

The Weekly

Information Resource Bulletin

FOCUS: Population growth

For some women, not being able to control the number and spacing of their children can be a matter of life and death.

According to the Malawi Demographic Health Survey (MDHS 2010), maternal mortality in the country is high.

The maternal mortality ratio is 460 deaths among every 100,000 births. Another way to look at it: each year, nearly 3000 women die during pregnancy and childbirth.

Family planning helps women control the number of children they have and space them out so as not to put the mother's life in danger.

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- To educate listeners about the importance of family planning
- To help create a positive attitude towards planning births, having smaller families and using the modern family planning methods
- To promote discussion and dialogue between listeners and other community members about the importance of family planning

The Problem: Low Use of Family Planning Methods

Family planning has a lot of benefits to individuals, families and the government.

Remember: a woman's ability to choose if and when to become pregnant has a direct impact on her health and well-being.

If families are not using family planning methods, it is difficult for them to space and delay pregnancies.

This will then lead to unintended pregnancies, and, in some cases to unsafe abortions.

Obviously, if families are not using any sort of modern family planning method, they will end up having more children than they intend to have -- and this will lead to high population growth rates.

Population growth has many consequences since it places greater demands on society -- requiring more land, food, water and other resources.

Family planning will help ease these problems.

Activities for Journalists

Use your radio station to help your community understand the benefits of family planning.

The following are some of the many benefits of family planning:

Family planning is key to slowing unsustainable population growth and the resulting negative effects on the economy, environment, and the country's development efforts.

Family planning can prevent closely spaced and ill-timed pregnancies and births, which contribute to some of the world's highest infant mortality rates.

Family planning methods help families to plan and space childbearing, thereby reducing rapid population growth – reducing the risk of food shortages.

Since the use of family planning will enable families to have their desired number of children, this will lighten the family's burden and responsibility. The parents will be able to provide basic needs for their children such as food, shelter and education.

Remind your listeners about modern family planning methods such as pills, injectable, Intra Uterine Device, condoms, vasectomy and tubal ligation. Also remind them that they can access these methods from any clinic or hospital near them.

Have a vox pop with a few people from your area (both men and women) and find out what they think are the benefits of family planning. Are they practicing family planning?

Have a round-table discussion with a couple which uses family planning and another couple which does not use family planning.

Ask the first couple about what made them to start using family planning methods and the benefits they are currently witnessing. Ask the second couple why they are not using family planning methods and the challenges they are facing.

Do a talk show and invite community leaders to talk about the benefits of planning a family and ensuring that each child has the basics in life: food, housing and education.

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