

Reaching Young People with FP Information via Mobile Phone: m4RH

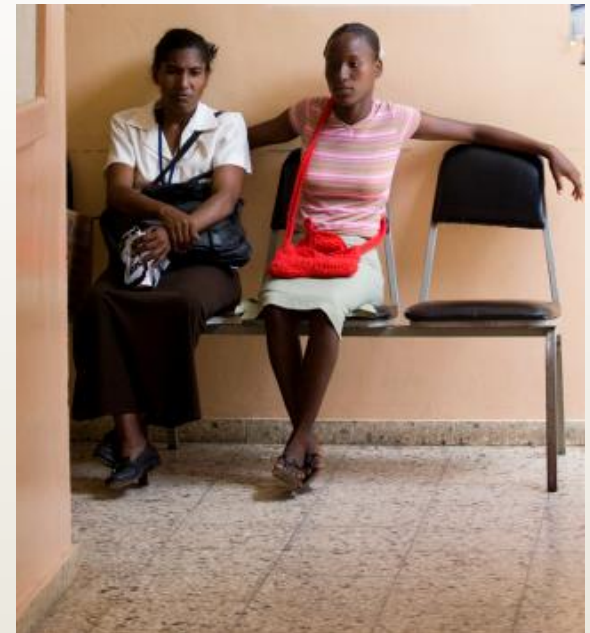
A Clear Need for FP Services for Youth and Adolescents

- 540 million adolescents (15-19 yrs) living in developing countries
- 6.1 million unintended pregnancies
- In SSA, 67% of married adolescent women who want to avoid pregnancy are not using any method – 12% using traditional
- 42% of unmarried, sexually active women are using no method, 17% traditional
- Modern contraceptive use prevents 3.1 million unintended pregnancies among adolescents each year

Source: The Guttmacher Institute/IPPF: *Facts on the Sexual and Reproductive Health of Adolescent Women in the Developing World*

Barriers to Adolescent Awareness and Use of FP

- Limited knowledge about methods
- Many myths and misconceptions
- Concerns for youth considering clinic settings:
 - Privacy and confidentiality
 - Cost of services
 - Convenience of locations/hours
 - Provider biases



Mobile Phone Use

- 5.9 billion mobile phone subscriptions world wide
- 1.6 billion are under the age of 30
- 79% are in developing world
- Wide-spread use in both urban and rural areas
- Highest rate of mobile market growth is in developing countries
- Worldwide, 200,000 text messages are sent every second



Sources:

WHO. (2011). mHealth: New horizons for health through mobile technologies. Geneva, Switzerland: WHO Press.

International Telecommunications Union. (2010, June 10). The world in 2010: The rise of 3G.

Brown, G. (2010). 2010 Youth Mobile Youth Report. Mobile Youth.

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/149519/mobile-phone-access-varies-widely-sub-saharan-africa.aspx>

m4RH: a communication channel for FP

Initiation:

2008

USAID/PROGRESS

Research pilot

System:

SMS

Interactive

Ping-pong

Opt-in

Countries:

Kenya

Tanzania

Welcome to M4RH free info service. For implants reply 11, IUD 21, permanent 31, injectable 41, pills 51, EC 61, condoms 71, Natural Family Planning 81, LAM 91.

- Check it Out
- Benefits to Women
- The Need
- How to Get Involved
- About M4RH

m4RH
Mobile 4 Reproductive Health

fhi Family Health International

What are the elements of m4RH?

1. FP messages, based on WHO and country-specific guidelines, designed and tested to ensure user comprehension within the 160 character limit
2. User interface developed specifically for m4RH that has been evaluated and refined through usability testing
3. Technology platform developed by Text to Change and maintained through relationships with mobile operators

How does m4RH address barriers to adolescent knowledge and use of family planning?



Who is m4RH Reaching? Gender & Age

		N	Percent
Gender	Female	553	56 %
	Male	442	44%
Age	19 and younger	142	15%
	20-29	411	44%
	30-39	243	26%
	40 and older	131	14%

Example: Monitoring User Data from m4RH

Keyword	Content	# of queries	
		Kenya	Tanzania
m4RH	Main Menu	6787	4333
11	Implants	1520	685
21	IUDs	1319	650
31	Permanent Methods	1084	620
41	Injectables	1467	671
51	OCPs	1492	598
61	Emergency Contraception	1408	1020
71	Condoms	2199	748
81	Natural Methods (incl. LAM in Kenya)	3170	1362
91	Clinic Locations	1281	813
Total Hits		29,722	14,635

Limited Knowledge and Misconceptions

“First of all people were saying those pills and injection...can cause sterility, when it comes time you want a child you can no longer have one. That I have seen is not true, the only thing I saw was you might delay in conceiving but it doesn't mean you will never again be able to have a baby, so I have learned...”

– Female, 25, Tanga District Tanzania

“Because we constantly give each other street education, some of it is true but some is just crap, so if you educate us on those issues it will be great.”

– Female, 25, Tanga Region Tanzania

Privacy/Confidentiality

“Sometimes it’s uncomfortable to go to health centers; it’s not easy talking about some stuff to other people.”

– Male, 22, Kakamega Kenya

“Person can ask any question confidentially, [I am] very glad about it, it is hard to go to clinics.”

– Female, 23, Voi District Kenya



Cost

“You now most of us Tanzanians.., economic wise, we are poor, so the first thing is the service is free, that is the main thing that made me happy. The second this is that you use your own phone so it is confidential.”

– Male, 23, Nakambako Tanzania

“You don’t have to go to a health center you use the phone! It’s cheap!”

– Male, 22, Kakamega Kenya

Convenience

“Easy to access message on phone, put advice into practice, cannot be misled any more it’s good.”

– Male, 19, Bungoma Kenya

“Easy to use, just send a message and they give response, no waiting. Gives direct answers you understand the messages.”

– Male, 22, Kankamega Kenya

Provider Biases

“You know, most of the youth like family planning so that they can avoid unexpected pregnancies, but they are afraid to go to a professional health attendant to seek advice especially if they are not married. They fear if they go there they will end up being interrogated...because if they are not married, why do they want these methods, so people are afraid to go.”

– Female, 21, Mbeya Mbozi Tanzania

“I told my brothers and sister...they say they are afraid [to go to the clinic] so I decided to teach them, they are just astonished how it is possible to get all this information via phones.”

-Male, 28, Mbeya Town Tanzania

Next Steps/Recommendations

- Mobile phones are a useful tool for reaching young people with FP information
- More explicitly target m4RH or similar programs to young people
- Explore ways to use m4RH to link young people to youth friendly services

Thank You!

Our Team

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Visit our m4RH website:
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