

USAID YouthPower2 Symposium (November 9-10, 2021)

SESSION NOTES

Increasing the Representation of Youth in Development

Track 2: Empowerment of Young Women: Insights from Rwanda, Namibia, and South Sudan **ACHIEVE** **DREAMS** **Programs**

Wednesday, November 10, 2021 – DAY TWO

10:05 – 10:55 AM

Breakout Session

Session Participants

Moderator:

Choice Makufa, ACHIEVE DREAMS Manager, PACT – ACHIEVE

Presenters:

Imelda Hoebes, Namibia ACHIEVE Economic Strengthening Officer, Jhpiego

Salwa Juan, South Sudan ACHIEVE DREAMS Mentor Supervisor, Jhpiego

Emily Muyeye, Namibia ACHIEVE Community Care Worker, Jhpiego

Aisha Uwasa, Rwanda ACHIEVE DREAMS Ambassador, YWCA

Kumbirai Tudor Mazaiwana, South Sudan ACHIEVE DREAMS AGYW and Out of School Facilitator, Jhpiego

Session Overview

The session aims to showcase strategies applied in the ACHIEVE DREAMS project to engage, empower and equip young women. These young women assume community leadership roles as DREAMS Ambassadors, mentors, facilitators, and champions of community health programs. Presentations will discuss the importance of empowering young women to take charge of their health independently and socio-economic needs. Participants will learn much about the capacity development of young women in community health programs as they share their experiences:

- Young women DREAMS Ambassadors in Rwanda provide mentorship and peer support to other young women to access HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) that helps prevent the further spread of HIV amongst young women.
- Comprehensive economic development targeted at vulnerable young women in South Sudan improves their financial literacy and vocational skills.
- Empowered young women in Namibia take on the community care worker responsibilities of protecting vulnerable adolescent girls and young women from violence early/unwanted pregnancies and improving access to youth-friendly health services.

Proposed Learning

Attendees have improved knowledge and understanding of sound practices to engage and empower young women for community health interventions. They will gain increased awareness of the impact of engaging, equipping, and investing in young women to identify, recruit, and support vulnerable young women to health programs. Lastly, attendees will see how participation in 'Safe spaces' by AGYW contributes to the development of their social assets and decreases community stigma and discrimination, leading to good adherence to ASRH services, including PrEP.

Session Notes

Main Topic Focus: Discuss the successful strategies applied in the ACHIEVE DREAMS project to determine best practices for engaging and empowering young women in community health interventions.

Background On the ACHIEVE DREAMS Project

Girls are more likely to have HIV than their male counterparts (studies done in 2019 show that 25% of all new infections in sub-Saharan Africa came from young women aged 10-24, even though they are only 10% of the population in total). DREAMS Partnership (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe) implemented the ACHIEVE project in 15 countries.

Dreams Target Population: Risk And Vulnerability Criteria

Ages 9 – 14 Priority groups: ever had sex, history of pregnancy, the experience of sexual violence, experience of physical or emotional violence, alcohol or other substance use, out-of-school

Ages 15 – 19 Priority groups: multiple sexual partners, history of pregnancy, STI, no or irregular condom use, transactional sex, the experience of sexual violence, alcohol or other substance use, out-of-school

Ages 20 – 24 Priority groups: multiple sexual partners, STI, transactional sex, the experience of sexual violence, alcohol or other substance use, out-of-school

The Achieve Project

The Achieve Project aims to achieve HIV epidemic control in target populations. It is a 5-year global cooperative agreement led by Pact to assist PEPFAR countries in program implementation and technical assistance. It targets adolescents, children, and pregnant and breastfeeding women. Some of the partners are Jhpiego, Palladium, WI-HER, and No Means No Worldwide.

- AGYW are a vital population to target to reduce new infections and reach epidemic control. The project priorities for AGYW are to keep them HIV-free, support them to stay in school, prevent early pregnancies, prevent sexual violence, reduce child marriages, and increase economic resilience.

Discussion about Rwanda and Namibia

Rwanda

- PREP (Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) info, education, & referrals
- Empowered 159 DREAMS young women to serve as mentors (who assists them in building positive relationships within their support networks and link young women to services)
- Youth-friendly tools used (accessible to youth)
- Strategies to maintain AGYM on prep: mentors capacitated as counselors, mentors empowered to advocate, mentors directly engage with AGYM

- Impressive results: 90% still on PrEP after one year
- Lessons learned
- Investing in young women contributed to their personal development, increased their self-confidence, and enhanced their ability to engage
- Well-equipped mentors key in raising PrEP awareness

Namibia

- Girls are at the center of the intervention – girls empowered by strengthening families, reducing the risk of sex partners, and mobilizing communities for change
- DREAMS offers 466 Safe Spaces in schools/communities across four districts
- DREAMS inspires AGYW to take on the role of the Community Care Worker
- Sudan
- ACHIEVE DREAMS South Sudan focused on improving its financial literacy and vocational skills.

Takeaways for USAID:

- Empower young women to empower the entire community
- Equip young women with the skills to make their own choices

Session Quotes:

“DREAMS empowers adolescent girls to make the right decisions for themselves.”

- **Imelda Hoebes**, Namibia ACHIEVE Economic Strengthening Officer, Jhpiego

“DREAMS built up my self-confidence to realize about my rights and my responsibilities.”

- **Emily Muyeye**, Namibia ACHIEVE Community Care Worker, Jhpiego

“I now know that I can do it on my own. That’s how DREAMS empowered me.”

- **Emily Muyeye**, Namibia ACHIEVE Community Care Worker, Jhpiego

Resources

[Session Presentation](#)

[ACHIEVE DREAMS training on Sexual and Reproductive Health in Namibia](#)

[Empowerment of Youth Women: Insights from South Sudan – ACHIEVE DREAMS Program](#)