

ASCM Foundation Initiative Aims to Uplift Women in Africa While Helping to Close Supply Chain Talent Gap

Partnership with PEPFAR and local DREAMS organizations is working to reduce HIV rates by giving women access to better employment opportunities

[CHICAGO] — November 3, 2021 — The ASCM Foundation has joined forces with the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief’s (PEPFAR) Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe (DREAMS) partnership to help close the supply chain talent gap in Africa while also improving economic opportunities for the women of the continent. The ASCM PEPFAR DREAMS initiative works to deliver an Essential Supply Chain Management Skills (ESCMS) program to women in Africa help them develop the necessary skills to succeed in entry-level supply chain jobs. This announcement was shared last week during the opening remarks at the [ASCM CONNECT Annual Conference](#) along with a [video](#) titled “Uplift and Thrive: The Positive Impact of Supply Chain Workforce Development” that showcases the program.

Because of the combination of an extreme upsurge in e-commerce and ongoing market disruptions, supply chains need to be closer to the factories where products are manufactured and distributed. This has created an unprecedented demand for skilled supply chain practitioners across the globe but especially in South Africa.

At the same time, the HIV epidemic is still ravaging through Sub-Saharan Africa. In the region, 67% — or approximately 280,000 cases — of annual new HIV infections in young people occur in adolescent girls and young women. This means that females are 14 times more likely to become HIV infected than their male counterparts. One of the best-documented ways to prevent women from contracting the virus is to provide them with high-quality, good-paying jobs.

The ASCM PEPFAR DREAMS initiative helps alleviate both challenges. Providing women with essential skills that lead to high-quality jobs provides economic opportunities not only for these women but also for their families and communities. The program initially will train 100 young women in South Africa to be the next generation of supply chain professionals in the region. The curriculum includes skills-based training using APICS Principles on Demand foundational modules, mentorships and networking opportunities.

“The supply chain talent gaps around the world continue to widen, and ASCM believes that engaging and training women and people of color to take on supply chain roles is a key strategy for closing these gaps,” says Dan Schoenfeld, vice president of the ASCM Foundation. “The ASCM Foundation is proud to do its part by offering training to women in Africa so that they can help improve local and global supply chains.”

The Essential Supply Chain Management Skills training pilot program, launched in April 2021 with 39 young women South Africa’s KwaZulu-Natal province. The four-day focused on foundational principles in logistics, inventory management and operations that are applicable across several industries.

Mentoring was provided for the women throughout the program and afterwards to assist in helping them find employment opportunities. All the students enrolled in this cohort passed the exam to earn a certificate of completion for Principles of Supply Chain Management.

Emit Logistics, an independent logistics services provider that offers a range of logistics, transport and distribution services designed to fit companies' supply chain needs hired four of the participants for an internship program. Additional employment opportunities are in development in a variety of supply chain roles including but not limited to supply chain analyst, inventory analyst, master scheduler, production planner and logistics coordinator.

The ASCM PEPFAR DREAMS initiative is an extension of ASCM's Global Health Initiative, a long-term strategy focused on modernizing supply chain processes around the world. Recent work has focused on workforce development and digital transformation across supply chains in Senegal, Nigeria and Kenya and has helped improve the delivery of food, medicine and other critical supplies in these countries.

To learn more about ASCM Foundation initiatives, visit ascm.org/foundation.

About ASCM

The Association for Supply Chain Management (ASCM) is the global leader in supply chain organizational transformation, innovation and leadership. As the largest nonprofit association for supply chain, ASCM is an unbiased partner, connecting companies around the world to the newest thought leadership on all aspects of supply chain. ASCM is built on a foundation of APICS certification and training spanning 60 years. Now, ASCM is driving innovation in the industry with new products, services and partnerships that enable companies to further optimize their supply chains, secure their competitive advantage and positively influence their bottom lines. For more information, visit ascm.org.

About the ASCM Foundation

As the philanthropic channel of ASCM (the Association for Supply Chain Management) — the global leader in supply chain organizational transformation, innovation and leadership — the ASCM Foundation was established in 2019 to take ambitious new actions to solve critical problems and maximize the extraordinary opportunity to create a better world through supply chain. With the support of ASCM, the Foundation collaborates with private foundations and public organizations addressing pressing global challenges with a specific focus on building frontier and humanitarian supply chains, K-12 supply chain education, STEM and career awareness, workforce development, and diversity and inclusion initiatives. For more information about the ASCM Foundation and its work, visit ascm.org/making-an-impact.