

Empowerment among adolescent girls and young women in Korogocho and Viwandani slums in Nairobi: Perceptions and implications for the 'E' in DREAMS

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BACKGROUND

- To help drive down HIV incidence, the DREAMS Partnership (promoting Determined, Resilient, Empowered, Aids-free, Mentored and Safe lives) aims to “empower” adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) through individual and community interventions.
- We sought to examine perceptions of empowerment among AGYW receiving DREAMS interventions in two slums of Nairobi: Korogocho and Viwandani.

METHODS

- We conducted qualitative interviews as part of the baseline evaluation process of DREAMS between April and June 2017.
- 20 in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with AGYW (10 to 22 yrs) who are beneficiaries of DREAMS
- Questions exploring empowerment such as “**What does the word ‘empowered’ mean to you?**”, and “**Do you feel empowered?**” were asked.
- An inductive approach guided thematic analysis of the transcripts.

STUDY SITE



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RESULTS

What does empowerment mean?	To be enabled through courage, confidence and knowledge to pursue life goals
How is DREAMS empowering you?	By increasing knowledge on HIV risk reduction
	By building socio- economic capacity
Barriers to pursuing your life goals?	Lack of school fees
	Unsafe communities
Factors helping you to stay on course?	Completing education
	Persistence in pursuing goals

“Empowerment is being encouraged to do something. If you do not have the confidence of doing something, power is the strength that you get to do it.”

(IDI: AGYW - Korogocho, 15 years)”

“I didn’t know about saving money before, after studying financial capability, I started saving to start a business.”

(IDI : AGYW - Viwandani, 20 years)

“Lack of school fees will get me chased out of school.”

(IDI: AGYW - Viwandani, 11 years)

“I want to study and complete school, I don’t want to drop out of school, then I will get a good job after”.

(IDI: AGYW - Korogocho, 16 years)

CONCLUSION

- Empowerment is valued among AGYW as a path to socio-economic strengthening and having the confidence and strength to do things. AGYW believe that empowerment is important for them to achieve their goals including HIV risk reduction.
- Programs like DREAMS can offer participants the tools to harness their personal power to achieve life goals but structural barriers like lack of school fees and unsafe communities that AGYW face remain beyond their personal control.



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