



ATHENA Initiative LEARN Workshop Highlights

LEARN AMBASSADOR TRAINING WORKSHOP:
NAIROBI 22ND – 26TH MAY 2017

Hosted by ATHENA Initiative in partnership with ICWEA (International Community of Women Living with HIV, East Africa Chapter) and PIPE (Personal Initiative for Positive Empowerment) Kenya.



Young Women LEARN

Young Women LEARN is a two-year project funded by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief as part of the DREAMS Innovation Challenge, managed by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. Young Women **Lead, Evidence, Advocate, Research, Network (LEARN)** is led by ATHENA Initiative and their community partners PIPE in Kenya and ICWEA in Uganda. **LEARN is designed to support effective roll-out and uptake of PrEP among Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) in Kenya and Uganda and to ensure that PrEP is responsive to the needs, rights, priorities, and preferences of AGYW in all of their diversity.**

LEARN has recruited a cadre of HIV prevention Ambassadors among AGYW most impacted by HIV to: define their priorities; set agendas and lead research; gather meaningful data in safe, learning environments; contribute to the formal evidence base around HIV prevention science; and advocate for prevention programming that reflects AGYW's lived realities, values and preferences.

Summary

The LEARN workshop held in Nairobi, Kenya brought together 10 LEARN Ambassadors to train them on: research skills, gender, human rights, PrEP and HIV prevention knowledge tools, leadership and advocacy skills, and monitoring and evaluation.

The workshop provided an opportunity for ATHENA to breathe life into the Young Women LEARN project through meeting the Ambassadors who are the heart of the project and by beginning project activities. It also provided an opportunity to establish a connection between the Kenyan and Ugandan arms of the project. This was instrumental for skills building for the ambassadors but also for ATHENA, ICWEA, PIPE and the Ambassadors to collectively work on shaping and structuring the project through contributing to the research tools.

Through individual and group exercises the Ambassadors articulated their HIV prevention priorities, identified characteristics of leadership, learned how social media tools can be used for advocacy, connected concepts of human rights and gender, learned about PrEP, and built a strong knowledge and skill base on research and M&E. In group discussions and through practice dialogues, the Ambassadors arrived at key success factors for facilitating community dialogues and leading research in their communities. Special emphasis was given to clarify PrEP, including efficacy, side-effects, special situations and research. Significant attention and time was paid to practical application of the new knowledge and skills learned through piloting community dialogues.

THE LEARN PROJECT AND OUR HIV PREVENTION PRIORITIES

Objective: Introduce LEARN and define the Ambassador's role and HIV prevention priorities.

The Ambassadors identified their priorities for HIV prevention in their communities in: policy (example: **active participation and involvement of AGYW in policy formulation**), resources (example: **investment in women led and women centered movements**) and research (example: **collecting data from AGYW and involving them at all levels of research**)

LEADERSHIP

Objective: Introduction to key concepts on leadership, define leadership, identify characteristics of leaders, assess leadership activities and identify how LEARN Ambassadors will utilize leadership skills

ADVOCACY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Objective: to provide an overview of advocacy and build skills in this area; show how social media can be used as an advocacy tool

INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER

Objective: to introduce key principles of human rights as it relates to HIV and SRHR and gender

HIV PREVENTION AND INTRODUCTION TO PREP

Objective: to identify factors that make women vulnerable to HIV; differentiate between PEP & PrEP; identify limitations of PrEP; highlight benefits of PrEP for women living with HIV; determine the target audiences for PrEP; and understand conditions for discontinuing PrEP

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH

Objective: to provide an introduction to research including ethics, safe-guarding, recruitment, data collection, anonymization, data quality, and reporting

LEARN RESEARCH MODEL AND TOOLS

Objective: to provide a comprehensive presentation on the LEARN research model and tools

IMPLEMENTING LEARN RESEARCH

Objective: to provide information on community dialogues, including an outline of key tasks and skills of the different roles of the facilitator and documenter

ETHICS AND RECRUITMENT

Objective: to present concepts related to ethics and recruitment in research in an interactive session.

REPORTING AND ANALYSIS

Objective: to outline the process of reporting and analyzing data as well as giving the Ambassadors a description of their roles and responsibilities in this process.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Objective: to present core concept of monitoring and evaluation and to go through the pre and post questionnaire and make changes together with the Ambassadors.

