

In 2017 Dance4Life together with our international partner network and young people worldwide, implemented a new organisational strategy and redesigned outreach model. We revised our partnership structure and decided to transition to a pure social franchise with the Empowerment Model as our core product.

This shift in focus and renewed clarity reinforces our goal of long term scale and the widest possible impact. It also strengthens our mission, the reason we exist: to empower young people and help them develop the personal leadership skills they need for healthy sexual choices and relationships.

To fully understand the success and implications of this transition, we decided to conduct extensive pilot research into 1) the Empowerment Model for young people and 2) the Social Franchise approach in the following countries: Russia, Nepal, Tanzania and Ghana.

1. THE EMPOWERMENT MODEL

We conducted outcome research in each pilot country, with the aim to investigate the impact of the Empowerment Model. It consists of an innovative sexuality education curriculum (the Journey4Life) focusing on empowering young people (10-19 years old) through a set of competencies (socio emotional learning competencies) which foster healthy sexual behaviours, and is plugged into an enabling environment based on available, accessible and youth friendly services and community support (Figure 1). The Journey4Life is contextualized for and with the franchisees.

Because of the relatively short time span of implementation, research focused mainly on assessing

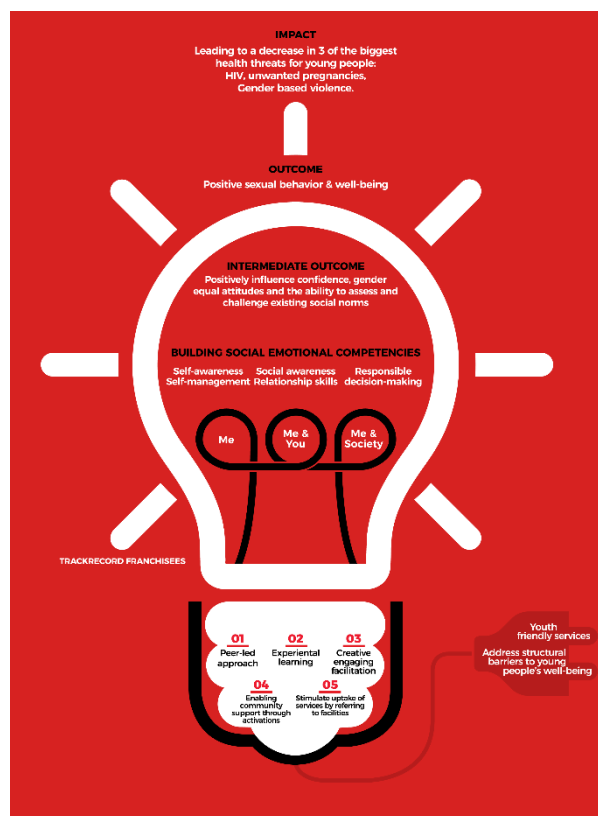


Figure 1. Dance4Life Empowerment Model

changes in behaviours, intentions (as strong predictor for future behaviours), confidence in acting in a positive way in relation to sexuality, gender equal attitudes, awareness of social norms and willingness to change harmful ones. Research tools were adapted in line with the contextualisation of the Journey4Life.

Key Findings

Findings from the outcome research are positive and encouraging. Across all countries the model increases young people's intention and/or behaviour to get tested for to HIV and STIs, though comparison between countries is difficult due to variances in focus of the contextualized Journey4Life.

Changes in behaviours are especially visible in Tanzania and Ghana, with the biggest impact in Tanzania (the last pilot). In Nepal positive changes in intentions to perform healthy sexual behaviours are noticeable. Behaviours investigated were use of contraceptives, refusal of unwanted sex, STIs and HIV testing, action against violence bullying and discrimination.

Confidence increased in Ghana, Nepal and Tanzania, especially when looking at positive sexuality (discussing

contraception use and STIs status with their partner, asking their partner to have sex and carrying condoms).

Gender equal attitudes increased across all countries. In Ghana, Nepal and Tanzania young people are more able to critically reflect on social norms related to SRHR and about their role in changing harmful ones. In Russia and Nepal more young people also feel able to influence the change of norms within their family/household or in the community, while in Ghana less feel able to do it, highlighting the need to address community support more in this case.

