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| <b>CATEGORY</b>            | Track A: Cross-Cutting and Policy<br>A9: Strategies to enhance human capacity in prevention, care and/or treatment services.  |
| <b>TITLE</b>               | <b>Quality Education as a Necessary Building Block for HIV Prevention</b>   |
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| <b>LOCATION OF PROGRAM</b> | East Africa (Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya)   |
| <b>KEY WORDS</b>           | Education, Quality, HIV Prevention  |

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **CONTEXT**

The challenge of providing quality education for all OVC is integral to human development in contexts severely affected by the AIDS. Beyond acquisition of certain sets of information, the first need of any person, and especially in conditions of vulnerability, is to become fully conscious of oneself and one's dignity. If education does not respond at this level, it fails.

AVSI understands quality education as an all-embracing experience in which learners are introduced to a process of discovery of themselves, the meaning of reality and to their freedom in making decisions.

The challenge to offer such an educational experience is particularly urgent in East Africa because education is generally reduced to mere acquisition of behaviors and knowledge. With the urgent need for success in HIV prevention, a program of truly effective education is absolutely necessary if prevention efforts are to have significant impact. For this reason, AVSI has included elements of quality education within the framework of a PEPFAR OVC program

The target populations are teachers and administrators from schools where AVSI supported OVC are in attendance, as well as social workers from AVSI and the 120 CBO partners in Uganda, Rwanda, and Kenya.

### **APPROACH**

AVSI utilizes *The Risk of Education* curriculum, developed after years of experience. All participants evaluate the training and receive follow-up.

The basic curriculum identifies four key factors of quality education: 1) the respect for **tradition** as the starting point of personal identity and any search for knowledge or meaning; 2) the relationship with an **educator** as a point of reference that does not offer pre-defined solutions, but engages youth’s freedom in a personal discovery; 3) **personal verification**, as learners’ initiative to discover the link between what they are taught and their deepest needs, questions and experiences; and 4) **freedom** as the capacity to recognize and pursue what corresponds most adequately.

## **OUTCOMES and CHALLENGES**

- 1) *The Risk of Education* was printed in English and French and distributed to local partners.
- 2) 1,500+ teachers and educators in Uganda have been trained.
- 3) AVSI has received consistently positive feedback and requests for further training.
- 4) To approach HIV prevention at this level is a great challenge. Teachers need to be educated to this understanding of the educational process and first engage themselves in personal verification of the issues at stake in HIV prevention and human sexuality. This is a delicate process that takes time but is crucial if teachers will become educators capable of guiding youth along this same path of personal growth.

## **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1) Specific HIV prevention programs should be designed as experiences of quality education, aimed at self-discovery rather than passive acquisition of behavioral models.
- 2) Training programs for educators are of utmost importance in order to change their understanding of authority.