


Young Ethiopians support themselves through condom distribution

 Young people in Ethiopia are selling condoms to help support themselves through college | Young people in Ethiopia are selling condoms to help support themselves through college

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2 Comments

After high school Zinash Kidanu* dreamt of a college education, but her dream went unfulfilled until a job selling condoms changed her life.

Being a member of a low-income family means life can be challenging. For Zinash, it meant her family couldn't afford the cost of her college education.

But a nationwide programme to sell condoms in Ethiopia is helping change the fortunes of over 500 young men and women, like Zinash, who are supporting themselves and their family with the commission they get from condom sales.

Since joining the 'young marketers' programme in late 2007 Zinash, 22, has managed to earn her college diploma in accounting by selling condoms during the day and attending college at night. Now she is looking for an additional job with her new qualification.

Zinash said: "The money I earned from selling condoms covered the cost of my education, and when sales were good I'd have extra to support my family."

Increasing Condom availability

The condom distribution program, run by DKT Ethiopia – a social marketing non-governmental organization – has increased condom availability among a wide range of the population in Ethiopia, including sex workers.

Country director of DKT Ethiopia Andrew Piller said: "Making condoms widely available is integral to successful HIV prevention. The condom distribution programme is not only providing the communities with the resources they need to prevent the spread of HIV, but also the young marketers are supporting themselves and promoting safe sex in their respective communities."

124 million condoms

The scheme is embraced by youth clubs throughout Ethiopia, who are working to create awareness about HIV and AIDS in their respective communities. Sex workers are also using the scheme as an alternative means of generating an income.

Zegeye Girma, youth club leader, said: "The young marketers programme is strengthening our club financially. Members are also changing their life using the income they get from the distribution of condoms."

The young marketers sell condoms on commission with 75% of the profit share going to the individual seller and the remaining 25% is kept in the club or associations account to help sustain the programme.

Since the programme started in May 2007 young marketers have distributed more than 124 million condoms.

"I am glad to be part of young marketers," said Zinash, "because I am providing protection for the community and supporting myself using the income I am getting from selling condoms."

*Name has been changed to protect identity

Image: Young people in Ethiopia are selling condoms to help support themselves through college

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Posted by Befekadu Beyene

A young man with six years of journalism experience. He is interested in issues related with HIV AIDS, Sexual and reproductive health as well as other socio economic issues. Befekadu runs a blog linked below.

<http://ethiopianobserver.wordpress.com>