

PROMOTING PARENT-CHILD COMMUNICATION AND IMPROVING ACCESS TO SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS AND OTHER SERVICES BY YOUNG PEOPLE

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Introduction

Adolescents' young girls and young people in Chikwawa district are facing numerous challenges in accessing friendly sexual reproductive health services. It is against this that we implemented a project on promoting parents-child communication about sexual reproductive health targeting adolescents and young people aged between 15-20 such as orphans and vulnerable children, including their parents with an aim of imparting them with relevant knowledge and skills on SRH rights and services so that they grew up responsibly.

Methodology

Cross sectional household surveys were done, collecting data and focus group discussions (FGDs), awareness, and advocacy and leveraging. Using the training of trainers (TOTs) approach as a capacity building strategy. We conducted training sessions, mobile clinics, and physiotherapy sessions for children, offered counselling while the community volunteers were engaged in promoting access to rights and services for the adolescents.

Results

Communication was triggered by seeing or hearing something a parent perceived negative and would not like their child to experience such as death attributable to HIV and unmarried young ones pregnancy. 100 young people and 200 parents were trained in the project concept, 500 reached through awareness sessions and focus group discussions. The trained youth most of them almost 80% are able to access health friendly services. A lot of parents/caregivers and the youth (over 80%) have been empowered on SRH knowledge which has increased demand and consumption on SRH services, thereby enhancing health lives.

Conclusion and recommendations

There is lack of comprehensive sexual reproductive health rights and services targeting adolescents and young people in the district hence there is need to collaborate and network with various stakeholders to offer these services for the youths.

There is need to strengthen referral centers and various stakeholders to provide adolescents and young people with comprehensive information on sexual reproductive health rights and youth friendly services. Parents should be sensitized to be discussing with their children on sexual reproductive health issues including use of contraceptives so that the youths become responsible citizens. Educational efforts may improve knowledge and uptake of the most effective forms of reversible SRH services.