

# USAID Afya Yangu - Southern Program Newsletter

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**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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# Foreword

“Afya Yangu Southern is a USAID funded program that aims at supporting the Government of Tanzania to deliver high quality integrated HIV and Tuberculosis (TB) services prevention care and treatment services that will improve health outcomes, particularly for youth and children. The program intends to increase the demand for and use of quality integrated HIV and TB services in Iringa, Lindi, Morogoro, Mtwara, Njombe, and Ruvuma regions”

Dear Friends of the USAID Afya Yangu Southern Program,  
Happy New Year 2023!

As we start the new year, I would like to share with you the first edition of the USAID Afya Yangu Southern Program newsletter highlighting the engagements that took place in FY23Q1. The program aims at prevention, care, and treatment services that will improve health outcomes particularly for youth and children in southern regions of Tanzania namely Iringa, Lindi, Morogoro, Mtwara, Njombe, and Ruvuma. The program closely collaborates with the government through the Ministry of Health, Presidents’ Office Regional Administration, and Local Government (PO-RALG); Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women, and Special Groups; and USAID-funded projects, implementers, and stakeholders.

The program is implemented through three supported intermediate result areas: improved access to quality

and client-centered HIV and TB services, improved ability of individuals to practice positive health-seeking behaviors, and enhanced enabling environment for quality HIV and TB service provision.

I hope you will enjoy reading through the pages as much as we have cherished every minute in service of our benefactors.



**Dr. Marina Njelekela**  
Chief of Party  
USAID Afya Yangu Southern

# Key Numbers



Program Performance Progress Towards FY23Q1

**188,531**

Clients tested for HIV (HTS\_TST)

**5,676**

Clients tested HIV positive (HTS\_TST\_POS)

**7,398**

Newly initiated on antiretroviral therapy (ART) (TX\_NEW)

**304,664**

Clients currently on ART (TX\_CURR)

**3,026**

TB patients detected

**1,911**

Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) clients with known HIV status (PMTCT\_EID <2months)

# Key Achievements

## TANZANIA HEALTH SUMMIT 2022

In October 2022, the USAID Afya Yangu Southern organized a healthcare forum themed “Comprehensive client centered approaches in action: The journey towards healthier and thriving communities” during the Tanzania Health Summit (THS). The forum featured best practices and lessons learned in differentiated client-centered approaches, focused HIV testing through community index testing and PrEP, Pediatric ART differentiated client-centered services (Saturday clinics and teen clubs integrated facility-led community ART services and multi-monthly dispensing (MMD), cervical cancer prevention (CECAP) and screening outreach, and hub-and-spoke model social behavior change (SBC) interventions for service delivery. The forum was moderated by Dr. Paul Chaote, Assistant Director of Health, Social Welfare, and Nutrition at the PO-RALG. The forum panel included government officials from PO-RALG, Ministry of Health (MoH), and USAID Afya Yangu, and Kizazi Hodari Southern Program staff.



From left to right, Dr. Paul Chaote (MPH), Assistant Director of Health, Social Welfare, and Nutrition at PO-RALG, Dr. Moses Ringo, Director of Results Management Office (USAID Afya Yangu Southern), Dr. Rehema Msimbe, Assistant Manager, Care, and Treatment (USAID Afya Yangu Southern), Godfrey Mwanakulya, SBCC Manager (USAID Afya Yangu Southern), Dr. Kenneth Chima, Deputy Chief of Party (USAID Kizazi Hodari Southern), Dr. Liberate Mleoh, Deputy Program Manager, National TB and Leprosy Programme (NTLP), and Dr. Werner Maokola, Strategic Information Lead, NACP

# TANZANIA HEALTH SUMMIT 2022

## Speakers

Dr. Mleoh shared the role of the NTL, which include the development of the National TB and Leprosy strategic plan and manual and other guidelines. NTL has collaborated with USAID Afya Yangu to execute various functions to ensure smooth service delivery and sustainability.

Dr. Maokola provided a highlight of policies and interventions in Tanzania necessary for the execution of client-centered approaches – “Delivery of HIV services by meeting people where they are with what they need”. He

emphasized that the purpose of the client-centered approach is to remove the barriers to continuous HIV care, including stigma and discrimination, and maximize convenience and responsiveness to client needs and preferences. He commended USAID Afya Yangu Southern for supporting the Government of Tanzania (GoT) with facility-based testing, care, and treatment services, serving people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) with what they need in HIV Care and Treatment Services, same day antiretroviral therapy (ART)

initiation and multi-month dispensing (3/6MMD), ART monitoring that includes HIV Viral Load testing services, and drug resistance monitoring. Dr. Maokola informed delegates that the GoT has introduced the biometric system in health care that is currently under pilot phase.



