

Promoting Family Planning and Contraceptive Services Using Radio

Radio has the capacity to reach a wider audience because it is relatively affordable, accessible, easy to use, and available in a variety of languages. Radio communication remains one of the most effective avenues for reaching target audiences to raise awareness, education and motivate the community to adopt family planning.

Key Outcomes of Radio Programming

- Increased knowledge of and uptake of family planning methods among women and men, but particularly among adolescents and youth
- Increased support among partners/community members for family planning and adolescents' access to reproductive health services
- Reduced myths and misconceptions on family planning issues, particularly surrounding AYSRH



A health implementer speaking about the benefits of family planning during a health talk on the radio.

Steps

1

Plan messages

Prepare messages that address specific knowledge, attitudes and practices in family planning or contraception and involve diverse groups in testing them, including women, men, adolescents and youth.

2

Identify journalists

Select journalists who have been trained or are passionate about family planning/adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health (AYSRH) programming.

3

Identify radio station

Select a radio station with high listenership at the national or community level. Share family planning messages with the radio show producers and participants – test them to ensure they are practical and feasible as well as build the confidence of the participants. The messages can be packaged into radio spots, drama and mentions.

4

Promote radio shows

Talk about the radio shows during health promotion and social mobilization activities and share with networks in catchment area.

5

Broadcast messages

On the day of the broadcast, share the relevant family planning/contraception messages and remember to include success stories.

6

Evaluate programs

Review and evaluate the radio programs after every broadcast and discuss the feedback with the show hosts and redesign subsequent shows to cater to the needs of the target audience. This will provide an opportunity to review the content if need be.

7

Strategically schedule programs

Schedule regular broadcasting times riding on existing segments that focus on health, wellness and future protection and plans. Ensure the listeners are able to interact with presenters through call-ins, SMS, and other social media platforms during the shows.

8

Continue promotion

Post photos, anecdotes or quotes about the radio show. Talk to relevant people to have recorded shows played at events hosted by youth groups, schools and partners.

Suggested Radio Discussion Topics

- Benefits of family planning
- Contraception methods
- Dispelling myths and misconceptions
- Family planning and economic development
- Effects of teen pregnancies
- Healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies

Useful Tips

- Community radio is a cost-effective dissemination approach because it already has relationships with the regional government and therefore discounted rates and is widely listened to within the community. So, establish a sustained, collaborative arrangement with the relevant radio partner for ease of planning.
- Be ready with sample messages and materials that have been pre-tested. It would also be handy to establish a database of available radio and TV journalists and spokespeople for ease of engagement.
- Maintain visibility and consistency. Regular, consistent messaging will help to build trust and ensure that the audience remains engaged.
- In order to achieve the greatest impact possible, you may need slightly different messages based on the needs of various individuals or organizations.
- To drive listenership include pre-program teasers and promotions.
- Pick impactful feature stories that can be pitched to reporters.
- Before the airing of the show, promote the program through existing channels, such as CHVs, digital channels in use at the facility and other sensitization fora, Facebook/Twitter pages, SMS reminders, and during all social mobilization activities.
- Where possible - have prize packs, which may include t-shirts, caps, umbrellas, etc. The winner may be asked questions around the topic discussed during the airplay.