

Module 5: HIV/AIDS and young people - Adolescent health and development with a particular focus on sexual and reproductive health - Assignment

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Groups of young people in Liberia who should be targeted with HIV interventions

In my opinion, in Liberia, the following groups of young people should be targeted with HIV interventions:

- Young people who are involved in commercial sex.
- Young school attending adolescents.
- Less fortunate Young people whose parents cannot afford to send them to school, and are therefore at a high risk of early marriage.
- Young ex-combatants who could not get a formal education, most of whom are users of illicit substances.
- Young teenage school dropouts, who may have fallen victim of too early unwanted pregnancy.

Factors which make them vulnerable

- Young sex workers. This group is particularly vulnerable because they are exposed to a number of clients (multiple sexual partners). In addition, their choice for safe sex (use of condoms), may to some extent be limited or compromised because their clients who in most cases have the financial power may be the sole decision maker of the method of sex he wants.
- Young school attending adolescents. This group comprises mostly of adolescents who may innocently be venturing into sexual relationship without knowing the consequences. They are at most time influenced by their peers or at the extreme, victims of sexual violence and coerced sex.
- Young people who do not have the opportunity to attend school. In this group of young people, parental or societal norms or pressure is the main force that drives them into early or unsafe sexual activities.
- Young ex-combatants involved in the use of illicit substances and unsafe sex. This is a group of young people who during their combat period may have gotten used to illicit substances abuse and subsequently violating women. Even in normal situation they may still see it as a way of life.

- Young teenage school dropouts who had become mothers from unwanted or unplanned pregnancies. This group comprises of young females who are in the difficult situation of carrying children with no proper care and support. With such an added responsibility, most of them opt into prostitution for earning a living.

Most important interventions which would contribute to achieving the UNAIDS goal

Young sex workers

- HIV preventive services (safe sex by use of condoms, HIV testing and counseling, etc.).
- Programs that will provide alternatives for making them productive or self-sufficient (basic skill acquiring programs).

Young school attending adolescents

- Sexuality Education.
- Adolescent friendly sexual health programs.
- HIV/AIDS and STIs prevention programs (condom, VCT, delayed sex).

Young people with no opportunity to attend school

- HIV and STIs prevention and Family planning programs.
- Sexuality education programs (delayed sex, prevention of too early pregnancy).

Ex-combatants

- Treatment of drug addiction.
- HIV and STIs prevention programs.
- Sexuality health programs.
- Skill acquiring programs.

Teenage school dropouts who have become mothers

- HIV and STIs prevention programs (condom promotion, VCT).
- Skill acquiring programs or getting back to school programs (women empowerment programs).

Assignment document

1. [Ferguson J. HIV/AIDS and young people. Paper presented at: Training Course in Sexual and Reproductive Health Research; 2010 Sep 26; Geneva.](#)