

Young Health Programme in Zambia

Young people make up over two-thirds of Zambia's population and contribute significantly to the economic welfare of their families and communities. However, socio-economic factors, including many cultural practices, lead to the poor health of young people who often lack access to health services and information.

The Young Health Programme in Zambia is focused on improving the health and well-being of girls and boys in the Chadiza district of Eastern Province in Zambia. The Programme is being implemented by Plan Zambia in partnership with the Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia (PPAZ).

After the agreed three year implementation period, the Programme in Zambia has finished. However, the Peer Education Programme continues to ensure its long-term sustainability.



AstraZeneca 

Young Health Programme

A global community investment initiative

in partnership with



Young Health Programme in Zambia



Key risk factors include being sexually active at a young age; unprotected sex leading to sexually transmitted infections and HIV; harmful traditional practices such as child marriage and sexual initiation; lack of access to information or health services; a cultural silence around issues of sexuality and high rates of early pregnancy.

This young population is further affected by the significant impact of HIV, where many have to assume responsibilities to provide and care for their families and grow up with little parental guidance and support.

What did we want to achieve through the Programme?

The Programme which began in July 2011 directly benefited 22,443 young people and reached 45,583 members of the wider community.

Objectives:

- Mobilise community support and increase advocacy for improved access and quality of young people's health services
- Promote information sharing, education and communication for adolescents on health issues
- Strengthen and improve the existing health services to provide quality, youth-friendly services

What activities took place locally?

- Health and sexuality education was addressed in schools through school health clubs and peer education
- Youth Action Movement (YAM) members were identified from the community and trained as Peer Educators
- Healthcare providers were trained on how to deal with young people and issues around privacy and accessibility of care. For example, a youth friendly corner was created in health centres to provide a place for young people to get information about their health, treatment and psychosocial support
- Events and media such as community radio and drama groups were used to create awareness in communities around key health issues

- Significantly increased distribution of contraceptives through service providers and young people themselves
- Participated in World Aids Day celebrations where Peer Educators provided information on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and young people took part in a march and drama performances to raise awareness
- School health clubs, established by the YHP continue to meet and grow, bringing young people together from within the schools and the wider community to focus on their specific health needs
- 9 youth friendly corners are now fully operational and equipped encouraging more young people to talk about their health and access services in an appropriate way
- Involving community leaders, service providers and young people in the production of adolescent health themed radio programmes to be broadcast across the region

Local partner

The Programme was implemented on the ground by Plan Zambia with the Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia (PPAZ). PPAZ is a Zambian non-governmental organisation (NGO) which has existed since 1972 with the aim of advancing the cause of sexual and reproductive health in Zambia. PPAZ's vision is a society in which all people in Zambia enjoy equal sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and have access to quality and affordable SRHR information and services.

What has been achieved?

- Established the YHP in nine communities in Chadiza
- 484 Peer Educators were trained. This built the capacity of adolescents to become agents of change in their own communities
- 45,583 wider community members have been reached with adolescent health information through community meetings, drama performances and radio shows