$85M Awarded to Prevent HIV Among Young Women and Girls

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Fifty-six winners from 10 sub-Saharan African countries will be awarded a total of $85 million to fight HIV among young women and adolescent girls; $40 million of that will be devoted to keeping girls in secondary school, which lowers a girl's risk for HIV.

The monetary support comes from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Johnson & Johnson's Janssen Pharmaceutica NV (Janssen) and ViiV Healthcare, according to a PEPFAR press release. The 56 winners participated in the DREAMS Innovation Challenge.

DREAMS, an HIV prevention program geared to adolescent girls and young women in 10 sub-Saharan African countries, aims to help girls and young women become Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe (DREAMS). It's supported by PEPFAR, Gilead Sciences and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, among others. According to the press release, girls and young women make up 75 percent of new HIV infections among adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa. This $85 million investment will help DREAMS reach its goal of reducing new HIV infections among this population by 40 percent by the end of 2017.

"With today's investment, thousands more adolescent girls and young women will have the opportunity to fulfill their dreams," said Ambassador Deborah L. Birx, MD, U.S. global AIDS coordinator and U.S. special representative for global health diplomacy in the press release. "Adolescent girls and young women deserve nothing less, and we are committed to walk with them at every step along the road to an AIDS-free generation."

Nearly 50 percent of the money will go toward keeping girls in secondary school, which strongly correlates to a reduction in the risk of HIV transmission. A recent study in Botswana found that girls who received 10 years of education instead of nine had a nearly 50 percent less chance of becoming infected with HIV.

Of the DREAMS winners, 64 percent are organizations from South Africa, Kenya and Uganda; organizations in Malawi will receive almost half of the education-focused resources. What's more, 18 percent of the winners will focus on employment for adolescent girls and young women, 23 percent on services from local organizations and 9 percent on increasing the impact of HIV/AIDS interventions.

As its name suggests, the ideas and projects these organizations will implement are new and innovative, with many coming from community-based groups. Nearly half of the winners have never received PEPFAR funding, and 64 percent are small, local organizations.

The DREAMS Innovation Challenge winners* are:

1. Afya Mzuri
2. American University
3. Amref Health
4. Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team
5. Badilika Foundation
6. Bar Hostess Empowerment and Support Programme
7. Brick and Brick Uganda
8. Camfed Malawi
9. Cecily Eastwood Zambian AIDS Orphans Appeal
10. CMMB
11. College of William and Mary
12. Community Media Trust Kenya
13. Community Media Trust South Africa
14. Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust
15. Family Health International
16. Femina HIP Ltd.
17. Future of the African Daughter Project
18. Girl MOVE Foundation
19. Greenfield Management Solutions
20. HIVSA
21. Hope for Victoria Children
22. HOPE Worldwide Zambia
23. ICS Africa
24. IdeiaLab
25. International Development Law Organization
26. Kenya Legal and Ethical Issues Network on HIV/AIDS
27. Latkings Outreach Program
28. Lubuto Library Project, Inc.
29. University of the Witwatersrand
30. Mercy Corps
31. Mirembe Project
32. Nyanza Initiative for Girls' Education and Empowerment
33. Nzeve
34. Ogra Foundation
35. Peer ProjectSupport
36. Population Council, Inc.
37. Premise Data Corporation
38. Rede Contra Abuso de Menores
39. Save the Children Federation, Inc.
40. Sesotho Media & Development
41. SisterLove, Inc.
42. Stichting AIDS Fonds-STOP AIDS NOW!

43. Students and Youth Working on reproductive Health Action Team
44. TackleAfrica
45. The African Centre for Women, Information & Communications Technology
46. Touch Roots Africa
47. Trocaire
48. University of Washington
49. Ushahidi Inc.
50. VillageReach
51. VOTO Mobile
52. Witkoppen Health and Welfare Centre
53. Wizarts Foundation
54. World Education, Inc./ Bantwana Initiative
55. World Vision, Inc.
56. Youth Advocates

* Currently, the organizations selected are considered provisional winners until further notice.

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