



Delivering effective and impactful SRHR information using technology

TALK III (Training & Local Knowledge in Zambia) Project Zambia

Name:

TALK III

Location:

Samfya and Chongwe districts, Zambia

Funded by:

Arm Limited, FCDO

Dates:

2020-2022, as an extension of Talk I and II (2015-2020)

Key partners:



pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV and promotion of adolescent wellbeing.

The programme was designed to address the fact that young people aged 10 to 24 years and adolescents between 10 to 19 years, especially young women, and young key populations such as migrant sex workers, fishing communities and rural girls continue to be disproportionately affected by HIV and SRHR issues. In this respect, the project targeted adolescents and youth aged 10 to 24 years in Samfya and Chongwe districts from May, 2021 to March 2022.

Background

The **Training and Local Knowledge (TALK) III project** is one of VSO-Zambia's projects under the Volunteering for Development (V4D) approach and fund which was developed as a scale-up of the TALK II Project that was successfully implemented in the Samfya district of Luapula Province, Zambia. This project was developed to focus on the use of training strategies for increasing knowledge as the major approaches for impacting local communities. Furthermore, it sought to tackle Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH) challenges which were regarded as a major public health issue both from the perspective of prevention of unintended



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Yvonne Katwishi, a community volunteer at Chichi island in front of the youth friendly space funded by VSO. As a community Volunteer Yvonne meets with other youths in her community to sensitize them on reproductive health matters.



Regina Mwaba, in green, sharing her story and encouragement to some young girls inside of the Youth Friendly Space at Mbabala Clinic. She also uses a Talking Book to help her share the lessons with young girls.

Objectives

The TALK III project was designed to advance successful aspects of the TALK II project, as well as additional areas. The project aim was to challenge existing taboos and empower young people to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The following are some of the project objectives:

- i. To strengthen **youth friendly spaces** to improve **quality SRH services** access for adolescents and youth
- ii. To support **access to accurate SRHR information** by young people and their households
- iii. To **foster dialogue** between health facilities and communities
- iv. To encourage **a culture of saving and entrepreneurship** among young people.

Key approaches used:

- VSO implemented a **community-focused approach** to challenge existing taboos, empower young people to make informed decisions about their SRHR and enable them to routinely demand and access comprehensive SRH/FP services.
- Central to this was the VSO **Volunteering for Development (VfD) method** which seeks to ensure implementation was inclusive, safeguarded all youth, supported their resilience, capacitated them to voice their demands including ways in which policy could change and hold office bearers to account. Youth volunteers were key to implementation. **Audio “Talking” books** supported standardized delivery of SRH and FP messaging.

- An integrated approach in which SRHR and Livelihoods are integrated thus incorporated savings, and the business component to the project.
- Capacitation of households with SRHR knowledge to support primary actor learning
- Establishment of **safe spaces for girls via the SHE clubs**
- Capacity building of enablers e.g., training of Health care personnel and traditional leaders in youth and adolescent SRHR.

Key results and link with the global Theory of Change (ToC)

Improved community attitudes, knowledge, practice, and behaviour

1. Increased approval and support of the project by parents.
2. Promoted parent to child communication on SRHR

Adolescents and Youth able to demand for their (SMNRCAR) health rights

1. Increased dialogue between the youth and the health facilities.
2. A total of **42 Community Champions** in Samfya were trained on Intersectionality, SRHR and Entrepreneurship and this resulted in increased knowledge on business management and formation of youth cooperatives for strategic positioning in cross project benefits and access to government youth funds.
3. Formation of **SHE Club groups** in Kabanga, Chilumba, Makasa and Mwana Yama.

Increased capacity of the health workforce to deliver inclusive health services

1. Increased access to SRHR services at the health facilities. The project closely worked with the Ministry of Health through capacity building efforts and engagements such as training of **15 health workers and traditional leaders in SRHR, an intersectionality approach and Talking Books technology** to ensure sustainability of Talking Books.

As a result of the project we reported a significant drop in teenage pregnancies and STIs from the inception of Adolescent Talk project to Talk III. Talking Books was well appreciated by the community and we are looking at other locations with appropriate conditions (remote locations, low internet access or cell phone utilisation) to scale up Talking Books.