CYBERGIRL RWANDA: Using human-centered design to reach youth: solutions to improve sexual and reproductive health

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Human-centered design is a creative, iterative approach to problem-solving. It can be used to develop solutions that address youth’s unique needs and behaviors, designed in partnership with youth.
BACKGROUND

Unemployment in Rwanda is highest among urban adolescent girls\(^1\)

1 in 10 adolescent girls reported having transactional sex\(^2\)

6-11% girls used condoms at last sex \(^3,4\)

12% contraceptive use among sexually active 15-19 olds\(^5\)

WHAT WE DID

Design research: 212 youth, providers, community leaders, teachers and parents

Prototyping: 182 youth, parents and health providers
We need advice, not information

Sexuality education in schools is rote-learned: practical knowledge is limited

Young people do not see the link between financial security and sexual health

Young people had few people they trusted to talk with about sexual health
Lack of knowledge around puberty and menstruation creates barriers to contraception.

Providers might be more open to providing info on other methods, leading with the condom.

Access to information is not leading to access to services among adolescents.

“When the periods come, what is actually coming out? What is happening inside the body?”
WE SET OUT TO...

DELIVER TRUSTED, PRIVATE SRH EDUCATION THAT BUILDS DEMAND AMONG TEEN GIRLS AND IS ACCEPTED BY PARENTS

CREATE CONTENT THAT TAPS INTO YOUNG PEOPLE’S EMPLOYMENT ASPIRATIONS AND DESIRE FOR ENTERTAINMENT

NAVIGATE TEENS TO SRH SERVICES IN A SAFE, COST-EFFECTIVE WAY

BYPASS PROVIDER BIASES ABOUT CONTRACEPTION FOR YOUTH
FIRST PROTOTYPES FOR YOUTH

POCKET GUIDE TO SUCCESS

DISCOVER

Aspirational, skills-building content integrated with SRH information to engage and empower girls

ASK JULIETTE

NAVIGATE

A virtual nurse / educator that answers questions and refers you to a local youth corner
**EVOLUTION: JULIETTE TO MUTONI**

*Mutoni shifted from a nurse to a virtual peer educator.* We worked with girls to co-design how the character looked and interacted with youth. The name Mutoni means ‘one who is valued’ and ‘precious’ and was chosen by our young Rwandan team members.
HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

**BENEFICIARIES**
Adolescents 15-19yrs
Urban / Peri-urban

**TEEN GUIDE TO SUCCESS**
Youth access tablet-based and printed education tools on SRH and employment skills

**BAZA MUTONI & BAZA NTWALI**
Youth seek further information and referral via SMS and IVR hotline

**CYBERNURSE**
Youth access contraception and information from trained providers and provide quality feedback

**ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES**
Youth are empowered to set goals for their futures and access information & resources on sexual health and employment skills
Youth have improved confidence and knowledge to access sexual and reproductive health services
Youth receive youth-friendly, non judgmental information and services from a trained provider
SURVEY RESULTS: n=19 young women (17-23 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRUE OR FALSE?</th>
<th>PRE-TEST KNOWLEDGE CORRECT</th>
<th>POST-TEST KNOWLEDGE CORRECT</th>
<th>% DELTA</th>
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<tr>
<td>When having sex, condoms are the only way to prevent getting HIV and STDs/STIs</td>
<td>15/19 (79%)</td>
<td>15/19 (79%)</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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<td>To prevent pregnancy, condoms work better when used with another contraceptive method.</td>
<td>12/19 (63%)</td>
<td>17/19 (89%)</td>
<td>+26%</td>
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<td>The IUD is 99% effective in preventing pregnancy.</td>
<td>10/19 (53%)</td>
<td>16/19 (84%)</td>
<td>+31%</td>
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<td>The condom is also 99% effective in preventing pregnancy.</td>
<td>5/19 (26%)</td>
<td>9/19 (47%)</td>
<td>+21%</td>
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<td>A copper IUD does not use a hormone and can last up to 10 years.</td>
<td>7/19 (37%)</td>
<td>17/19 (89%)</td>
<td>+52%</td>
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LESSONS LEARNED
DESIGN WITH YOUTH

We need to engage young people in the design and implementation of adolescent health programs. We believe that HCD offers a creative and deeply participatory tool to co-design and prototype with youth for better program design.
WORK WITH YOUTH

Hire and train young people, involving them at all stages of the process.
MEET YOUTH WHERE THEY ARE

An app is not the solution. We need to leverage the digital media that youth are already using rather than developing brand new ones.
BE AGILE, ADAPTABLE

We shifted massively from our original idea. Test assumptions and be open to failing and pivoting rapidly based on what you learn from your users.
SCALABLE & REPLICABLE - HCD can support scaling digital tools into new contexts

RAPID DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT - From wireframe to web-app in two weeks

INCORPORATES YOUTH VOICE - We designed with youth, not just for them.

DATA-DRIVEN: We prototype evaluation tools along with product prototypes
THANK YOU!
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