



In support of the Government of Malawi's goal on HIV prevention and risk reduction and through the PEPFAR/USAID funded Ana Patsogolo project, The Bantwana Initiative of World Education has been implementing the DREAMS program since October 2020 in the districts of Blantyre, Machinga, and Zomba, reaching over 55,000 AGYW each year.

## Ana Patsogolo DREAMS Program

DREAMS provides a layered package of evidence-based interventions to address factors that make girls and young women vulnerable to HIV. DREAMS interventions are delivered according to age, school status, and risk criteria so that adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) receive an integrated package tailored to their circumstances. Trained DREAMS Club Facilitators deliver interventions and manage referrals in DREAMS Clubs, which are situated in safe spaces at the community level in close proximity to where girls live. Scheduling of DREAMS Club sessions is flexible to enable AGYW to balance participation with other responsibilities. The Ana Patsogolo Activity delivers dreams in Blantyre, Machinga, Phalombe, and Zomba districts in southern Malawi. In 2022, **105,762** active AGYW participating in DREAMS.

### DREAMS Interventions by Age Band

	10-14 yrs	15-19 yrs	20-24 yrs
Primary Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DREAMS Toolkit 10-14 (HIV &amp; GBV prevention information)</li> <li>Financial Literacy (Aflatoun)</li> <li>Screening for HTS/HTS referral</li> <li>Contraceptive information</li> <li>Condom information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DREAMS Toolkit 15-19 (HIV &amp; GBV Prevention information)</li> <li>Financial Literacy (Aflateen)</li> <li>Screening for HTS/HTS referral</li> <li>PrEP education/information</li> <li>Contraceptive information/FP</li> <li>Condom information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DREAMS Toolkit 20-24 (HIV &amp; GBV Prevention information)</li> <li>Financial Literacy (Aflateen)</li> <li>Screening for HTS/HTS referral</li> <li>PrEP education/information</li> <li>Contraceptive information/FP</li> <li>Condom information</li> </ul>
Secondary Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Violence prevention (IMPower)</li> <li>Education: Bursaries + Menstrual Hygiene Management, reintegration/dropout prevention</li> <li>Access to contraceptive services or Condoms</li> <li>Families Matter Program for caregivers and Teen mothers</li> <li>Access to Post Violence Care services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Violence prevention (IMPower)</li> <li>Education: Bursaries + Menstrual Hygiene Management, reintegration/dropout prevention</li> <li>Access to contraceptive services /FP</li> <li>Access to condoms</li> <li>Families Matter Program</li> <li>PrEP screening and uptake (YFHS)</li> <li>Economic strengthening (Siyakha)</li> <li>Youth VSLA+</li> <li>Access to Post Violence Care services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to contraceptive services/FP</li> <li>Access to condoms</li> <li>PrEP screening and uptake (YFHS)</li> <li>Economic strengthening (Siyakha)</li> <li>Youth VSLA</li> <li>Access to Post Violence Care services</li> <li>Families Matter Program for caregivers</li> </ul>

*SASA! and SASA! Faith for community mobilization and norms change*

## Mentoring

DREAMS Club Facilitators (DCFs) have complex roles that cover a wide range of responsibilities, including delivering the *My DREAMS My Choice* Toolkit and the financial literacy curricula, actively linking beneficiaries to services (sexual reproductive health, gender-based violence, education, parenting support, economic strengthening), tracking attendance and retention, as well as reporting service completion.

APA equips DREAMS Club Facilitators are trained and equipped with standardized tools, SOPs, referral resources, bicycles, and smart phones. DREAMS Club Facilitators use the smart phones to enter data into the DREAMS DHIS2 database, as well as for supportive supervision, peer support, and learning. Many DREAMS Clubs Facilitators are DREAMS graduates. APA also engages DREAMS Ambassadors (2 per district) to promote DREAMS broadly at the district level and to support coordination feedback mechanisms, innovation, co-creation processes, and youth-led accountability.

## DREAMS Toolkit for Social Asset Building

DREAMS Club facilitators use the *My DREAMS My Choice* Toolkit to help AGYW to develop soft skills including communication skills, self-control, social skills, critical thinking, understanding healthy and unhealthy relationships, and, making healthy decisions about sex, understanding consent, positive self-concept, and goal setting. The interactive and engaging materials in the *My DREAMS My Choice* Toolkit is segmented by age band to keep AGYW engaged and boost completion rates.

