

SAFE Pwani Family Planning Pilot Project
Sponsored by the Romily Walton Masters Scholarship Programme

Introduction

Previous SAFE Pwani outreaches on HIV/AIDS revealed a startling lack of sexual health education, with some participants even unaware that condoms could prevent pregnancy, seeing them only as a means of protection against sexually transmitted diseases. A lack of use of family planning techniques was further made obvious by the prevalence of pregnant teenage girls attending the programme activities, and children far outnumbering the adults at performances. It was clear the number of children was growing fast, putting a strain on the resources of both individual families, and the county.

SAFE Pwani conducted research, focusing on Mtwapa a peri-urban area just to the north of Mombasa. The research confirmed the team's observation – this surge in teenage pregnancy was due to a huge unmet need for family planning education. This in part is caused by social, cultural and religious values which are preventing conversations on sex and contraception from happening, meaning that teenage boys and girls are not getting the information to keep them safe from unplanned pregnancies and STDs. Furthermore, the little information that young people received is from community myths and peer misconceptions, creating fear and suspicion around family planning services.

Programme Overview

The project was planned in partnership with youth drama groups in Mtwapa. The youth were initially given training at the local family planning clinic, providing them with up to date and factual information on sexual and reproductive health. They were then tasked, (with mentorship from SAFE Pwani) to create and develop a new family planning play to be toured around their home community, targeting youths aged between 15 – 23.

Objectives

- Increase understanding and uptake of family planning
- Facilitate peer to peer sharing of family planning information by creating a core group of fully educated and informed youth leaders
- Discover fresh, young talent in Kilifi county
- Build the capacity of drama groups through mentorship
- Create partnerships between the drama groups and other local organisations

Youth Family planning workshop

Prior to the training, the group had very little knowledge about Family Planning and contraception, having gained most of their knowledge through friends, most of which tended to be inaccurate. During the training, the group were given information on the different types of contraception and learnt the most common myths and misconceptions about contraception held by the community.

Not only did this training help the young people make the right decisions for their own sexual health but helped inform the creation of the performance which countered the myths and misconceptions prevalent in the community and empowered girls to take steps to protect their sexual health.

The Play – *Uamuzi* (Decisions)

To create the play, the drama group brainstormed learning from their workshop with the SAFE Pwani team and Executive Director Nick Reding. Together they created a story line, including the key messages that the youth had taken away from the workshop...

- Using contraception and family planning methods is incredibly important for young people, particularly those engaging in early sex
- Early pregnancy can create a loss of opportunity for girls and can sometimes put them in danger.
- Condoms are important to prevent pregnancies, as well as prevent sexually transmitted infections.
- Parents play an important role in helping their children make safe choices when it comes to sexual and reproductive health.
- Young people need to overcome fears and attend family planning clinics to acquire accurate information and advice on the contraceptive method which is most suited to each individual person

Uamuzi tells the story of four sisters and the challenges they face due to a lack of sexual health education. The play opens with a single father who has four teenage daughters. Having pressurised his wife to keep having children in his quest to have a boy, she had died giving birth to his lastborn.

Faced with the task, he does not know how to deal with the subject of sex as his daughters become teenagers. Without guidance at home or at school, the eldest two girls fall pregnant and another one becomes infected with HIV. Their prospects appear bleak until the fourth and youngest daughter intervenes with the help of her uncle they get to go back in time and create different futures by making good FP choices.

As well as creative direction, the group were given training in organising the other parts of a community outreach. Project Manager David Kalume mentored members of the group in location research and mobilisation. Together, they selected venues to perform the play, in locations with high populations of young people. They also formed partnerships with local community members and stakeholders to increase the attendance of each performance.

The team were greatly encouraged by the energy, dedication and talent of the youths. Each day they arrived an hour before the call time, and worked hard to improve their performances, carefully following the direction of SAFE Pwani.



Performance tour

The initial tour of eight performances was carried out in September, due to the success of the project, another four performances were executed in November, these performances were filmed in order to create a film resource to be used to secure additional funding for the Family Planning project.

Date	Location	Audience Numbers			Total
		M	F	Children	
03/09/18	Mwavitsa	48	136	206	390
03/09/18	4 Farm 04	44	64	344	452
04/09/18	Mikanjuni	27	43	70	140
04/09/18	Nguruweni	14	25	45	84
05/09/18	Majengo Mwakio	30	74	90	194
05/09/18	Kijijini	24	40	59	123
06/09/18	Mtomondoni Labour	83	80	87	250
06/09/18	Mikanjuni Video Mbili	58	50	52	160
15/11/18	Blue Star	37	52	162	251
15/11/18	Thailand Show	51	30	73	154
16/11/18	Amsterdam	46	51	180	277
16/11/18	Amkeni Ngogo	90	155	316	561
Total		552	800	1684	3036

The powerful story and the energy and talent of the young actors kept the audience captivated throughout the performances. It was common to see the crowd getting closer and closer to the performers, eager to find out what happens to each of the characters. Following the performance, the SAFE team carried out a facilitated discussion with the audience, focusing on the main messages of the play and how each audience member can apply them to their own lives. Following this, a nurse from the local family planning clinic spoke about the free services that they offer, and answered health questions and concerns from the audience members.

