OVERVIEW
PCI has been working in Botswana since 2011, improving the quality of life and self-sufficiency of vulnerable families. PCI believes that communities best understand their own needs, and with the right support, can lead the way in developing appropriate, low-cost solutions to address HIV/AIDS, gender inequity and other challenges. To help communities help themselves, PCI provides community-based NGO partners with the resources and skills needed to serve as a bridge between government services and households, extend services to where they are needed most, and become more sustainable. At the same time, PCI is helping to create a safety net of support for those in need by strengthening partnerships among government, private sector, civil society and communities.

BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY TO SERVE WOMEN & YOUTH
With funding from USAID, PCI is leading the Botswana Comprehensive Care for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) project, which aims to strengthen community agency to seek, support and provide HIV/AIDS-related services to OVC and their family members. The project is implemented in seven PEPFAR priority districts in collaboration with six local implementing partners. Together, PCI and partners offer a core package of comprehensive, integrated, gender-sensitive and evidence-based OVC services, including: linkages to pediatric HIV testing; home-based and facility-based case management; peer-to-peer approaches; household economic strengthening and empowerment; early childhood development; and parenting skills. PCI works closely with each of its local partners, providing tailored capacity strengthening support to ensure quality service delivery, while also helping build a solid foundation in financial management, compliance, and sustainability planning. Furthermore, in alignment with USAID’s Journey to Self-Reliance, PCI is working closely with its partners to prepare them to become direct recipients of US government funding. At the start of FY20, one of its six core partners received a multi-million dollar award directly from USAID.

Since 2017, PCI has reached a total of 32,495 individuals with services in support of improved health, safety, education and stability.

EMPOWERED, AIDS-FREE GIRLS & YOUNG WOMEN
Preventing new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women is a top priority for achieving epidemic control in Botswana. To this end, PCI (with funding from PEPFAR) is seeking to achieve an empowered AIDS-free generation of girls and young women through the DREAMS initiative. DREAMS (which stands for Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe women) is working to build the social assets of girls and young women to reduce their risk for HIV and violence, mobilize communities for change through school-based programs, and strengthen families through parenting programs and economic strengthening. Nearly 1,000 girls and young women have been linked to a mentor and placed in age-appropriate safe spaces since PCI began the program in 2017.

THE NEED
Botswana has the third highest HIV prevalence in the world, with 23.7% of the population age fifteen and above infected. Rates are highest among adolescents and women ages 15-49, many of whom are victims of gender-based violence which affects a reported 67% of women. Approximately one in ten children in Botswana have lost one or both parents to HIV-AIDS or related infections.

The country is recognized for its response to the HIV epidemic, becoming the first country in the region to provide universal free antiretroviral treatment (ART) to citizens living with HIV. But this progress is threatened as funds are increasingly directed to low-income countries. Botswana is now recognized as a middle-income country, yet up to one third of the population lives below the poverty line in rural areas. Adding to the problem is the high rate of youth unemployment, which stands at 25%.

REGIONAL FOCUS: Nationwide
LOCAL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING SUCCESS STORY

With funding from USAID, PCI provided capacity building support to 13 local CSOs and two umbrella organizations to address gaps in their capacity that undermined their ability to effectively deliver HIV services. Through training, technical assistance, and systems building support, PCI built the capacity of CSO partners in HIV/AIDS technical service delivery, program planning, monitoring and evaluation, financial and HR management and resource mobilization. Following the project, two CSO partners went on to secure direct PEPFAR funding and nine CSO partners increased their funding from non-PEPFAR sources to 40%.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **Workforce Readiness for Youth**: With funding from Barclays Bank’s “Ready to Work” initiative, PCI is providing youth with life skills and entrepreneurial skills development, as well as internship placements to prepare youth to enter the workforce. Over the past three years, PCI and its partners have trained more than 5,000 young people across six geographic locations.

- **Botswana Sports Heroes Mentoring**: In partnership with the Botswana National Sports Commission, PCI is engaging and building the capacity of a cadre of elite athletes and coaches to serve as youth mentors. Equipped with life skills training, these sports mentors travel the country and engage community leaders and youth through sports. These interactions aim to deter youth from engaging in unhealthy behaviors, such as excessive alcohol consumption and drug abuse.

- **Social & Economic Empowerment for Women & Girls**: PCI’s Women Empowered (WE) model is helping women build sustainable economic and social capital. By forming self-managed groups, members pool their savings, lend money among themselves, and conduct business together. In doing so, women and adolescent girls build their financial and social capital, and many become change agents in their communities. In Botswana, PCI has facilitated the formation of 471 WE groups, comprised of over 600 women and adolescent girls, which have collectively saved over USD $50,000.

- **Improving Parent-Child Communications to Reduce Risky Sexual Behavior**: With PEPFAR funding, PCI Botswana and partners are delivering The Families Matter! Program in communities in and around the capital city of Gaborone. The program is an evidence-based, parent-focused intervention based on a curriculum developed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention which seeks to promote positive parenting and effective parent-child communication about sexuality and sexual risk reduction, including gender-based violence. To date, nearly 200 caregivers have completed the curriculum and have benefitted from improved parenting and communication skills.

ABOUT PCI

PCI (Project Concern International), a Global Communities Partner, is a global development organization that drives innovation from the ground up to enhance health, end hunger, overcome hardship, and advance women and girls — resulting in meaningful and measurable change in people’s lives. Founded in 1961, PCI impacted more than 21 million lives in fiscal year 2019 through programs in 13 countries spanning Asia, Africa and the Americas.

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