

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2025 **Medicines Research and Access Platform**

WELCOME TO MEDRAP'S FIRST EDITION OF THE NEWSLETTER

As we launch this newsletter, we celebrate a milestone in our journey to provide reliable health information to communities across Zambia. At MedRAP, we have been dedicated to strengthening health systems and advocating for improved access to essential health commodities since 2016.

Our work in research, policy advocacy, and capacity building has equipped us with valuable insights and expertise. Through partnerships with government ministries, cooperating partners, civil society organizations, and the media, we have made significant strides in promoting health issues.

With this News Letter we aim to fill the information gap on health matters in Zambia. We believe that access to accurate and trustworthy health information is crucial for the well-being of our communities.

In this first edition, we will introduce you to our podcast series, which will cover various health topics, including sexual and reproductive health, infectious diseases, our activities in the districts and our engagements with our stakeholders. Our goal is to provide a reliable source of information.



Stay tuned for insightful discussions, expert opinions, and valuable health information.

We hope you will join us on this journey to promote health awareness and improve the well-being of our communities.

Best regards,

Liyoka Liyoka
Executive Director,

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PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACCESSING SRH

As **Given Nyambe** navigated life in her wheelchair, she once feared that love might pass her by. Then she met someone special and everything changed. Despite their differences, they connected deeply. Given's warmth, spirit, and sense of humor captivated her partner, who saw far beyond her disability.

But societal expectations and family pressures soon mounted. Some questioned her partner's decision to date someone with a disability, voicing concerns around caregiving burdens and future challenges. At the same time, Given encountered barriers when seeking sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services: inaccessible facilities, a lack of sign-language support or Braille materials, and insensitive—or uninformed—healthcare providers.

Their love blossomed, but obstacles persisted. Rather than retreat, they became advocates. Together, they insisted that healthcare providers adapt and understand the needs of people with disabilities, ensuring accessibility and dignity in SRH services. Their story stands as a salutary reminder of why inclusivity, acceptance, and accessible healthcare truly matter.

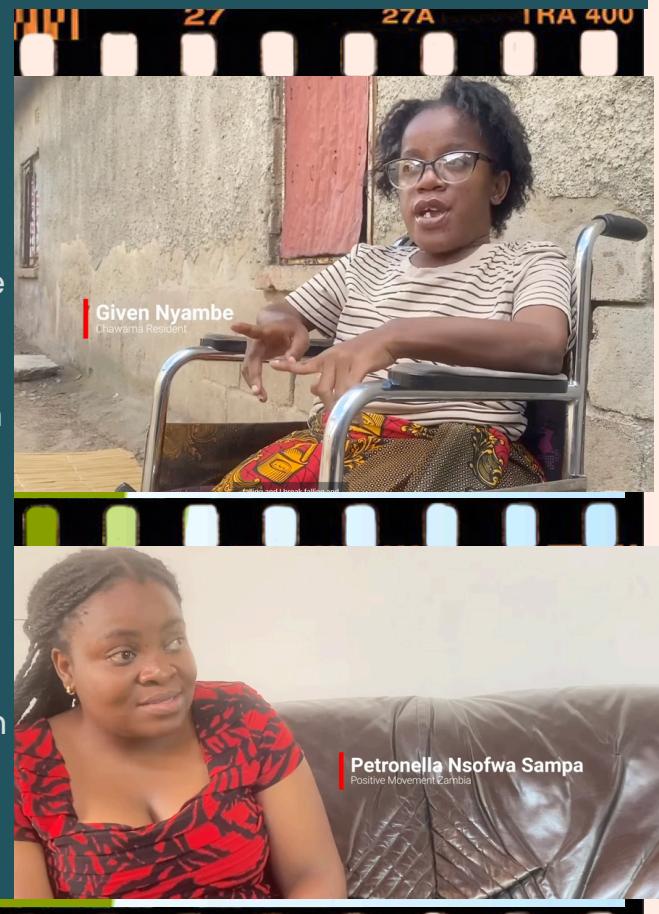
♦ Spotlight on advocacy:

Nsofwa Petronella Sampa, a Zambian HIV activist and psychological counselor represents the intersection of HIV advocacy and disability inclusion.

She emphasizes that persons with disabilities require health workers to be trained in how to relate well and provide respectful care.

♦ Although Zambia has progressive disability-inclusive policies such as the Persons with Disabilities Act (2012) and recent National Disability Mainstreaming Guidelines & Policy, gaps remain in translating legislation into practice, particularly in healthcare settings.

♦ Ministry of Health initiatives, have begun training providers in basic sign language and adapting SRH/HIV services to improve support for people with disabilities. ([MSI Reproductive Choices+2UNFPA Zambia+2UNFPA Zambia+2](#))



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WHAT WE DO

PROJECTS

INTRO: The Medicines Research and Access Platform (MedRAP) is a non-governmental organization registered under the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services. MedRAP's vision is to have a country whose citizens enjoy equitable access to affordable quality, essential medicines at all times and our Mission statement is to "strengthen health systems by promoting access to essential medicines through the provision of evidence pertaining to essential medicines in Zambia."

