



Examining AGYW Risk Factors in Relation to DREAMS Program Completion in Kyotera Cluster, Uganda

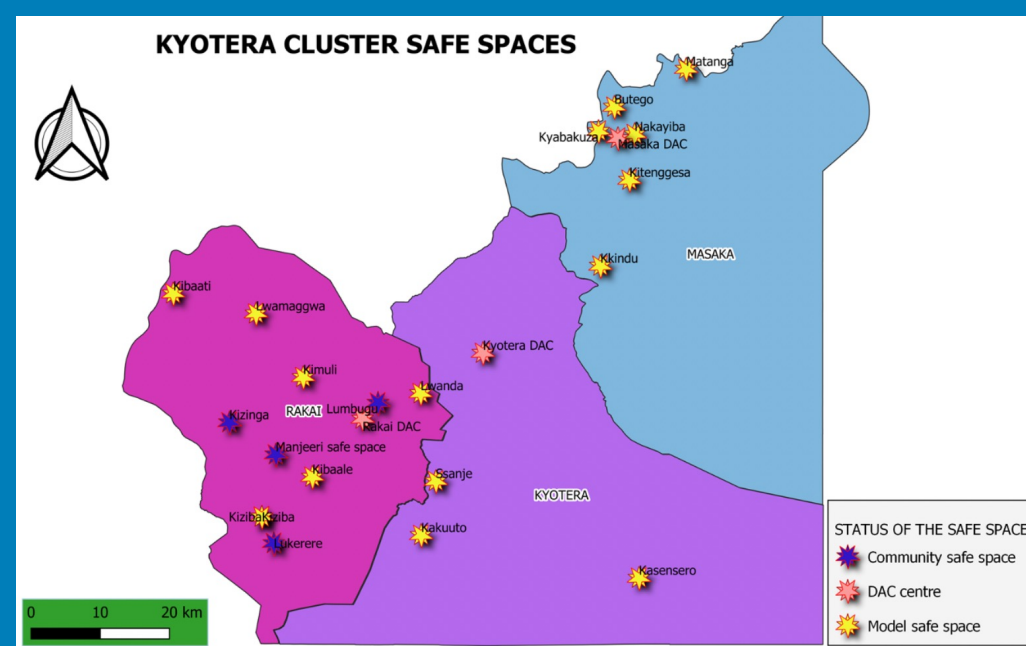
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Research Questions: Are AGYW with certain risk factors more/less likely to complete the primary and secondary intervention packages of DREAMS? What improvements could be made to screening, enrollment, service linkage, and monitoring of the DREAMS program in Kyotera Cluster?

BACKGROUND

Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, & Safe (DREAMS) is a public-private partnership aimed at reducing rates of HIV among adolescent girls & young women (AGYW) ages 10-24 in the highest HIV burden countries. DREAMS is unique in that it provides traditional HIV prevention services to particularly vulnerable AGYW in conjunction with other interventions targeting critical socio-behavioral determinants of health. Each AGYW enrolled in DREAMS should complete her primary package of interventions based on her age group, as well as any secondary interventions based on her individual risk factors identified during enrollment screening. The monitoring and evaluation team at Rakai Health Sciences Program (RHSP) oversees the implementation of DREAMS in 9 districts of Uganda and determines if annual CDC-defined goals are met. This project assisted the DREAMS M&E team by examining the most recent participant data for AGYW enrolled in DREAMS in Kyotera Cluster (comprised of Masaka, Kyotera, and Rakai district) to inform recommendations for improvements to screening, enrollment, service linkage, and monitoring.



DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION

Rakai Health Sciences Program is a collaborative bio-medical research and service delivery organization located in Kalisizo, Uganda. RHSP was established in 1987 as a collaboration between researchers at Makerere, Columbia and John Hopkins Universities, the Division of Intramural Research at the National Institutes of Allergy & Infectious diseases and the International Centre for Excellence Research. Since its genesis, RHSP has been committed to conducting relevant public health research, with many projects focusing on sexual and reproductive health. In efforts to reduce HIV incidence, RHSP oversees DREAMS implementation in 9 districts of Uganda.

METHODS

I first familiarized myself with the DREAMS data collection processes through numerous field visits with the data management officers to several safe spaces in Kyotera Cluster. During site visits, I assisted the RHSP DREAMS M&E team with data quality checks to determine the validity of data in the Uganda DREAMS-OVC Tracking System (UDOTS), which would be used in this analysis. The UDOTS data for COP22 includes information for 15,836 AGYW enrolled in Kyotera Cluster (7,848 in Masaka district, 6,675 in Rakai District, and 1,313 in Kyotera district).

Using the AGYW's answers to the enrollment screening questionnaire and the PEPFAR-defined eligibility criteria for DREAMS in COP22, I defined ten specific risk factors for each AGYW in DREAMS. Then, I created a conceptual map to identify proper primary and secondary services each AGYW should receive based on her risk factor(s). UDOTS program completion data was reviewed and will be fully analyzed when COP22 ends in September 2023.

RESULTS

Limitations in available data presented significant obstacles to program evaluation in the districts of interest. As a result, the project underwent numerous iterations. Final program completion data will become available at the end of COP 22 in September 2023 and a complete analysis will be conducted at that time.

Main findings: The complex nature of the DREAMS program causes inherent challenges to M&E processes. Although incomplete data has been a limiting factor in this evaluation, identifying specific gaps in data has guided recommendations for improvement.

DISCUSSION

We expect that AGYW of certain risk factors may have a lower program completion rate and therefore, require additional support for success in DREAMS. Furthermore, data may indicate errors in service linkage for certain secondary interventions that should be addressed in COP23.

REFERENCES

1. *Dreams: Partnership to reduce HIV/AIDS in adolescent girls and young women*. U.S. Agency for International Development. (2023, August 1). <https://www.usaid.gov/global-health/health-areas/hiv-and-aids/technical-areas/dreams>