

# AIDS

## Gender-Sensitive HIV Prevention for Young People

Young people are at the centre of the AIDS epidemic in terms of transmission, vulnerability, impact, and potential for positive change. The United Nations' Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS recognises young people's special needs concerning HIV prevention and the vital role they can play in halting and gradually reversing the spread of AIDS. However, they can only do this if they have

- access to information and education about their reproductive health and rights,
- the opportunity to acquire the necessary life skills and
- access to adequate reproductive health services.

This is why GTZ puts young people at the centre of gender-sensitive prevention efforts, aiming to empower them to make responsible decisions regarding their own and their partners' health and sexuality. We strive to build young people's AIDS competence by considering with them risky and safe choices, cultural norms, and the power dynamics between women and men and how they shape sexual relationships and practices.



### GTZ's approaches and their results

**Teenage mothers as agents of change:** Forced sexual contacts at a young age and early unwanted pregnancies are a widespread problem in many developing countries. This is why GTZ experts in Cameroon supported the development and implementation of the "Little Aunties" approach. Teenage mothers are organised in self-help associations and trained as peer educators. Based on their own experience, they advise other youths in their community about their sexual choices, responsibilities and rights – traditionally the task of aunts in many African societies. In addition to supporting young mothers, who are often stigmatised, in becoming motivated and effective agents of change, the approach has significantly reduced the number of unwanted pregnancies in schools which invited the "Aunties" to work as peer educators.

**Intergenerational dialogue:** In order to allow attitudes and practices to be changed, the underlying cultural and traditional beliefs first need to be addressed. With this in mind, in Guinea, Kenya and Mali, GTZ and its non-governmental partner organisations developed the "intergenerational dialogue" to promote constructive and consensual change of harmful practices, such as female genital cutting, forced marriages and withholding of sexual education and information from the young. Local organisations facilitate community-based dialogue workshops where young and old discuss with mutual respect controversial themes such as gender roles, sexual morality in the past and present and HIV. Evaluations show that the quality and quantity of communication between the generations improved significantly, that communities decided to sanction harmful traditional practices and that religious and traditional leaders who took part in these dialogues became active promoters of youths' reproductive rights.

**Youth-oriented education materials:** Attractively designed, youth-oriented education materials on reproductive health issues, including HIV and AIDS, do not exist in many partner countries. To address this need, GTZ supported the participatory development of a series of Question-and-Answer booklets on sexuality and HIV in Tanzania, providing young people with information on their sexuality and reproductive health. These booklets were based on their questions, written in their language and illustrated in a way that appeals to them. Young men and women and youth experts were systematically trained in needs assessment and development and production of materials. This approach has now been replicated in 17 countries in Africa, Asia and the Arab region. The considerable demand for these booklets and the many reprints funded by different organisations made evident that this approach is an effective and a replicable way of meeting young people's (as well as their families' and friends') needs for suitable information on reproductive health issues.

**Multimedia-based life skills education:** Young people today enjoy learning with modern media, including videos, digital games and computers. GTZ experts in Tanzania built on this interest, supporting the development of the first interactive website on reproductive health in East Africa, "<http://www.chezalama.com>" (play it safe) in Kiswahili and English. The website presents its users youth-relevant reproductive health information, including HIV prevention and advice on comprehensive health care services. It also uses interactive modes such as chats to encourage young people to share their concerns, questions and experiences. In Uganda, in cooperation with other agencies, GTZ involved rural youths in the development of an interactive DVD, "Life choices", presenting the story of rural youths in a high prevalence country who face difficult decisions in their first relationships with the opposite sex. The film stops each time a character needs to take a decision, such as whether or not to drink a beer with a boyfriend, whether or not to have sex, and whether to use

a condom or not. The audience discusses and agrees what the character should decide, and the film then continues accordingly, up to the next decision. The DVD is a perfect starter for discussions with young people about life skills, responsible decisions and safer sex.

**The Join-In-Circuit** is an interactive and a particularly effective and popular approach to raising HIV awareness and to increasing HIV competence. For more information on this approach, please refer to the info sheet enclosed in this folder.

## GTZ's service package

### **Situation analyses, surveys and needs assessments:**

GTZ experts enable partner organisations to carry out participatory situation analysis, surveys on sexual and reproductive behaviour and the qualitative and action research they need to plan their youth-oriented prevention programmes. Our gender-sensitive stakeholder analysis of young people identifies their needs and priorities as well as their opportunities for positive change.

### **Developing information and education materials:**

GTZ supports its partner organisations in the development or adaptation of youth-oriented information and education materials, involving young people actively in every step of the process.

### **Capacity development:**

Using a wide range of methods and tools, we enable our partner institutions, including government agencies and NGOs, to design, implement, monitor and evaluate their own youth-oriented prevention programmes. Our experts support different types of interventions and communication strategies in a variety of settings to reach the respective audiences with the kind of information, skills and services they need.

Contact: [aids@gtz.de](mailto:aids@gtz.de)

Imprint 08/07

Publishers:

Deutsche Gesellschaft für

Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH

Dag-Hammarskjöld 1-5

65760 Eschborn

T +49 6196 79-0

F +49 6196 79-1115

E [info@gtz.de](mailto:info@gtz.de)

I [www.gtz.de](http://www.gtz.de)

