



HIV PROGRAMMING FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN (AGYW) IN SOUTH AFRICA

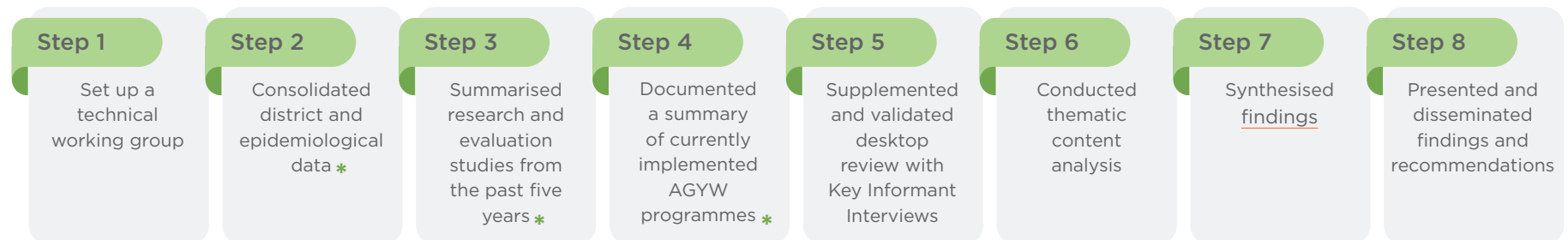
Where are we and where do we need to go?

The purpose of this implementer brief is to summarise key findings and share practical recommendations emanating from the South African AGYW landscaping analysis with programme designers, managers and implementers of the AGYW HIV prevention response.

HIV prevention programmes are not on track to meet targets for the AGYW

Each year, adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) continue to be disproportionately infected and affected by HIV in South Africa. Though some AGYW programmes show promise, the country's vision for AGYW has not yet been realised and the AGYW targets articulated in the [National Strategic Plan for HIV, TB and STIs \(NSP\)](#) have been missed. While there is a huge emphasis on the HIV epidemic in AGYW and large investments in the response, evidence and experience have not been sufficiently synthesised into guidance that can inform future programming.

This assignment aimed to consolidate and synthesise research [findings](#) and review the implementation of best practices of AGYW HIV prevention programming in South Africa. We followed an 8 step process as shown below:



*This information was captured in an Excel tool

Key insights on AGYW prevention programming best practices and how to make use of them

Programme Implementation



Through this process we developed a [Situational Review Tool](#) which houses information on AGYW prevention projects today as well as information and evidence from studies on existing and previous projects.

In this policy brief we summarise the best practices from AGYW HIV prevention **Programme Implementation** and provide insights and examples to implementers on practical steps for implementing these best practices.

What are the current gaps in the implementation of AGYW prevention programming in South Africa?



Programmes need ongoing meaningful youth engagement: There is limited evidence of these principles being implemented in practice.



Programmes do not provide incentives to participants: There is an understanding that AGYW need a level of support for continuous and meaningful engagement (e.g., transport reimbursements, child care, food vouchers etc.)



There is a lack of coordination, management and monitoring: The national AGYW response is unclear and fragmented, with no standardised framework guiding targets, communications and reporting.

Participation of AGYW can be encouraged by either **reducing barriers to access, or increasing perceived and realised value experienced by the AGYW.**

Reducing barriers:

- Prioritise a youth friendly programme interface;
- Work with communities to create a supportive environment for AGYW to engage in the programme;
- Offer a one-stop shop for a package of services;
- Include flexibility and continuity in timing of the provision of services (not only once a week for example).
- Use social peers on WhatsApp to communicate information on service provision, to keep engagement alive and to follow up.

Increasing value:

- Frame programmes and service provision around an AGYW as a whole person with goals and dreams – the service package should be clearly linked to the relationship, life goals and dreams of the AGYW.
- Programmes to consider rewarding AGYW for their participation – this reward should be greater than the opportunity cost of participating.



What are the best practices for the implementation of AGYW prevention programming in South Africa?



Youth need to be meaningfully engaged: Meaningful youth engagement in AGYW programming should occur from project inception and design through to evaluation. AGYW implementing partners (supported by government and donors) should develop explicit strategies for youth engagement through the course of the programme, and monitor and evaluate the use of these strategies annually. This approach should be clearly documented and budgeted for at the proposal stage.



Consideration should be made for incentives to AGYW:

These incentives could include child care and food vouchers.



To bring about more coordination and understanding of the AGYW response:

Implementers should introduce themselves to their local/district/provincial AIDS council and make an effort to attend quarterly meetings and coordinate through that structure.

Examples of youth engagement used in other programmes:

- Programmes define youth engagement at the proposal writing stage – in the design, implementation, review, monitoring and leadership of the programme.
- Structure and roles of youth include: a youth panel, youth advisory board, provincial youth leadership teams, youth ambassadors, youth advocacy plan, youth events and dialogues.
- An important principle of youth engagement is that the needs and inclusion of youth is prioritised throughout the programme.

Examples of **providing AGYW with incentives:**

Expanded peer outreach recruitment:

Including a modality where beneficiaries are encouraged and supported to recruit their peers.

Using non-monetary incentives to support retention:

Especially for multi-session interventions. Good incentives have been identified as: a full meal, transport allowance, dignity pack, lucky draw prizes at each session, childcare provision.

The landscaping exercises is based on research funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The findings and conclusions contained within are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. This work was done in collaboration with a technical working group that comprised a wide range of technical experts representing key constituencies within the AGYW HIV prevention landscape in South Africa.

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