PROMOTING GENDER-EQUITABLE NORMS TO SUPPORT FP USE AMONG YOUTH IN POST CONFLICT SETTINGS

Authors: Melissa Kanni Adams, Susan Akajo Oregede, Brad Kerner, Gwyn Hainsworth, Susan Igras, Rebecka Lundgren

Dakar, November 30, 2011
GREAT Goal & Strategic Objective

- GOAL: Improve gender equity and reproductive health outcomes in Northern Uganda

- STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: Boys and girls aged 10-19 form equitable gender norms and adopt attitudes and behaviors which positively influence reproductive health outcomes and reduce gender-based violence
GREAT Project Overview

- 5-year
  - Phase 1 (Year 1): Formative Research
    - Ethnographic Research
    - Program Review
  - Phase 2a (Years 2 & 3):
    - Pilot test interventions in 2 districts
  - Phase 2b (Years 4 & 5):
    - Scale up successful interventions

- Location: Northern Uganda

- Beneficiary Population:
  - Adolescent boys and girls, ages 10-19
  - Emphasis on very young adolescents, ages 10-14
Why Gender Norms?

- Use of family planning
- RH decision-making
- Parenting practices
- Unintended/unplanned pregnancy
- STIs/HIV/AIDS
- Health seeking behaviors
- Gender-based violence
Ethnographic Research Objectives

- Understand how gender norms are learned, internalized and passed on;
- why individuals would be motivated to change these norms;
- and how these norms shape GBV, SRH, and FP behaviors in post-conflict Northern Uganda
Research Design and Methodology

- Ethnographic, participatory, life course-tailored and activity-based
- Data collection took place over 6 months
- 40 Life Histories conducted with adolescents & 40 in-depth interviews with “significant others”
- All interviews were translated, transcribed, coded and analyzed using AtlasTi
Key Findings: Conflict, Gender, and FP

- Traditional attitudes toward gender roles held across life course and passed on through teaching, advice giving and modeling.
- Conflict and displacement disrupted gender socialization processes and brought about changes in gender roles at odd with traditional norms.
- Conflict and displacement significantly impacted adolescent SRH experiences.
“Men also became serious drunkards and the only thing they knew was to drink. This is not according to their interest but this is because men were too frustrated. In the camp, to tell you the truth, the most mistreated people by soldiers were also men. If a soldier wanted your wife, he could come and beat you. The rebels were also killing and mistreating men who they saw as spies for the government, and so men were frustrated. I see that men suffered most and they keep on doing this [drinking] because of the problems that had surrounded them.”

-Male, 28 year old, peer
Key Findings: Youth FP Use and Attitudes

- Prevailing gender norms significantly shape fertility desires and intentions among youth
- Strong community support for youth access to HIV services but not FP
- Communication about FP among adolescent couples high but use low/infrequent due to:
  - Lack of support from male partners
  - Concerns over side effects
  - Concern with marital discord
  - Stigma
  - Fear of infertility
I: Among all your hopes, which one is the greatest? You talked of education having a job, and your ability to give birth.

P: Giving birth is the most important. In this world if you don’t have a child then your life is worthless and people will insult you.

Female, 16, older adolescent
From insight to action

- Data from ethnographic research used to inform Phase II intervention
- Intervention aims to improve gender-equitable values, attitudes, and behaviors; improve SRH knowledge, attitudes, and access to services; decrease tolerance for GBV among adolescents
- Tailored to adolescent life-stages, designed for scale, and based on the ecological model
The GREAT Intervention Model

Enabling Environment
- Supporting Normative Shifts through Radio Drama
- Generating a “Buzz” around GREAT Brand Recognition
- Strengthening Service Linkages

Generating Reflection and Dialogue through Existing Platforms
- School-Based Child Clubs
- Farmers’ Associations
- Religious-Based Groups
- Village Savings Groups

Radio Drama

Scalable Toolkit
- Participatory
- Reflective
- Life Course-Specific Content

Community Mobilization
- Community Action Cycle GREAT Leaders
- Engaging the Wider Community
- Recognizing GREAT Champions