DREAMS Innovation Challenge

Innovative Prevention and Response Program
Addressing the Link Between Teen Pregnancy/Motherhood and School Drop-Out
In Swaziland, Tanzania and Zimbabwe

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WEI/Bantwana’s mission is to improve the wellbeing of vulnerable children and their caregivers and families affected by HIV and AIDS and poverty.

More than 25 million children have been orphaned and made vulnerable in sub-Saharan Africa by HIV and AIDS and poverty.
DREAMS

Determined  Resilient  Empowered  AIDS-Free  Mentored  Safe
Why DREAMS?

DREAMS is responding because adolescent girls and young women are getting infected with HIV at alarming rates:

- 360,000 every year
- 7,000 every week
- 1,000 every day

AGYW account for 74% of new HIV infections among adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa.
What is DREAMS IC?

- **DREAMS Innovation Challenge (IC)** is a partnership of 56 organizations to implement innovative solutions that reduce HIV infections in adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in 10 countries.

- Funded by President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Girl Effect, Johnson & Johnson, Gilead Sciences, and ViiV Healthcare.
WEI/Bantwana DREAMS IC Programs

- WEI/Bantwana focuses on the **highly vulnerable** and **under-served** sub-population of AGYW who:
  1. are pregnant/young mothers who have recently dropped out; or
  2. are in school, but at the greatest risk of dropping out

- In **Swaziland, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe**, with contextualized *prevention and response* activities

WEI/Bantwana will reach **5,856 AGYW** ages 15-24 over the 2-year program.
Holistic package of services to prevent AGYW school Drop-outs

Reduced HIV incidence and risk for AGYW

Society

School

Family

Prevention

Response

Train teachers on GBV and sexual violence

Protect our Youth Clubs

Early Warning System for girls’ retention

Parent/Community sensitization on girls’ education

Create Supportive Environment for Girls in Schools & Communities

Part Time Continuing Education for girls

Mentorship for girls to support retention

Wraparound services (HTC, ASRH, financial literacy, and life skills)

Early Childhood Stimulation Classes

Address Educational Needs of Pregnant Girls and Teen Mothers

Challenge Accepted Social Norms in Schools and Communities
Prevention: Gender Based Training for Teachers

• In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, train Guidance and Counseling teachers on gender based violence and sexual violence

• Used the Ministry’s approved curriculum to identify signs of sexual abuse, as well as how to respond and support those affected by GBV
  – Refer to: Early Warning System, Community Care Workers (CCWs) for referrals and follow-up, the police or safe shelters, especially in the cases of sexual abuse, or health facilities for HIV testing and care
Prevention:
Early Warning System (EWS)

- In each country, WEI/Bantwana is adapting an early warning system to identify girls who are most vulnerable to drop-out to be targeted for retention in schools.
- Teachers are trained to use a simple early warning tool incorporating the “ABC” risk indicators for dropping out:
  - A: ABSENTEEISM
  - B: BEHAVIOR
  - C: COURSE FAILURE
Prevention:
Early Warning System (EWS)

• In Zimbabwe:
  – An adapted tool was rolled out and piloted in 20 schools in July 2017
  – Established an Early Warning Taskforce at each school:
    • School Heads, Guidance and Counseling Teachers, District School Officials, Community Case Workers, and student representative
    – The Ministry of Education spearheaded the process, in partnership with the Department of Social Welfare ensuring Community Case Workers are part of the EWS taskforces in each school

• In Swaziland:
  – Buy-in from the Ministry of Education has been difficult, so the tool is being piloted in Protect Our Youth Clubs as a self-administered tool by the girls and facilitated by Peer Educators
Prevention: Protect Our Youth Clubs

• **In-school clubs** equip girls with knowledge and skills to prevent pregnancy, support teenage moms to continue with their education, and create a more supportive and girl-friendly school
• Using a **peer-to-peer approach**, and discuss experiences through interactive approaches such as dramas, stories, poems and drawings
• In addition to working with girls, the **POY clubs work with boys** to foster positive masculine behavior and include mixed sex and single sex activities
  – Involving boys enlist them as allies in combatting gender discrimination
• Connect AGYW with **mentors** for informal psychosocial support, guidance and information on available services
Prevention: Community Sensitization

• Traditional leaders, cultural gatekeepers, and opinion leaders are targeted through community dialogues to change cultural norms pertaining to child marriage, pregnancy, and education.
  – They help create an enabling environment for pregnant girls and young mothers to stay in school.
  – They are powerful agents of change towards motivating the community to support these girls.
  – They advocate for a reduction in child marriage and changes in gender norms in the community.

• Since roll-out, community dialogues have been adapted to target caregivers, spouses, and partners, and additional community leaders on the importance of girls’ education.
Response: Part Time and Continuing Education Program

- **PTCE** is a flexible education approach that allows learners who have dropped out of secondary school for various reasons, to access education
  - Such as pregnancy/motherhood and economic insecurity
- Learners are taught by **qualified teachers** in formal schools when formal lessons are not in session, such as after school
  - Times of attendance are designed to accommodate the various circumstances of the learners
  - Learners study and progress at their own pace
  - Community volunteers (Swazi) or community members (Zimbabwe) play with the children so the mothers’ attention is not disrupted
  - When they are ready, they take the same examinations as the formal learners
- This adaptable model is the most suitable to **retain girls in school** who have multiple roles, such as motherhood
Response: ECS classes, Mentors, wrap-around services

- **Early childhood stimulation** are parenting sessions for teen moms and their babies that are facilitated by trained community volunteers.
- Uses a parenting skills curriculum developed by WEI/Bantwana:
  - 12 parenting topics, including motor, social, emotional, cognitive development, communication and language development, health, and nutrition
  - Teen mothers led through toy making workshops and learn skills to stimulate their children to increase developmental outcomes.
- Girls are linked with **mentors** who support the girls with career coaching and help them develop life plans and goals.
- To enhance retention, WEI/Bantwana provides girls with **critical wrap-around services** such as POY Clubs, HIV prevention, adolescent sexual reproductive health, and financial literacy.
Challenges

- Extremely vulnerable population, almost ‘forgotten’
- Long standing cultural practices and beliefs are barriers to these girls’ access to education, in school and in the community
- Lack of male/partner support
- Limited timeframe, budget and small sample sizes
Key Strategies/Lessons Learned

• Government Involvement
  – All levels: community, school, district, national
  – Key linkages between sectors
  – Both for in-school and out-of-school models

• Inclusive Strategy for in-school POY Clubs and PTCE sites:
  – Intentional and inclusive targeting strategy
  – Stimulated students interest rather than stigmatize

• Involvement of male partners
  – Adapted community dialogue approach to target partners and spouses
Results To Date

**SWAZILAND**
- **166 AGYW** completed exams for Junior or Secondary Certificates
- Enrolled and retained **179 AGYW** in the PTCE program
- Reached **433** community members through Community Dialogues

**TANZANIA**
- Reached **938** girls and boy in POY clubs
- Enrolled **330** out of school AGYW for PTCE program
- Trained **60** teachers and head teachers in school-related gender-based violence prevention

**ZIMBABWE**
- Full buy-in from the Ministry of Education with the EWS - piloted it in **20** schools in **2** districts
- Reached **340** adolescent girls in PTCE sites
- **117** young mothers graduated ECS Sessions
- Trained **45** mentors to be paired with AGYW
Thank you!
Questions or Comments?