Dr. Mleoh



Dr. Maokola

## Our program staff shared a snapshot of differentiated clients-centered approaches during the THS 2022

Dr. Msimbe shared the different client approaches that USAID Afya Yangu Southern uses to ensure that clients get the opportunity to receive uninterrupted comprehensive ART services. The approaches include focused HIV testing through community index testing and PrEP, pediatric ART differentiated client-centered services (Saturday clinics and teen clubs), integrated facility-led community ART services, and Multi-Month Dispensing (MMD), CECAP screening outreach hub-spoke model. The WHO recommends that 95% of identified PLHIV linked

to care and treatment services remain in care and suppressed. UNAIDS estimates that 75% of people living with HIV (PLHIV) have access to antiretroviral therapy (ART); however, 90% of PLHIV in Tanzania are on treatment using client-centered approaches that need to be maintained to reach the global goal of 95% by 2030. Dr. Msimbe also shared the lessons learned including continued prevention continuum of care, psychological and medical intervention and improved suppression to HIT 95% suppression global aids goal for adolescents and children, and MMD delivery model gives

a promising approach towards reaching the global AIDS goals, with resource constraints setting shortage of providers with skills is inevitable. Additionally, engagement of the regional health management teams and utilizing available health care workers to conduct outreach CECAP services at places where clients reside is the best modality across regions.



Dr. Msimbe

Mr. Mwanakulya gave highlights on the SBC activities and how they are integrated into the program and the major milestones such as program orientation of over 200 treatment experts (TE) on-demand creation for HIV services at the facility and community level. He also shared how the program is using male champions to reach men with HIV testing, care, and treatments through small group sessions to address social norms that hinder the

uptake of services, interpersonal communication (IPC) – to address individual barriers with fellow men. Moreover, he discussed how the program uses community radio programs, regionalized local content, delivered with and by clients, and health experts through participatory dialogue (over 20 programs aired), recorded radio spots focusing on themes such as high viral load (HVL), COVID-19 vaccination, and HIV testing (1800 spots aired). He concluded that integrating

SBC into the service delivery program increases services uptake among target groups and client-centered approaches play a vital role in improving retention in HIV services for PLHIV – for change to happen we need to keep the dialogue going between clients and client-providers.



Mr. Mwanakulya

Mr. Chima shared about the implementation of a comprehensive client-centered approach through National Investigative Case Management System (NICMS) targeting orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) and households under USAID

Kizazi Hodari Southern. He also highlighted the guiding principles such as support for the GoT and community systems and structures, gender integration and meaningful engagement, routine use of data for continuous quality improvement, and integration

with other PEPFAR programs (with a focus on clinical programs).



Mr. Chima

The program was honored with the award for coordinating the health care symposium and exhibition in THS 2022, the award was handed over by the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Health, who also visited the booth during the event and learned about how the program is complimenting government efforts to deliver high quality integrated HIV and Tuberculosis (TB) services prevention, care, and treatment services in the southern regions.



Deputy Minister of Health, Hon. Dr. Godwin O. Mollel when he was handling the healthcare award to Dr. Moses Ringo, Results Management Office Director for USAID Afya Yangu Southern, as part of recognizing their efforts in the healthcare industry, ©USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R.George



On the left is Dr. Marina Njelekela, Chief of Party for USAID Afya Yangu Southern Program, and in the middle is Dorothy Matoyo, Chief of Party for USAID Kizazi Hodari Southern Activity, giving a vote of thanks during the USAID Afya Yangu Southern Forum at THS 2022, on the right is Dr. Selina Mathias USAID Afya Yangu Southern Contract Officer Representative when she visited program booth at the THS, ©USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R.George



USAID Afya Yangu Southern team during the THS 2022, ©USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R.George



## VEHICLE HANDOVER AT IRINGA, MAFINGA COUNCIL



*The Chief of the Party Dr. Marina Njelekela handing over the vehicle to District Commissioner Saad Mtambule, ©USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R.George*

The USAID Afya Yangu Southern Senior Management Team led by the Chief of Party, Dr. Marina Njelekela handed over the vehicle to the District Commissioner Saad Mtambule. The vehicle will continue to support the comprehensive HIV

care and treatment services that are provided in the facility and other program activities such as outreaches. The Mafinga district and council health management team thanked the program for the support and stated that the vehicle will enable to deliver

high-quality integrated HIV and tuberculosis (TB) prevention, care, and treatment services, which will also enable them to access hard-to-reach and rural areas.

