

# Leeds PrEPARED

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# Disclosures

- Received UKI educational sponsorship from Gilead Sciences Ltd to attend BASHH / BHIVA national conference
- Received fees from MSD to organise and chair the local segment of their Webex meeting; Journeys in HIV (November 2017)

# Project background

- PrEP awareness and uptake in heterosexual African communities remains low
- Our survey in 2017 revealed that 81% of respondents at an African football tournament were unaware of PrEP
- PHE HIV Prevention Innovation Fund
- Aim to increase awareness of HIV PrEP in African communities using trained community champions
- PrEPARED believed that HIV prevention messages would be delivered more effectively by community insiders who share language and culture

# Method

Champions were selected from Zimbabwe, Cameroon, South Sudan, Kenya and Nigeria on the basis of a perceived high risk of HIV infection, as defined by high prevalence of HIV and STIs (local GUMCAD codes)

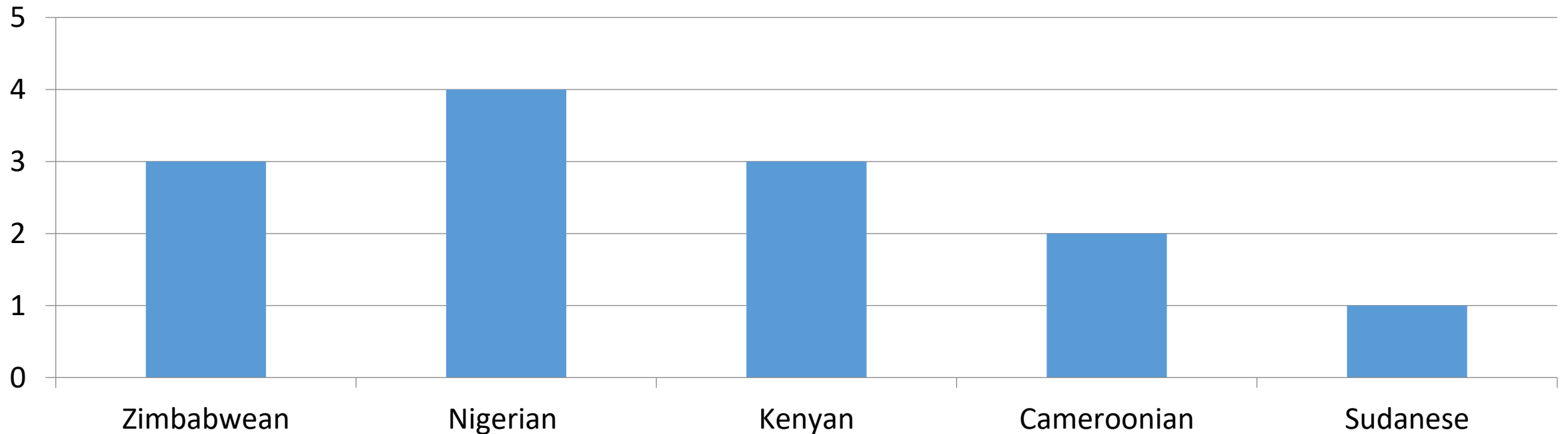
- PrEPARED hosted the following events:
- An open day as a community launch
- 2 day training for 13 champions
- 2 mid project review
- 1 day final evaluation, divided into focused group discussion and one to one interviews
- Champions were given a manual and Q&A booklet

- Over a 3 month period, the champions organised and delivered messages to the wider community
- They could chose a style that was most favourable
- The project team were on hand to provide support
- Returned questionnaires, group feedback sessions and one-to-one interviews produced data for analysis

# Results – champions

- 13 community champions
- 6 males aged between 49 – 65
- 7 females aged between 40 – 54

**N = 13**



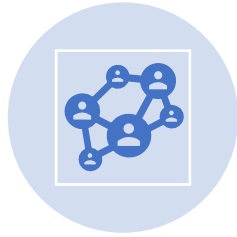
# Results – project outcomes

- 326 face to face PrEP sessions
- With innovation this number is larger
- 127 completed questionnaires
- 30% were 35-44 age group
- 65 % female
- 20 different country of origin
- 85% had never heard of PrEP
- 44% stated that they would take PrEP without any qualifications, rising to 61% if
  - Their sexual risk changed
  - PrEP was freely available
- 65% stated stigma as a major barrier to PrEP uptake

## Innovative ways

- WhatsApp groups
- Facebook posting
- Soup kitchen discussion
- Women's group discussion
- Mentioning it at events, weddings, church gatherings
- Part of pre-marital counselling
- Keeping leaflets to act as conversation starter
- Transnational benefits

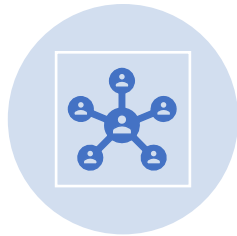
# Methodological findings



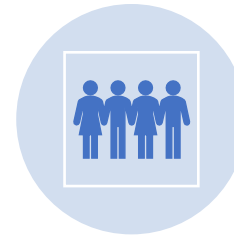
As each community had their own champion, they could speak in comfort and familiarity of their language and cultural norms



The informality of the model worked well, as PrEP information reached new audiences through innovative approaches by champions



There persist a degree of mistrust of the establishment in these communities, champions can bridge the gap



Target community face economic and social disadvantage, retention of volunteers without adequate remuneration would proof futile



For maximum impact, project cycle should be extended, as it took the champions time to work out how best to operate



Champions felt empowered and appreciated the new skills and knowledge that PrEPARED provided

# Limitations

- Survey forms frequently changed the dynamic of conversation
- The use of social media made it impossible to say exactly how many people heard the PrEP messages
- Given the complexities between knowledge and behaviour, it would be incorrect to infer that all those who endorsed the promotion or use of PrEP will actually use PrEP



# Lessons learnt

- Low PrEP knowledge across target audience (85% of 127 completed surveys)
- Black African communities have huge internal diversity
- Stereotype about trends in HIV persist in UK, this disadvantage individuals in terms of their perception of HIV risk
- PrEP has a role in allowing women to protect themselves from HIV and domestic violence
- Generational gap exist due to stigma, so targeted HIV prevention is needed
- Continuity and sustainability are implied due to relational and social emplacement of champions within their communities



**Thank you**