

**Date**

November 07, 2017

# IPA Zambia Co-Hosts Event on Interpersonal Communication to Encourage Use of Female Condoms in Zambia

On November 7, 2017, Innovations for Poverty Action Zambia and Society for Family Health (SFH) co-hosted a dissemination meeting of initial findings from the study *An Impact Evaluation of the Introduction of a New Woman's Condom on Overall Condom Use in Urban Lusaka, Zambia*, conducted by Thoai Ngo and Jessie Pinchoff from Population Council, and Rachna Nag Chowdhuri from the World Bank. The event was attended by representatives from SFH, WCG, USAID, the Center for Reproductive Health Education (CRHE), PATH, Population Council, CHAI, UNFPA and Scaling Up Family Planning (SUFPP).

Under the Expanding Effective Contraceptive Options (EECO) project with funding from USAID and Sida, WCG, Population Services International (PSI), and PSI's Zambian network member Society for Family Health (SFH) registered and launched the new Maximum Diva brand Woman's Condom (MDWC) in Zambia in March 2016, with the aim of increasing access to on-demand, non-hormonal, woman-initiated contraceptive methods, and growing overall condom use. The launch of the MDWC was accompanied by a mass marketing campaign that included the distribution of MDWC in pharmacies and other outlets by SFH, a mobile website, interactive forums, brand ambassadors, and an interpersonal communication (IPC) campaign. The IPC strategy targeted men and women aged 18-24 years old and involved providing content on the importance of contraceptive use with a focus on the benefits of female condoms. It also demonstrated correct use of the condom and taught negotiation skills to enable potential users to advocate for the use of a female condom through role-playing.

At the event, Thoai Ngo, lead researcher, reported that the study sought to answer whether the introduction and distribution of woman's condoms influenced knowledge and use of condoms in Zambia and whether IPC strategies increase knowledge, acceptability and uptake of the product. The initial results suggest that WC knowledge is associated with higher levels of education and greater knowledge of contraceptives. The results also show that IPC did not have an additional impact on uptake, as there was only a marginal impact on knowledge

among those who attended IPC sessions, although only 11% of respondents self-reported to have ever attended an IPC session. Only 25% of respondents reported having heard of the new WC brand. The age group targeted by the study made up only 40% of those who attended IPC.

After the presentation, the audience engaged in a lively discussion with the panel, highlighting the need for more targeted programming and research related to the target age group of the intervention. Although the results were not recorded as significant for the adolescent age group, questions arose as to whether or not IPC and the WC might be a solution for an older age group. Other discussions focused on underlying cultural issues surrounding low uptake of women-initiated contraceptives amongst women.

## City

Lusaka

## Country

Zambia