## USAID AFYA YANGU AND KIZAZI HODARI SOUTHERN SIGNS INTER-FUNCTION MEMORANDUM

USAID's Afya Yangu and Kizazi Hodari Southern Chief of Parties Dr. Marina Njelekela and Dorothy Matoyo signed an inter-function memorandum for effective collaboration to improve services for children and adolescents living with HIV in the southern regions by

enrolling them in the orphans and vulnerable children's platforms under USAID Kizazi Hodari Southern Activity. USAID Kizazi Hodari Southern (2022-2027) aim to improve the health, well-being, and protection of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) and youth in the

high HIV burden communities. Both programs are managed by Deloitte Consulting Limited and are implemented in the southern regions of Tanzania.



USAID Afya Yangu and Kizazi Hodari Southern Chief of Parties when they were signing the inter-function memorandum, © USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R.George

## 4th ANNUAL USAID GLOBAL HEALTH LOCAL PARTNER MEETING

On November 14 – 17, 2022, the Chief of Party for USAID Afya Yangu Dr. Marina Njelekela and USAID Kizazi Hodari Southern Dorothy Matoyo attended

the 4th Annual USAID Global Health Local Partner meeting in South Africa. The program also participated by submitting photos and videos to help

USAID showcase how prime local partners implement health programming.



Dr. Marina Njelekela, Chief of Party for USAID Afya Yangu and Dorothy Matoyo, Chief of Party for USAID Kizazi Hodari Southern Activity during the 4th Annual USAID Global Health Local Partner Meeting in South Africa, © USAID Afya Yangu Southern/M.Njelekela

# YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND MEANINGFUL REPRESENTATION “NOTHING FOR THEM WITHOUT THEM”



The USAID Afya Yangu Southern Program beneficiaries under the SITETEREKI platform at the booth providing education and information during the WAD 2022 in Lindi, ©USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R.George

USAID Afya Yangu and Kizazi Hodari Southern programs collaborated with TACAIDS on WAD 2022 commemoration by ensuring full participation and engagement of young people in youth and community

villages, dialogues with youth implementing partners, and religious leaders. The programs supported youth from Lindi, Mtwara, and Ruvuma to share their lessons on HIV youth-friendly services from their

regions as program beneficiaries through the SITETEREKI youth platform. The youth provided HIV education and information to their fellow youth during the event and showcased HIV youth interventions.



USAID Afya Yangu Southern Youth beneficiaries from Mtwara, Lindi, and Ruvuma in a group photo doing exhibitions during WAD 2022 at the USAID Afya Yangu and Kizazi Hodari Southern booth, ©USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R.George



Youth beneficiaries under the USAID Afya Yangu Southern SITETEREKI platform participated in different dialogues at the WAD 2022 and shared youth lessons from the program © USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R.George

## 2022 ANNUAL PROGRAM REVIEW

The USAID Afya Yangu Southern conducted an Annual Program Review from 6 – 9 December 2022 at APC Hotel in Bunju Dar es Salaam for the leadership

teams. The Annual Program Review enabled the program staff to strategize for the second year of program implementation for all the regions to meet the

set targets. Additionally, the program staff participated in various team-building activities.



The USAID Afya Yangu Southern team during the Annual Program Review workout sessions together with the Chief of Party, Dr. Marina Njelekela, Deloitte Partners Carlton Jones and Mabel Ndawula, © USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R.George



USAID Afya Yangu Southern leadership team during the team building activities at Annual Program Review in Dar es Salaam, © USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R.George

# Key Eminence

## WORLD AIDS DAY 2022

The USAID Afya Yangu Southern participated in the national commemoration of World AIDS Day (WAD) 2022 on 15 November to 1 December 2022 and provided support to Tanzania Commission for AIDS (TACAIDS) in various activities such as youth and community village events, press conferences, scientific symposium, and awareness creation. The program also collaborated with National AIDS Control Program (NACP)

in coordinating health services provision and education on the grounds such as HIV and cervical cancer screening services. The WAD 2022 national theme was “Imarisha usawa” translated from the global theme “Equalize”, a call for action to address inequalities and help end AIDS. The climax of the WAD 2022 was graced by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania Samia Suluhu Hassan on 1 December as the guest of honor. The President

congratulated all partners for their efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The goal of ending HIV in 2030 involves ending inequalities and fighting collaboratively with the government, PEPFAR, Global Fund, UN Agencies, and all the citizens. The president officially announced the government’s strategy for the years 2022, 2025, 2026, therefore, every sector should implement their focus areas and work on them accordingly.