## Sexual Reproductive Health Education and Services

APA delivers a range of sexual reproductive health education and services to AGYW. APA collaborates with clinical service providers for direct service delivery to AGYW in the DREAMS Clubs, to provide active referral and linkages (escorted) to health facilities for services that cannot be accessed in the community. DREAMS AGYW receive HIV testing services (HTS), screening and referrals to HTS services as needed, as well as education sessions on condoms and contraceptives. The Ministry of Health Department of HIV & AIDS provided training for APA DREAMS Clubs Facilitators to provide HIV self-testing services and PrEP Screening. DREAMS AGYW for the 15-19 and 20-24 age bands, who also receive PrEP education and family planning information during club sessions. AGYW can access condoms, contraceptives, and PrEP screening in DREAMS Clubs through the community service provision partners. AGYW eligible for PrEP services are referred to PrEP accredited facilities.

### Eligibility Criteria for DREAMS enrollment

APA uses the Malawi DREAMS screening tool to assess eligibility for DREAMS enrollment. Eligibility criteria include:

- Multiple sexual partners
- STIs
- No or inconsistent condom use
- Transactional sex
- Experience of violence
- Out of school/never schooled
- Alcohol use
- Orphanhood
- Living with a disability

### Entry points for DREAMS enrollment

APA leverages PMTCT platforms, ANC clinics, as well as HTS, STI, and FP settings for DREAMS enrollment activities.

APA also works with Key Population Implementing Partners to identify and enroll AGYW engaged in transactional sex as well as to ensure that active referrals are in place.

“ Having learned about PrEP and how it works to prevent HIV, I realized that I was at risk of HIV and decided to start accessing the service. I never knew there was such a thing as this and I am happy to have known about it. I feel empowered and I know live a life free from worries as I am in control of my life.” -Rachel, 23 year old from Blantyre

## Economic Strengthening

APA improves financial literacy of AGYW through *Aflatoun/Aflateen/Aflayouth*, an age-appropriate and participatory curriculum that helps AGYW hone their skills related to saving, budgeting, and income generation. Older AGYW who are engaged in income generating activities participate in Youth Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) groups that inculcate a savings discipline and promote budgeting and goal setting. Participation in Youth VLSAs strengthens self-efficacy decreases AGYW's reliance on transactional sex. To support AGYW in DREAMS who are too young to engage in economic activities, APA links their caregivers to adult VSLA groups. The Siyakha work force readiness program combines foundational, soft, and technical skills with practical internships and mentorship, and provides gender sensitive economic strengthening training, startup support, and coaching and mentoring to propel AGYW on the pathway to employment or entrepreneurship.



AGYW participating in Siyakha workforce readiness.

## Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response

Trained facilitators deliver IMPower, a sexual and gender-based violence prevention curriculum that prepares AGYW to identify violence, and develop their verbal and physical skills to defend themselves. IMPower also increases assertiveness skills, boundary setting, understanding of rights and moves control away from possible perpetrators of abuse. Through preparation and practice, AGYW participating in IMPower cultivate the use of their voice and personal power in contrast to social expectations of silence and compliance that enable continued violence perpetration with impunity. IMPower prepares also works to increase disclosure of sexual violence and APA links survivors of violence to comprehensive post-violence care and support.

## Positive Parenting

APA delivers the Families Matter! Program/Teen (FMP/T) to caregivers of AGYW aged 10-17 enrolled in DREAMS. (FMP/T) is an evidence-based, parent-focused intervention designed to promote positive parenting and effective parent-child communication about sexuality and sexual risk reduction, including risk for child sexual abuse and gender-based violence. FMP/T helps caregivers overcome common parent-child communication barriers, such as embarrassment or discomfort in talking about sex and relationships.

