit to Haiti. This blog post was originally posted on [USAID's IMPACT Blog](#). [28]



When a Haitian says, *Dí“yí” mí²n gen mí²n*, they mean to say, as you solve one problem there is always another that must also be solved.

Driving through the densely populated city of Port-au-Prince I wondered how many times this old proverb was the subject of conversation this past year.

In the months following the earthquake in early January 2010, Haitians endured the devastating effects of hurricane Tomas, political instability and violence stemming from a presidential election, and a cholera epidemic.

[Read more](#) ^[26]

January 13, 2011

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Haiti: 1 Year After the Earthquake - Our Mission is to Rebuild People ^[30]

[Management Sciences for Health](#) ^[27]

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Dr. Florence Guillaume, Deputy Chief of Party for MSH's *Santé pour le Développement et la Stabilité d'Haïti* (SDSH) ^[31] Project reflects on the year since the Haiti earthquake last January 12 in this video.

SDSH is a USAID-funded health project in Haiti supporting decentralization, strengthening public-sector capacity in service delivery, and supporting local nongovernmental organization service delivery.

[Read more](#) ^[30]

January 12, 2011

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Leadership in Times of Crisis: Haiti One Year After The Earthquake ^[33]

[Antoine Ndiaye](#) ^[34]

[Fragile States](#) ^[24]

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Prior to January 12, 2010, Management Sciences for Health's Leadership, Management and Sustainability Program ^[35] was working with Haiti's Ministry of Public Health and Population to build capacity in several areas: family planning and reproductive health; commodity management and security; coordinating HIV & AIDS awareness and community mobilization activities; and leadership development.

But after the terrible earthquake of one year ago, we who normally promote leadership in the health sector were faced with our own leadership challenges: how to continue to lead and manage our program effectively during an ongoing crisis, and most importantly, how to ensure continued help to those who rely on LMS support. Our immediate priority: dealing with the collapse and destruction of our office. For months, we worked out of large tent constructed next to the LMS warehouse, a reminder everyday that many of those we were serving had been forced to move into temporary shelters.

[Read more](#) ^[33]

January 11, 2011

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Haiti, One Year On: watch the webcast ^[37]

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Haiti, One Year On: Realizing Country Ownership in a Fragile State

Tuesday, January 11, 2011, 3:00-5:00 p.m., B-340, Rayburn House Office Building, Capitol Hill

This Washington DC event will be webcast live. You can tune in and join the discussion, below, starting at 3:00 p.m.

Dr. Florence Duperval Guillaume, MSH's Deputy Chief of Party and Technical Director, [Santé pour le Développement et la Stabilité d'Haïiti](#) ^[31], will be discussant at this Oxfam America-hosted policy discussion to examine aid effectiveness in Haiti within the context of country ownership. Other speakers will include:

[Read more](#) ^[37]

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- [13] http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2010/tb_test_20101208/en/index.html

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- [26] <http://www.msh.org/blog/2011/01/18/d%C3%AD%C2%A8y%C3%AD%C2%A8-m%C3%AD%C2%B2n-gen-m%C3%AD%C2%B2n>
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