

Hora H: HIV/AIDS prevention through young men's movements in Brazilian *favelas*

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Issues: Despite major reductions of national rates of fertility in Brazil in the past 20 years, specific rates among low-income young women (15-19) have increased 26%. For low-income young males, homicide has become the major cause of death in the urban setting. The major reasons are related to ways these youngsters are socialized and the way their gender roles are constructed.

Description: A study done by Instituto Promundo in Brazilian *favelas* showed that non-equitable men are less likely to use condoms by 57%, compared to their gender-equitable peers (Promundo & Horizons Program, 2002). Based on this result, JohnSnowBrasil, Promundo and SSL International, in partnership with two young men organizations from Brasilia and Rio de Janeiro, developed a social marketing strategy to reduce gender inequality. The three components of the strategy are: condoms accessibility, gender-equitable lifestyle promotion and youth employability. Youth helped in the creation of a new condom brand, "Hora H" ("In the heat of the moment"). The Brazilian Hip Hop movement, which represents more than 1.500.000 youngsters in favelas, embraced the project, promoting HIV/AIDS prevention messages.

Lessons learned: Working with young men to reach other men has been effective in promoting Hora H strategy. Mixing messages about gender equity with issues that calls youth' interest (friends, music, etc.) reduces perceived barriers for adoption of safe sex behaviours. The Hip Hop movement and Hora H are also raising awareness for other social problems among young men, such as unemployment, drug use and equal social rights.

Recommendation: Public policies directed at reducing HIV/AIDS among youth should be aimed at promoting involvement of young men in gender-equity, reproductive and sexual health issues. Since adolescence is the time in life when traditional male lifestyles and other gender interaction are rehearsed, equitable young male role models can introduce a different lifestyle based on justice, attitudes, respect and responsibility.