

Population Media Center (PMC)

Population Media Center (PMC) works with the mass media and other organizations worldwide to bring about stabilization of human population numbers at a level that can be sustained by the world's natural resources, to lessen the harmful impact of expanding humanity on the earth's environment, and to help large numbers of disadvantaged people live better and move out of poverty.

PMC uses entertainment programming on radio and television to encourage delayed parenthood, the consistent use of effective methods of contraception, and safer sexual behaviors, as well as to empower women to play equal roles in family decisions and in society.

Among its strategies, PMC uses a specific methodology of social-change communications developed by Miguel Sabido of Mexico, in which characters in long-running radio and television serialized dramas evolve into role models for their audiences, encouraging the adoption of healthier behaviors to benefit individuals and their societies. Scientific research has shown that the Sabido Methodology leads to population-wide behavior change.

In its first ten years, PMC has initiated projects in Brazil, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Mexico, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, the Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan, the United States and Vietnam. PMC has new projects in development in Botswana, China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Eastern Caribbean, Egypt, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, the Western Pacific, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. It has continuation projects in development in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and the Philippines. In 2007, PMC was recognized by the Population Institute with a Global Media Award for having the *Best Electronic Communications Service* for its entertainment-education television and radio dramas, featuring family planning, gender equality and reproductive health issues.

PMC's Programs in West and Central Africa

Mali

PMC is producing its second radio serial drama in Mali, to address family planning, HIV/AIDS and reproductive health, with a special emphasis on female genital mutilation (FGM). Over 92% of women and girls in Mali have been circumcised, which is the highest rate in the world. The new program, called *Djigi ma Tignè* ("Hope is Allowed") features three storylines:

- **Guedjouma's Story (Family Planning):** Guedjouma is a 40-year old peasant farmer, who has two wives. He has four children with his first wife and three children with his second wife – and has no interest in using family planning. His second wife is pregnant with her 4th child – but she is suffering to get through this pregnancy. She goes into labor, and experiences acute hemorrhaging. Both she

- and the baby die. Guedjouma is left penniless from the exorbitant medical expenses he has spent in trying to save his wife and child. Through his suffering, and the sage advice of his first wife, he realizes the importance of family planning, and adopts a modern method for use with his first wife. He starts to volunteer at a health association, and begins to get more involved in community and social affairs. He helps to advise others on the benefits of family planning.
- **Paul’s Story (STIs/HIV/AIDS):** Paul is an 18 year old young man, originally from the village of Tonobougou. He comes from a poor family, but has the chance to study at a secondary school in town. He is an attractive young man, and many women and girls try to seduce him. He is intelligent and ambitious. He works part-time for his idol, Mr. Kandé, a rich businessman who beds every woman he can. Paul dreams of becoming just like Mr. Kandé. Paul allows himself to be seduced by an older woman. He begins to develop symptoms of a sexually transmitted infection, which he fears might actually be a sign that he has HIV. But, he is terrified of taking an HIV test. He eventually begins to use drugs, abuses alcohol, and chases girls at his whim. Finally, at the advice of a female friend, he gets an HIV test – which is negative! However, this experience scares him so much that he rejects his former risky behaviors and settles down with the young woman who has literally saved his life. He becomes a peer educator and advises other youth on healthy sexual behavior.
 - **Baro’s Story (female circumcision):** Baro is a 55 year old woman, who is quite respected in her community. She is a traditionalist and circumcises the girls in her community. She has two sons (30 years old and 22 years old) and one 28 year old daughter. She circumcised her own daughter when the girl was just an infant. Baro suffers from poor health, so she leaves her village to live in the city with her children. The fact that Baro circumcises girls displeases her son, Demba, who is against the practice. She circumcises Demba’s youngest daughter, her own grandchild, a little girl who carries her name, and who is her favorite grandchild. As a result of the circumcision, the girl hemorrhages, and dies. Baro is blind with grief – she almost loses her will to live. But, with Demba’s support and love, she is renewed – and pledges her life to combating female circumcision in memory of her young granddaughter.

Mali, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso

Previously, in West Africa, PMC produced a radio serial drama to address issues of child slavery and the link between this problem and poverty-inducing factors, such as unwanted pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. PMC established an office in Bamako, Mali to oversee the project. Formative research was completed, and training was conducted for the producer and writers in June 2004. The radio serial drama went on the air in November 2004 and was completed in October 2005. The program, *Cesiri Tono* (“Fruits of Perseverance”) was done in partnership with First Voice International, which distributed the program via WorldSpace satellite to 169 community radio stations. These stations then broadcast the program throughout Mali, Ivory Coast, and Burkina Faso. PMC received a grant from USAID to support this work. The Ashoka Foundation awarded PMC the Changemakers Innovation Award (one of three worldwide) in their global competition for the most creative programs designed to prevent human trafficking.

