



Reflections on 2023

We wish you a happy, prosperous and fulfilling new year. We are excited that 2024 will allow us to continue collaborating and sharing evidence and findings that will protect and promote the rights of adolescent girls in Africa.

PROMOTE kicks off in Burkina Faso

In preparation for the commencement of PROMOTE's activities in Burkina Faso, the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) and l'Institut Supérieur des Sciences de la Population (ISSP) trained research assistants to carry out the baseline data collection for the intervention. The training was held in Ouagadougou from February 6 to 11, 2023. Ten research assistants (RAs) were recruited and trained on the baseline data collection tools by the ISSP and APHRC study team. Between March to April 2023, 276 adolescent mothers were selected and interviewed in randomly selected enumeration areas across Ouagadougou.

From May 1 to 5, 2023, ISSP and APHRC trained community health agents on the adolescent mothers' club curriculum. The training workshop was preceded by a values clarification and attitudes transformation (VCAT) workshop. Similar to their counterparts in Malawi, the community health workers act as a bridge between the community and the health sector and are, therefore, best placed to deliver the 24-session curriculum to adolescent mothers in their community. In preparation for the commencement of the intervention activities in Ouagadougou, the ISSP team conducted a series of community engagements in early November 2023.

Malawi Symposium on Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health



Between February 28 and March 2, 2023, Prof Alister Munthali, Dr Anthony Ajayi, Dr. Caroline Kabiru, Dr Chrissie Thakwalakwa, participated in the Malawi Adolescents and Young People's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Symposium.

The convening, which brought together different stakeholders, focused on using evidence, stakeholder collaboration, and knowledge sharing to improve policies, programmes, and practices on access to adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) information and services for adolescents and young people in Malawi. Drs. Kabiru and Thakwalakwa presented on the PROMOTE study during the symposium.

PROMOTE participants engage in the 2023 Africa Children Summit

Four participants in the PROMOTE study participated in the 2023 Africa Children Summit. The adolescents from Malawi and Burkina Faso participated in the child health session hosted by APHRC during the conference. The annual convening is a continental forum that seeks to give children a platform to participate in shaping policies

and program interventions around issues affecting them. It brings together children from across Africa and beyond to share their experiences on matters of children rights and protection; the unique challenges they face; interventions by their governments and share recommendations or solutions.

The aim of this year's hybrid Summit was to have children at the forefront, interacting with each other and key actors in the children's rights. The convening which was held in Nairobi, Kenya was attended by over 300 children from across the continent and was graced by the Vice Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Chair of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children and the Chief Justice of Kenya.

PROMOTE @GT4Africa

As a member of the IDRC Gender Transformation for Africa (GT4Africa) Consortium, the PROMOTE study team had three opportunities to share how it is incorporating gender transformative approaches in its work.

In May, the PROMOTE team participated in a consortium-wide webinar on intersectionality and in August, Dr. Chrissie Thakwalakwa (CSR) made a presentation on centering African perspectives in gender transformative approaches. She highlighted the importance of coming up with an African definition of the concept, even with the inherent challenges in fusing different

perspectives and coming up with uniform indicators of gender transformation. In November, Dr. Anthony Ajayi (APHRC) was a panelist during the GT4Africa webinar series male engagement/masculinity and sexual, reproductive and maternal health (SRMH). The objectives of the webinar were to unpack and deepen conversations on male engagement/masculinity and SRMH; share cross-cutting themes on male engagement and SRMH; and assess whether our projects are on the right track on male engagement and how to move forward.



Third Technical Advisory Group meeting

The PROMOTE team hosted the third virtual meeting of the project's Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The meeting, which was held on July 3, 2023, provided an opportunity for members of the TAG to receive updates on the implementation of the project, including the challenges that had been encountered such as the impact of the cyclone on Blantyre, one of the main study sites. TAG members also provided technical guidance to the team on various aspects, including the study design

Fundraising

In March 2023, APHRC's Sexual, Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (SRMNCAH) Unit, received USD 50,000 from APHRC's Strategic Initiatives. Among other activities, the grant will enable the team to test the feasibility of the mothers' club curriculum in Korogocho, Kenya, where APHRC has conducted a survey to understand the lived experiences of pregnant and parenting adolescents.

Workshops and conferences

Dr. Caroline Kabiru was a panelist during the fifth Population Council led- GIRL Center Learning & Collaboration Seminar held on February 21, 2023. She gave a presentation on the PROMOTE project that highlighted the study design and interventions.

Publications

- Ajayi, AI, Chamdimba, E, Sawadogo, N, et al. (2023). **Socio-ecological factors associated with probable depression among pregnant and parenting adolescent girls: findings from a cross-sectional study in Burkina Faso and Malawi.** *Reproductive Health* 20, 38 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-023-01588-x>
- Kabiru, C.W., Munthali, A., Sawadogo, N. et al (2023). **Effectiveness of conditional cash transfers, subsidized child care and life skills training on adolescent mothers' schooling, sexual and reproductive health, and mental health outcomes in Burkina Faso and Malawi: the PROMOTE Project pilot randomized controlled trial protocol.** *Reproductive Health* 20, 166. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-023-01706-9>
- Nwafor J., Chamdimba, E., Ajayi, AI., Munthali, A., Thakwalakwa, C., Ushie, BA., & Kabiru CW. (2023). **Correlates of intimate partner violence among pregnant and parenting adolescents: a cross-sectional household survey in Blantyre District, Malawi.** *Reproductive Health* 20:60 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-023-01606-y>
- Ajayi, A. I., Athero, S., Muga, W., & Kabiru, C. W. (2023). **Lived experiences of pregnant and parenting adolescents in Africa: A scoping review.** *Reproductive Health*, 20(1), 113. <https://reproductive-health-journal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12978-023-01654-4>
- Chamdimba, E., Kabiru, C.W., Ushie, B.A. & Ajayi A.I. (2023). **Naïve, uninformed and sexually abused: circumstances surrounding adolescent pregnancies in Malawi.** *Reproductive Health* 20 (114). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-023-01655-3>