*“When we talk of HIV, we are talking about 30 years since it came to Tanzania so we should all use this day to reflect on where we came from, where we are going and where we want to go in the efforts of fighting HIV.”*

*President of the United Republic of Tanzania Samia Suluhu Hassan giving closing remarks during the climax of the WAD 2022 in Lindi region, ©TACAIDS*

## Major highlights during the WAD 2022 national commemorations

During the commemorations, the program booth was visited by high-level officials such as the US Ambassador Donald Wright; Minister of State, Prime Minister’s Office, Parliament,

Policy, and Coordination George Simbachawene; and Deputy Minister, Prime Minister’s Office Labor, Youth, and Employment Patrobas Katambi. The program participated in various activities

together with the youth beneficiaries, and its sister project USAID Kizazi Hodari Southern.



USAID Afya Yangu Southern team with its beneficiaries during the WAD 2022 Launch Event, © USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R. George

## WAD 2022 US Ambassador visit

The US Ambassador Donald Wright had a chance to interact with youth that are recruited by the program under the SITETEREKI platform, receiving services such as sexual reproductive health, access to family planning, and protective gear such as condoms. They are also in youth clubs enable them to share ideas and present any challenges that they are facing. Ambassador Wright visited

the Sokoine regional referral hospital, one of the 98 facilities supported by the USAID Afya Yangu program in Lindi region, where he was welcomed by the USAID Afya Yangu Southern Chief of Party Dr. Marina Njelekela, Lindi Region Medical Officer Dr. Kheri Kagya, and Medical Officer in Charge for Sokoine Regional Referral Hospital Dr. Muhaji Kamtande. The ambassador had a chance

to interact with the hospital management team, service providers, USAID Afya Yangu Southern program staff, and beneficiaries. He was briefed about how the program supports HIV prevention, care, and treatment services for adults and pediatrics at the facility, integrated comprehensive service delivery, non-HIV services at the facility, and COVID-19 support.



Dr. Marina Njelekela, USAID Afya Yangu Southern Chief of Party welcoming the US Ambassador to Tanzania, Donald Wright to the USAID Afya Yangu and Kizazi Hodari Southern programs booth during the WAD 2022 in Lindi region, ©USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R. George.

