

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

Adolescence is a critical developmental period when many young people begin to define and clarify their sexual values and, often, start to experiment with sexual behaviors. According to UNFPA, there are more young people in the world than ever before: an estimated 1.8 billion people are between ages 10 and 24 (UNFPA 2014). In Kenya, young people constitute a significant proportion of the population, where 43% of the population is younger than 15 years and about 9.2 million are adolescents aged 10-19, representing 24 percent of the population (Gok and KNBS 2010). The current ASRHR Policy aimed at enhancing the Sexual Reproductive Health status of adolescents in Kenya is pegged on the previous policy of 2003 and ICPD programme of action of 1994 (Ki-moon and UNFPA 2014), advocates for the increased access to ASRH information and age appropriate comprehensive sexuality education (AACSE) that aim to enhance ASRH outcomes (Ministry of Health 2015). Adolescent sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRH) indicators in Kenya are unstable and some are performing in negative direction, teenage pregnancy stands at 18 percent for the last one decade (KNBS and ICF Macro, 2014; KNBS & ICF Macro, 2010).

Adolescents and young people in Nyanza region specifically in Kisumu like the rest of Kenya, face numerous SRH related problems resulting from low access to information and utilization of services. They are adversely affected because the area is the epicentre for HIV in the country (National AIDS and STI Control Programme 2014). According to Kenya Aids Indicator Survey (KAIS) 2012, HIV prevalence was higher among women (16.1%) than among men (13.9%) in Nyanza region compared to nationwide prevalence of women (6.9%) and among men (4.4%). Teenage pregnancy and motherhood is also high where 15.4 percent of adolescent women age 15-19 have had a live birth in Kisumu County (KNBS and ICF Macro 2014). The County has unmet need for family planning that stands at 23.2 percent (12.6 for spacing and 10.6 for limiting) among currently married women in reproductive age with adolescents having worst hit (KNBS and ICF Macro 2014).

In order to avert these challenges, relevant interventions are urgently needed for the adolescents' ages 10-14 years and 15-19 years who constitute 13% and 10.8% of the total population, respectively or 23.8% (Gok and KNBS 2010; Ministry of Health 2015; National Council for Population and Development 2013). An immediate example is the use of mass media prongs, for example newspaper pullouts, to provide direct access of Sexual and Reproductive Health information to adolescents. To respond to this, the Centre for the Study of Adolescence (CSA) in collaboration with Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Alliance/Kenya through funding from Rutgers initiated the implementation of Access Service and Knowledge (ASK) Nyanza programme in Kisumu and Kisii Counties with an aim of improving the SRHR of young people (10-24 years) by increasing young people's uptake of SRH services including information. ASK project utilised innovative approaches such as newspaper pull outs and games to pass sexuality information to young people. The newspaper pull outs for students called young talk (Ytalk) and Teen talk for primary and secondary schools, respectively were developed and utilized materials for World Starts With Me and My World and My Life curricula. CSA conducted teacher trainings in two years 2014 and 2015 which empowered teachers and peer educators with capacity to guide discussions using the Newspaper Pullouts and SRH board games and debates on SRH issues. The number of teachers who were trained are 153 (75 male and 78 female) and 52 (35 male and 27 female) in 2014 and 2015, respectively. Peer educators assisted the teachers in the implementation process of newspaper pull outs, WSWM and MWML curriculum to other learners on weekly basis.

Pullout magazines were developed by Pupils/students in the editorial group comprising of ASK – CSA project officer as the convener, CSA research Team – member for operations research and Straight talk team from Nation Media Group (NMG). A total of 9,600 copies of newspaper pull outs were distributed amongst 80 schools in Kisumu and Kisii Counties. Trained teachers identified the most enthusiastic pupils to participate in Peer Educators’ (PEs) training. In collaboration with CSA, the trained teachers conducted PEs training. The number of trained PEs was 575 (285 male and 290 female) and 1,212 (486 male and 726 female) in 2014 and 2015, respectively. PEs guided discussions newspaper pull outs on weekly basis.

### **Research objectives**

Main goal of newspaper pullouts was to contribute towards addressing the unmet need for SRHR information among adolescents through newspaper pullouts in selected primary and secondary schools in Kisumu County, Kenya. In phases 1 and 2, the main objective was to assess the attitudes and perceptions of learners about SRHR information and content made available through newspaper pullouts. Phase 3 concentrated on assessing the effects of newspaper pullouts on sexual and reproductive health knowledge, attitudes and confidence of young people in schools.

### **Study methodology**

The study was organised in three phases. Phase 1 and 2 studies were focused on the perceptions and attitudes towards newspaper pullouts among learners, teachers and parents. They both collected and analysed qualitative data for reporting of the findings through a triangulation of research methods: observations, FGDs and KIIs. The results gave input in the development of the next newspaper pull outs. The third phase of OR study gathered the effect of the newspaper pull outs on SRHR capacity (knowledge, attitudes and confidence) among learners aged 10-19 years in selected schools using a structured questionnaire through a quasi – experimental research design. It also gathered qualitative data for triangulation.