A random-sample, household evaluation survey was conducted in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Ivory Coast in December 2005 to determine the impact listening to *Cesiri Tono* had on awareness of and attitudes towards child trafficking and exploitation and its underlying causes in the three countries. The survey data indicated that the program produced the following results:

MALI

- 22.4% of respondents listened to the drama.
- Listeners in Mali were half as likely as non-listeners to prioritize educating boys over girls (11% vs. 22%).
- 31% of listeners in Mali had discussed exploitative child labor during the period of the program, compared to 17% of non-listeners during the same period.
- The belief that it is acceptable for women to work outside of the home was 53% higher among listeners than it had been at baseline.

BURKINA FASO

- In Burkina Faso, 23% of listeners had taken action against exploitative child labor, compared to 9% of non-listeners.
- 96% of listeners in Burkina Faso could identify at least one place that provides family planning/reproductive health services, compared to 80% of non-listeners.

IVORY COAST

- 43% of listeners in Ivory Coast had discussed children's rights in the 12 months before the end of the program, while only 25% of non-listeners had discussed children's rights in the same period.
- 32% of listeners in Ivory Coast knew at least three factors that can lead to child trafficking, compared to 14% of non-listeners.

ALL THREE COUNTRIES

- Listeners in all three countries were substantially more aware of child trafficking than non-listeners.

PMC and First Voice International are working together to create a new regional program for West Africa, which has been endorsed by the Clinton Global Initiative.

Niger

In March 2005, PMC received USAID funding to implement a two-year radio serial drama project in Niger to address similar issues to those addressed in Mali, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso. A Country Representative was brought on board, formative research was completed, and an in-depth workshop was held to train the producer and scriptwriters. The program, entitled *Gobe da Haske* ("Tomorrow will be a Brighter Day") went on the air on February 12, 2006 and was distributed by First Voice International via WorldSpace satellite to community radio stations in Niger. The program completed broadcasting on January 14, 2007. A final evaluation survey was

completed in March 2007. USAID provided PMC with a no-cost extension through December 2007, to allow for re-broadcast of the program throughout Niger.

The final evaluation provided strong evidence of widespread listenership and significant changes in several indicators among listeners, as opposed to non-listeners.

- Of all households surveyed, 67.2% were familiar with the serial drama program.
- The vast majority of the listeners (94%) had no education or only primary education.
- 39% of listeners could identify at least three methods of family planning, compared to 10% of non-listeners.
- 67% of listeners had heard about exploitative child labor, compared to 28% of non-listeners.
- 55% of listeners had heard of child trafficking, compared to 28% of non-listeners.
- 23% of listeners knew the link between use of family planning and reducing exploitative child labor, compared to 6% of non-listeners.
- 40% of listeners had discussed exploitative child labor during the past 12 months, compared to 19% of non-listeners.
- 34% of listeners could cite at least three practices that lead to exploitative child labor, compared to 15% of non-listeners.
- 29% of listeners could cite at least three practices that lead to child trafficking, compared to 14% of non-listeners.

Nigeria

In 2006, PMC carried out a radio serial drama project in Nigeria in collaboration with the Rotarian Action Group on Population and Development (RFPD). Support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Conservation, Food and Health Foundation supplemented the support from RFPD. PMC produced and broadcast *Gugar Goge* (“Tell it to me Straight”), a 70-episode radio serial drama addressing reproductive health, family planning, and obstetric fistula in northern Nigeria. Obstetric fistula is a condition commonly resulting from early childbirth that makes its victims incontinent.

Gugar Goge was broadcast over regional government-owned and private radio stations in Kaduna and Kano states from June 2006 to February 2007. By mid-September, 47% of new reproductive health clients indicated they were listening to the program. Clinic monitoring determined that *Gugar Goge* served as the primary motivation to seek health care services for 33% of family planning/reproductive health clients and 54% of fistula clients.

The endline evaluation of the program showed that 91.9% of the population in Kano and Kaduna states had heard at least one episode of the program. Even more impressive was the fact that 82.1% of those interviewed reported listening to the radio serial drama at least weekly (four or more episodes per month). The endline evaluation also found that:

- When asked their opinion as to whether “a woman with fistula should be part of the community like everyone else,” more male listeners (32.1%) “strongly agreed” with this statement than did non-listeners (17.6%).

