

Background:

Botswana's young people (15-24 years) have the world's third-highest HIV prevalence rate (~18.7%)

- Lack access to reliable information about sexual and reproductive health (SRH)
- Expert-driven programs are marginally effective



Urgent need to engage youth and other community stakeholder to develop and implement culturally relevant comprehensive sexual and reproductive health (SRH) education programs for young people with the goal help foster a healthy, self-confident, and an HIV/AIDS-free generation.

Research Question:

Can Sustainable Community Partnership and Empowerment (SCOPE) strategy be used to engage in community-based collaboration between researchers and the community

stakeholders through all stages of the intervention process – from conceptualization to implementation and evaluation to develop an SRH education program?



Methods:

- Partnered with key stakeholders in a rural community in Botswana

- Used in-depth interviews and FGDs for data collection in summer 2019
- Rigorous qualitative data analysis led to identification of key emergent themes

Results:

- Thirty-five key community stakeholders including parents, teachers, health workers, youth leaders participated in in-depth and focus group interviews.
- **Emerged themes:**
 - Sexual and reproductive health knowledge;
 - Social issues related to intimate relationships; and
 - Gender-based violence.



"It's very important to teach them about reproduction, sexual reproduction because they don't know the consequences of having sex without protection, so it is very important to learn so that they can be protected from diseases, STIs, and other diseases like HIV/AIDS." – **Parent**

"Children in the village are not taught about puberty. When they attain puberty, they feel that there is something wrong happening with their body. They lose confidence. There is a lot of stigma around menstruation in the Maunatlala community." – **Health professional**

"So, it's my perspective, I would say, children from ten years onwards should be educated about SRH. As long as they understand, and they are not shying away, they can be taught that about sexual and reproductive health." – **Health professional**



relations, and open communication

- Sexual and reproductive rights, availability and access to health services

Conclusion:

Using the SCOPE approach for engaging youth and other key stakeholders in the community can be an effective way of developing SRH education programs that are culturally relevant and locally meaningful.

Next steps:

- To engage young people in Botswana to implement and evaluate the comprehensive SRH education program.
- To promote an HIV/AIDS-free generation in Botswana.

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