

Youth-led Success

Making education about novel PrEP methods relevant for end users

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MOSAIC (Maximizing Options to Advance Informed Choice for HIV Prevention)

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HIV Prevention Ambassador Training development team after pilot training in Uganda. Photo credit: Brian Ssewankama, Uganda

Background

In sub-Saharan Africa, adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) are two to three times more likely to be living with HIV than their male peers. The HIV Prevention Ambassador training was created in 2019 to support young people to lead rollout of biomedical HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) methods for HIV prevention. The training covers HIV prevention within the context of sexual and reproductive health and rights and aims to empower and equip AGYW with the knowledge and skills to promote HIV prevention and informed decision-making among their peers and within their communities.

During a 2022 update of the training, developers sought to engage young people more meaningfully in the process to amplify their voices and increase the utility and acceptability of the resource. Developers have updated the training to include new content which cover healthy relationship dynamics, new PrEP methods, inclusive language, and the importance of practicing self-care for ambassadors.



Methods

Nine young people from Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, the United States, and Zimbabwe formed more than half the revision team. With support from in-country mentors, they selected, reviewed, and drafted training content relevant to them, using their experience as youth advocates and Ambassadors to guide the revisions and the update process during biweekly virtual meetings. These young people led an internal pilot of new training content in Uganda, and then planned and implemented field tests of the updated training in their respective countries.

Results

Through field testing, the team engaged 122 participants. Young team members reframed scientific content in community- and youth-friendly language, advocated for gender-inclusive language and inclusion of a nonbinary Ambassador character, and developed a new session exploring how healthy relationships affect AGYW's PrEP use. They also gained skills in facilitation, communication, project management, and writing.



Conclusion

Our process led to youth-friendly improvements of an HIV prevention education tool and increased important skills among participating young people. With adequate support and an inclusive approach, young people are able to lead development of resources that work for them.

Field Test Feedback and Key Takeaways:

GENDER	AGE			TOTAL
	18-21	22-29	30+	
Cisgender girl/woman	33	54 (including 6 female sex workers)	6	93
Cisgender boy/man		8	6	14
Transgender girl/woman		6	1	7
Transgender boy/man		5		5
Nonbinary person		1	1	2
Intersex		1		1
TOTAL	33	75	14	122

How will participants use what they learned from the 3rd edition of the HIV Ambassador Training Package?

“They will engage more effectively with AGYW in their communities, respond and demystify misconceptions around PrEP Methods and HIV as well as respond to the disclosures of violence more effectively.”
– Field Test Facilitator, South Africa

Which sessions were of greatest interest?

“All the sessions on three PrEP methods- since the majority of them had not heard about the ring and CAB-LA. Peer support skills, healthy relationships & supportive partners, boundary setting & self-care [were also of great interest].”
– Field Test Facilitator, Kenya

How did the in-person workshop in Uganda compare to your expectations?

“It exceeded my expectations. There was an all-around appreciation for everyone’s input, and an opportunity to learn from it. The workshop also helped us understand [the training] on a deeper, and more developed level.”
–Workshop Participant, MOSAIC



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