

Impact of an Integrated HIV/STI Prevention Project in Reducing Behavioral Risks for Out-of-school, 15-24-year-old girls in Mukuru Slums, Nairobi

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Despite the progress in the overall global HIV/AIDS response, AIDS is still the leading cause of death among Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) aged 15-24 years in Kenya, where 468 new HIV infections occur among them every week. AGYW residing in informal urban settings are especially vulnerable. This paper looked at the self-reported changes in HIV/STI protective behavior by AGYW residing in Mukuru Slums, Nairobi, participating in an integrated project named Bold Idea for Girls (BIG). In November 2013, 546 AGYW were enrolled into the project. Behavioral data was collected and reported as proportions at baseline and end-term levels. A regression model was used to determine any differences in behavior between the two levels. The proportion of sexually active girls who had tested for HIV in the last three months increased from 23% to 57%, condom use during sex from 15% to 77% and those with multiple sexual partners reduced from 17% to 6%. These results were all significant at $p < 0.05$ even after controlling for age. The results support the argument for integrating gender, lifeskills; and economic empowerment aspects into HIV prevention programs targeting AGYW in resource poor settings in order to increase protective behavior.

Keywords: HIV, young women, integrated program, behavior change.

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