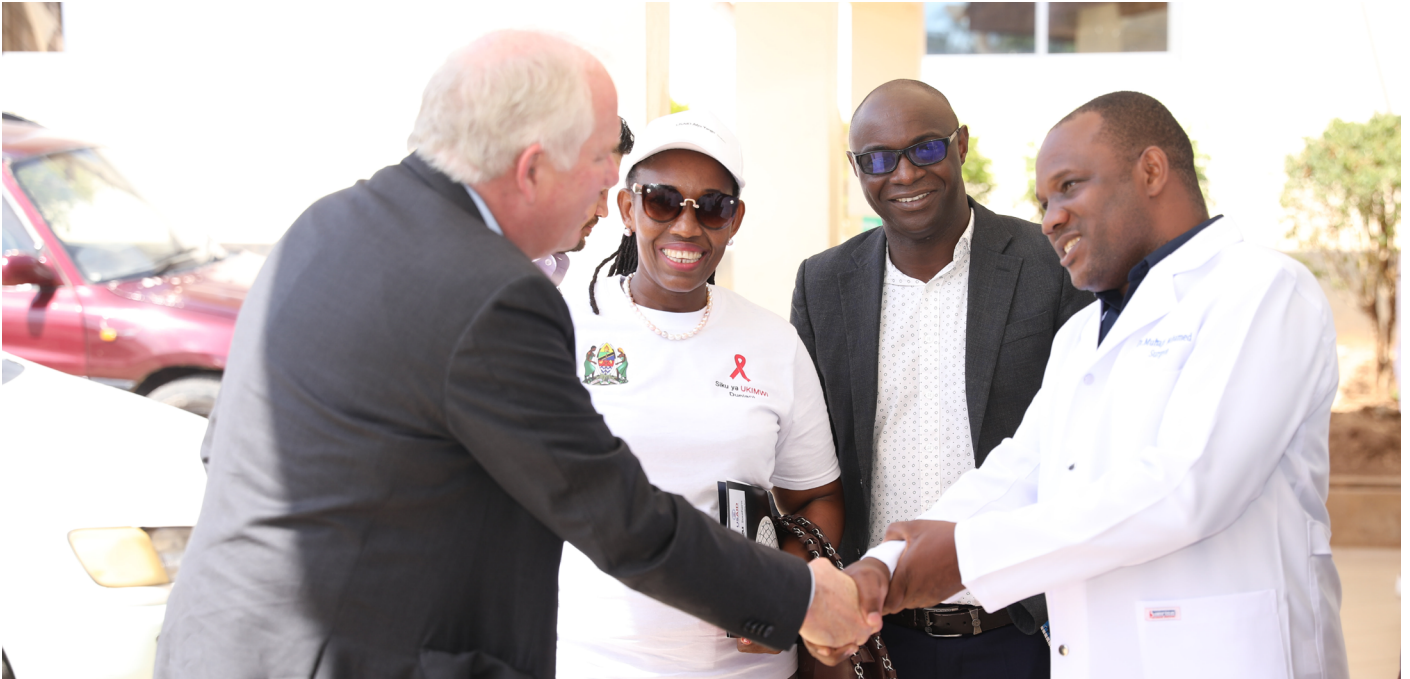


The US Ambassador to Tanzania, Donald Wright when he visited USAID Afya Yangu and Kizazi Hodari Southern programs booth during the WAD 2022, © USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R.George

Dr. Kamtande explained the overview of the services offered at the hospital including care and treatment services, which has 16 staff and 1,241 clients. He also shared about the collaboration between Tanzania and U.S government through USAID Afya Yangu Southern that enabled clients to access HIV/ TB medication. The ambassador was also given tour of the hospital starting from OPD then CTC where he learned about the services being supported by the USAID Afya Yangu Southern, which includes HIV and TB screening and testing,

linkage of the positive clients to medication, counseling services, cervical cancer screening, family planning, PrEP services, and COVID-19 vaccination where 899 out of 1,187 clients have been vaccinated. After the tour Ambassador Wright and other program staff had a short meeting with the different service beneficiaries from CTC such as GBV survivors, clients receiving their ART services, discordant couples, supporting groups, CBHS, youth from SITETEREKI platform, and TB expert client. They shared their testimonies and thanked

the hospital and program staff for their support in offering the required services. The US Ambassador Wright congratulated everyone for their hard work in making sure that health services are accessible and affordable to all. He also recognized the testimonies that were shared and wished early recovery to those who suffered any kind of violence but also encouraged them to be resilient and for those who are on ART to continue adhering to medication.



Ambassador Donald Wright when he was welcomed by the Medical Officer in Charge for Sokoine Referral Hospital in Lindi when he was visiting USAID Afya Yangu Southern Program, © USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R.George



US Ambassador when he was listening to the USAID Afya Yangu Southern service providers and beneficiaries' testimonies at the Sokoine Referral Hospital © USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R.George



On the left, the Chief of Party for USAID Afya Yangu Southern Dr. Marina Njelekela introducing the US Ambassador Donald Wright to program staff. On the right, the Ambassador in a group photo with Sokoine Referral Hospital Management Team, Lindi Regional Medical Officer, USAID Afya Yangu Southern staff, beneficiaries, and services providers © USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R.George



## WAD 2022 ministers' visit

The program was also visited by Hon. Simbachawene and Hon. Katambi at the USAID Afya Yangu and Kizazi Hodari Southern booth where they

learned about how the programs ensure youth's health needs are met, particularly for HIV and TB and family planning. Hon. Simbachawene commended

the projects for ensuring meaningful youth engagement and participation, and urged the program to continue ensuring youth representation.



Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office, Parliament, Policy, and Coordination George Simbachawene visiting USAID Afya Yangu and Kizazi Hodari Southern booth, ©USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R.George



The Deputy Minister, Prime Minister's Office Labor, Youth, and Employment Patrobas Katambi visiting USAID Afya Yangu and Kizazi Hodari Southern booth at the WAD 2022, ©USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R.George

# AIDS TRUST FUND MARATHON



USAID Afya Yangu Southern and Kizazi Hodari Southern Activity team after the marathon, ©USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R. George

USAID Afya Yangu and Kizazi Hodari Southern programs participated in the AIDS Trust Fund marathon during the

WAD commemoration in Lindi region as part of supporting TACAIDS efforts to raise awareness towards sharing and

dissemination of information, also advocating domestic HIV/AIDS resource mobilization.



