

HELP & SHELTER/UNFPA MONTHLY REPORT ON FAMILY PLANNING
ACTIVITIES - JUNE 2012

Name of Person(s) Implementing Activity: Colin Marks, Chabela Lord, Parbattie Ranglall, Carol Innis Baptiste, Renita Charles, Julian Haynes

Total # of Persons Reached = 157 Females (103) Males (54)

Total # of Persons Referred for FP Clinics = 8 Females (7) Males (1)

Description of Activity:

- Interactive session with students from Sophia Vocational Training Centre
- Interactive session with mixed community group
- Interactive session with members of the Mix Reaction Dance Group – Sophia
- Awareness session on Family Planning for parents of Goed Fortuin community
- Group Session for parents of students attending Grove Craft Centre
- Grove community interactive session
- One on one sessions with clients accessing help & Shelter's counselling and hotline services
- Home visits in Good Hope/Lusignan community to discuss family planning
- Visit to Lusignan Health Centre

FP Topics Discussed:

- Benefits of Family Planning and its impact on managing a viable family
- Benefits of Family Planning and its role in domestic violence and family dysfunction.
- Benefits of Family Planning and its relation to family maintenance and domestic stability
- Benefits of Family Planning for women in the Bell West community
- Domestic Violence and Family Planning
- Introduction to Family Planning and Why use Family Planning
- Available contraceptive methods available
- Referrals for sexual & reproductive services
- Family Planning methods available at community clinics
- Male & female condom, emergency contraception and standards days method

Objective of Activity:

- To show how a planned family can impact better family health, relationships and economic security through management of procreation.
- To show how family stress caused by unplanned children can be an influencing factor in the presence of domestic conflicts within the home
- To educate parents in the Goed Fortuin community on the benefits of family planning
- To give clients options in referrals for sexual & reproductive services
- Advantages to delaying pregnancy for teenagers
- Explaining the use of emergency contraception

Location of Family Planning Clinic Referrals: GRPA, FPAG, Bell West Health Centre, private doctor, Lusignan Health Centre

Assessment of Activity:

- Facilitator discussed factors impacting the stability and welfare of the family unit and possible solutions or alternative course of actions. The group explored methods of family planning after identifying large families as a major factor that leads to stress in the family unit and even contributes to violence and dysfunction. Information and statistics on the expanding global population especially in the poorer territories and effects on financial and health resources of the family was shared with participants. There was general agreement that larger families without proper spacing of children did affect education, health, economics and social wellbeing of the family. The session lasted 2 hours.
- This session was an extension of a domestic violence prevention activity. Participants were primed for an interactive discussion on the various methods of family planning. The global population status was also introduced by the facilitator for discussion. Participants were of a mixed group including women of post child bearing stage, younger women who had decided not to have any more children and youths who were sexually active but had not seriously considered starting families. The older participants related their experience of using some of the FP methods discussed and though they stated that methods of family planning was generally suggested by health personnel, they agreed that with the high incidence of STIs and STDs they supported the younger persons in the group who generally had opted for the use of the condom. It was noted that the young females were not au fait with the use of the female condom so they relied on their partner's use of the male condom as their method of family planning. The session lasted 3 hours.
- This session was conducted with persons between the ages of 15 and 28 yrs. Only 3 female members of the group were parents. The group was first given an overview of how a family's economic struggles coupled with the incidence of violence in the home is often connected to the number of children in the family and the amount of time, money and energy needed to support stability and welfare for all family members. After the introduction of every method the group was asked what would be their choice and why they would make that choice. The pill, male condoms, withdrawal, injection and "safe period" were the methods that the group was acquainted with. Male/female trust issues and physical discomfort allegedly associated with family planning methods were also discussed at length, and it was discovered that some person's knowledge of family planning was based on myths, while to some there was a taboo associated with any form of contraceptive. At the conclusion of the session it was clear to the participants that the purpose of family planning was not to affect the ability to conceive but rather a mechanism for exercising personal responsibility in having a family of manageable numbers where the individual members' needs can be met. The session lasted 3 hours.
- The activity was an interesting one, women asked many questions relating to family planning.
- Persons who attended the session were very attentive and asked questions that would best introduce our next session (Methods). Persons showed interest in meeting again to continue discussions on the various forms of contraceptives and how there are best used. Participants were mothers and shared personal experiences, these included home methods they would have tried such as Guinness and Black Pepper boiled and drink after sexual intercourse, cold water use after sexual intercourse etc.

