

CHARTING THE JOURNEY

Shifting young women's HIV risk perception with journaling

Background

Young women in South Africa, while being significantly more at-risk of acquiring HIV, are not focused on HIV prevention as a meaningful priority (AVAC, Upstream, Final Mile, 2019). A successful HIV prevention strategy therefore means supporting young women in their journey to navigate healthy sexual behaviours and relationship management overall.

Informed by this research, the My Journey Adolescent Girls and Young Women Programme, funded by the Global Fund, developed the My Journey Journal to:

- Enable them to track their own journey through the programme
- Show the services available to them in the community and create demand for services
- Provide key health and wellness information, as well as risk reduction techniques
- Incentivise and support treatment adherence and engagement with services
- Empower them to identify their goals, barriers to achieving these goals and make plans for achieving these goals.

Aspirational design



Reflection page example



Tracker page example



Health information pages example



Description

The journal was designed to inspire and inform: with key health messaging, aspirational quotes, prompt pages to guide reflection and planning, trackers and blank pages for doodling. It was divided into thematic areas:

- Me (goals, services & notes)
- My body (health & wellness)
- My mind (mental health & feelings)
- My heart (relationships)
- My work (education & career)
- My money (finances & budgeting)
- My world (volunteering & activism)
- My power (motivation)

A local services directory was included in a pocket at the back of the journal.

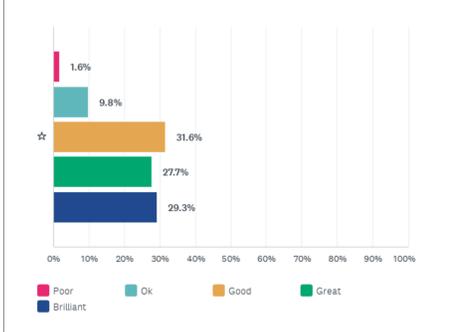
It was printed in three tranches and distributed to **240,798** young women between 15 and 24 from June 2020 to January 2022. The content and design of the journal was informed at every stage of its development by validation workshops and feedback surveys.

"I love it. It is helping me finding my journey, setting my goals, taking care of my body, the book has the services that I could use if I need help. I could say the book is very helpful because it is also guiding me of how to eat healthy and being healthy, how to take care of my future, job seeking... I have also used this book for others who had asked for advice from me with their issues and it feels great that they ended up getting the help they were seeking, meaning this book is not only helpful to me only but to others too."

Lessons learned

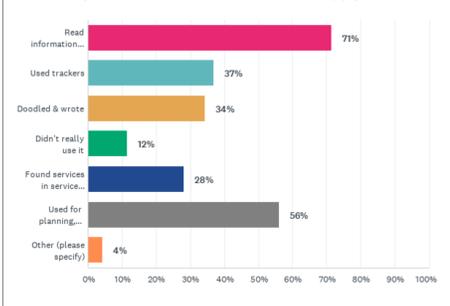
An online feedback survey (n=300) found that almost 90% rated the journal either good, great or brilliant.

Overall, how do you rate the My Journey Journal?



Most respondents said they read the information pages (72%), with 56% saying they used it for planning and goal-setting. Use of the trackers (36%), the blank pages (35%) and finding services (29%) was evenly spread. Qualitatively, the journal was successful in providing information, making women feel special, motivating and helping with planning and goal setting.

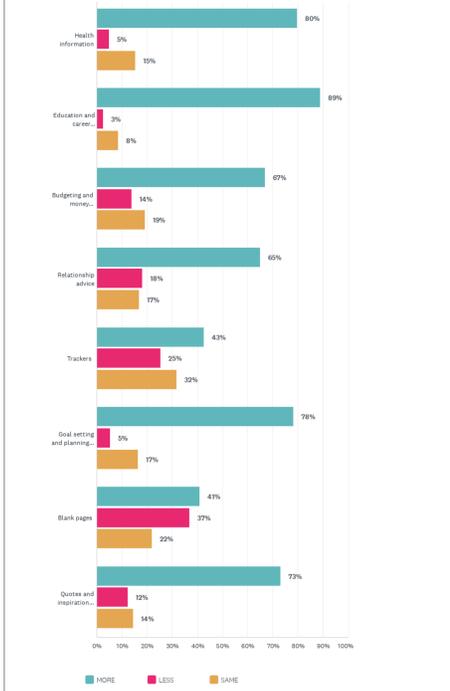
How did you use the Journal? Tick all that apply



We asked young women to tell us which sections they wanted more or less of and what they felt should stay the same. The vast majority wanted more of everything – with Education and Career Advice (89%), Health Information (80%) and Goal Setting and Planning (77%) coming out top. Only 41% said they wanted more blank pages and 43% wanted more trackers – a result at odds with the comments where many respondents asked that we put in more blank pages to make it more like a conventional diary.

We asked young women if they would use the journal if we digitized some of it and the response was largely positive with 76% saying 'Yes, definitely' and only 9% saying 'No, I don't have data or access to the internet'.

What would you like to have more of and less of in the Journal?



"The journal is really great and it is really helping me a lot and I would it love if more girls to have it even if they are not in the program."

"It helped me realize that women have the power to run the world and that anything is possible if you're determined."

Conclusions

Overall, the survey revealed that the journal is well-received and appreciated by adolescent girls and young women on the My Journey programme. It is a tool that is used and valued and could continue to play a role in engaging and retaining young people on the programme.

Engaging young women in the Journal development from the beginning through an iterative process, lead to a richer and more effective product. Based on the survey, NACOSA made the following changes to the third and final tranche of the journal:

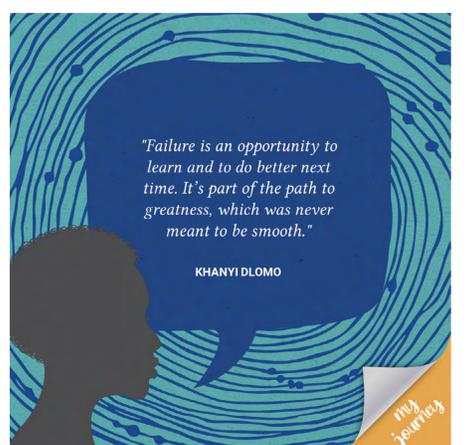
- More information on maternal health and parenting and menstrual hygiene.
- Provide more career and study support content, as well as more on sexuality and gender in the relationships section.
- Increase the number of blank pages for reflection.
- Provide a space for a photo so that young women can personalize their Journal further.
- Include tips and tools on advocacy and activism (particularly on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights)
- Digitize some of the content for use on the Myjourney landing page and in social media

Vulnerable adolescent girls and young women are in need of motivation, inspiration and advice to shift their perception of HIV risk. The My Journey Journal will be made more widely available by digitising some content, adapting it for relevance for all young people, and possible distribution in schools.

Learnings will be applied to other programming with young people, to potentially incentivise programme sign-up and PrEP adherence.

"Every teenager must receive the journal beginning of the year, this could help educate us more."

Digital adaptation of the journal content



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