

“Go-Getters”: Empowering young women in Uganda

Girls and women are a critical part of the vulnerable people, given their relative powerlessness and disproportionate susceptibility to HIV infection.

Women make up nearly half of the world’s 33.2 million adults aged 15-49 living with HIV; in sub-Saharan Africa, the figure is close to 60 per cent. Numerous research studies have shown that the Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved without addressing gender inequality and gender violence, especially in combating HIV and AIDS. PSI empowers girls and women to protect themselves against HIV and other sexually-transmitted infections through education and access to prevention products and services. Working with its partners, PSI addresses the social and cultural factors that deny girls and women the means to protect themselves.

In Uganda, young women ages 15-24 are three times more likely to be infected with HIV than their male counterparts. Cross-generational sex (CGS), puts young women in Uganda and other African countries at higher risk for violence, unplanned pregnancies, HIV and other STIs. Qualitative research conducted by PSI helped reveal motivations behind these relationships: material or financial benefits for young women and sexual gratification for men.

In 2004, PSI/Uganda implemented a one year pilot programme on three Kampala university campuses to address and better understand the dynamics of CGS. In January 2007, PSI/ Uganda scaled up the intervention and expanded the programme to 10 universities



“Help put a stop to Sugar Daddies preying on young girls in our communities. Take responsibility for ending this practice that is jeopardising the education of our children.”

Hon. Geraldine Namirembe Bitamazire
Minister of Education and Sports

Cross Generational sex is destroying the lives of young girls in our country. “Sugar Daddies” are taking advantage of our daughters, sisters and nieces. Because of this practice many have been infected with HIV and some have dropped out of school. Its time for us all to take a stand and put an end to Cross Generational sex.



Hon. Geraldine Bitamazire, Minister of Education and Sports in Uganda (Picture courtesy of PSI)



(Picture courtesy of PSI)

as well as 50 secondary schools in five districts. The inclusion of schools stemmed from a recommendation, made upon completion of the pilot, which specified the need to target younger women, as in many cases, CGS begins at an age much younger than university level.

Among the programme’s components is the establishment of peer and social support groups for young women dubbed the “Go-Getters”. Through these clubs, young women receive peer education and counselling about the risks involved in cross-generational relationships, guidance on planning for their dreams and mapping out a path to success in their future careers. Go-Getters club members are also empowered with the life skills that will enable them to make good, sound decisions and judgments when faced with choices that will ultimately either save or end their lives.

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