

# The Weekly

## Information Resource Bulletin

### Focus: Family Planning

According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) in just over 40 years Malawi's population has increased from four million people in 1966 to just over 13 million in 2008 to near 15 million today.

Large families are the main reason for this population growth. On average, a woman in Malawi will have six children.

The more children we have per family the more our population will continue to grow, rapidly.

Family planning is often regarded as the woman's responsibility, but there is a need for men to take part in family planning issues, too.

Men could play important roles in decisions about reproductive health in this country.

### The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- To educate listeners about the need for men to take a part in family planning issues
- 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 role of men in family planning issues

### The Problem: Men Often Don't Take Part in Family Planning Issues

Men often control important decisions about fertility and contraceptive-use in most families.

According to the United Nations Population Fund-UNFPA, it is men who usually decide on the number and variety of sexual relationships, timing and frequency of sexual activity and use of contraceptives, sometimes through coercion or violence.

This is often the case in

most parts of the country – as men have greater decision-making power over household matters including health care.

In an interview with some men in Blantyre and Mulanje, they said they are reluctant to visit reproductive health clinics with their wives because they view at the facilities as “ladies places” and they don't want to mix with women for fear of being looked as “not man enough.”

## Activities for Journalists

Use your community radio station to help listeners understand the role of men in family planning issues.

Men have a great role to play since they are the ones who are seen as decision makers in a family, they should take lead in initiating communication with their wives on family planning and reproductive health issues.

Traditional and religious leaders should take the initiative in encouraging men to consider using the family planning methods such as vasectomy.

Conduct an interview with a few men from your community and find out what roles men could play in family planning issues and why men do not like taking part in these issues.

Have an Interview with a man (role model) who does takes part in family planning

issues. For example; he escorts his wife to the antenatal clinic or he has chosen to have a vasectomy. You might ask the following questions: how does he support his wife in as far as family planning issues are concerned? Why does he do that? What are the benefits he gets from supporting his wife?

Also have an interview with the wife of this man, ask her how she feels that her husband supports her in decisions about family planning, and how this has improved their communication in the family.

Talk to Sandra Mapemba at Population Reference Bureau (PRB) or Jean Mwalabu from the Reproductive Health Unit to find out why it is important for men to take part in family planning issues.

### Useful Contacts

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- [www.healthywomen.org](http://www.healthywomen.org)
- [www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)



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