



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

### DRP Youth Project in Malawi

Developing Radio Partners is implementing a pilot project in Malawi aimed at informing young people about youth friendly health services that are available to them and to ensure they know their rights when visiting these facilities.

Some of the DRP-trained youth reporters say they want to make sure their peers don't make the same mistakes that they've made. Tiyamike Chunga, who is a teenage mother, said after having her baby she found it difficult to finish school. "I have been robbed of my youthful dreams and suddenly became a parent and this project has given me space to speak to fellow youths in my community. I am an example of the need to use condoms."



19-year old Tiyamike Chunga says she plans to finish her high school education, but it would have been much easier if she hadn't gotten pregnant.

DRP is working with about 130 youth between the ages of 14-and-19 and three partner community-based radio stations in the central and western parts of the country. The areas are Nkhotakota, Monkey Bay and Mchinji.

After being trained by DRP, the youth are creating their own weekly radio programs and daily public service announcements – and are mentored by a reporter at their local radio station. In addition, with input from local schools, DRP assisted in the creation of nine youth radio listening clubs that provide feedback each week about the youth radio programs and suggest future topics. At each station, there is one club for girls, one for boys and a third for boys and girls – with approximately 10 youth in each club. At the conclusion of the project, the effectiveness of each will be evaluated.

Three months into the project, the youth and the stations have taken ownership of the project in a number of ways:

- Each youth group and station has created its own radio program (one station has continued its youth program as part of a DRP project in 2014)
- Youth participants have taken this awareness campaign into their local schools and have organized performances around sexual reproductive health issues

- One youth participant has created posters for the project and have put them up at his school and around the community
- Nearly a dozen informal radio listening clubs have formed to listen each week to the radio programs

DRP survey work before the start of the project identified several key problems with the Ministry of Health's Youth Friendly Health Services program. They included:

- Inconvenient hours for youth at Youth Friendly Health Services clinics
- Unfriendly staff and lack of privacy at the facilities as a result many youth who did know of the services didn't visit the clinics.
- Parents and many youth had never heard of the youth friendly services
- Parents who had heard of the youth friendly services often had a negative opinion about them

Since the project launched in early May – the following has occurred:

- At a DRP sponsored community activity in Msaka where youth complained about the lack of access to health services in their rural community, a Member of Parliament pledged to look into providing funds for a mobile clinic for the village.
- In Monkey Bay, two church leaders told the local radio station that the radio program, Youth Take Action, has “assisted them so much” and that both churches have established youth groups to discuss, among other things, sexual reproductive health openly. The church leaders say they want to stop early marriages and early pregnancies.
- After listening to a youth program on Dzimwe Radio about the role of chiefs in promoting SRH, a village headman for Monkey Bay, called a community meeting where he emphasized the need of parents and guardians to discuss sexual reproductive health issues openly with their children to avoid the rising problems of early marriages and pregnancies.
- The father of a youth reporter at Nkhotakota Radio who was adamant that parents should not talk to their kids about sex, changed his mind after listening to his daughter, a youth reporter, on a weekly radio program. He was so impressed that he vowed to be an agent for change and has appeared on her show – urging other parents to talk to their kids about sex.
- Monkey Bay Hospital now provides a public list of names and contact details for all youth friendly health personnel to make it easy for youth to contact providers and report problems – such as unfriendly staff and lack of privacy.
- One hospital is now offering weekend hours for its YFHS after a youth radio program urged the hospital to offer hours that are convenient to youth.

- Another hospital has started providing a youth friendly health services mobile clinic in hard-to-reach areas after a weekly radio program pointed out the lack of services in rural areas.

DRP sponsors community activities where radio stations organize and host events aimed at bringing community-wide attention to specific issues, creating face-to-face dialogue and spurring positive action.

In Nkhotakota, more than 300 people took part in an early August 2017 event – where health officers, health care providers, parents, religious leaders (Christian and Muslim) and young people gathered to discuss the benefits of youth friendly health services. The event was broadcast live and station reporters conducted interviews to use in the weekly radio program. DRP provided t-shirts featuring the name of the radio program and the time that it is broadcast each week.

The Nation, a national newspaper also covered the event. Read it here: <http://mwnation.com/kk-youths-decry-limited-access-srh-services/>

Dzimwe Radio in Monkey Bay hosted a youth march in mid-August followed by a community wide meeting that was carried live on the radio station. The event include many stakeholders – including Ministry of Health officials, a Member of Parliament, local nurses and doctors, religious leaders, parents and youth. The aim was to ensure young people know their rights when visiting youth friendly health services clinics and to encourage parents and religious leaders to open a dialogue with their children about sexual reproductive health.

During the event, some rural youth complained that they lived too far from youth friendly health services and asked that mobile clinics be sent to their communities. Read it here: <http://mwnation.com/monkey-bay-youths-demand-health-rights-protection/>

In the baseline survey conducted before implementation began, DRP found: Young people who said they listened to the radio at least four times a week, knew more about youth friendly health services than those who reported to listen to the radio once or twice a week or did not listen to the radio, at all. One-hundred percent of the youth surveyed believe that radio programs that discuss youth friendly health services would be helpful to adolescents.

For Developing Radio Partners, it's all about trust and relationship building with its partner radio stations. They, in turn, build trust and strong relationships with their communities – and ultimately become the 'go to' source for information. As the station manager at one partner radio station described it – the station becomes 'the problem solver' in the community as a result of its relationship with DRP.

The nine-month pilot project, a partnership with the Population Reference Bureau, will conclude in January 2018.