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## Population and Child Spacing Information, Education and Communication Activities

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Several agencies are involved in providing Child Spacing (CS) and population information, education and communication (IEC). They use almost all communication channels available in-country. A brief description of different agencies on IEC programme is given below:

### 1. Ministry of Health's Health Education Unit (HEU)

This has been and continues to be the main actor in CS IEC. Their programmes include:-

- (a) **Health Education Band/Drama:** Mobile health education bands communicate the CS and PHC messages, through songs and plays. The Health Education Band/Drama has also trained some local bands in rural areas to pass child spacing messages. The UNICEF has been very supportive in training these drama groups.
- (b) **Materials Production:** The HEU has printed four types of posters on CS depicting current contraceptive methods, another explains effect of too frequent births on the mother and child, and another benefits of child spacing by comparing frequent child birth with maize planted too closely. The last one shows what services are available at clinics. A workshop in December 1991 developed 8 new posters targeted at teenagers to address dangers of early pregnancy, and benefits of child spacing. The four old posters were modified to address effects of having large families, advantages of child spacing, new contraceptive methods.
- (c) **Magazines:** The HEU publishes a monthly magazine known as Moyo Magazine which features information on child spacing and population.
- (d) **Audio visual:** The HEU produced a video film on child spacing with the assistance of the Department of Information and Banja La Mtsogolo.
- (e) **Field guides and other pamphlets:** Four booklets and one flipchart have been printed to aid health workers in their motivational efforts. Two leaflets on benefits of CS and men's role in CS have also been produced in English and Chichewa. 3 different information flyers (on different issues) were also produced and are currently being reprinted with assistance from UNICEF.
- (f) **Training of Extension workers:** Sensitization of DDC and over 12 ADC in the country on CS was done. About 25

extension workers from various government and NGOs each district trained to include CS messages in their work.

### 2. Christian Hospitals Association of Malawi (CHAM)

CHAM is the next largest provider of CS services. It also provides clinic based and community based IEC. Some CHAM Units produce IEC materials and procure them from sources other than from HEU. CHAM has initiated Community Based Distribution (CBD) activities at Ekwendeni and Malamulo hospitals. CBD work involves: Motivation; Counselling; Distribution of IEC materials; Distribution of condoms and pills; and referrals.

### 3. Department of Information (DOI)

The DOI is within the Ministry of Information and Tourism. It publishes a newspaper for free circulation which devotes a page to CS and health. Its circulation is 80,000.

The DOI, through funds from FAO/UNFPA, is implementing a Family Life Education project, and through the Second Family Health Project will be implementing a CS IEC component. This activity will be funded by the European Community.

The DOI development objective to these two projects is "to create critical awareness among the Malawi Public about the intricate relationship between population, available resources and family health with the hope that this understanding will change people's attitude and behaviour and ultimately improve the family well being".

These objectives will be achieved through:

- Training, Communication, Research techniques, Problem and Audience analysis, Data Analysis, message development, etc.
- Materials Development: Booklets (Mdyamakanda and Kamodzikokha on teenage pregnancies); Flipchart (advantages of child spacing); Training materials (user-guides and campaign management manuals); Animated video (effects of population on natural resources and environment); Drama and Folk/popular media (13 songs using popular artists and 5 theatre plays).
- Research studies: Before these activities DOI conducted focus group interviews (FGI) in various districts. Chiradzulu (lowest fertility rate); Mchinji (highest fertility rate); Rumphi (moderate fertility rate). The FGI guidelines included such topics as: child/parent relationships; marital stability, family size, child spacing, boy/girl relationships, vocational aspirations, publicity and teenage pregnancies. The research findings were categorised: Population and Development; Erosion of family roles; Adolescent fertility and teenage pregnancies; Family health.

Family Life Education Campaigns will initially be mounted in four districts of Mulanje, Blantyre, Mchinji and Rumphi. The idea is to deliver a multi-pronged IEC campaign. Blantyre and Mulanje have already started experiencing effects of population pressure where as Mchinji and Rumphi are vulnerable to these effects due to their high population densities.

There will be training of district staff (multisectoral) on the campaign management, implementation, and evaluation.

Because the campaign is big and to ensure that materials are used with right target audience in right manner and expected objectives are reached, the District Officers who are supervisors of extension workers will be trained in campaign management monitoring and evaluation. An impact evaluation will be done at the end of the pilot phase.

This campaign will require support from the District Health staff in the provision of services and technical assistance.

### 4. Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and Community Services

This Ministry has three projects.

- (a) **Child spacing Message Project:** Through the second family health project. EC has funded this project to enable the Ministry to incorporate CS messages into Adult Literacy and Home Economics network. The Ministry employs

the second largest extension worker population approximately 1700 (community Development Assistants and home economics/instructor and Adult literacy instructors). These have been trained to integrate CS message into their daily activities. Activities done so far include: Orientation of policy makers; Training of master trainers; Training of trainers; Training of community development assistants and home economics instructors; Orientation of CCAM, MCP Chairperson, Secretaries and Wives of MPs; Materials development, booklets, primers, flipchart and posters.