- The parent had some information that needed clarification. The session was done at the parent's home. Time was spent going through all the methods and how effective each is rated, she is now pleased about the various methods available.
- The participants thought they knew a lot about contraceptives but were impressed by the various FP methods available.
- Clients wanted information on sexual and reproductive health matters
- Two women visited were pregnant and already had 2 and 3 children each. Both of them were finding it very difficult to provide basic necessities for their 5 children who were all below 5 years old

Feedback from Participants:

- Out of a total of 22 persons, 16 persons said they preferred to use condoms as their family planning method. Another participant opined that condoms were more popular because it was more accessible. One of the participants who was a mother of two, remarked that she did try the "safe period" method but confessed that it was still risky. Early exposure to sex education was highlighted as critical because most young people who started families had no previous knowledge about family planning or even sexuality.
- This is the first time I've ever seen the link between family planning and the general welfare.
- Family planning is a responsibility that is applicable to both males and females
- Condoms can be seen as the most effective method, but one that requires discipline and contriteness.
- The information on the expanding world population was very defining for me.
- I recognize a definite link between family health, welfare and planning methods
- Most of the participants stated that they preferred condoms (male). However it was noted that there was little known about the female condoms, none of the sexually active female participants had ever used any. Participants all agreed that the current trends reflected that most families were started with absolutely no prior plan and in most cases babies continued to be produced at close intervals until something traumatic happens in the family and both parents (or one) is forced to take a responsible step to address family planning. It is the overall view that the male condom is used because of its effectiveness against sexually transmitted diseases and infections including HIV. Other comments included;
- For effective family planning fathers and mothers need to get involved
- Deciding on the method of family should be a woman's job.
- Men don't always like to hear about family planning.
- Sometimes the wife or woman cannot make a choice unless the man agrees or understands what family planning really means.
- Most young people are unwilling to try any other form of family planning except condoms but when they have multiple partners it complicates things further, because some males don't even like condoms.
- Family planning is about protection and responsibility.
- Some older women would tell younger women that contraceptive or family planning can contribute to them getting fat.
- When the family gets too big the men leave anyway so women need to be wise in their personal choices.

- A few participants informed that they were hearing about the benefits of family planning for the first time. Some participants were already on family planning
- At the end of the session, participants said they understood the benefits of family planning and requested a session on the different contraceptive methods.
- Most participants shared willingly about their family planning experiences.
- The parent was happy to know about correct and reliable family planning methods so she can now best choose which would best suit her lifestyle. The parent was worried that her using the tables after a period would cause a built up in her system, reason for her never being interested before.
- A female client said she was confused and does not know what to do, because husband told her she must get an abortion
- Another female client expressed uncertainty about her pregnancy because her boyfriend left and is having an affair with another woman
- A female client was put out by aunt, has no where to go and needed information on family planning
- None of the participants opted for any referrals as they felt, that should they make a choice regarding a method they would more likely prefer condoms as it does not require interviews or interfacing with any one other than maybe a shop keeper
- Young man counselled about FP was grateful for the advice. He indicated that he was afraid to approach his parents as he and partner were sexually active but still at school and they did not want to take any chance with a teenage pregnancy
- During the interaction session done at the Lusignan health centre persons wanted to know why they should use condoms if they were already on the pill or injection; if the breast feeding method was fool proof and if it was advisable to use condoms while breast feeding
- Two women indicated that they would be most interested in the exclusive 6 month breast feeding method as neither worked. Using condoms also seemed appropriate as their spouses worked at sea and were away for long periods of time. They asked that the community based worker return to meet with their partners to explain the benefits of FP
- Teenagers wanted to know at what age they could access condoms from the health centres and would this information get back to their parents

Challenges:

- None of the participants wanted an immediate referral. The younger participants stated they needed to think about using any other method than condoms
- There are some culturally based myths surrounding family planning that has profound influence on some individuals. Though they receive the information, they are hesitant to be responsive except their individual circumstances change dramatically
- The women wanted to know if a session like this would be shared to males, since it would be hard for them to discuss this with their partners
- The male present didn't share much in the session
- To get participants to talk about individual experiences and opinions about family planning. Most were more willing to listen
- Explaining to men that many children will not improve quality of life
- Advising young people to delay sexual activity until they have finished their education and are old enough to handle the responsibility of parenthood and FP

Recommendations:

- It may be good to have condoms and some literal materials to disseminate to persons or groups who are being engaged in the sessions
- It's imperative to always link the challenges faced by the family as a unit to the responsible decision to be involved in family planning. In families with a manageable number of children stress, health and welfare issues or ultimately violence in the home is far less
- To have a follow up session on the different methods
- That more family planning information should be shared on television
- That this type of information be shared with the young adults in the community and more follow up sessions be conducted
- UNFPA should make more of those glossy leaflets available or give permissions for them to be photocopied since the women were interested in these

Successes:

- Being able to have the first male participate in a session
- Twelve new persons have information on the benefits of family planning
- There was the total acceptance by the group that family planning was a very relevant topic for discussion and awareness throughout the community. They also appreciated the opportunity to view family planning as a possible deterrent to family violence.
- Eighteen women learnt about the benefits of family planning
- The recognition of family planning as a critical responsibility was a noted response by most of the participants.
- The majority of the participants stated that their knowledge of the amount of family planning methods to be chosen from has expanded
- A parent was willing to share from personal experiences and promise to share information with others who would have given her incorrect information
- The Grove Craft Centre is willing to accommodate us whenever we have sessions of such. Of the total amount of persons contacted only one (1) person was absent
- Young people knowing that FP methods were available to them free of cost at health centres