



Background

In Uganda, delayed disclosure, stigma, poverty, and the absence of parental support contribute to lower adherence rates for adolescents living with HIV (ALHIV) compared to their adult counterparts (MOH 2020).

The USAID/Uganda Better Outcomes for Children and Youth in Eastern and Northern Uganda (BOCY) program service package mitigates the risks and impacts of HIV and violence on orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). Peer support groups strengthen coping skills for ALHIV but miss opportunities to engage caregivers in supporting their broader health and social welfare needs. [World Education, Inc.'s Bantwana Initiative](#) has responded to caregivers' concerns with the **Peer Support Group *Plus*** family-centered package, which includes:

- Economic supports** to mitigate the financial impacts of HIV
- Positive parenting** to strengthen communication and family bonding
- ART treatment literacy** to improve understanding and appreciation of the importance of adherence on adolescent health and resilience

Methods

From April – December 2019, an integrated community and clinic team:

Delivered the **Peer Support Group *Plus*** package to 132 caregivers and 138 adolescents at six high-volume sites.

Reinforced learning through **home visits** and monitored and tracked resilience, adherence, and viral load testing through **case management**.

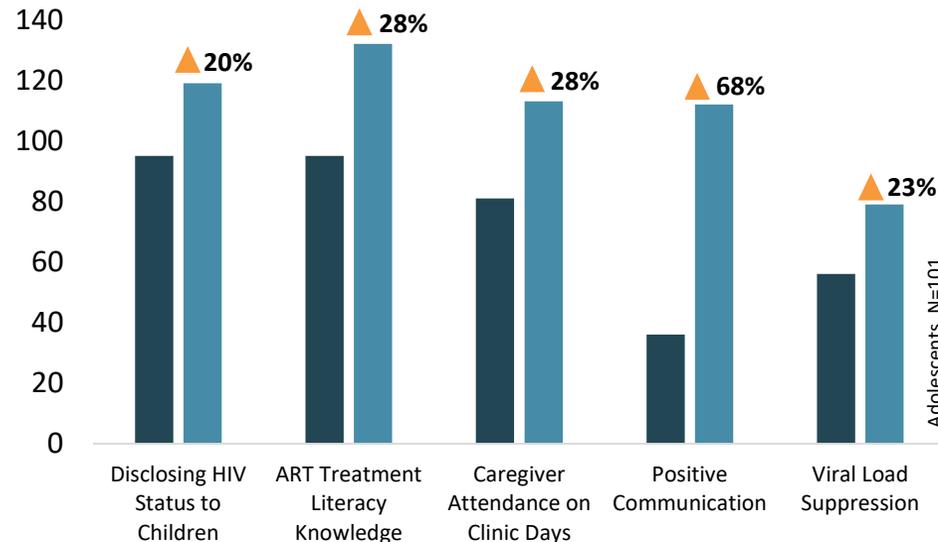
Sensitized key stakeholders around ALHIV adherence and protection challenges and coordinated actions to reduce stigma and bolster safety in clinics, schools, and communities during monthly meetings.



Photo credit: AVSI, Uganda

Family-centered approaches that prioritize the socioeconomic needs of caregivers and their children – *beyond HIV and health* – should be considered in all efforts to support adolescent adherence and resilience.

Results



Lessons Learned

- With the right supports, caregivers are important allies for ALHIV adherence and resilience
- Stronger bonding and improved communication in families bolster safe disclosure
- Addressing caregivers' financial concerns increases attendance in parenting and ART treatment literacy sessions
- Involving clinical partners at the outset builds clinic buy-in and ensures a continuum of support