



ERADICATING FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION IN ETHIOPIA



Formerly I used to believe that unless a girl is circumcised, she becomes addicted to breaking utensils, tends to be insubordinate defying the authority of her would-be husband, and will prove to be sexually frigid and cheap. Now, I have understood from the drama that all these beliefs are false. I telephoned my mother and told her to listen to the drama. At that time, my mother was preparing herself to witness the circumcision of my sisters. I explained to her how inhumane and repugnant the practice was. Since I was successful in making her follow the drama closely, she completely abandoned the idea and my two sisters were spared from the pain that they were about to undergo.

- A listener from Harar, Ethiopia

PMC's fifth radio drama in Ethiopia, *Sibrat* ("Trauma"), is tackling issues of critical social relevance in Ethiopia, such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and early marriage and childbearing. Listeners have taken an instant liking to the characters and story lines in *Sibrat*, and the series is enjoying widespread popular appeal in both rural and urban areas. Radio Ethiopia has received numerous letters from listeners expressing their enthusiasm for the drama, their appreciation for the issues addressed, and the close connection they feel with the characters, whose experiences and family relationships remind them of their own.

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A female listener named Hirut from the town of Nazareth wrote:

The situations mentioned [in 'Sibrat'] are true to life and realistic in character. The drama provides counseling and gives hints to solve problems. It has a bearing on family life, is multipurpose, and reflects life clearly. It has enabled me to know myself. Every day it has been a source of strength for me, and made me consider it as a school in which I have learned much about life.

One of the most consequential issues that *Sibrat* addresses is FGM/C. It is estimated that 74% of Ethiopian women have undergone this life-threatening and psychologically traumatizing procedure and, in spite of the fact that FGM/C is now considered a violation of human rights under international and Ethiopian law, the ritual is still being practiced because of its association with traditional social and religious norms.

A female listener from Bahir Dar emphasized the importance of changing societal attitudes towards FGM/C:

Harmful traditional practices, particularly FGM, subject women to suffering and to social, economic, and moral downfall. Above and beyond this, FGM may cause loss of life. It is from the central theme of the drama that I was able to realize all these things. It has helped me to understand the cultural, traditional, and religious ceremonies of my country whether they are good or bad.

Equally significant is the effect that *Sibrat* has had on the male population. As a result of listening to the series, Solomon S. from Addis Ababa wrote:

I will make every effort possible on my part, by holding discussions with others and educating them, in support of attempts to tackle the problem [of FGM/C].

Another male listener from Addis Ababa named Solomon B. wrote:

The drama has enabled me to understand sufficiently the problem of FGM. As a result, I have been motivated to contribute my share to the solution of the problem. I cannot afford to sit idle when I see such a situation that is having such an adverse effect on the well-being of humanity. I have drawn lessons from the drama and learned how I can help to address this important issue and make changes in my own life.

Each of the letters revealed the story of one person's life -- their struggles, hopes, and dreams. While each person shared a different story, each found both solace and inspiration from the characters and story lines in the drama to combat FGM/C and improve life in Ethiopia.

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Photo by Luca Belis



Photo by Katie Elmore



NIGERIA: A Majority of Women at Family Planning Clinics Cite PMC's Program as the Reason They are Seeking Services

Ruwan Dare ("Midnight Rain") was launched in July 2007, following the immense success of PMC's first radio serial drama in Nigeria that dealt with the issue of obstetric fistula. *Ruwan Dare* uses the Sabido methodology for entertainment-education to increase awareness and stimulate behavioral change on a range of issues, including family planning, early marriage and childbearing, HIV/AIDS, and reproductive health. The program is being broadcast in the states of Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, and Sokoto in northern Nigeria, which have the highest fertility rates and the lowest levels of knowledge about contraceptive methods in the country.

To monitor the effectiveness of the program, PMC worked with an external research firm to conduct exit interviews at family planning clinics to find out what had motivated clients to seek services. Monitoring was conducted periodically throughout the broadcast for a 3 - 4 month duration each time.