On the left, USAID Afya Yangu Southern program staff Dr. Moses Ringo, Director of the Results Management office, Nyantilo Machota (Enabling Environmental Manager), and USAID Contract Officer Representative, for USAID Afya Yangu Southern Dr. Selina Mathias prepping for the marathon during WAD 2022 marathon. On the middle, USAID Afya Yangu Southern program team together with TACAIDS Executive Director, PEPFAR Country Coordinator Jessica Greene, USAID Contract Officer Representative for USAID Afya Yangu Southern Dr. Selina Mathias, during the World Aids Day marathon. On the right USAID Afya Yangu and Kizazi Hodari Southern team in a group photo with the Ministry of Health and other implementing partners ©USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R. George

# 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

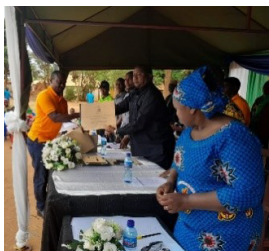
The USAID Afya Yangu Southern participated in the National launch of 16 Days of Activism and presented to the Minister of Community Development, Gender, and Special Groups Dorothy Gwajima how the program integrates gender in its implementation in line with Tanzania's Gender and Youth policies and USAID and PEPFAR guidance to end violence against

women and children. During the 16 Days of Activism, USAID Afya Yangu Southern supported the Tanzania Ministry of Health to print 600 recently revised copies of GBV registers, tally sheets, and monthly report registers to improve documentation of reported cases. Moreover, the program conducted a GBV youth dialogue attended by universities in Iringa

and graced by the Regional Commissioner, Halima Dendego. The program also had a live radio session in Mtwara on Safari Radio to create awareness of GBV/VAC. The USAID Afya Yangu Southern senior management team supported national and global efforts to end violence against women and children during the 16 Days of Activism.



On the left, Hon. Dorothy Gwajima, Minister of Community Development, Gender, and Special Groups when she visited USAID Afya Yangu Southern booth, in the middle is program staff in a group photo with other partners, UN Agencies, and the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, and Special Groups, on the right its program staff on a group photo, ©USAID Afya Yangu Southern/A. Rehan



On the left, USAID Afya Yangu Southern program staff handing over GBV registers, and program staff together with Regional Social Welfare Officer during the live radio session in Mtwara region - I. Sanga. On the left, USAID Afya Yangu Southern Iringa region program staff during the gender-based violence dialogue in Iringa region during the 16 Days of Activism, © USAID Afya Yangu Southern/B. Zegeli



© USAID Afya Yangu Southern/R.George

## CARAVAN PARTICIPATION

The USAID Afya Yangu Southern program participated in the 16 Days of Activism caravan in the Morogoro region, providing an opportunity for the community

to watch the world cup while discussing various forms of GBV facing men, available support services, and the role of men as clients, supportive partners,

and agents of positive change in fighting against GBV. The strategy aimed to ensure male engagement towards ending femicide.



USAID Afya Yangu Southern staff in Morogoro during the 16 Days of Activism caravan, © USAID Afya Yangu Southern/J. Uwaya

## CQUIN 6th ANNUAL MEETING



Dr. Moses Ringo, Director of Results Management Office during the CQUIN Annual Meeting, ©USAID Afya Yangu Southern, M. Ringo

On 6 – 9 December 2022, USAID Afya Yangu Southern, Director of Results Management Office Dr. Moses Ringo presented the poster on “The Synergetic Effect of Teen Clubs Towards Pediatric HIV Viral Load Suppression in Southern Zone of Tanzania, a case from Morogoro region” during the

CQUIN (Commissioning for Quality and Innovation) 6th Annual Meeting in South Africa. The Program is implementing 60 teen clubs and 323 Saturday clinics with 1,734 and 8,280 beneficiaries from 0-19 years of age in and out of school respectively. Through these clinics, adherence to medication

has improved, and subsequently the HVL suppression among the pediatric population. During the FY22, HVL Suppression among pediatric improved from 79% to 92% in Gairo DC (n=92) and from 80% to 90% in Malinyi DC (n=104) in the Morogoro region.

# Success Stories

## FAITH AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE (FCI)

Faith and Community Initiative (FCI) plays a significant role in addressing socio-behavioral constraints which are affecting uptake of HIV/AIDS-related services in Ruvuma.

Ruvuma is among Tanzania's administrative regions with the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate. The recent available data indicate that the region has a prevalence rate of 5.6 exceeding the National prevalence rate, which currently stands at 4.7. Having a prevalence rate of 5.6 has placed Ruvuma in the list of 10 regions with the highest prevalence rates. The Tanzania HIV Impact Survey (THIS) 2016-17 reports that at the national level, tremendous efforts have been put in place by government authorities, non-state actors, and international communities, yielding results in terms of reducing HIV infections in the country and promoting uptake of care and treatment services for the people who are already aware of their HIV positive status.

However, the invested efforts have not produced significant results as anticipated. Key drivers that are fueling HIV transmission in the communities still exist. The THIS document highlights the major drivers for HIV transmission as behavioral related and deep rooted in the social structure. Risky behaviors such as early sexual debut among sexually active adolescent girls and boys, engagement in multiple and concurrent sexual partners, engagement in paid and cross-generational sex, and discriminatory attitudes and stigma towards people who are living with HIV/AIDS are cited as among those behavioral and social structure related drivers.

