

ICFP 2025

03 November - 06 November 2025

Bogotá, Colombia

Abstract ID : ICFP20256040

Empowering Adolescent Mothers in Kampala: A peer-led initiative to improve Sexual and Reproductive Health outcomes through Young Mothers' Clubs

Abstract Status : Accepted

Submission Type : Individual Abstract

Submission Track : 9. Adolescents and Youth

Track (Second Choice) - Optional : Which Of The Following Does

1. Equity Through Action: Advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for All (ICFP 2025 Theme)

Your Abstract Address? :
Program/Best Practice

Significance/background :

Globally, there are over 1.8 million adolescents aged 10-19 years, with around 70% of them living in low and middle income countries. In Uganda, adolescents comprise approximately 34.8% of the total population, with a high teenage pregnancy rate that has stagnated at one in four girls aged 15-19 either pregnant or having given birth%. This rate contributes to the country's alarming maternal health statistics whereby 18% of maternal deaths are linked to pregnancies among teenagers. Teenage pregnancies in Uganda are often linked to unprotected sex, resulting in unplanned pregnancies, unsafe abortions, birth complications like fistula, and high school dropouts. The challenges facing adolescent mothers are compounded by a range of socio-economic and health-related vulnerabilities. Their young bodies are physically unprepared for childbirth, placing them at greater risk of maternal health complications. Social stigma, lack of family and community support, limited access to family planning, and dropping out of school further isolate them. These factors contribute to a higher likelihood of poor health outcomes for both adolescent mothers and their newborns.

Program Intervention/activity

Tested : In response to these challenges, Naguru Teenage Centre (NTC) pioneered the Young Mothers' Clubs as a peer-led initiative. Designed initially for first-time mothers and pregnant adolescents aged 10-19 years, the program aimed to address their unique sexual and

Methodology : The Young Mothers' Club initiative, is a peer-led intervention designed to provide education and support to first-time mothers and pregnant adolescents aged 10-24. The program focuses on sexual and reproductive health, HIV prevention, family planning, and life skills through structured, monthly

Results/key Findings : Since its inception, the Young Mothers' Club has reached 1,371 young mothers, with 47% of attendees aged 13-19 and 53% aged 20-24. Notably, over half (54%) of participants attended two or more sessions, and 7% attended with their male partners. The most common topics covered in

reproductive health needs. Recognizing the broader interest from older young women.

meetings. During these sessions, a group of young people are trained as peer educators or peer mothers to continuously facilitate discussions on SRH/HIV and contraception information as well as information on problem-solving, communication, language, critical thinking, prevention, and treatment of pre-and post-natal infections. The training is conducted in a formal setting for 3 to 4 hours every month.

During the training, different topics are covered in a series of 20-25-minute sessions. About 25 to 30 people participate in the training. Sessions are often preceded by health video shows or drama skits relating to the same topic. Each session is followed by a group discussion and questions. The peer educator/mother summarizes the topic, giving facts and correct answers relating to questions. Beyond the sessions, the peer educators provide continuous psycho-social support through home visits.

Program Implications/lessons

Learned : The peer led Young Mothers' Clubs represent an effective model for addressing the complex needs of adolescent mothers in Uganda through delivery of last mile health services including SRH, GBV and HIV prevention information to young people across board. By providing a safe space for peer mentorship, life skills training, and SRH education, the clubs empower young mothers to make informed decisions about their health and their futures. The peer to peer model has proven crucial in overcoming cultural and societal barriers, allowing young mothers to engage in open discussions about their reproductive health, including HIV prevention, family planning, and postnatal care. The initiative also supports the economic empowerment of young mothers, linking them to livelihood programs that build economic resilience. Furthermore, the integration of male partners into the program has enhanced the overall impact by promoting joint decision making and support within relationships. The success of the

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the sessions were family planning and HIV/AIDS (32%), post-natal care and baby care (25%), nutrition during pregnancy (20%), life planning skills (16%), and entrepreneurship (7%). A significant outcome was the cultural shift in discussing SRH/HIV/AIDS issues. Participants reported feeling empowered to express their SRH concerns freely in the supportive environment of the clubs, with many indicating that they would not have disclosed such information in other settings. Additionally, there was strong involvement from male partners, with many participants reporting that their partners actively supported their attendance and learning. Client satisfaction surveys from Kisugu and Kitebi Health Centers revealed that 74% of young mothers consistently used condoms, while 65% of young mothers at Kiswa Health Centre were using a family planning method, with many attributing their decision to the information received from the clubs

Is Your Abstract About Colombia Or Does It Use Data From Colombia? : No

Young Mothers' Clubs underscores the importance of using context specific, peer driven approaches to improve adolescent maternal health outcomes and increase SRH service utilization. Given its positive results, the program could be expanded to other regions of Uganda to improve adolescent maternal health outcomes and reduce the societal burden of teenage pregnancy. The Young Mothers' Clubs exemplify a sustainable, scalable model for enhancing the SRH, life skills, and economic resilience of adolescent mothers. By addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by young mothers through peer led education, psychosocial support, and empowerment, this initiative provides a promising avenue for improving maternal and child health

**In Which Of The Following
Formats (Oral, Flash, Or Poster)
Would You Agree To Present
Should Your Abstract Be
Accepted? : Poster Presentation**

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