What you can do to save the life of a young Ugandan girl

A Corporate Response

The situation
Young women in Uganda are disproportionately infected with HIV as compared to their male counterparts. 2004-2005 Uganda HIV/AIDS Sero-behavioral Survey of 15-24 year olds quotes the rate of HIV prevalence among females as 4% but 1% in males within the same age category.

The cause
Cross Generational Sex is defined as a non-marital sexual relationship between a younger girl and older man, where the age difference is 10 years or more. This practice is becoming increasingly commonplace in Uganda, with more and more young women getting into relationships with “Sugar Daddies”. Sadly, these now prevalent relationships are a key medium through which young girls are getting infected with HIV.

Formative research conducted by PSI among young urban girls who have been involved in these relationships, showed the need to satisfy their financial and material "wants" as opposed to "needs" as their primary motivation. Motivations for men were almost exclusively sexual gratification.

The response
PSI Uganda will be implementing a 2-year program a number of interventions geared towards encouraging young women, older men as well as communities to stop the deadly practice of Cross Generational Sex. These will include Faith Based Interventions targeting communities, University programs targeting young girls and a crosscutting communications campaign.

The “Go-Getters” program
One component of this multi-faceted program will be the implementation of a program targeting female students in 10 Universities- Makerere University, Makerere University Business School, Kyambogo University, Kampala International University, Gulu University, Uganda Martyrs University Nkozi, Uganda Christian University Mukono, Mbarara University, Nkumba University and Islamic University in Uganda Mbale.

The decision to join university demonstrates ambition. Nonetheless, young girls are subject to a variety of social and financial pressures once they are introduced to the relatively uninhibited environment of campus life. Social pressure to fit in with and look like their peers and financial pressure to support this image. The university setting therefore provides the
perfect breeding-ground for Cross Generational relationships to develop and older men have recognized and capitalized on this.

The Go-Getters program aims to cultivate confidence and self-esteem and provide women in universities with the motivation to identify their lives' ambitions and make a feasible plan to realize them. The program's curriculum will empower young women with the life skills that will enable them to be assertive, forward-thinking and goal-oriented individuals.

Monthly talks and presentations will be held using successful local young women from various professional backgrounds, to give the girls tangible evidence of what they too can achieve. Ultimately, the assumption is that once these young women are armed with this information and a plan for their lives, the exchange of sex for a plate of chips or a mobile phone seems not only degrading, but simply not worth the consequences.

**Your role**

As a complementary intervention, local businesses will be lobbied to provide short-term opportunities to girls in the program. Girls will be placed according to their ambitions, to give them a taste of what it feels like to live their dream career and to provide extra impetus for them to focus their efforts on getting there.

Ideally, as a participating business, your organization will need to provide internship or ‘shadowing’ opportunities to a minimum of 5 girls. There are 2 rounds of placements scheduled during the University holidays (July 2nd – September 16th 2007).

Once placed, the selected girls will be given the opportunity to shadow the person within the organization, whose position they want to pursue as a career. This rare insight into the demands and requirements of the job will help them plan better on how to equip themselves with the skills to fulfill the position once they graduate.

We strongly suggest that as part of the placement, the girls also get a chance to complete a rotation in different departments, as this will give them exposure to areas in which they may in fact be best suited but otherwise would never have considered e.g. distribution, production, marketing, PR, HR, Finance.

Although the rest of the program will be funded by PSI, we ask that you make the small contribution of providing lunch and transport for all the girls that you place.

**Program Logo**

In recognition of your invaluable contribution to the program, PSI has developed a logo.

This logo can be used and applied however and wherever you see fit, as an identifier of your contribution to the fight against HIV and the development of young girls in Uganda.

For more information on how you can join the program and make your contribution to stemming the tide of HIV among Uganda’s female youth please contact:  
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