- When asked if they or someone they knew had “ever sought treatment for fistula,” more female listeners (59.7%) said “yes” compared to non-listeners (48.5%).
- A significant difference was found between male listeners (92.8%) reporting knowing of a place to get a male condom compared to non-listeners (75.0%). A significantly larger percentage of female listeners (96%) also knew of a place to get condoms than did female non-listeners (64.4%).
- When asked if a condom was used the last time they had heterosexual intercourse in the last twelve months, significantly more female listeners (79.5%) said “yes” compared to female non-listeners (35.6%).
- When asked if it is “acceptable or not for information on condoms to be provided,” significantly more female listeners (87.2%) compared to female non-listeners (49.1%) said it is “acceptable.”

A post-broadcast qualitative evaluation, which consisted of participatory sketching and photography with avid listeners of *Gugar Goge*, demonstrated the personal impact of the obstetric fistula storyline. Many listeners, both in their sketches and photos, focused on the interrelated themes of early marriage and pregnancies, the development of obstetric fistula, and the debilitating (and often fatal) consequences of such practices.

PMC is now carrying out a second serial drama project in northern Nigeria in 2007, with continuing support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Conservation, Food and Health Foundation and new support from an individual contributor. The new program, *Ruwan Dare* (“Midnight Rain”), began broadcasting in Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, and Sokoto states on July 31, 2007. Monitoring interviews conducted at reproductive health and family planning clinics with 220 clients in October-December 2007 showed that 56.3% of the clients reported that it was *Ruwan Dare* that had motivated their visit to the clinic.

With support from UNFPA, PMC is also carrying out an additional project dealing with obstetric fistula. “Fistula Voices” involves a capacity building among community leaders for promoting behavior change to prevent fistula. A training workshop was held for fistula spokespersons in October 2007. Twelve women who had experienced fistula were trained to reach out to other women in their communities to let them know how to prevent and treat fistula.

Senegal

Population Media Center has received funding from USAID and UNFPA-Senegal for two radio serial dramas that will go on the air in April 2008. One serial drama, funded by USAID, will be written and produced in the Wolof language, and broadcast nationwide throughout Senegal. This program will address USAID/Senegal’s core themes of reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, child survival, and malaria prevention. The second serial drama, funded by UNFPA, will be written in the Pulaar language for broadcast in the UNFPA target region of Matam. This program will target youth and will focus on HIV and STI prevention, and sexual and reproductive health. The Matam region has been identified by UNFPA as a priority region, having a high need for youth health interventions. For the USAID program, PMC is a subcontractor to the *Agence pour le*

Développement de Marketing Social (ADEMAS), which implements USAID-Senegal's health social marketing activities. For both programs, PMC is working in coordination with RAES (*Réseau Africain de l'Education pour la Santé*) based in Dakar, Senegal and the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Public Health.

Inter-Regional Programs

Inter-Regional Training

In 2003, PMC implemented a project for the U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA) on a region-wide basis in Africa and Asia to assist local FM and community radio stations in addressing HIV/AIDS and reproductive health issues through entertainment-education. The project included training workshops in the use of entertainment-education techniques for community radio producers and representatives from selected NGOs. Under this project, personnel from radio stations and NGOs in eight African countries received training at a workshop in Johannesburg in March 2003. They were Angola, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria and South Africa. Six Asian countries participated in a similar workshop in Manila in May 2003. They were Cambodia, Mongolia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, and Vietnam. As part of the project, PMC produced a report of a needs assessment, *Strengthening Partnerships among Local FM Radio Networks and Reproductive Health Agencies on HIV/AIDS*, which can be found at

www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/486_filename_157_filename_communityradio.pdf.

In follow up to the workshops, PMC has developed long-running social-content serial drama projects with several of the participants.

Training Guide & Best Practices Manual

In 2004, UNFPA asked PMC to develop a training guide with detailed information on the application of the serial drama methodology to address such issues as the way in which gender discrimination impacts women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. The training guide was published in 2005. A PDF of the Training Guide is available on the PMC website at www.populationmedia.org. In 2005, UNFPA asked PMC to develop a best practices manual with examples of excellent social change communication programs worldwide. That publication will be available in 2008. An article on PMC's work appears on the UNFPA website at www.unfpa.org/news/news.cfm?ID=761&Language=1.

For more information about PMC and our work, please visit our web site at www.populationmedia.org