

Young Health Programme in Zambia

Young people make up over two-thirds of Zambia's population and significantly contribute 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).



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Young Health Programme

A global community investment initiative

in partnership with



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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 do we want to achieve through the Programme?

The Programme which began in July 2011 is directly targeting 12,500 adolescents, reaching 25,000 members of the wider community in Chadiza and engaging in additional advocacy work that will see the Programme benefit over 57,000 people in total.

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 are taking place locally?

- Addressing health and sexuality education in schools through school health clubs and peer education
- Identifying and training Youth Action Movement (YAM) members from the community as peer educators
- Training healthcare providers on how to deal with young people and issues around privacy and accessibility of care. For example, creating a youth friendly corner in health centres to provide a place for young people to get information about their health, treatment and psychosocial support
- Running events and using media such as community radio and drama groups to create awareness in communities around key health issues

What has been achieved so far?

- Established the YHP in nine communities in Chadiza
- Building the capacity of adolescents to become agents of change in their own communities through training as peer educators and as drama group members. These activities have contributed to directly reaching 18,533 young people
- 38,663 wider community members have been reached with adolescent health information through community meetings, drama performances and radio shows
- Significantly increased distribution of contraceptives through service providers and young people themselves including 22,474 condoms handed out to date
- 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 is being 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.