



Sustainability from Square One: Building a Long-Term Pregnancy Prevention Plan

Alexandra Ricks, Somala Diby, Elsa Falkenburger, Janine Zweig, and Nan Astone

WHAT IS PASS?

Promoting Adolescent Sexual Health and Safety (PASS) is an aspirational adolescent pregnancy prevention program that empowers youth and their caretakers to challenge gendered and societal norms, build healthy relationships, and connect them to local health services. PASS is delivered in a community-based setting to 1) reach youth who are disengaged with school, 2) make content relevant, and 3) ensure content is delivered by trusted adults who can reinforce messages outside of program hours.

THREE CURRICULA

Sisters Rising and *Brothers Rising* were created to empower teens to be **critical thinkers** so they can make healthy and informed decisions about their bodies, relationships, personal development, self-expression, and identity.

Parents Matter is an evidence-based program for parents and guardians of youth that aims to give parents the knowledge, skills, comfort, and **confidence to communicate with their children about sexuality and sexual risk reduction.**

TARGETS YOUTH AND ADULTS

Target population includes black youth ages 13-19 and their adult care-givers in and near D.C. Housing Authority (DCHA) sites.

INTERACTIVE SESSIONS

- *Sisters Rising* and *Brothers Rising*: Ten consecutive weeks of 2-hour sessions.
- Small group discussions, role playing, take-home exercises, sisterhood, brotherhood, and bonding, skill building, and a field trip, to a local health clinic (Community Health Center).
- *Parents Matter Program*. Five weekly 2.5-3 hour sessions among groups of 12-18 parents/caregivers.

Sisters Rising and *Brothers Rising* draw on the *Compendium of HIV Prevention Interventions with Evidence of Effectiveness* (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), *Advocates for Youth*, and *Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)*. Both curricula were developed by Urban Institute staff and consultants in collaboration with resident leaders from the Benning Terrace DCHA community (the neighborhood in which PASS was first piloted), UC-San Diego researchers, local DC rape crisis experts, Sasha Bruce Youthwork, Men Can Stop Rape, and DC Housing Authority staff.

The *Parents Matter Program* is a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) evidence-based program.



The PASS Program's Vision of Sustainability

The goal is a **network of community members**—co-facilitators, caretakers, and youth groups—that share a **common framework of what healthy and safe sex and relationships are**, where the educators are embedded in the community, and the knowledge from PASS programming is sustained beyond the duration of the programs. We believe this can be achieved by starting to think about sustainability early on, during the planning phase, and by including a **saturation model**—where a majority of community members are exposed to programming— as a key feature of sustaining the program and its intended outcomes.



BUILDING LASTING, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The first step towards sustainability was building **relationships** with key partners who 1) maintain and **spread the knowledge** from PASS programming and 2) are capable of **sustaining the effort financially**. Key partners include:

- **D.C. Housing Authority**, both administrators and on the ground staff (such as the Community Navigators)
- **Community leaders** from the properties' Resident Councils
- **Trusted community members as paid co-facilitators**; 2-3 male and 2-3 female co-facilitators per-site
- **Parents/other trusted adults**, engaged through participation in Parents Matter
- **Community Health Centers**

"[I was comfortable because the community co-facilitator] watched us grow up. I looked at her like she's my mother or auntie or something."
—Female youth participant



CREATING A SATURATION MODEL

PASS builds sustainability using a **saturation model** within each of 4 housing developments. Programming should reach the majority of kids AND a meaningful portion of the trusted adults (either as co-facilitators or through Parents Matter).

- 4 cohorts of 30 youth in Brothers/Sisters Rising per-site, in order to reach most youth aged 13-19 in the community
- A cohort of 12-18 adults in Parents Matter at each site
- Several co-facilitators, recruiters, and other engaged adults from the community helping recruit, implement programming, and support operations

"The stuff I learn working in PASS I use with my kids. Three boys... so I need to know what to tell them."
—Facilitator



IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH A COMMUNITY-ENGAGED PARTNER

Programming is administered by the community co-facilitators along with a service provider partner. Beyond hiring and training the co-facilitators, the **service provider engages with the community** to build long-term relationships that can extend beyond the grant period.

- Participating in community life and events, such as holiday parties, Halloween festivities, and Thanksgiving basket giveaways
- Hosting family game nights and open houses
- Providing resources as part of community education and resource fairs

"It takes time to build trust. I think that kids in these kind of neighborhoods are used to programs coming in and out and they've been bothered about a bunch of programs. And I think they kind of have the mentality that...[we're] not going to be around anyway!" —Facilitator

IN THEIR WORDS: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Participants shared their perceptions of the programming and the facilitators in **focus groups** following the 10-week program.

Youth discussed their comfortability with the program facilitators and co-facilitators: *"I don't open myself up to people I don't know like that. Usually I just sit there speechless, looking around. But with them, I have only known them for a minute but I feel like I've known them my whole life."*

Some reported **sharing the information** learned in PASS with others in their community, for example:

- *"I told boys in school about STDs because they are really sexually active."* – Female youth participant
- *"I told a girlfriend about the birth control thing... I was telling her about the different kinds of pills."* – Male youth participant

Youth shared that they joined the program when they were encouraged to by adults in their community with whom they had pre-existing relationships. For example: *"[A community leader] always has activities for us around the community"* and *"I always join groups when she asks me to."* – Male youth participants

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

1. **Building these relationships** can be challenging; it's important to plan far in advance to solidify the roles and staff prior to programming
2. Resident co-facilitators, resident council presidents and vice presidents, and community navigators play a **key role** in recruitment, retention, and parental engagement/permission
3. Partners agree that **building trust** is crucial but takes time; youth participants confirm their comfortability with facilitators who came from— or made an effort to connect with— their communities
4. Information from **PASS programming spread beyond** the involved cohorts; youth told friends and family about things they learned