In realizing that, most of the key factors precipitating HIV infections and effecting HIV/AIDS treatment are behavioral in nature and deep rooted in the social structure, the USAID

Afya Yangu Southern Program under social behavior change communication (SBCC) thematic area works with faith leaders from three religious umbrella organizations namely Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC), Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT), and the National Muslim Council of Tanzania (BAKWATA) to address behavioral issues and societal norms that have negative impact on the HIV/AIDS care and treatment services in the region.

In the beginning of July 2022, the program conducted a one-day orientation to 17 faith leaders from eight administrative councils of the region. Participants of the orientation were taken through several topics on HIV/AIDS and Gender and GBV to address the identified knowledge gap, tackle the negative norms, perceptions and attitudes among them, and equip them with the correct and

evidence-based information on the pandemic to enable them to communicate the right and powerful messages to their believers and thus contributing to the country's efforts in achieving epidemic control by 2030 as envisioned by the UNAIDS through the 95-95-95 global targets. Most of the participants of the orientation were very excited and eager to learn throughout the orientation.

***"I am very happy that I was invited to this training, I have gained a lot of new insights that have shaped my perceptions and understanding on HIV/AIDS tremendously,"***

His Grace Alkwin Kapinga - The Archbishop from the Evangelical Church of Tanzania for the Western Diocese, which covers the regions of Ruvuma, Mbeya, Njombe and Rukwa.

Speaking during and after the orientation sessions, some of the participants made very positive remarks about the orientation.

*“That part of Gender and GBV was very powerful, and the facilitator of the session did his job in a very professional way. Before attending this session, I did not have adequate knowledge on gender and GBV issues, and the way gender norms and GBV have been affecting provision and uptake of HIV/AIDS services in health facilities, I will make sure that I share what I have learnt from this orientation with my family, fellow bishops, priests and with the people we are serving. The messages we have received today are very key in ensuring that our believers take precaution against HIV/AIDS,”* continued Bishop Kapinga in an interview with one of the program staff.

On her part, CCT Secretary for Ruvuma Region – Madam Lilian Mwakisyala extended her heartfelt thanks to the USAID Afya Yangu Southern for organizing the training. *“I truly thank the management of the program for organizing such a training, it has given us faith leaders a chance to meet and intensively discuss issues related to HIV/AIDS and GBV, which have*



*been affecting our believers. The way HIV has spread currently, there are PLHIV everywhere including in our churches. We cannot be comfortable at all while our people are suffering, as the development of the church and expansion of our services rely on the people who are healthy. Therefore, we will strongly continue to partner with government and non-state actors in fighting the disease,”* remarked Madam Mwakisyala. *“We believe that people who are suffering from different health problems can be healed through prayers if they truly believe in them, but we never advise our people to stop using medication and resorting solely to prayers, and therefore we will continue to talk to our believers about this,”* Madam Mwakisyala concluded.

Commenting on the training, the Regional BAKWATA Secretary Sheikh Rajabu Mustafa Songambe hailed the organizers of the training for recognizing the role of the faith leaders in promoting HIV/AIDS services uptake in the region. *“As it was said during the sessions most of the factors that perpetuate the existence of this disease are rooted in the behavioral context, and this should tell the experts that to solve the problem we need a multi-sectoral approach. Therefore, on behalf of my fellow BAKWATA leaders whom I represent, I pledge to continue preaching messages that will contribute to the*

*Mr. Abubakar Rehani - Gender and Youth Manager facilitating a session on Gender and GBV during the FCI orientation in Ruvuma Region, © USAID Afya Yangu Southern/A.Rehan*

*prevention of HIV infections as well as promoting uptake of the HIV/AIDS related services. Regarding the gender and GBV issues, it is of course my first time today to hear something like marital rape, I never knew there is such a thing but from today’s sessions, I have now understood about it, I have also learnt how marital rape and intimate partner violence (IPV) are fueling HIV transmission and negatively affecting uptake of HIV/AIDS related services. I suggest more trainings of this nature be organized to reach more people,”* Sheikh Songambe concluded.



## CONTINUITY OF TREATMENT APPROACH

Continuity of treatment is critical to maintaining the health of PLHIV and achieving epidemic control and is attainable through a client-centered focus. USAID Afya Yangu Southern investigated the reasons for treatment interruption and sought to advance practices that facilitate continuous treatment.

