

IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HIV PREVENTION PROGRAMMES TARGETING ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND:

The Global Fund (GF) invested in a three-year combination HIV-prevention intervention for AGYW in ten priority districts in SA; comprising a comprehensive package of health, education and support services for AGYW (10–24 years). Research on scale-up of combination prevention approaches is valuable for donors and programme implementers. Within the HERStory Study, we conducted a qualitative evaluation of the intervention to identify implementation and operational strategies that supported uptake and access.

METHODS:

Using a purposive sampling strategy, we asked GF principal recipients to identify programme implementers and designers who would be appropriate to interview. We conducted 12 interviews with programme implementers (project managers), and engaged five programme designers in discussion on strategies that supported GF programme implementation successes. Using these interview and discussion data, we aimed to describe the a priori theory of change and gain perspectives on the planning and implementation of the intervention. Interviews were conducted in English, audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and entered in NVIVO 12 software. Thematic data analysis included dual coding transcript text, applying predetermined codes and iterative codes for emergent themes.

RESULTS:

Based on participant responses, the a priori theory of change postulated several successful and some less successful implementation and operational strategies. Implementation worked well and targets could be achieved when buy-in and stakeholder relationships with government, schools and community leaders was in place from national to district and local levels prior to service delivery. In some settings, there were unanticipated implementation constraints related to social and geographical contexts. Program implementation was most successful when the governing body supported implementers through engaging them in processes of feedback, learning and adaptation. Governance roles need to include planning and support for an effective monitoring and evaluation system and strategy.

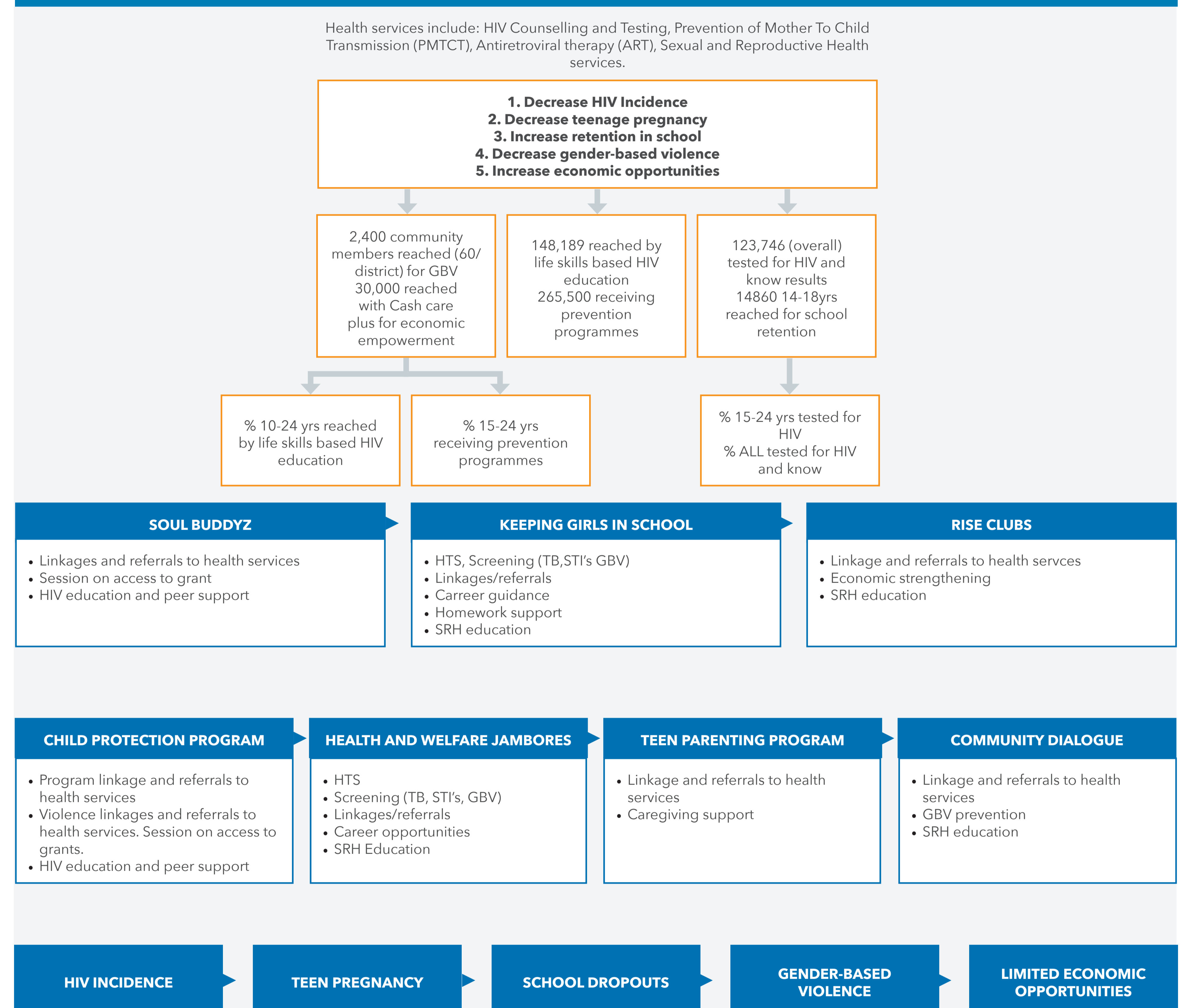
CONCLUSIONS:

This evaluation reveals where the hypothesized implementation processes succeeded and where they failed, uncovering lessons for the design and implementation of complex, multisector interventions to prevent HIV among AGYW.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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PROGRAMMING FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA



PROGRAMME SUCCESSES

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION WAS SUCCESSFUL WHEN THERE WAS:

- An existing footprint in the community
- Sufficient time for planning & relationship building
- Stakeholder (parents, DoE, school principals) buy in was crucial to achieving targets.
- Ownership and buy in from the Department of Education (DoE) was crucial to enable access to schools
- Implementers engaged and informed relevant community gatekeepers
- Stakeholder (parents and school principals) buy in was crucial to achieving targets.

PROGRAMME CHALLENGES

- Insufficient time for programme setup
- Programme implementers had challenges in reaching targets.
- Implementers had inherent challenges upfront (prior to implementation)

- Challenges related to monitoring and evaluation processes and tools.
- Challenges relating to implementation of specific programmes and content.
- Communication challenges affected implementation and targets.
- Contextual considerations in rural areas.
- Challenges relating to governance of implementation arrangements

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Governing bodies of complex, multi-sectoral interventions need to support implementers through engaging them in processes of feedback, learning and adaptation.
- Governance roles need to include planning, technical expertise and support for an effective monitoring and evaluation system and strategy
- Consultation is needed with programme recipients to tailor programmes
- Community responsive programming
 - Tailor curriculum content based on age and context
 - Stakeholders at all level; national, provincial to district
 - Map existing services prior to implementation