



Success Story

Eugénia, an HIV+ GBV Survivor, Demonstrates Resilience

Background

WEI/Bantwana implements the Força à Comunidade e Crianças (FCC) project, an initiative aimed at improving and expanding evidenced-based models of integrated support for OVC and their households. FCC's goal is to reduce the socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS on OVC and their caregivers by enhancing the capacity of families and communities to support, protect, and care for them. In collaboration with the Government of Mozambique and a range of local implementing partners, the project utilizes schools and communities to reach over 125,000 vulnerable children and adolescents with integrated services to help them thrive and grow into productive and healthy adults.

With the addition of Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-Free, Mentored, and Safe (DREAMS) funding, WEI/Bantwana also delivers an integrated package of comprehensive services that address the age-specific needs of over 27,000 in and out-of-school AGYW. The package is aligned with the DREAMS Core Package to empower AGYW and reduce their risk, mobilize communities for change, and strengthen families. WEI/Bantwana leverages evidence-based materials and approaches and implements interventions considered part of the HIV/AIDS continuum of response.

Eugénia's Story

Eugénia, age 11, has been a double orphan since her mother, her last surviving parent, passed away in June 2017. After both parents' deaths, Eugénia's sister and her husband invited Eugénia to live with them in their home. Her sister is a vegetable vendor in Quelimane whose husband is unemployed and stays at home most of the time.

One day, Eugénia's brother-in-law came home and sexually violated her while his wife was still at the market. He threatened her not to tell anybody about the rape—otherwise he would kill her. He continued to sexually assault Eugénia for almost two months. He also burdened her with many household chores, thereby forcing her to drop out of school. She continued to endure her brother-in-law's sexual abuse and could not even confide in her sister for fear of being killed.

Eugénia's woes came to an end one day when she was invited to a community mobilization meeting organized by adolescent girls from a nearby Girls Empowerment Club (GEC). GECs are part of the FCC/DREAMS Project being implemented by the Bantwana Initiative of World Education, Inc. in Zambezia Province. The GEC meeting that Eugénia attended was focused on creating awareness amongst adolescent girls and young women on Gender-Based Violence.

Determined

Resilient

Empowered

AIDS-Free

Mentored

Safe



DREAMS Success Story

By the end of the meeting, Eugénia felt empowered to speak out about her situation. She narrated her ordeal to members of the GEC and they advised her to report the matter to the police immediately. Her brother-in-law was arrested. Eugénia was then referred to the nearest health center for medical examination and care. FCC ensured that Eugénia was also tested for HIV. Upon learning of her HIV-positive status, she was immediately initiated on ART.

Since Eugénia was assisted by the GEC, she has been a regular member of the club and attends most of their sessions. One of Eugénia's fellow GEC members noted that before joining the GEC, she was reserved and did not mix easily with other people. However, as a result of participating in GEC sessions, her confidence levels have shot up. She is now more open and mixes with other group members easily. In addition, FCC has registered Eugénia into its database and will support her with school materials to re-integrate into school next year.

“Cases related to gender-based violence, if not well addressed, may have a negative impact on the social development of the entire community. We are very grateful to World Education for the great work that is being done in our communities. Eugénia is a live example of this. The FCC/DREAMS project intervened positively in her life. She is now a dynamic girl who freely expresses her rights, and is willing and wanting to continue attending school and pursue her dreams of being a nurse.”

– Focal Point Person, Department of Social Action, Quelimane District

The project creates safe spaces where girls regularly meet under the supervision of trained mentors to openly discuss issues of sexuality, general health, their rights, plans and dreams. To date, FCC has created **424 safe spaces** in five districts across the three provinces where DREAMS activities are being implemented, namely, Sofala, Gaza and Zambezia. In **Quelimane**, where Eugénia lives, **90 safe spaces** have been created and more than **3,457 adolescent girls and young women** use these safe spaces.

Eugénia, under the FCC project, is a DREAMS beneficiary. DREAMS seeks to protect adolescent girls and young women from contracting HIV/AIDS.

The Bantwana Initiative of World Education, Inc. | www.bantwana.org

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