DISSEMINATION, ADVOCACY, AND MOBILIZATION

Objective: to provide top line information on mobilization, advocacy, message development, and what success looks like for effective advocacy, mobilization and dissemination

PILOTING COMMUNITY DIALOGUES

Objective: to provide an opportunity to put learning into action and practice piloting community dialogues.

The practice dialogues were a great learning experience for the Ambassadors as this provided a platform for them to voice any questions or concerns and allowed them to use the skills they learned throughout the week and gain confidence in them.

READY FOR RESEARCH?

Objective: to elicit feedback from the Ambassadors. After trying out the research tools, the Ambassadors were asked if they have any suggestions for how to improve them, what worked well, and what was challenging

Launch Event

ATHENA also hosted a project launch which provided a great platform for ATHENA to build partnerships with other stakeholders working on HIV prevention, care, treatment and support for adolescent girls and young women and for ATHENA to communicate and disseminate information to them about the Young Women LEARN project. The launch event co-created by ATHENA and the ambassadors embodied the ethos of LEARN; the only young women-led, peer to peer project on PrEP funded through the DREAMS Innovation Challenge. It provided a platform to highlight partners, donors and governments the need for:

- Commitment to put adolescent girls and young women at the center and forefront of research and policy enactment
- Investment in leadership opportunities for adolescent girls and young women
- HIV prevention agenda centered on holistic needs of adolescent girls & young women

The workshop was a great foundation for a successful journey of implementing LEARN. The workshop outcomes met and surpassed our expectations. Responses to the pre and post-questionnaires and feedback from Ambassadors highlights the significant impact the workshop had around knowledge, skills and confidence about SRHR, PrEP, research, and monitoring and evaluation.

Next Steps

The Young Women LEARN project is built on amplifying the voices of AGYW and creating spaces and opportunities to nurture leadership. To accomplish this, ATHENA recognizes the need to ensure that tools and products developed for the project are suitable and tailored to facilitate AGYW's engagement, and developed in partnership with them. The research tools will then be further refined based on the outcomes of the Nairobi workshop and feedback from ambassadors.

LEARN Ambassadors will:

- Lead research to gather data, specifically through community dialogues.
- Use research to develop advocacy priorities, strategies, and develop articles
- Advocate using social media and in person
- Identify 100 AGYW in their communities as peer mobilizers to raise awareness around PrEP and sexual and reproductive health services in their communities

LEARN Ambassador training workshop report summary

- Provide ongoing mentorship and support
- Network with other LEARN Ambassadors through the ATHENA LEARN Ambassadors' WhatsApp Group and engage with decision-makers

Monitoring and Evaluation

The 10 LEARN Ambassadors filled a pre-questionnaire on the first day of the workshop and a post-questionnaire with the same set of questions on the last day of the workshop to help measure how much we achieved during the workshop.

Based off the results of the pre and post-questionnaires, excellent progress was made in the following areas:

- Knowledge about PrEP (118.2% increase)
- Knowledge of M&E (120% increase)
- Knowledge about SRHR (62.1% increase)
- Knowledge about doing research (53.3% increase)
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In addition, Ambassadors were asked open text questions in the pre and post-questionnaires, including:

What did you gain from this training?

"I have gained much knowledge about different subjects like PrEP, PEP, and gender and rights. I have gained confidence in leading and participating in meetings and conferences."

What is the most important thing you learnt from this workshop?

"Have learnt that there are many ways we can lift up our voices concerning SRHR and gender equity in the community in order to cause change."

What skills have you developed by taking part in this workshop?

"Confidence. Carrying out research skill. Using social media."

Participants were asked how confident do they feel about taking on your role as a LEARN Ambassador. **All participants ranked their confidence as extremely or very confident. Their comments suggested they felt they had the support, knowledge, and skills to do perform well.**

Ambassadors were also asked to rate their confidence about each part of their role as a LEARN Ambassador. **All participants ranked their confidence on taking part in research high with comments suggesting that they felt they had been "fully equipped" to carry out research with AGYW about PrEP.** Similarly, Ambassadors commented they feel **"very confident" in facilitating dialogues and taking on peer mobilizers in their communities.**

The workshop was a catalyst for paving the way for a great start in what ATHENA envisions will be a successful journey of implementing the Young Women LEARN project with confident and equipped Ambassadors armed with new knowledge and skills.