



AFRICAN CONSTITUENCY BUREAU
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IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HIV, TB, MALARIA PROGRAMMING IN AFRICA: WHAT WERE COUNTRY EXPERIENCES AND KEY INTERVENTIONS?



2
SERIES

HIV/AIDS AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

BACKGROUND

Despite great progress made against HIV globally, adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) are disproportionately at risk of acquiring new HIV infections. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown measures, including school closures, further predispose the AGYW at risk. Therefore, policy measures remain a necessity to reduce the spread of the pandemic, and at same time safeguard progress made in the fight against HIV among the AGYW.

FACTS

- In sub-Saharan Africa, despite making up just 10% of the population, one out of every five new HIV infections happens among adolescent girls and young women¹
- AGYW are 5 to 14 times more likely than their male peers to be infected with HIV²
- AGYW accounted for 1 in 5 new HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa in 2017³

COUNTRY EXPERIENCES

- Closure of schools impacted information dissemination through schools on sexuality education;
- Scheduled peer-to-peer interventions including targeted HIV testing services were disrupted;
- Interrupted condom distribution in tertiary institutions since students were home;
- Increased teen pregnancies, marriages, and school dropouts;
- Increased cases of gender-based violence mostly on girls and women; and
- Sexual and reproductive health services for girls were not a health priority due to reduced staff.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

- Delivery of smart televisions to schools to provide sexual education;
- Opened hotline for reporting and counseling gender-based violence;
- Use of social media for timely update on sexual education;
- Engaged community champions such as traditional leaders to talk strongly against early pregnancies/child marriages;
- Use of mobile vans or motor bikes to deliver commodities such as condoms; and
- Training of AGYW outreach workers and peer educators on COVID-19 and HIV services.
- Cash transfers for beneficiaries to reduce vulnerability to some sexual behaviors

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¹ Avert. (2020). Women and girls, HIV and AIDS. Available from <https://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-social-issues/key-affected-populations/women>

²Saul, J., Bachman, G., Allen, S., Toiv, N. F., Cooney, C. & Beamon, T. (2018). The DREAMS core package of interventions: A comprehensive approach to preventing HIV among adolescent girls and young women. PLoS One, 13(12), e0208167. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0208167. PMID: 30532210; PMCID: PMC6285267.

³UNAIDS. (2019). Women and HIV: A spotlight on adolescent girls and young women