Table 1. Key results

Outcomes	Country	% of increase after implementation
Uptake of services	Tanzania	17%
	Tanzania	21%
Testing for STIs	Russia	13%
	Ghana	5%
	Tanzania	32%
Testing for HIV	Russia	23%
	Ghana	5%
	Tanzania	8%
Use of contraceptives	Ghana	8%
	Russia	15%
Confidence towards healthy sexuality	Nepal	25%
	Ghana	24%
	Tanzania	49%
Positive gender attitudes	Nepal	31%
	Ghana	24%
	Russia	8%
	Nepal	19%
Awareness of social norms	Ghana	20%
	Nepal	31%
Influence in changing norms	Russia	21%

Overall positive results are visible in relation to SRHR. Agency in using services can still be fostered more in both Ghana and Tanzania (where it was assessed) where difficulties on referral to health services encountered by Champions4Life (Ghana) and lack of accessibility of them (Tanzania) were found.

2. THE SOCIAL FRANCHISE APPROACH

We commissioned RAND Europe to carry out a process evaluation. The evaluation focused on the processes through which we support our franchisees in the four pilot countries, and how in turn the franchisees support the delivery of the Journey4Life by the Champions4Life.

The evaluation aim was to develop understanding on what works well and what could work better to support the further development of the social franchising approach. Below we present broad findings on the two headline research questions.

1. How effective is Dance4Life at supporting its franchisees?

On the whole, franchisees perceived Dance4Life's support as effective. The start-up package and support for implementation are sufficient for the franchisees to implement the Empowerment model, and the contextualisation of the model is also seen as successful. More extensive translation and piloting of the Journey4Life before implementation was also suggested.

Franchisees tried to engage potential funders, but found a key barrier was convincing them about the impact of the model and its value for money. This is no surprise as at the time of this study outcome research was still underway.

2. How effective are the franchisees at supporting Champions4Life in the aims of the programme?

Champions4Life reported that they were effectively supported by franchisees. They had positive feedback about the training and ongoing support, saying it helped them become effective facilitators.

Areas for improvements included more explicitly connecting SRHR content to the Journey4Life activities during training and including training topics such as managing large groups. Champions4Life also sometimes mentioned facing challenges concerning finding sufficient time to deliver sessions and referring participants (Agents4Change) to health services.

3. Cross-cutting finding on the Journey4Life

12 sessions of 60 to 90 minutes holds as the ideal standard. At the same time, Champions4Life highlighted recruiting schools can be a challenge as well as finding suitable locations for sessions within schools, especially as timing of sessions was affected by the school curriculum.

Barriers for participants seeking health services for consultations on sexual health are: (i) they would still have to meet the cost of treatment after a free consultation, (ii) health services are sometimes too far to travel to and (iii) services are unfriendly and/or understaffed.

CONCLUSIONS AND FOLLOW-UP

Overall findings show that the Empowerment Model has positive effects on young people and that franchisees are satisfied with the social franchising approach.

As the pilots took place over a period of almost one full year, quite some recommendations following implementation have been taken up. For example, the Journey4Life has been improved, with more SRHR content explicitly linked to the activities. Similarly, the Champions4Life training has been adjusted accordingly.

The contextualization and translation processes have also been improved and this has resulted in more thorough and effective workshops.

2019 FOCUS

In 2019 many other suggestions and recommendations will be taken up, such as improving the franchise offer (especially around ongoing support for franchisees) and strengthening the referral system for young people.

Since Dance4Life's main focus lies with empowering young people through an innovative sexuality education curriculum, we recruit and work with partners with a strong track record of working with young people on issues of SRHR. They have access to structured settings for young people (e.g. schools, youth clubs), participate in existing youth and/or SRHR networks, task forces or alliances, and have extensive experience working with local providers of youth friendly SRHR services and fostering community support.

DANCE4LIFE CAN BE PROUD OF THE POSITIVE AND PROMISING RESULTS FROM THE PILOTS; THEY ALLOW FOR REPLICATION AND SCALE-UP, AND PROVIDE A STRONG BASIS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.

The findings also highlight the timeliness and importance of investing in longterm, rigorous impact research alongside wide-scale implementation. **2019 promises to be a fruitful year.**