Monitoring Period	Percent of Clients Reporting That <i>Ruwan Dare</i> Motivated Their Visit to the Clinic
Round 1: October 2007 - December 2007	55% of clients
Round 2: January 2008 - April 2008	66% of clients
Round 3: May 2008 - July 2008	64% of clients
Round 4: September 2008 - December 2008	67% of clients

PMC provided listeners throughout the region with diaries so they could document their reactions to the radio program. A total of 600 listener diaries were disseminated throughout the region, then collected and carefully analyzed in order to provide feedback to the scriptwriters and help the writers better understand how the drama had impacted the listening audience. Listeners frequently emphasized how realistic they found the scenarios in the drama to be and the close connection they felt with the characters who were confronted with many of the same issues that listeners are confronted with in their own lives, particularly the stresses of large families and deciding whether or not to use a family planning method. The analysis of the listener diaries found that the story lines that were developed around the issue of family planning really resonated with listeners, which reinforced the findings from the monitoring that was conducted at the clinics.

Maimuna, a 25-year-old mother of five from Katsina State, described how the drama helped her and her husband realize the value of family planning and eventually adopt a family planning method. Maimuna began listening to *Ruwan Dare* when it first came on the air and immediately became an avid listener. Soon after, she convinced her husband to begin listening to the program along with her. Maimuna and her husband found themselves deeply enthralled with the characters and story lines in the drama, who exposed them to the benefits of using family planning methods. The drama stimulated a much needed conversation between the couple about family size and using contraception. As they continued to listen to the program and discuss the issues raised in the program, they decided to visit a nearby family planning clinic to seek family planning services. A male listener from Kano State praised the program: "In a society which seems to stand logic on its head, it is good to have this drama, written in the local language and airing on the radio, the most accessible form of media in Nigeria. It is quite educative."

The popular appeal and the demand for the program are so great that one of the most frequent comments in the listener diaries was their desire for the episode length to be extended to 30 minutes. *Ruwan Dare* will continue to air on four radio stations in northern Nigeria throughout 2009. Its broadcast is made possible with the continued support of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Conservation, Food and Health Foundation, and an individual contributor.



We are sad to report the untimely death on April 8 of PMC's Nigeria Country Representative, Tony Asangaeneng. Tony was recently hospitalized, and, although we don't know the cause of death, he had been suffering from the effects of malaria. Tony is the person who brought about PMC's decision to work in Nigeria and successfully implemented two radio drama projects there. His passion, drive, and charisma will always be remembered. We are grateful to have had Tony as a part of PMC's team and are deeply saddened by this great loss. If you would like to send condolences, you may do so via multisec_dev@yahoo.com, and his staff will convey your message to his wife, Eno, and Tony's family.

Population Media Center Explores Developing a Program in Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea, an island in the Pacific just north of Australia, is only slightly larger than California in land mass, yet may be one of the most culturally diverse places on the planet. It is estimated that there are 864 unique languages spoken throughout the country; that's 12% of the world's languages. More than 80% of people live in rural areas, and because of the extremely mountainous terrain, many tribes have little or no contact with each other or the outside world. In fact, radio is often the only link in these widely scattered and isolated settlements with low literacy levels.

The cultural diversity of the country is matched only by the biodiversity of both the land and the sea. It is estimated that 5% of the world's biodiversity is found in Papua New Guinea. The waters of Papua New Guinea harbor hundreds of species of fish, including a number that do not exist anywhere else in the world.



In February 2009, PMC's President and Director of Communications traveled to Papua New Guinea to explore the possibility of using PMC's unique behavior change strategy in the country to deal with a range of social, health, and environmental issues.

