



Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe (DREAMS) Lives

Tobin Jones/hpiego



A patient receives counseling on the full range of family planning options during an outreach event at an informal settlement in Nairobi.

Funding Level:

\$8.1 million

Duration:

June 2015 – June 2017

Activity Goals:

- Reduce HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women by 40% in two years.
- Provide tailored, comprehensive, and evidence-informed services to adolescent girls and young women at the highest risk for HIV infection.

Geographic Focus:

- Three HIV high-incidence rural Western Kenya counties (Homabay, Siaya, and Kisumu)
- Nairobi County (Pumwani Ward)

Key Partners:

The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Nike Foundation, and USAID.

Other partners include:

- Kenya Girl Guides Association
- Saint John's Community Center
- Global Communities

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ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Despite Kenya's success in combating HIV and AIDS, new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women ages 15-24 are on the rise. Moreover, young women are reporting increased cases of sexually transmitted infections and gender-based violence. DREAMS is an ambitious partnership to reduce HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women in Kenya and address the challenges that they face every day. The goal of DREAMS is to help girls lead **D**etermined, **R**esilient, **E**mpowered **A**IDS-free, **M**entored, and **S**afe lives. The underlying principle of DREAMS is that girls can – and often do – reach their full potential when they have access to health and economic services and when they perceive themselves as both capable and resilient. DREAMS will also sensitize and bring together the larger community in support of girls achieving their hopes and aspirations.

Discriminatory cultural norms, gender-based violence, and economic disadvantages prevent many adolescent girls and young women from accessing education, health, and financial services. These challenges can leave girls without the support they need to thrive. However, if these adolescent girls and young women are fully empowered and have the capacity to surmount the many challenges they face, they have the potential to foster an AIDS-free future.

ACTIVITY AREAS

Over the next two years, DREAMS will work with 2,500 adolescent girls and young women through a two-pronged approach that provides customized individual support while strengthening education, health, social, and economic systems. The activity promotes healthy sexual behaviors including abstinence and delayed sexual debut; prevention of gender-based violence; life skills; prevention of drug and alcohol abuse; adherence to anti-retroviral therapy as appropriate; positive attitudes towards people living with HIV; stigma reduction; and economic livelihoods and positive health-seeking behaviors.

Key approaches include community dialogue, outreach, sensitization, on-site support, mentorship, coaching, and training. The activity draws on community stakeholders for meaningful involvement and expertise. Stakeholders include teachers, school administrators, caregivers, ward administrators, law enforcement, religious leaders and government officials. This comprehensive and coordinated approach ensures both widespread community buy-in and that participants benefit from the input and services of all major sectors of their community.

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ACTIVITY IMPACT

The DREAMS strategy underscores the need for adolescent friendly services and empowerment of young women in all spheres of life. By employing a participatory approach that offers adolescent girls and young women the opportunity to shape the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the activity, DREAMS is empowering young women to determine their future – a future that is AIDS-free.