

success story

Survey indicates positive results for C-Change's work in Albania

Challenge

In Albania, few people are aware of and use modern contraceptive methods (MCM). In 2008, about 11% reported their use in Albania's Demographic and Health Survey. Only 4% of the respondents said they used male condoms, 2% reported use of oral contraceptive pills, and even fewer used injectables and IUDs. The most prevalent family planning method has been withdrawal, with the rhythm method close behind.

C-Change's interviews with healthcare consumers and healthcare providers revealed that both groups lack accurate information about modern contraceptives and share misconceptions about their effectiveness.

Response

To improve this situation and contribute to an enabling environment for modern contraceptive use, C-Change devised a series of social and behavior change communication (SBCC) interventions. These aimed to improve knowledge, awareness, and use of MCM and to contribute to increased access by young adults, ages 19–24.

An early intervention targeted pharmacists who provide modern contraceptives. It addressed not only the quality of the information they offer



A poster used by the C-Change campaign to promote use of modern contraceptive methods.

about these products, but the way they communicate with young people about them.

In addition, C-Change provided journalists from diverse media outlets with training and workshops on sexual and reproductive health. This effort aimed to improve the quality and quantity of reporting in Albania on modern family planning.

C-Change also launched two concurrent SBCC interventions: a national mass media campaign and an interpersonal peer education program. Carefully trained teams of peers provided education on MCM for students in dormitories connected to four universities in three major metropolitan areas: Tirana, Vlorë, and Elbasan.

C-Change conducted a baseline survey to measure knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of university students relating to MCM. The



Peer educators in Albania provide university students with information on modern contraceptive methods

researchers used these results and the same questionnaire for an end-line survey among 300 female and 295 male students at the four universities. Their responses were compared with those of 591 students—296 males and 293 females—at a comparison site, the University of Kamez.

Results

The end-line survey found that exposure to the peer education program positively affected students' use of MCM. Young men and women who went through the peer education program were 1.7 times more likely to report use of MCM when compared to those not exposed to the program. When compared to the baseline survey the year before, 8% more young women reported they rely on birth control pills and 34% more reported reliance on condoms.

The survey also concluded that students exposed to both the peer education program and TV messages were four times more likely to identify three or more modern contraceptive methods than those not exposed. The most widely used method was condoms, which also provides protection against sexually transmitted infections.

C-Change's training for journalists is also paying dividends. A journalist health club to exchange and share up-to-date information has been established. And in a one-week period in early March 2011, no less than 10 accurate articles and two TV reports on family planning and reproductive health were written or prepared by journalists who had attended a recent C-Change workshop.

A follow-up study will be conducted on the streets of Tirana in May 2011 to validate the results of the journalism training.

C-Change is a USAID-funded project to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of social and behavior change communication as an integral part of development efforts. AED implements C-Change with US-based partners—CARE, Internews, Ohio University, and IDEO; and regional partners—Centre for Media Studies and New Concept Information Systems (both in India); Social Surveys and Soul City (both in South Africa); and Straight Talk, Uganda. For more information, visit www.c-changeproject.org.