

The DREAMS Initiative is an ambitious partnership to reduce HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women in 10 Sub-Saharan African Countries. The goal of DREAMS is to help girls develop into Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe Women.

The Bantwana Initiative is currently implementing DREAMS programming in four countries: Mozambique, Swaziland, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Across all four countries, DREAMS will be layered onto existing programming for orphans and vulnerable children and will focus on strengthening comprehensive services for adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) to reduce their risk of HIV.

In Uganda, WEI/Bantwana equips AGYW with an integrated package of life skills (HIV prevention, adolescent reproductive and sexual health, and child protection) and economic strengthening interventions. Through Girls First Clubs, DREAMS interventions will build the social assets and agency of adolescent girls so that they can protect themselves from HIV and abuse while building their financial literacy, entrepreneurship skills, and market-linked career guidance skills.

Caregivers and girls are supported to enroll in savings groups that build household resiliency. Additionally, parenting groups for caregivers and teens strengthen intergenerational communication and build on positive parenting practices to help caregivers and adolescents discuss sensitive topics like reproductive health and HIV prevention. Parasocial workers who are trained in community case management will help to ensure that girls and caregivers are linked to critical services along the HIV continuum, as well as other important socioeconomic services.

UGANDA



MOZAMBIQUE

WEI/Bantwana delivers an integrated package of comprehensive services that address the age-specific needs of over 27,000 in- and out-of-school AGYW and their families in three provinces of Mozambique. Key interventions include: develop and disseminate information to enhance linkages and referrals between community, school and Adolescent Friendly Health Services; provide education subsidies to support vulnerable girls to stay in school, transition to secondary school, and help reintegrate drop-outs; and establish girls' clubs to equip in-school AGYW with information on HIV prevention, reproductive health, leadership, and life skills so they can exert control over their own lives, protect themselves from HIV, and participate meaningfully and effectively in their societies.

In addition, caregivers are encouraged to participate in savings groups to increase economic resilience, which helps keep girls in school, and parenting groups to overcome communication barriers on discussing sexuality and sexual health risks with their children. Throughout this model, a case management referral system will be strengthened to follow up on the most vulnerable girls and families with home visits and improved coordination of service providers.

ZIMBABWE

In Zimbabwe, the DREAMS project empowers 3,000 young women through the provision of a comprehensive care package including entrepreneurship, mentoring, life and employability skills, vocational skills trainings, financial literacy, sexual and reproductive education, and protection services from gender based violence. Internal Savings and Lending (ISAL) clubs are established to support savings and give girls and young women financial literacy skills. Entrepreneurship skills assist them to start their own small businesses while a Work Readiness model linked with internships in private and public sector companies prepares girls for employment in the broader job market. All girls in the program are trained in a curriculum for gender-based violence education and awareness and adolescent sexual reproductive health education and HIV prevention.

SWAZILAND

In Swaziland, Bantwana supports the delivery of DREAMS programming as a sub-grantee to PACT, reaching 2,550 girls and young women ages 10–24 with life skills and health and education services in Lubombo region. Core DREAMS platforms include: in-school and out of school adolescent girls clubs run by Youth Volunteers trained on the Stepping Stones curriculum; health clubs attached to local clinics for HIV-positive adolescent boys and girls; referrals for testing, treatment and support for positive adolescents; tracking of positive adolescents on treatment and adherence to treatment; and school block grants to support school fees for at-risk girls.

Determined Resilient Empowered AIDS-Free Mentored Safe