Papua New Guinea is a country of 6.4 million people and is growing rapidly. Papua New Guinea's total fertility rate of 4.4 children per woman is among the highest in the Pacific Region. The human population dynamics are working against the long-term sustainability of the country. Thus, the population growth and related poverty of the country is contributing to widespread environmental pressures. Addressing rapid population growth, contributing factors such as violence against women, and other related social and health issues such as HIV/AIDS is crucial to improving the overall health and well-being of people in Papua New Guinea.

About 70% of men and women in PNG know a source of contraceptives, while current use of modern methods is about 25%. The leading reasons for non-use are the desire for more children and lack of information. There is a critical need to change social norms with regard to ideal family size, acceptability of family planning, and self-efficacy with regard to decision-making about family matters, and to provide correct information regarding the relative safety of contraception compared to early and repeated childbearing. Addressing these cultural and informational issues can best be done through carefully designed communications programs.

In June 2008, *The New York Times* published a story on the disappearing forest in Papua New Guinea. Based on new satellite images, it was found that Papua New Guinea is losing about 1,400 square miles of rainforest, or about 1.4% of its total forest cover, every year. At this rate, by 2021 more than 80% of the country's

accessible forest and more than half of its total forest area would be badly degraded or cleared. Not only does this threaten the millions of species of plants and animals that exist nowhere else in the world, but it threatens the way of life in Papua New Guinea and greatly increases vulnerability to erosion and depletion of soil nutrients. Clearing the forests for agricultural use has become one of the main threats, and high population growth rates are seen as one of the main causes.

Similarly, exploitation of marine and other natural resources is, in part, a reflection of traditions that were sustainable when Papua New Guinea was less populous. The negative practices also reflect a combination of ignorance and poverty that lead people to adopt unsustainable practices, such as overfishing. Role modeling sustainable livelihoods and practices can bring about changes in behavior to reflect the reality of life in Papua New Guinea today and what must be done to preserve its resources.

PMC concluded that by developing two Sabido-style radio serial dramas, one to be broadcast nationwide in Pidgin and another in Motu, we could reach a large percentage of the population and have a significant impact on a range of social, health, and environmental indicators. Given the complexity of language and culture in Papua New Guinea, Population Media Center is also proposing the production and broadcast of a weekly talk show on each of the provincial radio stations where listeners can call in and discuss issues raised in the dramas. The purpose of these talk shows is to make the stories and information more accessible and relevant to life in the each of the provinces.

Funding for PMC's exploratory trip to Papua New Guinea was provided by The David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

On the Air

Country/Region	Program Name	Format	Broadcaster
Brazil	<i>Various Programs</i>	Television Dramas	TV Globo
Eastern Caribbean (nine countries)	<i>Coconut Bay</i>	Radio Drama	<i>Various Radio Stations</i>
Ethiopia	<i>Sibrat</i> (“Trauma”)	Radio Drama	National Service of Radio Ethiopia FM Addis 97.1
Ethiopia	<i>Alegnta</i> (“Security”)	Radio Talk Show	National Service of Radio Ethiopia
Ethiopia (Afar region)	<i>Naedeti</i> (“Let’s Stop It”)	Radio Magazine	National Service of Radio Ethiopia
Ethiopia (Somali region)	<i>Igaddaa</i> (“We Do Not Want It Anymore”)	Radio Magazine	National Service of Radio Ethiopia
Mali	<i>Jiga ma Tignè</i> (“Hope Is Allowed”)	Radio Drama	ORTM Radio Mali (National and Regional) & 50 community stations
Nigeria	<i>Ruwan Dare</i> (“Midnight Rain”)	Radio Drama	FRCN Kaduna, FRCN Katsina, Rima Radio, & Freedom Radio
Rwanda	<i>Umurage Urukwiye</i> (“Rwanda’s Brighter Future”)	Radio Drama	Contact FM & Radio Salus
Senegal	<i>Ngelawu Nawet</i> (“Winds of Hope”)	Radio Drama	Radiodiffusion Television Senegalaise (RTS) National
Senegal (Matam region)	<i>Coñal Keele</i>	Radio Drama	Radiodiffusion Television Senegalaise (RTS) Matam
Vietnam	<i>Khat Vong Song</i> (“The Desire of Life”)	Radio Drama	Voice of Vietnam (VOV1, VOV2, & VOV3)

