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Assessment of the Straight Talk Foundation (STF) Peer Education Approach to Sex Education in Arua and Bugiri Districts in Uganda.

AUTHOR(S)

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Background of STF

STF began as a newspaper in 1993 and became an NGO in 1997

STF aims to improve adolescent well being by improving sexual and reproductive health, and reducing HIV transmission using a variety of synergized communication approaches, including print, radio and face to face activities

Newspapers include

- Young Talk (students aged 10 – 14 years)
- Straight Talk (15 to 24 years)
- Tree Talk & Farm Talk
- Teacher Talk (English & local languages)

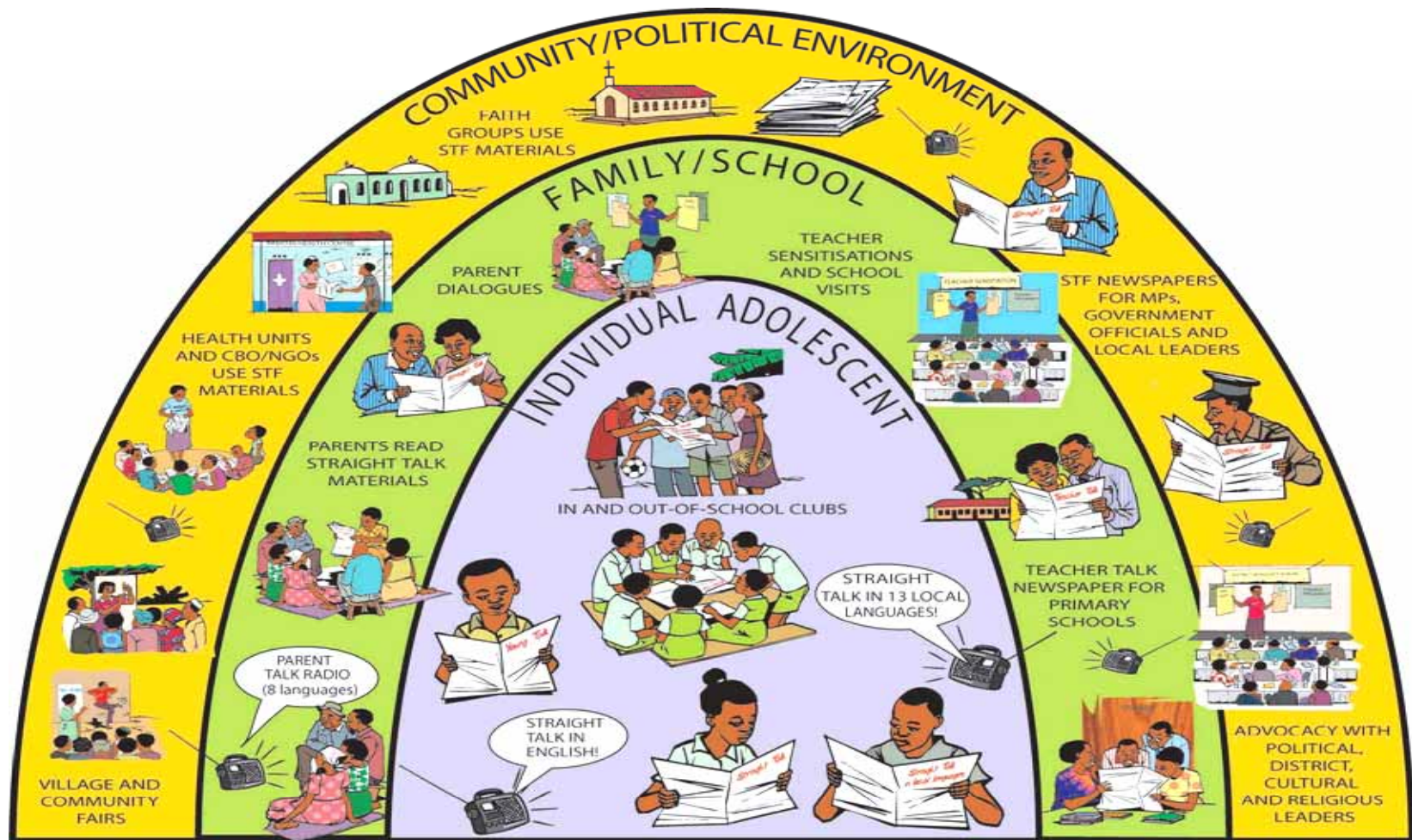
Radio programs include Straight Talk & Parent Talk programs (17 languages)

Face to Face activities include peer education training, teacher training & health fairs in selected districts



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STF's ecological model



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STF's Peer Education Program Aims

- ❖ To strengthen and encourage formation of pupil driven *Young Talk* clubs in primary schools
- ❖ To increase pupils' access to continuous adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) information and services, life skills education and edutainment activities for positive behavior change.
- ❖ To empower the girl child in schools to manage positively the different issues and problems they encounter in their sexuality experiences, including unintended pregnancies.
- ❖ To encourage children to develop open and positive attitudes towards sexuality at an early age, which will help them better prepare for teenage years.



