



**DREAMS**

WORKING TOGETHER FOR  
AN AIDS-FREE FUTURE  
FOR GIRLS & WOMEN



Determined

Resilient

Empowered

AIDS-Free

Mentored

Safe

# DREAMS

## Core Package of Interventions Summary





## DREAMS Background

DREAMS is an ambitious partnership, totaling \$385 million, committed to help girls develop into **Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-Free, Mentored, and Safe** women. DREAMS funds a Core Package of evidence-informed approaches that go beyond the health sector, addressing the structural drivers that directly or indirectly increase girls' HIV risk, including poverty, gender inequality, sexual violence, and lack of education.

Despite considerable progress in the overall global response to the epidemic, HIV among young women ages 15 to 24 in a subset of sub-Saharan African countries remains an urgent problem. AIDS is the leading cause of death for adolescent girls in Eastern and Southern Africa, who account for 74 percent of all new infections. As many as 7,000 new infections a week are occurring among the most vulnerable girls and young women in this region – people who are critical to the future of their countries. This must change.

To address this urgent and complex issue, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Johnson & Johnson, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Girl Effect, Gilead Sciences, and ViiV Healthcare partnered to create DREAMS. PEPFAR, Johnson & Johnson, and ViiV Healthcare mobilized an additional \$85 million in funding for the DREAMS Innovation Challenge. DREAMS is already delivering a Core Package of evidence-informed interventions in 10 countries, which account for more than half of all new HIV infections: Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The DREAMS Core Package of interventions goes beyond the health sector, addressing the structural drivers that directly and indirectly increase girls' HIV risk, including poverty, gender inequality, sexual violence, and lack of education, with the goal of reducing HIV incidence in females ages 15 to 24 by 40 percent in 2017. To reach this goal, innovative approaches from new and existing players are needed.

## The Core Package of Interventions Offered Through DREAMS

# 1

### Empower Girls and Young Women

Interventions for this population aim to empower girls and to reduce their risk for HIV and violence.

# 2

### Reduce Risk of Sex Partners

This activity aims to characterize "typical" sexual partners of adolescent girls and young women in order to target highly effective HIV interventions.

# 3

### Strengthen Families

Interventions for this population aim to strengthen the family economically, as well as in their ability to parent positively.

# 4

### Mobilize Communities for Change

These interventions aim to educate girls, young women, and young men, as well as mobilize communities.

## DREAMS Core Package Evidence-Informed Interventions



### Interventions to Strengthen Families

#### > Parenting/Caregiver Programs

It is vital to young women to have a positive relationship with a parent, caregiver, or other caring adult. This relationship has a consistent protective factor for young women and adolescent girls against a variety of negative health and social outcomes. Programs that involve parents and caregivers have shown to be very effective in changing HIV-related sexual behaviors among all youth (e.g., use of male and female condom, delayed sexual debut, as well as decreased exposure to negative outcomes such as violence and abuse).

#### > Cash Transfers

Programs that provide financial support have demonstrated consistent positive outcomes to the health and well-being of young women. Most governments in East and Southern African countries are supporting unconditional or schooling-conditioned financial support that will benefit vulnerable children. This type of program could be a scalable platform to achieve DREAMS outcomes.

#### > Educational Subsidies

Female students are especially vulnerable to dropping out of school. Providing educational subsidies is an effective intervention for keeping girls in school. In most settings, higher levels of education are associated with lower HIV risk and higher HIV testing acceptance. Education also has countless other positive effects in the lives of girls, young women, and their communities as a whole.

#### > Combination Socio-Economic Approaches

The most effective social protection approaches for promoting healthy behavioral changes and decreasing the risk of violence among adolescent girls and young women have been those that use both economic and social empowerment. PEPFAR is already providing financial savings programs and can provide a platform for DREAMS. Programs to increase social empowerment can include discussion groups on gender-based violence, couples communication, mentoring, and comprehensive, evidence-based HIV prevention education programs. Providing these programs together can create lasting change in the lives of these young women.



### Interventions to Reduce Risk of Sex Partners

#### > Characterization of Male Sexual Partners

Medical antiretroviral drug treatment for men living with HIV is a highly effective intervention to prevent transmission to their sexual partners. These medications are not a cure, but can prevent spreading the virus. However, many men are reluctant to be tested at all and those that test positive may be reluctant to be treated. There is a great need for better characterization of the male sexual partners of at-risk girls and women in order to develop services men are more likely to use and help them accept treatment.



## Interventions to Mobilize Communities for Change

### > School-Based HIV Prevention

Sexual education programs in school systems can provide a foundation of accurate knowledge among young people and in some instances can help to decrease risky sexual behaviors.

### > Community Mobilization/Norms Change

Community mobilization provides an essential support framework for HIV prevention programs and serves as a way to engage boys, men, and the broader community in addressing social norms that increase HIV risk for adolescent girls and young women. Community mobilization efforts in related areas, like gender-based violence prevention, have demonstrated a significant impact on norms change, as well as decreases in violent victimization and perpetration.



## Interventions That Empower Girls and Young Women

### > Increase Consistent Use and Availability of Condoms

Condom use is highly effective for preventing HIV/AIDS when used correctly and consistently. Therefore, providing and distributing condoms is vital for reducing infections among girls and women.

### > Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)

Pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, is a way for people who do not have HIV, but who are at substantial risk of getting it, to prevent HIV infection by taking a pill every day. This oral antiretroviral medication has the potential for significant reduction in HIV infections among young African women.

### > Violence Prevention and Post-Violence Care

There is a strong association between violence, especially intimate partner violence and violence against children, and HIV status in women. Preventing, screening for, and treating the negative effects of violence in adolescent girls and young women are ways to identify those young women who may be at greater risk for HIV infection. In addition, high-quality violence prevention and response may decrease young women's risk for HIV.

### > HIV Testing and Counseling (HTC)

HTC is a crucial part of the entire Core Package of interventions. Testing young women assists in linking them to care if infected, and linking them to DREAMS prevention activities if uninfected. Testing men helps to prevent HIV among adolescent girls and young women by linking uninfected men to voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) and men living with HIV to HIV care and treatment.

### > Increasing Contraceptive Method Mix

Adolescent girls and young women in low income countries experience high rates of unplanned pregnancy due to an unmet need for voluntary family planning, which increases their risks for pregnancy-related morbidity and mortality and affects lifelong education and economic opportunities. Unplanned pregnancy is often cited as the reason for adolescent girls



dropping out of school. The promotion of dual protection, in which condom use is combined with another modern contraceptive method, is a critical component of family planning/HIV services and will help reduce the risk for HIV infection as well as unintended pregnancy. Increasing the variety of contraceptive methods available to women will also help keep them HIV free.

➤ **Social Asset Building**

The most at-risk adolescent girls and young women often lack strong social networks. Programs that connect adolescent girls and young women with peers and adults who can offer emotional support as well as information and material assistance are needed. Interventions that build social skills may improve girls' abilities to protect themselves by reducing their social isolation and providing them with social safety nets through mentors, peer groups, civic engagement, and access to health information and services.

## The DREAMS Innovation Challenge

The DREAMS Innovation Challenge seeks to award and implement solutions that further DREAMS' commitment to reduce HIV infections by infusing new thinking and approaches to meet the urgent, complex needs of adolescent girls and young women in sub-Saharan Africa. PEPFAR, Janssen Pharmaceutica, NV, one of the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson, and ViiV Healthcare have committed \$85 million in awards for solutions that address unmet needs not covered by the DREAMS Core Package. For more information, visit [www.dreamspartner.org](http://www.dreamspartner.org).