Population and health researchers, managers, and practitioners are deeply concerned about government policies, programs, and resource-allocation decisions that affect population and health services and their clients. These professionals often have extensive knowledge of demographic surveys, censuses, and other studies plus long experience with programs and familiarity with user needs that should play a key role in guiding policy decisions. Yet all too often, their research findings, knowledge, and experience fail to reach influential audiences and, consequently, are not used to shape policies and programs.

This communication gap arises for a number of reasons. In some cases, population and health professionals may be unfamiliar with the policy process and the information needs of policymakers. In other cases, they may fail to see the policy relevance of their own knowledge and experience. As a result, they do not make the extra effort to communicate in nontechnical language to policymakers or to shape messages specifically for policy audiences.

The East-West Center and the Center for Communication Programs at the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHU/CCP) have, between them, more than 20 years of experience conducting workshops to improve communication among population and health researchers, practitioners, managers, and policymakers. The Information and Knowledge for Optimal Health Project (the INFO Project), based at JHU/CCP, expands on this combined experience.

The objective of this workshop is to increase the use of research findings and professional knowledge and experience to improve population and health policies and programs. Sessions are designed to help participants identify the policy implications of population and health findings, to understand how research results and professional knowledge can influence the policy process, and to communicate with policymakers in simple and compelling formats. Specifically, participants will:

- Explore the policy process and successful strategies for policy change
- Design strategies to communicate research findings to policymakers
- Use electronic and print media to obtain research results and other information that puts their own work in a broader context
- Develop hands-on skills for communicating with policymakers, both directly and through the media

Each participant will make a series of oral presentations and written summaries in appropriate formats for policy audiences. They will learn how to use computer-graphics software to enhance their oral and written presentation skills.

The workshop is designed for researchers, program managers, and other professionals working in population and health. Participants should have computer experience and be fluent in English. They should bring their own research results or project data that can be used to address a policy problem. They should also be familiar with the most recent Demographic and Health Survey or equivalent national survey for their home country.
Workshop Sessions

Plenary and small-group sessions will incorporate a hands-on, participatory approach. These sessions will cover seven areas:

- **Exploring the policy process**
  Participants will examine the factors that influence the policy process, the differing roles of policymakers and population and health professionals, and the barriers that limit the use of research findings and project experience in policymaking. Reading materials, lectures, and discussions will generate ideas on how to influence the policy process.

- **Obtaining information on population and health**
  Participants will learn how to identify and make effective use of additional information sources to put their research into a broader context.

- **Developing strategies for communicating with policymakers**
  Participants will analyze the policy context of their own research and will develop communications strategies that include identification of policy goals, primary and secondary audiences, key objectives, clear and compelling messages, and appropriate channels and formats. Discussion will cover how to recognize communication opportunities, build a policy coalition, and design and carry out an action plan.

- **Communicating research results through the media**
  A comprehensive policy-communication strategy requires an understanding of how to work effectively with journalists. Participants will learn how to communicate to policymakers through newspapers, radio, and television. Skill-building exercises will include drafting a press release, practicing interview techniques, and learning how to build and maintain good relationships with the media.

- **Writing fact sheets and policy memoranda and conducting policy briefings**
  Program information and research results must be presented in concise formats that policymakers can absorb quickly. Participants will prepare fact sheets based on current data from their home countries and policy memoranda based on a case study. In role-play exercises, they will conduct policy briefings for high-level government officials.

- **Making oral presentations using computer graphics**
  Participants will learn how to make presentations with computer graphics using PowerPoint. Workshop sessions will introduce a step-by-step approach to organizing effective policy presentations and will provide design tips for presenting text, graphs, flowcharts, and photos. Each participant will prepare a 10-minute oral presentation of research results or project information for a policy audience. Presentations will be videotaped and critiqued.

- **Sharing the knowledge and skills gained at the workshop**
  Participants will learn effective ways to share strategic approaches and communication skills with students and colleagues.

**Coordinators**

Sidney B. Westley (B.A. Smith College) is a Communications Specialist with the Research Program at the East-West Center. Ms. Westley has worked as a writer, editor, and communications director for international research organizations in Ethiopia, Kenya, and the United States. She has taught courses in science writing for researchers and in science reporting for journalists.

Phyllis Tilson Piotrow (Ph.D. Johns Hopkins University) was the founder and first Director of JHU/CCP. Earlier, she served as the first Executive Director of the Population Crisis Committee, now Population Action International. She is the author of *Health communication: Lessons from family planning and reproductive health* (1997) and *Advancing health communication: The PCS experience in the field* (2003).

**Resource Persons**

Margaret A. D’Adamo (M.L.S. University of Maryland; M.S.B. Johns Hopkins University) is Deputy Director of the INFO Project at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Center for Communication Programs and manages Reproductive Health Gateway (www.rhgateway.org). Ms. D’Adamo has provided training in the use of information resources in Africa and Asia.

Jennifer Nadeau (Ph.D. American University) is Director of Communications with the Guttmacher Institute. She creates, implements, and evaluates outreach and advocacy strategies for the Institute’s research on sexual and reproductive health and develops training materials and conducts communications workshops for researchers, advocates, policymakers, and journalists.

Gladys Villanueva-Parmelee (B.A. University of the Philippines) is a former Health Education and Promotion Officer with the Philippines National AIDS Council. She provides technical assistance to government and private-sector agencies in developing materials, training, advocacy, media campaigns, social mobilization, and policy formulation.