



Monthly Newsletter

1. MAPUTO ACTION PLAN AN THE REPOSITIONING OF FP : ABBEF IN POLE POSITION

The Burkina Faso Member Association « *Association burkinabè pour le bien-être familial* » (ABBEF) has made itself two influential allies within the framework of its commitment to implementing the Maputo Action Plan and its efforts to reposition family planning in Burkina Faso. These are the Ministry of Health and UNFPA.

Working in tandem with these two reference structures, the Burkina Faso Member Association has embarked on a massive advocacy and family planning promotion project in the country.

It is unanimously accepted that in Burkina Faso, ABBEF is the pioneer in family planning and the promotion of contraceptive methods. In fact, ABBEF began conducting sensitisation activities on the ground long before the Government made a formal commitment through the adoption of a national family planning policy in 1986 and the repeal of provisions of the law of 1921, which prohibited the promotion of contraceptives.

The lead role played by ABBEF was recognised and lauded by UNFPA and the Burkina Faso Ministry of Health which have made ABBEF a pivotal partner in the advocacy and promotion of family planning. Through the collaboration fostered with these two institutions, ABBEF has managed to mobilise funds for the implementation of a number of

activities that would contribute to accelerating the implementation of the Maputo Action Plan by Burkina authorities and significantly increasing the demand for modern contraceptives in the country.

A Multimedia Approach

To this end, ABBEF developed a set of coherent activities which have been ongoing, since the last quarter of 2007.

Radio and television commercials on five (5) themes have been developed and are being broadcast in the administrative centres of Burkina Faso's regions that constitute the most important towns.

The broadcasts are in French as well as four of the most important national languages.

With regard to radio commercial broadcasts, ABBEF approached local FM stations in the country's political and economic capitals, and others in eight (8) medium-sized towns.

Radio programmes are meant to support the broadcasting of commercials in order to assist target populations to better grasp the messages conveyed.

For this multimedia campaign, ABBEF has envisaged a mechanism to motivate the production of written articles on various family planning topics. This is justified by the fact that in most editorial offices, newspaper heads are not quick to finance the production of articles on reproductive health and would rather set

aside resources to cover politics and other events which, according to them, sell better.

ABBEF launched an invitation to tender to select a number of articles submitted and whose authors will receive financial and material support for their production. This initiative will enable the MA to give Burkina nationals and readers all over the world the opportunity to read well documented and extremely interesting press articles that put their finger on key issues concerning family planning and the Maputo Action Plan.

The selection of articles will be done by a small committee composed of ABBEF resource persons, technical departments of the Ministry of Health (Department of Public Health and Education and the Department of Family Health) and UNFPA, set up for this purpose, on the basis of clearly defined criteria in the terms of reference that have been widely disseminated within press circles.

Resource Persons to Support Advocacy

Besides media activities to promote family planning, ABBEF's initiative also plans for intensive advocacy actions to arouse real interest in family planning.

In this regard, the association is going to take leadership in steering a movement of associations carrying out advocacy.

To gain maximum support, the association established a family planning advocacy support group.

The group of 5 members, chaired by ABBEF's National Chairman comprises well-known national resource persons, with diverse profiles. In addition to the Association's leader in the person of ABBEF's National Chairman, the group includes a health specialist, a population and development expert, an expert on health rights and a customary leader.

The group members who enjoy a certain aura in Burkina Faso should provide the raw material to all those engaged in advocacy for the repositioning of Family Planning in Burkina Faso through their intellectual productions,

public pronouncements and daily activities, thus contributing to a real awareness of FP issues at the highest level of the Government and among development partners.

With the recruitment of a coordinator for the project entitled « From Dependence to Independence », ABBEF's actions towards the implementation of the Maputo Action Plan should be intensified in order to have a greater impact on the positioning of family planning in the list of Burkina Faso's priorities.

Mahamoudou BELEMVIRE

Head of IEC/ABBEF

2. CSOs meet in abuja to urge ECOWAS to own SRH

A two-day sub-regional consultative meeting on "Ownership and Leadership of Sexual and Reproductive Health in West African States" was held on April 14 - 16 2008 in Abuja. The meeting was convened to deliberate and motivate action on the concern expressed by the African Union that African countries are unlikely to achieve the MDGs with significant progress in the reproductive health, and to launch an advocacy initiative that will ensure that ECOWAS collaborates with other partners to actualize the commitments made by African governments.

The meeting, which was hosted by the Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria PPFN and the regional body the IPPF Africa Region, was attended by government officials in charge of reproductive health, ECOWAS representatives, parliamentarians, development partners and civil society organizations working in reproductive health in the four target countries. The European Commission, the main sponsors of the project, was represented by the head of the Health Section from the EC delegation in Nigeria, Mr. Daniel Plas.

The civil society organizations in Africa are also working in partnership with the AU and national governments to hasten the achievement of the MDGs. Among them are the International Planned Parenthood Federation, IPPF Africa Region and its member organizations in

various countries. They have been collaborating with African Union Commission AUC and UNFPA to advocate for implementation and ownership of these regional strategies by national governments.

