

The Role of Peer-to-Peer education in overcoming Cultural Barriers to HIV Prevention Communication Approaches: Experiences from Primary Schools in Uganda

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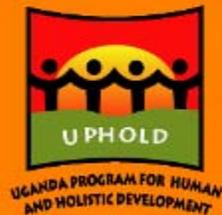
Outline of Presentation

- **Introduction**
- **Project Interventions**
- **Objectives**
- **Methods and implementation processes**
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- **Challenges, Conclusions and Recommendations**



The Republic of Uganda

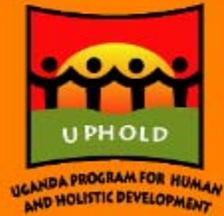




Introduction

Children below 18 years	56% (13.7 million)
Secondary school age population (13-19 years)	16.3% and the adolescent population (10-24 years) 34.3%.
Children of primary school age (6-12 years)	more than 5.4 million and form 22% of Uganda's population.
% of young women and men had sex before they turned age 15	14%
% of women and men that had sex before the age of 18.	63% of women and 47% of young men
Source: Sero behavioral survey 2006 (MoH & ORC Macro)	

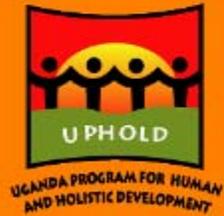




Introduction (cont)

- More focus on 15-49, neglecting 6-12
- Only 30% of young women and 35% of young men have comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS (ibid)
- Traditional 'top-down' /adult-child approaches are common (Yowell, 1997; Hurberman, 2002)
- Culturally, there are communication barriers between adults and children on sexuality and HIV prevention (Lagina, 2002).
- Hence the need for peer-to-peer strategy.

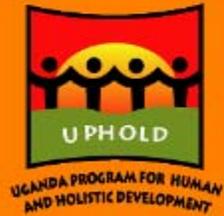




Definitions

- A peer is a person who belongs to the same social group as another person or group.
- Peer education is the process whereby well-trained and motivated young people undertake informal or organized educational activities with their peers (those similar to themselves in age, background or interests) over a period of time, aimed at developing their knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and skills and enabling them to be responsible for and protect their own health (UNFPA and UNICEF, 2003)

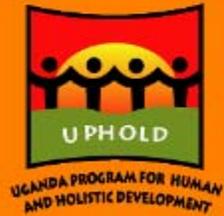




Advantages of peer to peer approach

- Youth peer educators are less likely to be seen as authority figures ‘preaching’ about how others should behave from a judgmental position.
- The process of peer education is perceived more like receiving advice from a friend ‘in the know’, who has similar concerns and an understanding of what it’s like to be a young person (FOCUS on Young Adults, 1997)

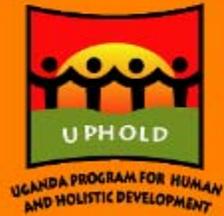




Project Intervention

- UPHOLD, is funded under a bilateral agreement between the government of Uganda and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).
- To improve the lives of Ugandans, the five-year project works in partnership with local governments and Civil Society Organizations to support interventions in 34 districts in Uganda in the Education, Health and HIV Sectors.





Project Intervention(cont)

- Partnerships with CSOs have been a key strategy behind the achievement of substantive results, even in the HIV sector
- In 2005, eight civil society and grassroots organizations were provided funding and technical support to provide prevention communication to youth, mostly in primary schools, using the peer-to-peer strategy.

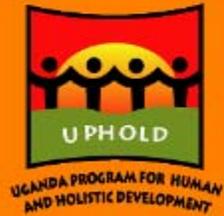




Project Intervention(cont)

- Ibanda Child Development Centre,
- Students Partnership World Wide,
- Mayanja Memorial Hospital Foundation,
- Uganda Reproductive Health Bureau,
- World Vision
- Rural Welfare Improvement for Development (RWIDE),
- German Foundation for World Population (GFWP),
- Youth Alive, Uganda

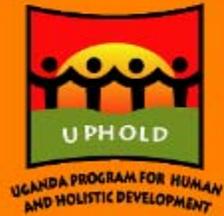




Objectives of the intervention

- To increase awareness of HIV/AIDS transmission among primary school children, and to reduce risky sexual behavior among them
- The CSO intervention supplemented efforts of the PIASCY program in equipping children in primary schools with information and life skills to enable them stay away from HIV.



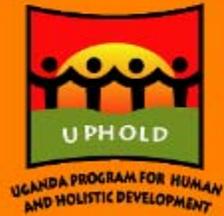


Methods and implementation processes

The CSOs employed the peer-to-peer strategy in communicating HIV/AIDS prevention messages to youth through:

- Training of peer educators to disseminate these messages in their daily interactions with their peers(DSW,WV, Youth Alive)
- The use of peer educators in drama shows (Ibanda,SPW,WV)
- Dialogue meetings in dissemination of HIV prevention information to young people in primary schools. Ibanda, SPW, Youth Alive.
- Community outreaches (Mayanja MHF,)
- Peer to peer interaction in daily activities.

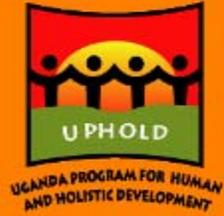




Results

- Overall, more than 17,565 youth in eleven districts (Ibanda, Mayuge, Kamuli, Mbarara, Bugiri, Bundibugyo, Nakaseke, Kyenjojo, Wakiso, and Kamuli) were reached with HIV prevention communication messages.
- Further, a total of 4,021 children signed abstinence cards to document their commitment to abstinence
- A total of 3,230 youth received training as peer educators.

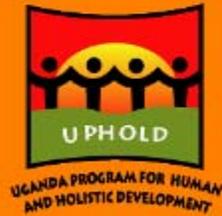




Challenges and Recommendations

- Gender and peer education
- The quality of training cascades
- Interactive communication skills
- Challenges of volunteer motivation
- The difficulty of tracking non- formal contacts among peers





Conclusion

- HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns targeted at young people need to embrace the peer-to-peer communication strategy as an effective channel of communication.
- However implementers will need to be cognizant of the need address the challenges of motivating volunteers, reporting of achievements and ensuring quality of training activities if the intervention is carried out on a large scale.