When asked what messages the audience took away from the play, the following themes were raised across the performances:

- Parents should help guide their children to achieve their goals.
- Family Planning is not a con, it is a good way to plan pregnancies allowing you to have children at the correct time.
- If you do get pregnant, it does not mark the end of your life. It is important to still pursue opportunities.
- Family Planning is the responsibility of both men and women.
- It is important to use protection during sex

The most common questions and concerns were:

- Is there a method that can be used by men only? Some women do not want to use family planning because of the misconceptions.
- Does the lubricant on a condom cause infection?
- Is it true that family planning methods can reduce libido?
- Why does the implant disrupt periods?
- I have heard stories of the implant giving women strokes, is this true?
- Can hormonal contraceptives make people infertile?
- Can I use family planning if we are not married?
- Why does the implant give people high blood pressure and weight loss?
- Why are there no family planning methods for men apart from vasectomy? Is this reversible?

These questions made it clear that although people had an awareness of the different family planning methods available, they feared the side effects. Side effects which have not properly been explained and are not understood. During the post-performance discussion, the nurse was able to describe why certain side effects occur and encourage women to visit to clinic and get advice on what on the most appropriate form of contraception is for each individual.

Follow up M&E

In January 2019, the team returned to the target areas to conduct M&E to find out how the information from the performance had disseminated through the community.

Community Knowledge

Ten people were chosen at random and interviewed.

Location	People who attended the performance	People who had not attended but heard about the performance	Those who had neither attended or heard about it
Amkeni	6	2	2
Ngunaweni	6	0	4
Thailand	5	2	3

The same people were asked the following questions:

- 1) What did you learn during the play?
- 2) Did you take any steps after getting this information?
- 3) Any other comments

Name: Ann Nazi

Age: 28

What did you learn from the play:

- The importance of family planning
- Being entertained by the simpa ropa
- The importance of spreading the awareness I had learnt to other people

Did you take any other steps?

Yes, I went to the hospital to ask about methods, I am now on contraception, I have got the 3 month injection.

Any other comment?

The services were good, I would recommend other people to do it too.

Name: Mamake Anima

Age: 25

What did you learn from the play?

The play was about family planning, I was also entertained by the simba ropa.

Did you take any other steps?

Yes, I was pregnant at the time of seeing the play, but now I have started to take the IV tablet

Name: Alice Mjimba

Age: 23

What did you learn from the play?

The play was about Family Planning, I learnt that girls can also contribute a lot in the community if they are given a chance.

Did you take any other action?

I visited the hospital after seeing the play, the play was an eye opener for me and I wanted to know about the different methods in detail. They are offering good services, I am now using the 3 month injection and it is working well for me.

Name: Rashid Kahindi

Age: 26

Rashid looks older than 26, the interviewer suspected that he was lying about his age. He told the interviewer that he had four children by four different women.

What did you learn from the play?

The play was about family planning and the rights of the girl child.

Did you take any other action?

Having sex with a condom is something I will never do because they cause stomach infections and penis cancer. Most of all, sex is much sweeter without a condom.

Name: Magila Mama Lau

Age: 24

What did you learn during the play?

It was a good play, I was very entertained by the music and I learnt about family planning. We needed that information because girls in this area do not have the knowledge at all.

Did you take any other action?

I am using the coil because I already have two children.

Name: Maskan of five young men

Age: 17 - 20

These young men wanted to be interviewed as a group

What did you learn from the play?

The play was about family planning, we cannot forget about it, it is one of the best things that happened. We learnt that it is important to space your children in order to give them a better life. There is a need to do family planning because we are making too many children.

Did you take any further action?

We asked our sisters to start using Family Planning.

Interviewer Observations

- People don't want to be honest about their age.
- Boys/men still believe that it is upon a woman to go and get the services
- Some people are still hiding behind their culture instead of getting services.
- Some men do not want their wife/ girlfriend to use family planning
- Women will have to hide the FP from their husband/ boyfriend

Key achievements

- Building the skills and confidence of young actors
- Creating an effective working relationship between SAFE Pwani, the young actors and the government family planning
- Educating 1352 adults and 1684 children on the importance of Family Planning

Way Forward

The success of the pilot programme shows a clear need for family planning interventions and the relevance of *Uamuzi* to communities in Kilifi County. SAFE Pwani now want to do a full tour with follow-up community workshops to build knowledge and help create working relationship between the youth and the sexual health services.

Objectives

- Provide mass education on sexual reproductive health, focusing on family planning to reduce the taboo on the community.
- Empowering parents to talk to their children about all aspects of sex education at home.
- Educating and empowering girls to seek out and implement effective family planning practices. As well as life skills sessions on wider sexual health issues.
- Involve boys in discussions around family planning, emboldening them to realise their equal responsibility in preventing unplanned pregnancies and protecting their and their partners sexual health.