## Education Support

To keep girls in schools, APA provides education bursaries (school feeds and uniforms) in collaboration with District Education Offices. Working with Mothers' Groups, APA provides menstrual hygiene support (combination of disposable sanitary pads and training on how to make reusable sanitary pads using locally available materials). For girls who have dropped out of school, APA provides reintegration support including engagement with parents and school officials and PSS. APA's early warning system (EWS) identifies girls at risk of dropping out and uses a case management protocol to retain girls in school.

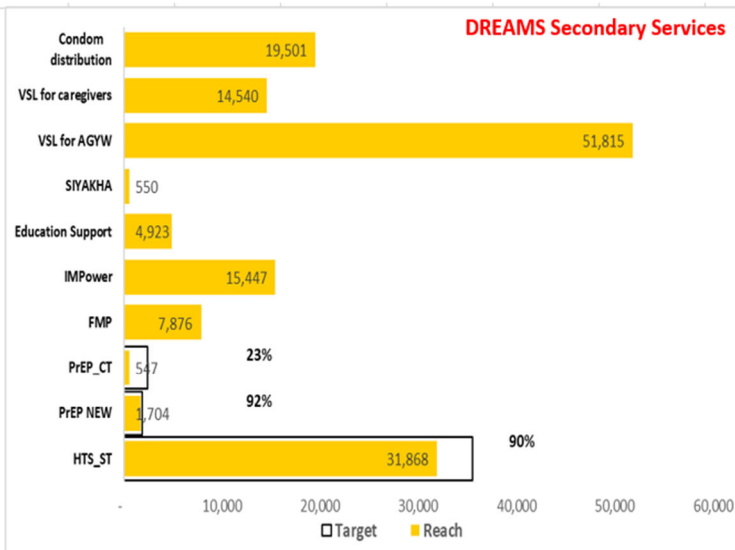
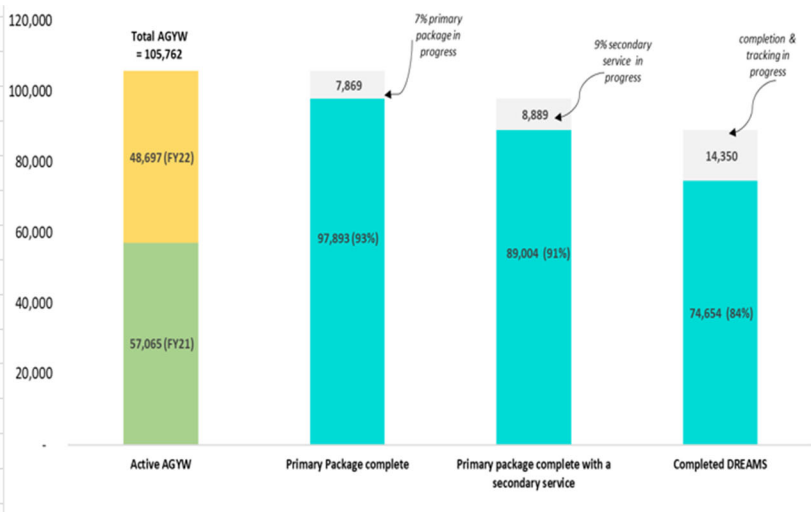
## Community Mobilization and Outreach to Male Sexual Partners of AGYW

SASA! is a gender-transformative intervention that engages communities to address cultural and normative issues and power dynamics that fuel gender-based violence and sparks conversations among community members to find local solutions. APA supports SASA! Community Action Groups, Change Agents, and Male Champions to hold monthly community mobilization meetings on GBV issues. When issues of violence are identified through SASA!, APA ensures linkages to post violence care and referrals to the OVC comprehensive program. In addition, Male Champions increase promotion of positive behavior and service uptake among male sexual partners of AGYW by delivering SASA! and creating demand men's clinical health services by increasing knowledge, awareness, and acceptability of men's health issues including HIV testing, VMMC, PrEP/PEP, prostate cancer, blood pressure, and ART initiation.



**Timely progression through DREAMS** and completion of the primary and secondary packages is critical to keeping AGYW engaged and retained in DREAMS through completion. In 2022, of the 105,762 active in DREAMS, 97,893 (93%) completed the primary package (with 7% continuing to complete the primary package in 2023). In addition, 89,004 (91%) completed both the primary package and at least a secondary service. APA provided the following services: HIV self-test kits distribution, VSLA for AGYW and their caregivers, education support, violence prevention sessions through IMPower, parenting sessions for caregivers through Families Matter! Program, Siyakha workforce readiness. APA also referred 1,704 AGYW for PrEP initiation. A total of 74,654 (84%) completed DREAMS and of those **98.9%** remained HIV negative.

