

# Peer Power Session

During this session the participants got the chance to learn about dance4life’s peer-led approach and experience a powerful gender sensitizing activity which was lead by a dance4life peer educator from Kenya, Yvonne Ochieng. The activity triggered interesting discussions and feelings which showed the transformational power peer-led approaches can potentially have and can be harnessed within CSE interventions. This session took the discussion of the criticism on peer education further. The participants, based on own knowledge from research or experience identified the strengths and weaknesses of peer education/peer educators:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding and compassion for peers</li> <li>• Young people can easily understand/relate to peer educators,</li> <li>• PEs can easily relate to the reality of young people</li> <li>• Young people can feel more comfortable to discuss issues</li> <li>• PEs can be active and interactive</li> <li>• They speak the language of the target group</li> <li>• It is an empowerment tool for young people</li> <li>• Can cerate connection with young people</li> <li>• Be fun</li> <li>• Create safe environment for sharing</li> <li>• They can influence both positively and negatively</li> <li>• PEs can be role models</li> <li>• PEs can be serious at what they do as educators/facilitators</li> <li>• PEs are able to inspire youth to spread the message they’ve learned to their environment</li> <li>• PEs can be great in referring young people to YFS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High expectations from PEs to trigger behaviour change with so little support</li> <li>• PEs do not receive enough training/guidance/support/capacity and supervision</li> <li>• It’s considered as cheap labour</li> <li>• It’s difficult to track success of their effectiveness in adoption of behaviours of the young people they educate</li> <li>• Can be one-dimensional</li> <li>• They do not have authority</li> <li>• Aren’t taken seriously by teachers but also NGO staff, and even peers</li> <li>• It can evoke negative peer pressure</li> <li>• They are mostly volunteer and not paid</li> <li>• They can be preaching instead of educating</li> <li>• Lack of power and in-depth info</li> <li>• Lack of authority and therefore less impact</li> <li>• Cultural opposition</li> </ul>

Based on the discussion the following **recommendations** came out of the discussion:

- Should we still call it peer *education*? Education means knowledge and information, while peer leaders (instead of educators) may not be experts in SRHR and may be more

# Peer Power Session

effective in role-modelling, confidence building, facilitation of building skills and referral to YFS.

- When peer-led approach is used in interventions expectations should be realistic on what they can/can't do and complement their responsibility with other parts of the intervention
- Peer-leaders should be considered young professionals and be fairly compensated for their efforts
- As support system should be established that will provide safety, guidance, learning and risk mitigation (such as backlash)
- Involve peer leaders from the beginning of the intervention in the planning, design of materials, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Enable a learning curve for them as well, by provision of guidance and coaching.
- There's evidence that they are taken more seriously their peers if they are a bit older
- Take them seriously and involve them in the improvement of the intervention (they can best know what works well and what doesn't)
- Invest in research on how we can harness peer pressure, descriptive learning, role modelling etc.