

Using radio drama to tackle attitudes towards family planning in Northern Nigeria

BBC Media Action Nigeria conducted research to understand the influence of our multi-media content under the Inclusive Family Planning project. The work focuses on improving access to family planning for people with disabilities. Survey and qualitative research findings showed that audiences demonstrated awareness and understanding of family planning rights of persons with disabilities, the different contraceptive methods available and positive attitudes towards family planning.

Context

Evidence from Nigeria suggests that women and girls with disabilities face multiple forms of discrimination in accessing health services they require, including family planning services and contraceptives. Key issues include stigma, negative attitudes and discrimination from family, community members and health workers, infrastructural barriers within health facilities, and the limited implementation of anti-discrimination policies. People with disabilities, and particularly adolescent girls and young women with disabilities, also face significant barriers with regards to free and informed choice and bodily autonomy related to the use and choice of contraceptives¹.

The project

Working in a consortium led by Sightsavers and with other partners, BBC Media Action is implementing the Disability Inclusive Development (DID) Inclusive Family Planning (IFPLAN) project which is a four-year project funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). The project seeks to contribute to the reduction of the unmet need for family planning and increase access to, and use of available modern contraceptive methods by people with disabilities in Kaduna and Borno States. The project reaches out to these audiences through *Madubi*, a radio drama, and social media output as well as capacity strengthening of media partners.

Research methodology

Mid-way through the project, research was conducted to understand how the project was performing, specifically:-

- Qualitative research – 12 semi-structured interviews and 10 focus group discussions were conducted with married and unmarried adolescent boys and girls, men and women, and 8 in-depth interviews were held with relevant stakeholders (healthcare workers, organisations of persons with disability, community and religious leaders).
- Quantitative research – a sample of 1,706 male and female adults with and without disabilities aged 15 years & above were surveyed across five focal states (Borno, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, and Yobe) to examine the links between exposure to our radio drama and social media content and audiences' knowledge, attitudes and practices in relation to family planning.

¹ <https://inclusivefutures.org/access-to-family-planning/>

Regression analysis was used to establish the association between listenership and knowledge of family planning methods as well as attitude towards, and uptake of family planning. This enabled us to understand this relationship while controlling for social and demographic factors that might have influenced respondents such as sex, age, location, education and whether the respondent feels that their family and/or community supports family planning.

Key findings

- **Reach:** The radio drama reached over 3,000,000 people across the five focal states. *Madubi* drama and social media content engaged audiences and received positive feedback from the target audiences who found it useful and relevant to their lives.
- **Knowledge:** Audiences reported learning about family planning for persons with disabilities including the different modern contraceptive methods from the programme, such as implants which some reported was new information for them. Regression analysis showed that even when controlling for other factors, regular listeners of *Madubi* and those exposed to our social media content were more likely to know at least four planning methods compared to non-listeners.
- **Attitude:** Compared to non-listeners, regression analysis showed that *Madubi*'s regular audiences are more likely to affirm that people with disabilities have family planning rights, even after controlling for influencing factors.
- **Practice:** The study found that those who are regularly exposed to *Madubi* are more likely to practise family planning compared to non-listeners even after controlling for influencing factors such as education, gender, family and community support.
- **Discussion:** Many scenes in *Madubi* drama modelled spousal communication and discussion of family planning. This seems to have had an impact as those most engaged with *Madubi* are more likely to report

discussing family planning with others compared to non-listeners, even after controlling for other factors.

“The information I receive from Madubi is not different from what I receive when I visit the hospital. The only difference is that while you are on the radio, you are receiving it digitally, at the hospital you are receiving it face-to-face from a doctor or nurse.”

Female, 15-17 years, rural, person with Albinism, Kaduna

Key implications

- Overall, BBC Media Action's *Madubi* content in Nigeria has contributed to positive outcomes around knowledge, discussion and behaviour among its regular audiences. These are encouraging results particularly in this context where women and girls, especially those with disabilities face barriers to the uptake of family planning such as perceived religious restrictions, discrimination from family and community members and fear of side effects as the study found.
- Media content that reflects the realities in people's context while modelling positive attitudes is more likely to inspire support for and uptake of family planning.
- Whilst people who are regularly engaged in project output have demonstrated positive outcomes, sustaining and building upon these positive results will require sustained effort.
- To address some of the barriers to the uptake of family planning, interventions need to target gatekeepers such as male heads of households.

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