MSIZ introduces Long-term FP in Remote parts of Zambia.

MARIE Stopes International Zambia (MSIZ) welcomed a new member to its Network Partnership. In Dec 2009, HODI, a local NGO, collaborated to provide training and technical support to supply Family Planning in Chiyawa which is an isolated rural area in the southern part of Zambia.

MSIZ’s role in the partnership is to supply the only two rural MoH health centers in Chiyawa with Family Planning (Short and Long-term) in an effort to supplement government’s efforts in the provision of Family Planning services in the area. Equipment from DRI was donated to the sites to enable them to continue to offer services.

The level of demand for implants was remarkable: more than 200 clients accepted Jadelle implants in December 2009. This is the highest demand MSIZ has seen at any one site in any month throughout their entire Network Partnership.

In January 2010 MSIZ undertook a similar intervention to train and facilitate the provision of Long-term Family Planning methods in Sichili Mission Hospital MCH Clinic, which is an isolated rural area in the western part of Zambia. Again, the response was overwhelming.

MSIZ is the first organization to introduce Long-term FP in both areas. Some women walk long distances to the health centre to access FP methods. The majority of women were under 20 years with 3 or more children who expressed the desire to finish their schooling before adding to their families.

“The response was so overwhelming” said Pamela Nyirenda, MSIZ Programme Assistant, “the only hindrance was lack of power supply in the area. The MCH centre uses a generator for operating an autoclave and of course fuel cost is an issue, restricting supply to just one hour per day.”

One of the teachers thanked MSIZ for the gesture and said the introduction of long-term methods will lessen the problem of girls in the area dropping out of school due to teenage pregnancies.

Both Rural Centres in Chiyawa and Sichili have not been offering long-term methods because of lack of FP training, supplies and instruments.

MSIZ donated Family Planning instruments, equipment, FP supplies and also trained health workers at the two rural health centers on long-term methods who immediately started providing the services to the community.

MSIZ also oriented the Community Health Workers who will be promoting FP in their communities to raise awareness on a number of FP methods available.

Chiyawa is highly populated due to polygamous marriages hence the urgent need for FP services.

“The gesture was welcome by both Chiyawa and Sichili communities who for a long time had been longing for the long-term methods of FP which they believe is the only sure way of cutting down the number of their families” said Pamela of MSIZ.

The people in the communities now have an opportunity to choose what method they want unlike in the past where everyone was subjected to taking the short-term methods which were also in short supply.

MSIZ has also been working throughout 2009 with FHI and PSI in Zambia to have SINO Implant registered. In January this was achieved. MSIZ will work with sites such as these to introduce SINO which has a disposable trochar and more appropriate for resource-poor settings.

Introducing long-term methods in such isolated areas will greatly help improve the lives of the people in their respective communities and surrounding areas as they will be able to have sizeable families that they will be able to sustain with fewer difficulties.