

# Evidence Review of Peer-Led Youth Education Programmes

Eleanor Maticka-Tyndale, PhD

Canada Research Chair in Social Justice and Sexual Health  
University of Windsor, Canada

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# Basis of presentation

- Review of literature: 1/90 to 12/07 on community-based HIV prevention programmes targeting youth (10-24 yrs) in lower income countries (LICs) that used peer leaders
- Inclusion Criteria -- information provided about the programme and evaluated using:
  - RCT or Full QE: 7 programmes
  - Pre-post intervention group: 10 programmes
  - Data on reach, distribution, community mobilization: 19 programmes
- Location of programmes:
  - 25 subSaharan Africa
  - 8 Asia, SE Asia, S. Asia
  - 2 Russia
  - 1 Latin America
- N = 36

# A Programme Component ...

## contributes to success if

It was present in at least 1 programme that produced desirable outcomes & not present in any programmes with undesirable outcomes.

## detracts from success if

It was addressed as problem in any intervention.

It was only present in interventions with undesirable outcomes.

# Outcomes in RCT and QE Evaluated Interventions

## Number of Studies

Study Goal	total number	positive results	negative results	mixed results	n.s. results
Correct Knowledge	15	13	0	2	0
Establish desirable norms, skills, self efficacy	6	5	0	0	1
Establish or change to desired behaviour	10	8	0	1	1

# Evaluated Process Goals

## Number of Studies

Study Goal	total number	positive results	negative results	mixed results	n.s. results
Distribute resources	5	5	0	0	0
Connect clients to youth services	2	2	0	0	0
Mobilize community	3	3	0	0	0
Reach youth with programme	15	13	2	0	0

# Theoretical Foundations: (implicit or explicit)

- Social Learning Theory
- Freire – empowerment through participation of affected people
- Diffusion of Innovation Theory
- Developmental theory (adolescence)

*Cash in on naturally occurring processes.*

# Advantages and Disadvantages of Peer Led Interventions

# Advantages or Strengths

- Qualitative Evidence
  - Peers may be trusted more than non-peers.
  - Can address issues related to sexuality that non-peers cannot.
- RCT & QE Evidence
  - Have demonstrated impact on KAB, norms, & motivation
- Project Records Evidence
  - Can access marginalized/vulnerable groups
  - Can mobilize communities to take action

# Disadvantages or Challenges

- High maintenance (cost?)
- Recruitment
- Cannot assume motivation, capability or good role model
- Require more training & supervision than adults
- May need more structure than adults
- May not be able to challenge their peers
- Stigma has more direct effect
- Peer leader role may create social distance
- Retention – e.g. youth grow up
- Sustainability

# Specific Issues

# Structured/Supervised vs Unstructure/Unsupervised

- Only 1 comparison (QE) in the literature:
  - Ghana (CEDPA, 2000) comparison led to the conclusion that structure & supervision are required.
- Nepalese example of peer leaders working without structure or supervision – intervention failed (Sharma, 2002)
- Amount of supervision & structure varied in successful interventions

*Conclusion: Peer leaders probably require some structure & supervision.*

# Training Needs of Peer Leaders

- Relevant content, gender and sexuality issues
- Legal and ethical issues
- Communication skills – interpersonal & group
- Group leadership
- Organizing activities
- Counseling skills
- Dealing with peer pressure
- Concrete, practical – practice all skills required
- Potential problems: literacy, self care
- Refreshers
- Train supervisory staff

# Retention Problems

- Mobile populations, youth who 'grow up', other priorities
- Retention enhanced with
  - Reimbursement for expenses
  - Incentives (pay, microcredit, bicycles, ...)
  - Acknowledgement
  - Professional development & job related skills
  - Participation in project development, decision-making
  - Manageable scope of work
  - Job satisfaction and comfort
  - Support & supervision

# Potential Abuse of Authority

- Many comments that peer (& adult) leaders do not always *“practice what they preach”*
- Some comments that peer (& adult) leaders have used their position to exploit others

*Conclusion: Peer (& adult) leaders are products of & continue to be influenced by their community & culture. Training will not necessarily change deep-seated gender and sexual roles, scripts, and gendered-power relations.*

# Limitations of Peer Led Programmes

- Adults may be better at conveying factual information
- Peers appear to be better at engaging in conversation about norms, attitudes, behaviours
- Close peers may be 'too close for comfort' and a sense of confidentiality
- Certain requirements must be met for a successful peer led programme

# Successful Peer Led Programmes Pay Attention To:

- Selection of Peer Leaders
- Establishing agreements with gatekeepers & stakeholders
- Providing broad training (& refreshers)
- Providing a structure for programme delivery
- Providing trained supervision & support
- Involving Peer Leaders in development & decision-making
- Retention issues
- Developing a system to locate & train replacements
- Developing a system for sustainability