In 2007, IPPF Africa Region embarked on advocacy initiative aimed at increasing political will and financial commitments for reproductive health at national level in four countries; Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso and Gambia, as well as the Economic Commission of West African States, ECOWAS.

3. The MA Orientation Workshop 2008

The MA orientation workshop 2008 was held on the 25th to 29th March 2008 at The Grand Regency Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya. IPPFAR and ACEEMAAR arranged to have this workshop because of their commitment to strengthen the institutional capacity and performance of IPPFAR MAs. The overriding goal of the workshop was to provide newly recruited senior staff a comprehensive orientation on the IPPF strategic framework, policies, procedures, operations and reporting requirements with a particular focus on specific institutional and programmatic challenges faced by the targeted MAs. The 5 day workshop drew participation from 17 Member Associations; in addition to the newly recruited senior staff in the MAs 2 Executive Directors from The Gambia and Côte d'Ivoire were involved to facilitate the workshop. This was seen as a good opportunity by IPPFARO to develop training material and facilitation skills of experienced Executive Directors for the upcoming learning centers by IPPFAR.

The workshop was organized into 2 parts; a 3 day sit-in workshop where the participants were taken through IPPF strategic framework, IPPF's programmatic areas, supporting strategies, Advocacy & Resource mobilization, Regional Office New Initiatives and ended with a study visit to Family Health Options of Kenya (FHOK), one of IPPFAR Member Associations. During the second part of the workshop, the participants had a one on one meeting with their desk officers, technical persons and other resource persons to discuss programmatic and institutional issues relating to their MAs. This 2-

day meeting resulted into the development of country specific action plans.

From the evaluation of the workshop, the participants felt that the inclusion of the 2 Executive Directors to the workshop was very helpful as they could relate with their experiences and benefit from their best practices. The MAs saw this as a good opportunity to reflect on their MAs, develop action plans based on their needs which would be in turn shared with their staff and National Executive committee (NEC). In the end they called upon the Regional office to support the MAs in implementing the Action Plans they developed.

4. News from the Regional Director's office

The highlight of the month was the 4day retreat that the RD initiated and facilitated in Karen Blixen. This retreat was necessitated by events in the RO that demanded such participatory forum. The outcome of this retreat is gradually being implemented in the regional office, as some recommendations have been incorporated in annual workplans. In addition, the RD led the delegation of staff members to attend the EXCO Meeting held in Abuja, Nigeria. Also, the RDO's presided over the opening of the Launch of the Donorship and Ownership Project in Abuja. Thereafter, the RD attended a joint meeting with UNFPA African Division to prepare a work plan on collaboration b/n IPPF and UNFPA.

The Deputy Regional Director attended a five days workshop of the Central African CSO Consultative meeting on the Maputo Plan of Action in Yaoundé, Cameroon. This consultative meetings by regions serves to mobilize the different stakeholders, have an idea of how it is being implemented in the different countries and provides an opportunity for forward planning.

5. YSAFE and YAM host an SRHR side meeting at the EU-ACP JPA in Slovenia

YSAFE and YAM (the IPPF EN and IPPF Africa Region youth networks) continued their advocacy efforts within the framework of the Joining Forces: Youth advocates for SRHR in development project by attending the EU-ACP JPA held in Ljubljana, Slovenia from 16-20 March 2008.

With support from JPA Co-Chair, Glenys Kinnock, YSAFE and YAM brought together other organisations, You Act and members of Countdown 2015 Europe, where they hosted an official side event on SRHR and youth participation. The side event was titled "Young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights: Hear our voice!" and took place on Wednesday, 19 March 2008. The event had an interactive agenda with an outstanding turn-out of both African and European Members of Parliament.

The side meeting began with a drama to highlight the challenge young people can face when needing access to youth friendly services. They continued to explain the challenge to access SRH services in the developing world as well as point out the importance of youth participation when developing and implementing projects that reach young people. Using posters they raised awareness on how young people from both Africa and Europe have taken their own needs in their hands by advocating for better access to services and for greater youth participation in decision making on a national and European level. Next, the young advocates raised

awareness on the International, European, African and EU/African political commitments that have been made to address these challenges.

During the side meeting, time was set aside for an open debate between the young advocates and the attending JPA members. They successfully held good discussions on how members of the JPA can help young people be heard on their sexual and reproductive health needs. The JPA members showed overall support to young people on SRHR with concrete recommendations. For example, John Bowis, UK MEP, invited the young advocates to give input on reports, Rita Sithole, Mozambique MP, invited the young people to speak at the Parliament, and a Kenya delegate promised to look into the budget lines to make sure that SRHR of young people would be included. The young advocates also presented their statement to remind JPA members of how they can support both the issues of SRHR and youth participation as well as better implementation of the existing commitments.

In addition to the side meeting, the young advocates attended other JPA sessions, particularly where health and SRHR were topics. They also had the opportunity to host an IPPF information stand, take part in a demonstration together with CONCORD, as well as have an experience sharing meeting together with active youth volunteers in Slovenia.

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A+ News letter Editor: Dr. Josephine Moyo- Director, Organizational Development Effectiveness and Governance-IPPF Africa Region