- (b) **Family Life Education Project:** This project too has the same target group of extension workers to integrate FLE activities into their work. Activities being undertaken include: Integration of FLE into curriculum at Magomero is underway; Materials production - manuals for field workers; Orientation workshop for field workers; Pilot activities in six districts (Mangochi, Machinga, Salima, Ntchisi, Nkhata-Bay and Rumphu). The FLE manual includes topics like, child spacing, breast feeding, and healthy motherhood, etc.
- (c) **Parent Education Project:** The idea is to ensure that parents are taught about family life activities, so as to ensure there is a dialogue between parents and their children on sex, sexuality and other family issues. The ultimate goal will be that parents will not be suspicious of what is happening in FLE which is targeted at the youth. Activities include: Audience research; Materials production (posters and flip charts on population, positive parenthood, sugar dad, communication, effects of teenage pregnancy, etc.); Orientation seminars for different target audiences; Implementation in a pilot district. It is planned to merge FLE and parent education projects soon.

#### 5. Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)

The extension Aid Branch (EAB) of MOA provides media support to Agricultural extension network. Recently MOA has fielded a pilot project in one district to integrate population education in its agricultural extension.

In the past EAB has been supplementing MOH activities by assisting HEU to show the child spacing motivation films to the general public through the use of EAB's yellow vans which are equipped with cinema projection facilities. Some extension workers from different districts were oriented to child spacing activities and have been motivating the general public.

With the introduction of the new project it is expected that nearly 20% of field assistants in the country will be trained to integrate population education into agriculture extension education services.

This project, which started on pilot basis in Chiradzulu, is being funded by UNFPA but executed by FOA. The emphasis of the project has been on population IEC. The EAB identified and provided the development and delivery of messages in this project. Issues which will be addressed are, land holding sizes, land fragmentation, family planning aspects and social cultural values and traditions, demographic and geographic profile etc. as they relate to population.

A number of publication such as text books leaflets, brochures, calendars and posters were produced. The project proved very successful and it has been agreed in principal that the project should be replicated to other areas.

Another project to integrate Population Education into the Curriculum at the Natural Resources College is underway.

#### 6. Chitukuko Cha Amai m'Malawi (CCAM)

CCAM is engaged in child spacing motivation and population activities and is instrumental in advocating and mobilising favourable environment for the implementation of population child spacing activities.

With funds from the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), CCAM is conducting community based IEC

through party and church activities. Sometimes they have been involved in clinic based IEC. About 24 trainers of trainers (2 from each of the 12 pilot districts) have been trained in training and monitoring skills on child spacing motivation. These in turn have trained 240 volunteers who are motivating the general public on the benefits of child spacing.

#### 7. Department of Youth and Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP)

The Department of Youth and MYP is responsible for out of school youth through provision of vocational training. There are MYP officers in each district and a sports instructor in every school.

The Department of Youth and MYP initiated a Family Life Education Programme integrated with income generating activities.

With funds from IPPF, the Department held consultative meeting on Family Life Education and youth needs. Many recommendations were made from these workshops, which lead to the development of two FLE manual for supervisors and instructors. Training of trainers was done to 20 youths (mainly girls from Mapanga MYP base) to start FLE with IGA in pilot districts in the South and in the Central Regions. It is envisaged that the Department in conjunction with other relevant organisation will produce other training materials.

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## Community Based Distribution

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### Background

Community Based Distribution (CBD) is a relatively new concept. It is a service that reaches beyond the clinic walls to provide contraceptives in the communities where people live. This is achieved by considering the following factors: *Geographical* (bringing the source of service and contraceptives closer to where people are); *Economic* (ensuring that contraceptives are affordable); *Administrative* (making it as convenient as possible to obtain and use contraceptives); *Cognitive* (providing information that is accurate, reliable and understandable so client can make informed choices about the method they wish to use).

The ultimate goal of the CBD programme is to improve the accessibility of contraceptive services and supplies in reaching and being utilised by individuals who need them.

To achieve the stated goal of CBD programme, the following issues need to be considered: Official support; Community support; Selection of distributors; Training; Supervision; Remuneration; Resupply systems; Pricing of contraceptives; Mix of services; Contraceptive method mix.

However as one is about to establish a CBD project a more serious consideration need be given to the following issues and possible alternatives: Goals and objectives of the program; Urban/rural coverage; Free/fee for service; Voluntary/paid agents; Child spacing (Family planning) only/integrated services; Clinic linked/free standing; Motivators/distributors; Inclusion/exclusion of pills; Government/non-government; Large/small project; Static/mobile service for support; Literate/illiterate workers; Logistics (Training, supervision); Monitoring and Evaluation.

In addition there are other more subtle issues that need to be thought about. For example whether the National family planning policy specifically include or exclude the Community