

## MAIN EVENTS CALENDAR

---

[Upcoming Events](#) [Past Events](#)

### **International Day of the Girl Child**

**Date of event:** 11 October 2013 - 11 October 2013

### **International Conference on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting**

**Date of event:** 21 October 2013 - 25 October 2013

**Location:** Rome

### **Launch of the State of World Population report**

**Date of event:** 30 October 2013 - 30 October 2013

**Location:** Worldwide

### **Climate Change Conference (COP 19)**

**Date of event:** 11 November 2013 - 22 November 2013

**Location:** Warsaw, Poland

### **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women**

**Date of event:** 25 November 2013 - 25 November 2013

**Location:** Worldwide

### **World AIDS Day**

**Date of event:** 1 December 2013 - 1 December 2013

### **Human Rights Day**

**Date of event:** 10 December 2013 - 10 December 2013

**Location:** Worldwide

---

## **HOW RADIO CHANGED FAMILY PLANNING IN WEST NILE**

---

*The Observer* on 30 September reported on a persuasive family planning campaign aired on local radio every Wednesday that has brought a shift in public attitudes on child spacing and reproductive health in the West Nile region of Uganda. The programme, which airs on Arua One radio, is the brainchild of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), introduced in 2011. The programme focuses on reproductive health, young people, HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence. Read in English: [The Observer](#)

SUNDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 2013 17:38

WRITTEN BY DAVID TASH LUMU

[1 COMMENT](#)



A persuasive family planning campaign aired on local radio every Wednesday has brought on a shift in public attitudes on child spacing and reproductive health in West Nile.

At 2pm on August 28, Al-hajji Amin Mo, 86, rode a bicycle to a community gathering one kilometre from his home in Lodonga, in Yumbe. To Amin, the meeting was a must-attend, because at the gathering people get to listen to a radio programme on family planning issues.

This programme, which airs on Arua One radio, is the brainchild of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), introduced in 2011. The programme focuses on reproductive health, young people, HIV/Aids and gender-based violence.

This healthy choices radio programme, implemented by Communication for Development Foundation Uganda (CDFU) with support from the UNFPA focuses on community mobilisation, using communication to organise groups of people in Yumbe. The programme airs every Wednesday.

Amin says he doesn't miss the radio programmes because the presenters tackle everyday issues that affect society.

"I don't miss this radio programme," he said.

According to CDFU statistics, in 2012, Healthy Choices radio programme aired 12 family planning programmes and 12 on Pregnancy and Maternity Care on Arua One FM, to increase on family planning awareness and maternal health. The outcome of these programmes is overwhelming results in family planning practices and also lowered maternal-health-related complications in the district.

Badru Wawa, the acting Senior Yumbe Hospital Administrator, says before the Healthy Choices radio programme was introduced in 2011 by UNFPA, the family planning issues were not taken seriously, but things have improved.

"Family planning was previously viewed as stopping people from producing. We had to drop the word family planning and we took on the effects. Issues like fees, health, money, poverty—concepts that come as a result of poor planning," he said.

"In 2003, they [people] used to say there is God. He will space the children. But today they say that there is a medicine that spaces children. So, today we talk about these things freely," Wawa added.

Wawa emphasises that the best avenue for this mobilisation to work out, especially among people deep in the villages, is through these radio programmes. Thanks to UNFPA that solar-powered radios were distributed to radio listeners groups in Yumbe.

These groups are usually mobilised by Village Health Teams (VHT) who through the same arrangement were trained by CDFU. After listening to the radio programme, the groups then discuss the issues, relating them to their situation and experience.

Each community group is given a solar-powered radio set to facilitate the listenership. In fact, some people in the communities argue that these radio programmes have started to yield results.

Yassin Dramani, 57, has three wives and 32 children. He told us, "As elders we made mistakes before, child spacing was not an issue because of ignorance."

Dramani now says the radio programme has been very educative. Before that, myths about family planning clouded his mind. Dramani argues that before this sensitisation exercise, women in Yumbe believed that family planning caused bleeding.

David Andama, the Yumbe Queen of Heaven Catholic Parish priest, said to show that the UNFPA programme has picked up; even the message against family planning by the Catholic priests has changed from “I cannot change the Catholic doctrine, but that doesn’t bar you from accessing any method of family planning.”

“It is a personal choice. If you feel you can use it, you go ahead,” Andama said.

This is the point Ratib Ayub, the LCI chairperson, emphasises. He argues that many young men are now willing to go for counselling and also enthusiastically accompany their women to hospital.

James Ondunga, 23, says listening to the radio programme with his wife started debates and that it has also enhanced the myth he had previously harboured that accompanying a woman to hospital without financial backup meant humiliation.

“Men used to fear to go to hospitals, or accompany women because of the requirements health workers demand such as two basins,” Ondunga said.

Dr Alfred Yayi, the Yumbe district health officer, attests that the Healthy Choices programme has yielded results