International Musical Sensation, Baaba Maal, Records Theme Music for PMC’s Program in Senegal



Baaba Maal is a Senegalese musical superstar and human rights advocate. His music is a mix of traditional Senegalese music, Western popular culture, reggae, and contemporary instrumentation. Maal’s music has not only become a hit sensation in Senegal and throughout West Africa, but he has worked his way up the charts in Europe, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia. In July 2008, *The Independent* rated Baaba Maal’s most recent album, *On the Road*, number one among the top ten world music albums.

Maal is not only known for his incredibly popular music, but also for his powerful voice. Maal uses his music to advocate for world peace, African self-determination, strong families, and the individual dignity of men and women.

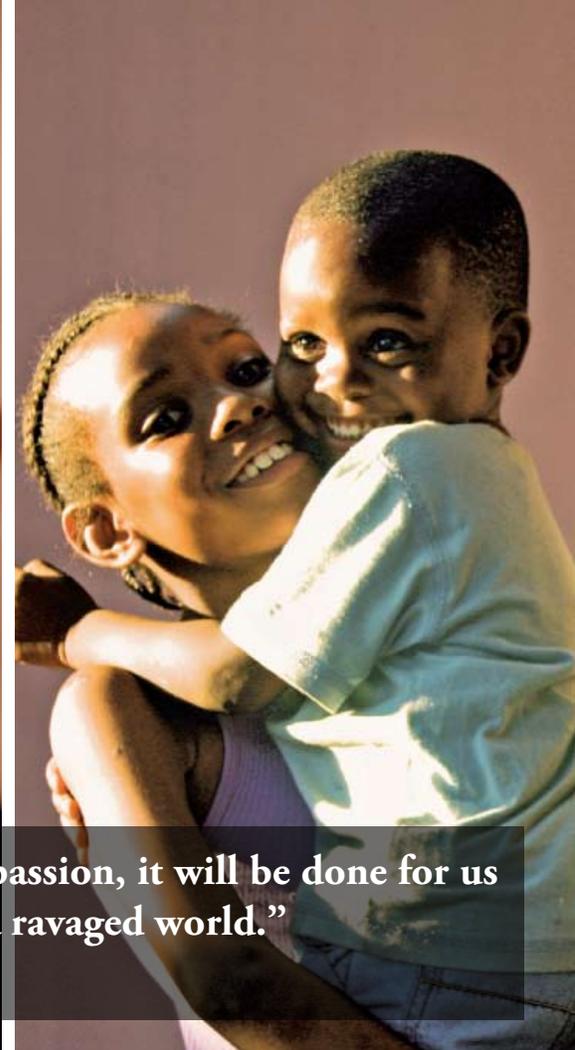
PMC was honored to have Baaba Maal create the theme music for our new Pulaar language radio serial drama in Senegal, *Coñal Keele* (“Harvesting the Seeds of Life”). Fara Diaw, PMC Senegal Country Representative, credits the theme music by Baaba Maal with helping to make *Coñal Keele* an instant hit throughout the Pulaar-speaking regions of Senegal.

Baaba Maal’s dedication to improving life in Senegal and more broadly in Africa is further reflected in his role as Ambassador for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and spokesperson on the HIV/AIDS crisis in Africa.

Population Media Center (PMC) works worldwide using entertainment-education for social change. PMC's programs encourage positive behavior change among the audience.

<http://www.populationmedia.org>

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“If we don’t halt population growth with justice and compassion, it will be done for us by nature, brutally and without pity — and we will leave a ravaged world.”
- Nobel Laureate Dr. Henry W. Kendall