Purpose of Evaluation

- To assess the extent to which peer educators implemented sex education activities in their respective schools
- Determine the outcomes of the peer education project at individual and schools levels.
- Identify challenges and discuss possible solutions as away to ensure continuous effectiveness of the program and eventual replications



Main Intervention Evaluated

STF conducted peer education program in two districts in Uganda, Arua and Bugiri

- In 50 primary schools, Young Talk clubs were strengthened and formed in the two districts (6 pupils trained from each school, 3 girls, 3 boys).
- 300 Young Talk club members were trained on peer education, club leadership and ASRH issues
- 150 administrators including the head teachers, senior women teachers and a teacher in charge of PIASCY were trained
- The study was carried out in the districts of Arua and Bugiri and it targeted, in each school, the peer educators who took part in the program, the head teacher, PIASCY teacher as well as the senior women teachers

Methodology

A qualitative approach aimed at soliciting for the outcomes of the program through the eyes of the beneficiaries.

It involved the pupil community, purposively selected pupils from P5, P6 and P7 to discuss the peer education program through their own understanding.

Data was collected through Focus Group Discussions that centered on

- the activities being implemented in schools
- the benefits to individuals and the schools
- the challenges they have faced and possible solutions



Findings

Findings showed that all the schools visited were implementing the activities that were intended by the training workshop, ensuring that the peer education program achieved its expected objectives.

Activities ranged from;

- Discussing sexuality messages at school assemblies and gatherings,
- Creating opportunities for discussions and reading young talk,
- Group discussions during music, dance and drama, games and sports activities.

□ Peer Educators FGDs in Arua

“During the assembly, we talk about HIV and what pupils can do in case they are being forced to marry. Pupils here face those problems.. “

(Michael Drako, peer educator, Awika P/S, Arua district)”

□ Peer Educators FGDs in Bugiri

“We debate on issues like education is better than early marriage and sex. The teachers and debate prefects help us to come up with topic. The debates are for upper classes. We used story telling, songs/drama to make it exciting.”

(Derrick Magum, peer educator, York P/S, Bugiri district)

Findings

Teachers and school administrators were asked to comment on how the activities carried out had benefited their schools.

Positive feedback showed the potential of the program in effecting behavior change.

The achievements of the peer education program were categorized into two main sub themes; *benefits for individuals* and *benefits to schools*.

☐ Girls only talks

“When I came back from the training, I realized that we can not talk about some topics well with the girls in general group especially on menstruation. So, we introduced the “girl-child only talks in our school.” (Senior woman teacher, Awika P/S, Arua)

☐ One on one discussions/peer counseling

“One time, a teacher brought to us a boy who wrote a love letter to a girl. I got the boy and talked to him privately. From that time, he has become my friend and he change a lot. He used to be one of those rude boys in this school.” (Peer Educator, Ewava P/S, Arua)

Benefits

The benefits to individuals and schools can be summarized under the following sub themes;

- Improved ASRH knowledge and capacity of peer educators and teachers
- Increased dialogue about ASRH issues in schools
- Creation of avenues and opportunities to discuss girls/gender issues

❑ Leading games and sports

“when we go to play our games, before we start, we talk about good health and good behaviors . We compete among ourselves and with other pupils. Even when the games end, we discuss some of the issues that arise therein.” (Sarah, peer educator, York p/s, Bugiri)



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Program Lessons Learned

- The peer education program encourages dialogue about ASRH issues in schools.
- The activities have created a demand for ASRH information, thereby encouraging ongoing dialogue which is a protective factor and fits what is theorized in STF's "ecological model".
- The benefits of the peer education program have been enhanced by a number of factors, some of which were existent in schools while others were contributed by STF.
- These should be considered in future interventions in relation to peer education, including careful selection of the peer educators and teachers to ensure the aims of the training are achieved, and improved availability of resource materials for peer educators in local languages.

Thank you



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