

# DREAMS: DETERMINED, RESILIENT, EMPOWERED, AIDS-FREE, MENTORED, SAFE

Under USAID's BETTER OUTCOMES program in Uganda, the **Bantwana Initiative of World Education (WEI/B)** and **partners** are improving the well-being of vulnerable children and families through access to high quality integrated services across the HIV cascade.

As a community-based partner under DREAMS, BETTER OUTCOMES is contributing to the goal of reducing HIV incidence amongst adolescent girls and young women (AGYWs) through tailored **evidence-based interventions** that address the unique vulnerabilities of AGYW to HIV infection and a **referral and linkages** approach to ensure that AGYW access complementary HIV, health, protection and other socio-economic services across the HIV cascade.

## BANTWANA'S EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS



### 1. GIRLS FIRST CLUBS

Girls First Clubs (G1C) strengthen HIV prevention knowledge, confidence, and social assets of out-of-school AGYW and equip them with financial literacy, savings, and market-linked livelihood skills that expand their opportunities for safe work.



### 2. PEER EDUCATOR CLUBS

Peer Educator Clubs (PEC) bring out-of-school young women and men together to mutually support one another to stay HIV-free. Goal setting, life skills, entrepreneurship and market-linked enterprise selection skills help them develop a plan for their future. Open discussion around HIV prevention, gender, child protection, and adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ARSH) helps youth address the underlying issues that put young women and men at high risk of HIV in their communities.



### 3. PROTECTION AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT CLUBS

Protection and Economic Empowerment Clubs (PEEC) strengthen the agency of in-school girls to protect themselves from abuse and other HIV infection risks. Savings and goal setting skills help youth invest in their futures. Trained Matrons and Patrons support and encourage youth to stay in school and remain HIV-free.



### 4. VILLAGE SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATIONS - PLUS

Village Savings and Loan Associations – Plus (VSLA+) groups build economic resilience and social supports in young women and caregivers aimed towards helping AGYW remain HIV-free. Group members are encouraged to 'save for a purpose' and use savings and loans to help support girls' education, access HIV and other critical health services, and invest in income generating activities that help cover the cost of children's basic needs.



### 5. SINOVUYO PARENTING PACKAGE

Sinovuyo supports girls to stay HIV-free through improved communication with caregivers around sensitive issues like HIV prevention, ARSH, child protection, and economic decision-making in families.

“ I never thought I could talk to my mom about sensitive things like sex & HIV. **Now we talk together about how I can stay HIV-free,** like how I can stay safe from sexual abuse, how to talk to boys, and where to get more information on sexual and reproductive health.



- DREAMS Girl, Gulu

# BANTWANA'S REFERRALS AND LINKAGES APPROACH

1.

## IDENTIFICATION

Girls and young women are identified through HIV clinic partners, community HIV prevention and protection partners, district protection partners, schools, and other implementing partners working with girls and young women in HIV 'hot spots'.

2.

## DOCUMENTATION

Participant rosters at each service site ensure that DREAMS girls and young women are tracked and followed up.

3.

## REFERRALS AND LAYERING

Service maps are used by trained civil society organization (CSO) partners to facilitate referrals and strengthen service layering with all DREAMS partners along the HIV cascade.

4.

## DREAMS PASSPORTS

DREAMS Passports reinforce the layering approach and encourage and motivate girls to achieve their goals to stay HIV-free.

5.

## DREAMS AMBASSADORS

DREAMS champions will reinforce HIV prevention messages in broader communities, raise the visibility of the DREAMS program, and support and encourage DREAMS girls and young women to stay HIV-free.

“

After I found out I was HIV-positive, I had my children tested. My 16-year-old daughter learned she is HIV-positive too.

At first she was very depressed, but after she joined the Peer Educator Club, she became bold and now actively speaks out about how to stay HIV-free – especially to her HIV-negative younger sister.

The VSLA+ also helps me cover costs of my girls' basic needs.

- DREAMS Caregiver, Gulu

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<sup>1</sup> Covering the cost of girls' basic needs reduces the risk of girls engaging in high-risk behaviors in exchange for goods or money. Per Ugandan law, members under 18 do not borrow but are encouraged to learn financial literacy and save along with their caregivers.

<sup>2</sup> To address the parenting needs of young mothers with small children, Bantwana is currently developing a parenting package that draws on evidence-based parenting models