

Adolescent Participation in the All In! Process

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#EndAdolescentAIDS

Adolescent Participation in All In Process

- Adolescent participation in decision making is not perfect in Jamaica.
- There are groups where youth and adolescent involvement is encouraged in communities and schools. We are also organized as part of some non-government organizations.
- It is well known that we should be involved in decisions that affect us. Policy makers talk about it all the time.
- Sometimes we are consulted through focus groups but adolescents are rarely at the table when decisions are being made.

How it Began

- About 30 adolescents and youth came together in April to share our thoughts about the adolescent AIDS epidemic and how it is being implemented.
- Among the group were adolescents in schools, adolescents living with HIV, heterosexual and homosexual adolescents and teenaged mothers.
- We noted that many other adolescents who are affected by AIDS or are vulnerable were not there with us. This was an important missing piece – we know it is very important that all vulnerable young people are given an opportunity to share their views and give recommendations.

How it Began



One of the lively group discussions at our first meeting.

What We Agreed

- We agreed that with all the laws in place and the policies that are “on the books,” adolescents are still being overlooked and are not a strong focus under the current AIDS programme response.
- We agreed to engage other adolescents and young people to make sure that we are not just speaking from our limited understanding but, as much as it is possible, ensure that the views of all vulnerable adolescents are heard.
- We agreed that adolescents were not being given enough space to make decisions, especially when it comes to our health, education and overall development.
- We intend to change that! We agreed to stick together.
- We have kept the discussion going and keep each other updated through a “whatsapp” group that was started the day of our first meeting.

Since Then

- We participated in the National Stakeholder meeting which reviewed the data on adolescents.
- We participated in rating the policy environment and gave very useful feedback to the Government representatives, the members of the All In team and all the adults who were there.
- We now have three adolescent representatives and one youth representative on the All In Steering Committee. We are very committed and excited about our role in the Country Assessment and beyond.

What's Next

- We are now involved in the setting up of an adolescent technical working group not just for All In but as part of the national AIDS response team.
- We will be meeting regularly to improve our knowledge of the AIDS response and have discussions so that we can be ready to give our full participation at Steering Committee meetings.
- We will be part of a national stakeholder workshop that will make decisions regarding phase 2 of the Country Assessment. We will ensure that adolescents from vulnerable populations are taken into consideration for the decisions that will be made.
- We also will be an important part of the monitoring of All In as it moves from assessment to strategy.

THANK YOU



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