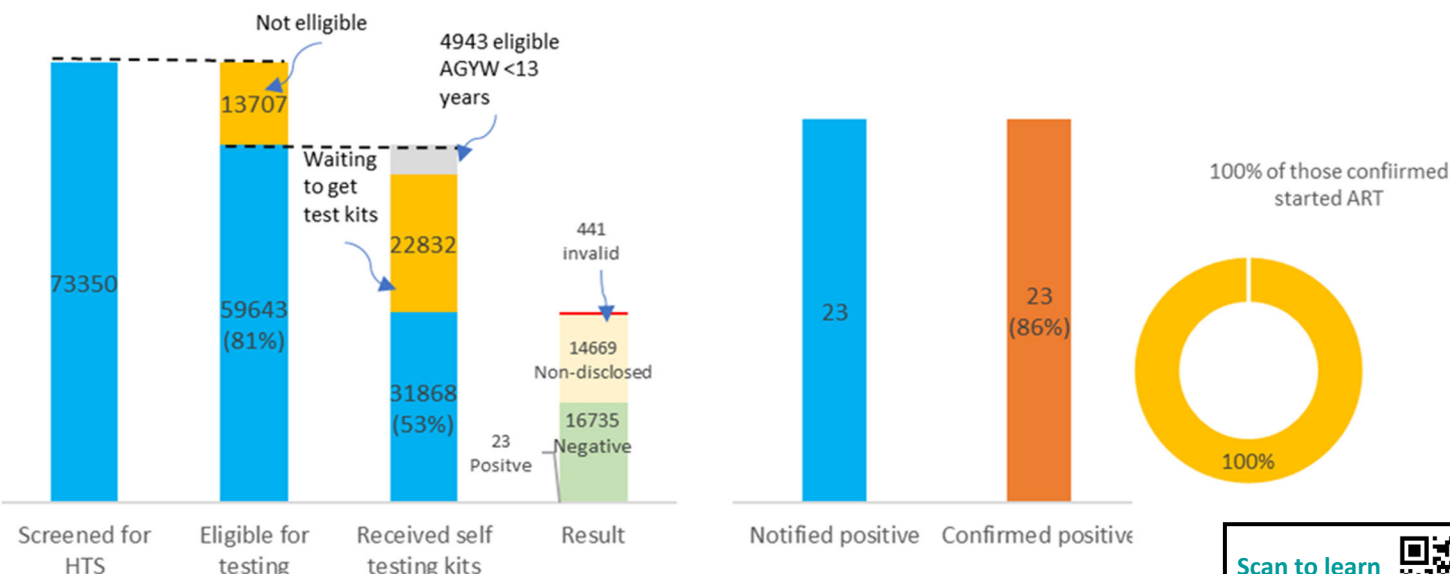
### Progression through DREAMS



Ana Patsogolo Activity, a 5-year PEPFAR and USAID funded project, delivers DREAMS in three districts under the leadership of The Bantwana Initiative of World Education in partnership with Global Hope Mobilization (GLOHOMO) in Machinga, Malawi AIDS Counselling and Resource Organization (MACRO) in Blantyre, and Zomba and Global AIDS Interfaith Alliance of Malawi (GAIA) in Phalombe.

## HIV Self-Test Cascade

All AGYW enrolled in DREAMS clubs completed an HIV risk screening and counseling session on risk reduction strategies to remain HIV free. DREAMS Club Facilitators trained as HIV self-test kit distributors by the Ministry of Health distributed HIV self-test kits. In 2022, APA screened **73,350** AGYW and distributed **31,868** HIV self-test kits to AGYW. Of those that received the HIV self-test kits, 28 tested HIV positive and were all referred to an HIV Diagnostic Assistant (HDA) for a confirmatory test. Of those, 23 AGYW who were confirmed HIV positive were initiated on ART and linked with positive living counseling and support.



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