“But what about the boys?”
Community perceptions of girl-centered HIV programming in Nairobi informal settlements: Experiences from DREAMS implementation

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1. BACKGROUND

- Disproportionate risk of HIV infection among adolescent girls & young women (AGYW; 15-24yrs), compared to male peers, has led to a focus on targeted interventions.
- In Kenya, the DREAMS Partnership targets AGYW with evidence-based HIV prevention interventions and, to a lesser extent, adolescent boys and young men (ABYM).
- We describe community perceptions of the focus on AGYW and involvement of ABYM in DREAMS in Korogocho and Viwandani, two slum settlements in Nairobi.

2. STUDY SETTING

Aerial view of a section of Korogocho slums - Photo courtesy of APHRC

3. METHODS

- We conducted 20 in-depth interviews (IDIs) with ABYM who had knowledge of or ever participated in DREAMS programs; 2 IDIs with DREAMS implementing partners; 2 focus group discussions (FGDs) with parents/guardians of AGYW; and 4 FGDs with DREAMS mentors of AGYW.
- An inductive approach guided thematic analysis of the transcripts.

4. DREAMS ‘Core Package’ of Interventions

1. Empower Girls and Young Women
   - Interventions for this population to empower girls and to reduce their risk for HIV and violence.

2. Reduce Risk of Sex Partners
   - This activity aims to characterize “typical” sexual partners of adolescent girls and young women in order to target highly effective HIV interventions.

3. Strengthen Families
   - Interventions for this population aim to strengthen the family economically, as well as in their ability to parent positively.

4. Mobilize Communities for Change
   - These interventions aim to educate girls, young women, and young men, as well as mobilize communities.

   Source: https://www.pepfar.gov/documents/organization/269309.pdf

5. RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived benefits to ABYM</th>
<th>Perceived disadvantages to ABYM</th>
<th>Perceived solutions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABYM</td>
<td>Participation in life skills strengthening interventions for adolescents (10-19 years)</td>
<td>Exclusion from other interventions on social protection</td>
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<td>Participation in community-level social norms and gender-based violence prevention activities</td>
<td>DREAMS Mentor ineligible for social protection interventions like cash transfers and education subsidies</td>
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<td>DREAMS Implementers and Parents</td>
<td>ABYM and AGYW can equally access text books provided in schools as part of education subsidies for AGYW</td>
<td>DREAMS Implementers and Parents can equally access educational resources</td>
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<td>Improved access to HIV testing services (HTS) and condom provision</td>
<td>ABYM not getting sufficient information on HIV prevention</td>
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“We target the boys with community interventions to get their views on issues of violence against women and HIV, we offer HTS and condom distribution, and try as much as possible to integrate boys together with the DREAMS girls in school based interventions.” (IDI-Implementing Partner)

“It is okay to help the girls but what about the boys? They don’t have enough information about condom use and HIV/AIDS, they take it lightly, it would help if they are also educated” (Mentors-Korogocho)

6. CONCLUSION

HIV prevention is increasingly ‘targeted’, e.g., with a girl-centered focus. However, greater inclusivity of adolescent boys and young men is encouraged by community members and implementers of girl-centered programs in urban Nairobi slums in order to address early male vulnerability and enhance outcomes for AGYW.