Gender and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights: Barriers and Opportunities for RH and Family Planning

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Presentation outline

- Understanding Gender in SRH
- Gender Barriers and opportunities for RH and Family planning
- Conclusion .. Action points
Summary of SRH Sub-Saharan Africa

- The main MDG target that may not be met by most African countries is **Goal 5 Improve maternal health:**
  - Lifetime risk of maternal death is 1 in 22 in SS Africa

- Peak HIV prevalence for women 30-34 years
- Men late 30s – early 40s
- Young women between 15-19 are 3 times more likely to be infected than their male counterparts
- Women aged 20-24 are 5.5 likely to be living with HV than the men of their cohort (Kenya 2009)
Summary of SRH Sub-Saharan Africa

- Access to RH especially FP remains a big challenge
- Access to right information is limited... extension services limited
- Access to contraception expands but unmet needs remain high
- Young women more vulnerable...unsafe abortion
- The power to decide use of FP largely remains in the hands of men
Africa Why?

- Health Care Service delivery systems and plans not comprehensive
- Poverty
- Government priorities and budget allocation
- Gender inequalities, barriers and drivers … this will be the focus of the presentation…… how gender has impacted on RH and FP in Africa
Gender

- **Relational** - Socially constructed roles, behaviors, responsibilities
- **Context** - varies within and between cultures, ethnicity, class etc
- **Changes** - Changes over time
- **Hierarchical** - Power relations
- **Institutional** - institutionally structured, supported by values, legislation, religion etc
Gender Issues

Three basic elements to a gender issue:

- A gender gap is a measure of gender inequality on any particular socio-economic indicator.
- Knowledge Gap.. females knowledge of RH and FP is limited despite its availability.. Why? Gender diff in educ , movement, etc
- Gender Discrimination .... results from stereotypical beliefs, trends and different treatment of men and women or boys and girls. Women treated in an inferior manner, men not expected to access SRH services openly,
Gender Issues

Gender oppression is the inferior treatment of one sex.

In gender oppression there is an unequal distribution of resources, and power, there is injustice;

- Most women not to make decisions on use of FP, number of children, sometimes visits to health facilities.
Gender Barriers/ drivers … RH and FP

Home setting.. Gendered Values , practices , beliefs

Community Gendered perceptions , beliefs and practices

Health facility practices , attitudes
Unpacking the HH, Community and Health Institutions in Africa

**RULES**
How things get done

**RESOURCES**
What is used?
What is produced?

**Activities**
What? Who?
Who benefits?

**PEOPLE**
Who is in?
Who is out?

**POWER**
Who decides?
Whose interests are served?
Rules

- **Rules:** *how things get done*
- Household behavior is governed by rules. These may be official and written down as well as unofficial and expressed through norms, values, laws. They determine what is done, how it is done, by whom it will be done and who will benefit. Women/men should, do, access, behave
Activities

- **Activities:** who does what? who gets what? who can claim what?

- In the household; they try to achieve goals by following their own rules. These activities can be productive, distributive, or regulative. It's important to ask who does what? who gets what? who can claim what?
Resources

- **Resources**: who gets resources to do the activities? who gets the benefits from the use of resources?

- Households mobilize and distribute resources. These may be human resources (for example, labour, education, and skills), material ones (food, assets, land, or money), or intangible ones (information, political, clout, goodwill, or contacts).
People

**People:** *who is in? who is out?*

Households has was defining its people and are selective about: who they allow in and whom they exclude; who is assigned various resources, tasks, and responsibilities; who is positioned where in the hierarchy. different household rules are in different cultures determine who will be looked after by in what way, etc. Women and girls low priority...!
Power

- **Power**: *Who decides? Whose interests are served?*

- Households embody relations of authority and control. The unequal distribution of resources and responsibilities, together with the official and unofficial rules which promote and legitimize this distribution, ensure that some household actors have authority and control over others.
Gender issues

- Gender based/inequalities ...
- Sexual violence,
- Differential rights entitlements ..land and resources
- Religious restrictions
- Low levels of inter spousal communications
- Conflict situations..
- Violations of women's rights
- Poverty...
General Low Status of women in Africa

Cultural beliefs and practices ..mukazi twrwara!

Women's battle!! : olutalo lwakyala?

Social networks .. Grand mothers , mother in laws influence..

Women's value and identity .. Predominantly linked to mother hood…

Men's involvement....... points of engagement (resources and decision making)....... may be too late
Interventions

... improving women's status and position and promote gender justice...educ, econ empowerment

Mobilize and fight gendered practices that keep women and girls discriminated and oppressed

Mobilise men as partners in RH and FP