### **Study Findings**

The results indicate that learners developed positive perceptions and attitudes towards newspaper pullouts. Learners in secondary school (students) mentioned relationships, contraceptives and talking to parents about sex, while primary school pupils identified physiological changes, child rights and sex as important topics, interesting and very educative to them. There were gender differentials in topics that secondary school students found to be educative in the Teen Talk pullout. Many girls found the topic on contraceptives and avoidance of pregnancy as educative, while boys focused on relationships and sex. The students perceived newspaper pullouts as encouraging and educative.

There were mixed reactions with secondary students rating the Teen Talk pull outs highly because the content was relevant to their experiences and was comprehensible. Those who rated the pull outs low, cited the topics as difficulties in comprehension of the language/vocabulary utilised and gender insensitive content.

Pupils in primary schools equally found the topics on physiological changes of adolescents, contraceptives and relationships very exciting. They were eager to learn more about the process of menstruation, how adolescence affects boys & girls and sexual intercourse. Most respondents liked features in the pullouts, particularly the stories, quizzes, use of imagery and celebrity talk shows.

Results indicate that comprehension of the content, knowledge of the newspaper pull outs, interesting topics, favourable features and design of the pull outs were facilitating factors for uptake

whereas, language barrier was setback for utilisation of the newspaper pull outs amongst the young learners.

Teachers and parents reported to have some problems that hinder them to discuss effectively with teens on matters relating to SRHR. Most teachers reported that they do not teach SRHR to students because the issues are not included in their curriculum, the subject is not examinable and that they rely on their own notes and experiences to guide students. Teachers reported that their trainings are ill-equipped to handle SRHR issues of adolescents. Teachers reported that parents ought to instill good morals, become friendly to their children and use culture and religion positively to instruct their children on SRHR issues rather than letting teachers shoulder the burden alone. However, some teachers showed willingness to support the learners to learn the content in pullouts such as sex related matters and also support implementation of the project in their schools. On the hand, parents also reported that they do not talk to their children because their children don't take them seriously because they prefer getting information from other sources. Although in phase 3, learners reported that it is easy for them to talk to their fellow classmates, parents and teachers about sexually issues since the introduction of newspapers.

Qualitative findings show that newspaper pull outs had increased capacity of learners in terms of knowledge, positive attitudes and confidence to address challenges that adolescents experience. Learners stated they had acquired a lot of information on SRHR which they planned to cascade to fellow peers and also apply to situations they face in lifes. Teen Talk pull outs enabled secondary school students to clear myths and misconceptions about sex, abstinence, menstruation and contraceptives. Further, results from quantitative indicate that intervention group of learners scored higher in knowledge items assessed on SRHR than control group of learners. Overall, the mean score for SRHR knowledge for the intervention group (69.2) had significant different ( $p=0.056$ ) from the control group (62.5) at 90 % confidence level using only five variables. Results confirm that the intervention group scores significantly higher on knowledge compared to the intervention group.

Both quantitative and qualitative results indicate that young people expressed positive attitudes towards sexual and reproductive health and rights. Learners reported that newspaper pull outs have really assisted them to have positive attitudes towards using contraceptives such as condoms and pills. Overall, there was statistical significant evidence that intervention and control group of learners had different attitudes towards SRHR at 99 % confidence level.

Majority of leaners felt more able and confident to cascade SRHR information to their peers. Primary school learners felt confident to take positive action such as escaping or reporting to relevant authorities if forced into marriage at an early age. Learners reported they used to be shy, afraid and had fear of talking about sexual matters with their parents and other people but they have improved confidence about talking to their teachers, guardians and parents and hoped to get solutions on matters relating to SRHR. Quantitative results indicate that there was effect of the newspaper pullout on the confidence towards SRHR among young learners, 7 out of the 8 confidence questions assessed intervention group of learners scored significant higher than control ones.

## **Conclusions**

The study concludes that well designed and well implemented innovative way of imparting SRHR information to learners such as newspaper pullouts improve knowledge, attitudes, communication and confidence towards their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Direct access to ASRH information for the youth provides conducive environment for proper intake of ASRHR information.

Interesting and educative content of newspapers with simple language, attractive pictures and colour, exciting topics and features improve the acceptability, usage and discussions among the learners. Involving all the stakeholders in SRHR programming including religion leaders, parents, teachers enhance information and service delivery and uptake.

### **Recommendations**

- i. There is need to scale up this innovative way (use of newspaper pull outs) of imparting SRH knowledge, attitudes and confidence to majority of learners in our schools (both primary and secondary schools) and communities.
- ii. When creating materials or any other interventions that encourage direct access to ASRH information to the youth, use simple language, attractive pictures and colour, exciting topics and features with interesting and educative content in order to improve the acceptability, usage and discussions amongst them.
- iii. There is need to increase levels of championing and sustaining meaningful youth participation in comprehensive sexual education programming that include information and services to improve behavioral changes amongst them.
- iv. Involve all the parents in implementing innovative ways of imparting SRHR information to learners so that they can also embrace the programme and acquire knowledge, improve attitudes and confidence towards SRHR matters.