PROJECTS THAT MedRAP IS IMPLEMENTING

Currently, MedRAP is implementing a four (4) year (2022-2026) EU funded project called **Solutions for Supporting Healthy Adolescents and Rights Protection (SHARP)**. The programme is being implemented in 6 countries of the Great Lakes Region which are Rwanda, Burundi, Congo DRC, Tanzania, Kenya and Zambia.

In Zambia, SHARP is being implemented in Luapula province (Mansa & Samfya districts) and Southern province (Livingstone and Kazungula districts).

SHARP's main objective is to improve both the supply side of SRH (availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality of services and commodities) While increasing the demand for services through socio-cultural and religious interventions.



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CHANGING THE LAW, CHANGING LIVES PROJECT



The Center for Reproductive Rights has joined with 18 partners in 13 countries across Africa and Latin America to implement "The CHANGING THE LAW, CHANGING LIVES PROJECT" funded by Global Affairs Canada.

In Zambia the project is being implemented by MedRAP in Samfya district in Luapula Province and Kazungula district in Southern Province.

Overall Goal: Improve Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) of women and adolescents in Zambia, by building strategic partnerships and countering regressive policies and practices.

Specific Objectives/Outcomes:



**CENTER *for*
REPRODUCTIVE
RIGHTS**

Strengthen the Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) of women and girls in Zambia through evidence generation and building strategic alliances to counter regression on policies and practice.

Foster collaborative networks among SRHR actors in Zambia to counter opposition and regression and strengthen advocacy efforts and multi-stakeholder collaborations to ensure implementation of progressive policies on SRHR in Zambia.

Empower women and adolescents to actively participate in SRHR decision making spaces at the national and regional levels by equipping them with knowledge and supporting their participation in national/regional platforms to voice their experiences and share their priorities.

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ENDING CHILD MARRIAGES AND ADOLESCENT PREGNANCIES IN ZAMBIA



UNICEF has partnered with MedRAP to address child marriage, adolescent pregnancy (28%, 2024 ZDHS Report), despite a robust re-entry policy (1997), re-admission of teenage mothers has shown a substantial decline, with an average of 41.0 per cent at primary level and 70.0 per cent at secondary school level. In addition, for adolescent girls, lack of access to WASH contributes to absenteeism linked to menstrual cycles, and can ultimately lead to school drop-out, which in turn places them at risk for child marriage and sexual violence.

Underlying these multiple deprivations, deep rooted socio cultural and gender norms pose critical barriers to adopting healthy behaviours and demand for quality and friendly services. The partnership with MedRAP seeks to address this through identifying, capacitating and mobilizing action by key influencers to address harmful social norms, while advocating for positive practices, access to quality and friendly services, as well as necessary positive change in policies and budgets at national level.



The project is being implemented in 6 provinces that include Lusaka, Copperbelt, Eastern, Luapula, North Western and Southern.

The districts are Chongwe, Chifunabuli, Kawambwa, Nchelenge, Chienge, Mwansabombwe, Samfya, Katete, Kasenengwa, Mushindamo, Mufumbwe, Kabompo, Zambezi, Mwinilunga, Ndola, Mpungwe and Kazungula.

