

Community Radio as a Conduit for Culturally-Appropriate Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Messaging in Senegal: A Short Report

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Abstract

Background: Adolescents in Senegal encounter considerable barriers to accessing accurate sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information, heightened by cultural sensitivities. Conventional health communication channels frequently fail to reach this group effectively.

Purpose and objectives: This short report aimed to document and analyse the role of community radio in developing and broadcasting culturally appropriate SRH content for Senegalese adolescents from 2021 to 2024.

Methodology: The report synthesised monitoring data from three regional community radio initiatives. It included a thematic analysis of listener feedback collected via SMS and focus group discussions during 2023, alongside a review of programming and content adaptation strategies.

Findings/Key insights: Community radio facilitated dialogue on previously taboo topics, including menstrual health and contraception, by framing messages within local linguistic and cultural contexts. Listener engagement data from 2023 indicated that 68% of adolescent respondents in participating areas reported improved SRH knowledge. Feedback highlighted the value of anonymised, on-air question-and-answer sessions with trusted local health workers.

Conclusion: Community radio is a viable and accessible tool for delivering adolescent SRH education in Senegal, bridging a gap between public health information and cultural acceptability.

Recommendations: Stakeholders should increase sustainable funding for SRH radio programming and invest in capacity building for radio journalists on accurate SRH content creation. Future initiatives, through to 2026, should formally integrate structured listener feedback mechanisms to guide content development.

Key words: adolescent health, sexual and reproductive health, health communication, community radio, Senegal, health education.

Contribution statement: This report provides practical evidence for public health practitioners and policymakers on leveraging indigenous media for adolescent SRH interventions in comparable cultural settings.

Keywords: *Community radio, Sexual and reproductive health, Adolescents, Sub-Saharan Africa, Culturally-appropriate communication, Health promotion, Senegal*