



WORLD EDUCATION'S BANTWANA INITIATIVE IN ZIMBABWE

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Zimbabwe has the fifth highest HIV prevalence in sub-Saharan Africa at 15%, and 1.4 million people are living with HIV, including 170,000 children, equating to 4% of the global total. Despite significant reductions in HIV prevalence, rates of infection remain high among key sub-populations, including adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) aged 15-24 years, due to various structural factors such as poverty, gender-based violence, inter-generational relationships, and limited financial and social literacy.

In 2015, with funding from PEPFAR, Gates Foundation and Nike Foundation, USAID launched the **DREAMS** (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe) Initiative, an ambitious partnership to reduce HIV infection among AGYW ages 15-24 in 10 sub-Saharan African countries by 40% in two years. World Education Inc.'s Bantwana Initiative (WEI/Bantwana) is implementing the two-year DREAMS program in Zimbabwe in three HIV hot spots: Bulawayo, Gweru and Mazowe. These districts were selected on the basis of high HIV burden, high population of AGYW, and the high risk factors for HIV amid low coverage from interventions.

WEI/BANTWANA'S PROGRAM FOCUS

Under the DREAMS Initiative, WEI/Bantwana seeks to focus on the structural drivers of HIV affecting AGYW through (1) comprehensive GBV prevention and care services; (2) social protection services that includes education and parenting interventions; and (3) economic empowerment and resilience building. WEI/Bantwana and partners are using a 'layered approach' ensuring that each adolescent girl or young woman receives a core package of services that tackles factors that exacerbate the HIV epidemic. These factors include AGYW who drop out or are at risk of dropping out of school due to poverty; those forced into early marriage due to harmful religious and cultural practices; teenage mothers; young women with no vocational/life skills; young women in tertiary institutions; those exposed to GBV; and those with limited access to HIV-related services.

GBV PREVENTION AND CARE SERVICES

WEI/Bantwana's GBV Prevention and Care model encompasses health, legal services, psycho-social support and counselling, and emergency shelters for girls 15-19 years old.

SOCIAL PROTECTION INTERVENTIONS

WEI/Bantwana's Social Protection Interventions focus on formal and non-formal education for vulnerable girls and strengthening family and caregiver responses to HIV and AIDS issues.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND RESILIENCE BUILDING

WEI/Bantwana's economic empowerment interventions are designed to reduce girls' vulnerability to HIV/AIDS by giving them the opportunity to be empowered through income stability.



GBV PREVENTION AND CARE SERVICES

STOP THE BUS: This innovation is a multi-sectoral outreach intervention designed to bring GBV prevention messages to community members in their local areas and immediately link them to medical, legal and counseling support services through a bus. It seeks to increase awareness of GBV services by increasing the demand and uptake of support services within their own community.

HEALTH: WEI/Bantwana is collaborating with specialized health centers to ensure that the survivors of GBV are able to access post-rape medical examinations, emergency contraception, STI screening, and HIV testing as well as post exposure prophylaxis. WEI/Bantwana is also working with the Ministry of Health and Child Care to strengthen the capacity of health workers with trainings to provide these post-GBV care services to victims.

TRANSPORT VOUCHER SYSTEM: Vouchers are distributed to survivors to address prohibitive transport costs related to accessing needed medical services. The vouchers are accessed in the communities through community volunteers, community case workers and through the DREAMS partners.

DROP-IN CENTERS: Emergency drop-in centres have been established to offer psychosocial support services to AGYW through therapeutic support and peer-to-peer support groups. AGYW are also linked to online information services. WEI/Bantwana is working with Childline Zimbabwe to ensure that survivors are linked to these centres for treatment and care.

EMERGENCY SHELTER: WEI/Bantwana has established survivor friendly shelters to provide GBV survivors with safe, emergency/temporary accommodation, counselling and basic legal advice. At these shelters, the GBV survivors are linked with health facilities for HIV and STI screening, PEP and clinical counselling. The shelters also aim to create safe spaces for AGYW to support each other, identify common problems and solutions, and offer each other peer-to-peer support as well as being counselled by a trained Social Worker. The older AGYW, aged 18-24 year old, are also linked to economic strengthening programs to enhance their livelihoods opportunities and financial literacy.

SOCIAL PROTECTION INTERVENTIONS

EDUCATION WEI/Bantwana's focus is to ensure vulnerable girls stay in school and transition from primary to secondary school. The project also supports the reintegration of out-of-school girls back into the formal school system. For girls between 15 and 24 years, who are out of school and cannot be reintegrated into the formal school system, WEI/Bantwana has a school-based, non-formal Part-time & Continuing Education (PTCE) programme which provides AGYW with flexible platforms for learning.

PARENTING: As part of WEI/Bantwana's efforts to strengthen family and caregiver responses to HIV and AIDS issues, WEI/Bantwana has introduced the Family Matters! Program (FMP) Curriculum to promote parent-child dialogues on sexuality and sex risk reduction. FMP is an evidence-based, family focused, small group HIV prevention intervention for parents, guardians, and other primary caregivers of adolescents. Parenting sessions are being used to capacitate parents/caregivers to effectively define and convey their values and expectations about age-appropriate and safe sexual behavior, and communicate important messages about HIV, sexually transmitted infections, and pregnancy prevention among AGYW. FMP has two curricula, FMP and FMP1, for caregivers of pre-adolescents and adolescents, respectively.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND RESILIENCE BUILDING

Economic empowerment interventions are designed to reduce AGYW vulnerability to HIV/AIDS by giving girls the opportunity to be empowered through income stability. Through DREAMS, WEI/Bantwana is building the AGYW's economic resilience and expanding economic opportunities for these young women through a comprehensive empowerment package that includes employability skills development, vocational skills trainings, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, linkages to HIV/AIDS testing, sexual and reproductive health education, and protection services from gender based violence. WEI/Bantwana is utilizing the **following instruments to deliver these interventions:** Internal Savings and Lending (ISAL) methodology for financial literacy and entrepreneurship skills development; Work Readiness Model for employability skills and internships; Young Women's Empowerment curriculum for leadership, mentorship, HIV/AIDS, GBV education and awareness; and Join in Circuit (JIC) model for Sexual Reproductive Health information dissemination.

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

Now in its second year of implementation, WEI/Bantwana's DREAMS program has achieved the following results:

- Adapted the *Families Matter!* parenting model to the Zimbabwean context and commenced parenting sessions for 752 caregivers in Bulawayo District.
- Provided the core package of services (GBV prevention and response, social protection services, economic empowerment) to 3,080 AGYW through layering and coordination with other implementing partners.
- Provided gender based violence (GBV) response services to 2,233 AGYW in Bulawayo, Gweru and Mazowe. Of these, 272 and 1,974 were sexual violence and physical/emotional abuse survivors respectively.
- In coordination with other implementing partners, developed a referral protocol that guides referrals across and between partners to ensure GBV survivors access time bound services such as PEP.
- In coordination with WEI/Bantwana partners, developed an online information management system that will enable tracking of referrals and layering and has built in mechanisms to avoid double counting.
- Retention of 285 adolescents in school with linkages to social asset building and 102 linked to PTCE sites.
- Caregiver capacity strengthening – 818 caregivers reached through FMP with 467 graduated and 351 currently in session. ISALs reached 1,160 caregivers trained with 574 saving and lending.
- Improved employability skills for young women - 540 trained in life skills program and 60 currently enrolled in an internship.
- Entrepreneurship skills development - 40 girls linked to Bulawayo Projects Centre.
- Financial literacy - 263 AGYW trained in ISALs with 107 actively saving.