•FAITH LEADERS

•Theology-based messaging in 520 congregations in 13 districts

•YOUTH ADVOCATES

•130 trained peer champions driving community action

•SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

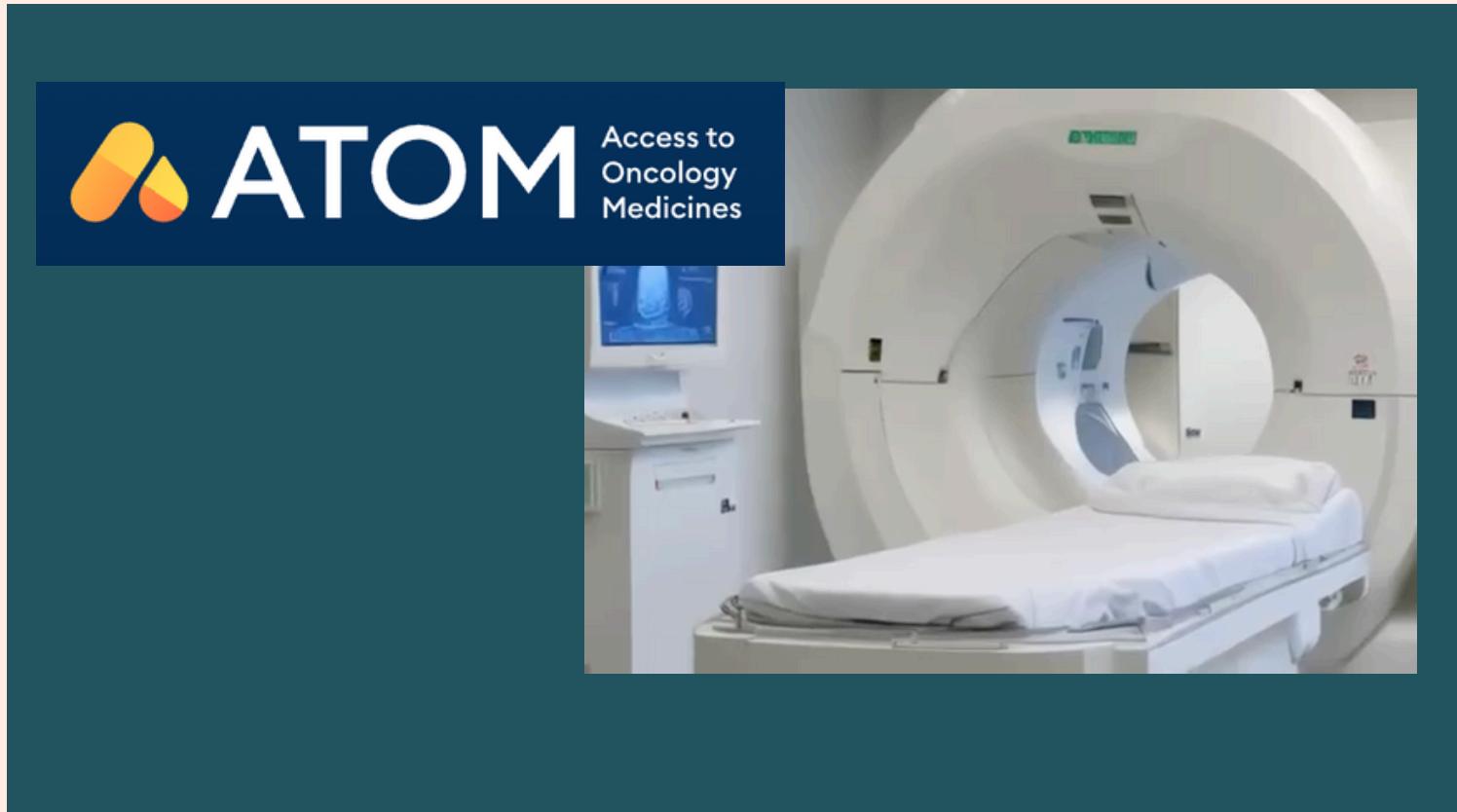
•District-level policy reform & service linkages



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ACCESS TO ONCOLOGY MEDICINES IN ZAMBIA (ATOM)



MedRAP is the ATOM coalition in-country Technical consultant. In 2022, the Union for International Cancer Control launched the Access to Oncology Medicines (ATOM) Coalition to increase access to life-saving essential cancer medicines and technologies in low-and lower-middle-income countries. The Coalition includes over 42 public and private sector partners and focuses on 46 countries, including Zambia.



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SHARP ANNUAL REFLECTION – 25 MARCH – 2 APRIL 2025



Between March 25 and April 2, 2025, Medicines Research and Access Platform (MedRAP) led a strategic series of high-level engagements in Zambia's Southern Province. These sessions laid the groundwork for the SHARP (Solutions for Supporting Healthy Rights and Protection) Annual Reflection Meeting, aimed at boosting adolescent sexual and reproductive health (SRH) across the Great Lakes Region

SHARP partners come together to reflect on the advocacy work accomplished in the last three years and the significant impact made to ensure that adolescents in the Great Lakes Region have access to high-quality SRHR and family planning services.



Highlight of the meeting was MedRAP's score-carding exercise, a participatory evaluation of SRHR service quality involving youth advocates, civil society, local media, councillors, and health workers. The process culminated with a site visit to Simonga Rural Health Post, where a newly launched Youth-Friendly Space now provides stigma-free SRH services to adolescents in the district.

MedRAP's preparatory engagements and the SHARP Annual Reflection Meeting mark a critical step forward. The meeting showcased the power of collective commitment, youth inclusion, and infrastructure to strengthen adolescent SRH services and chart a path toward healthier futures across the region.

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MEDRAP LAUNCHES HEALTH CONNECT PODCAST

On 4th February 2025, Medicines Research and Access Platform-MedRAP launched a Podcast dubbed "Health Connect" a dynamic 30-minute weekly podcast dedicated to advancing knowledge and fostering dialogue on critical aspects of human health.

The program focuses on empowering individuals, with practical insights and evidence-based information to navigate health challenges, adopt healthier lifestyles, and make informed decisions about their well-being.

By addressing barriers to healthcare access and exploring topics such as mental health, nutrition, preventive care, and disease management.



This innovative health podcast addresses the critical issue of health in general and SRHR specifically among young people.

-The Podcast seeks to target Young Zambians (15–35 years) interested in health wellness, Women and men, Policy makers and influencers, Urban professionals, students, and digital-savvy listeners and Health-conscious individuals through its high-quality content that educates, informs, and empowers the community to make healthy choices, whilst also providing a platform for health stakeholders to respond to emanating issues.

We have produced episodes that include male breast cancer, leukemia, Sexual and reproductive health and people living with disabilities, epilepsy and Violet Zulu's story of incarceration.