Based on Q2 data the project identified three key areas that significantly contributed to treatment interruption and number of adults and children currently receiving antiretroviral therapy (TX CURR) drop between May and June 2022. The areas included documentation loss, less attention to proactive prevention strategies and unaddressed sub-populations characteristics and challenges. To address these challenges the program started with orientation and technical assistance support to various groups including CBHSFP, facility based trackers, stationed Community Based Health Services Providers (CBHSPs), expert clients, CBHSPs, and services provides, a total of 44 CBHS FP, 37 Family Based Treatment (FBT) and 51

stationed CBHSP, and more than 160 volunteers were oriented on CoT strategies from June to September 2022. The facility was oriented on monitoring tools, clinic preparations, same day tracing, three boxes approach and map cues activation, and the whole package of continuity of treatment approaches. Data triangulation, care and treatment centre database for HIV clinics to manage data on their HIV/AIDS care and treatment patients (CTC2) cards arrangement and documentation of on transit clients was another area that was emphasized, for example tier one facilities had high challenge of CTC2 card accessibility due to poor arrangement and sometimes misplacement of CTC2 Cards, this called for attention to invest

in CTC2 cards arrangement using the agreed system like the use of folder file in which the CTC2 cards are arranged using alphabetic order/CTC ID.



*Jovin Jonathan, Assistant Manager Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) Retention and Community Based Health Services Focal Person (CBHSFP) © USAID Afya Yangu Southern/J.Jovan*



To address sub population challenges different interventions were prioritized including scale-up Defined Daily Dose (DDD) model among clients living less than 10 kilometers away from facilities and to address the movement challenge among miners and peasants, establishment of evening and Saturday clinics to tier one health facilities (HFs) support business, workers, and adolescent’s sub-populations. The process and intervention were monitored on a daily basis using various WhatsApp groups, for example two WhatsApp groups were designed to monitor facility level reports for tier one facilities while the other group was to monitor council performance trends. Deployed facility-based trackers were responsible for sharing a daily report using a well customized tool to capture important indicators related to continuity of treatment like expected

appointment adherence, same day tracing, map cue activation, session of clinic preparation, and a section explaining if all attendees have been updated into CTC2 database. Likewise, the CBHSFP were responsible for sharing a daily summary report on tracing efforts of MISSAP (Missed Appointment) with more than 3 days not on ART and Interruption in Treatment (IIT) tracing efforts. Members of the group includes CBHSFP, program staff, district data officers, Regional and Council Health Management.

**The left tool is the one used by CBHSFP while the right tool is used by facility-based trackers.**

By the end of Q4, all supported regions achieved positive net new clients, and the trend increased across months, for example new clients increased from 115% end of FY22Q2 to 113% in FY22Q4 with only Morogoro and Mtwara achieving less than 90%, in comparison

to the last two consecutive quarters the program marked significant treatment growth of 2.8% in FY22Q4 compared to 2.3% in FY22Q3. Also, the number of clients on IIT decreased significantly by 3,163 clients between the two quarters, for example the number of IIT dropped from 10,737 in FY22Q3 to 7,574 in FY22Q4 due to active effort invested on proactive loss prevention strategies. Currently the retention proxy is 100%. For the FY23Q1 onwards, the program will continue to scale up measures to prevent treatment interruptions, early identification and tracking of clients who miss appointments using an appointment system and 3 box model, prioritization of ART refills through outreach services among hard-to-reach groups, and mobile clients as provision of three and six months Multi-Month Dispensing (MMD) to stable clients.

CBHS – FP’s DAILY SUMMARY REPORT 21/10/2022 (7 COUNCILS)	ADULTS	PAEDIATRICS
# of IIT attempted to track	502	4
# of IIT tracked back	41	2
# of IIT confirmed TO	3	0
# of IIT confirmed dead	1	0
# of IIT opted out	0	0
# of IIT attending	4	-
# of IIT MissApps attempted to track	155	2
# of IIT MissApps tracked back	125	2
# of IIT MissApps confirmed TO	0	0
# of IIT MissApps confirmed dead	0	0
# of IIT MissApps opted out	0	0
# of ART Outreaches expected	-	3

BOMBAMBILI DISPENSARY (20/10/2022)	
# Expected app	21
# client visited before app	0
# client who visited	19
# entered in DB	19
# client missed app	2
# of clients traced on the same day via phone number	2
# of clients not reachable	0
# of clients with no phone number	0
# not responded	0
# banned number	0
# clients given to CBHSP for physical tracing: (expectations for those without numbers/wrong numbers)	0
TRACKING OUTCOME	
# promise to come	0
# transfer out	0
# died	0
#opted out	0
MAP CUES	
# of the clients attended today (S&US)	19
# of the clients with incomplete/no map cues	19
# updated	15
# re-recorded	2





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