

Global Business Coalition Winner: Community Philanthropy



WINNER

GBC Award for
Business
Excellence

REGION: MALAWI

INDUSTRY TYPE: FINANCIAL SERVICES

WEBSITE: www.intesasanpaolo.com

Through collaboration with the local government and a number of NGOs, Intesa Sanpaolo has designed and implemented Project Malawi—a multifaceted intervention aiming to break the poverty cycle by addressing health care, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and local development and microfinance.

Goal

To mitigate the impact of HIV on the population by improving health conditions of infected individuals and reducing mortality; strengthening PMTCT; reinforcing the capacities of families and communities to cope with the epidemic; and economically empowering vulnerable communities.

Program Scope

Intesa Sanpaolo and the Cariplo Foundation have contributed €9 million over three years mainly to the DREAM program in Malawi, establishing 10 health centers and three molecular biology labs in the landlocked African country, which has one of the highest HIV/AIDS rates on the continent.

Outcomes

- DREAM Centers saw 8,980 patients for a total of 36,202 appointments throughout the pilot period.
- The centers tracked 598 pregnancies and prevented 364 newborns from mother-to-child transmission of HIV.
- As a result of the program, 4,054 patients began highly active antiretroviral therapy, including 524 children.
- Molecular biology laboratories processed more than 25,000 blood samples.

ABOUT INTESA SANPAOLO

The Intesa Sanpaolo Group is the leading banking group in Italy, where it serves about 10.7 million customers, and is one of the top banking groups in Europe. The Group is the Italian leader in financial activities for both households and enterprises, and enjoys strategic coverage in Central-Eastern European markets.

THE WINNING PROGRAM

The key to this successful community philanthropy venture is not only the scale of the financial commitment, but its sustainability in the long term. By providing €9 million in funding over a three-year period Intesa Sanpaolo and the Cariplo Foundation helped finance the Drug Resources Enhancement against AIDS and Malnutrition (**DREAM**) program of the **Community of Sant'Egidio**, Malawi. The program also established

three molecular biology laboratories and 10 health centers serving almost 10,000 people, building critical testing and treatment capacities on the ground.

By partnering with three additional local NGOs—Scout Associations, Save the Children and CISP—the scope of the intervention was broadened, giving birth to Project Malawi. With the assistance of grant funding, Intesa Sanpaolo built a special multifunctional center to host the diverse activities of the program— such as nutritional support and education, psychological support for children and teens, voluntary counseling and testing (VCT), training for medical personnel on prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT), training and support to income generating activities and leisure activities for socially alienated youths.

In preparation for launching the program, each area of intervention was discussed with local authorities and large players on the ground—such as the World Bank and UNAIDS. The final program draft was submitted for approval to the President of Malawi and the local ministries involved.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Creating a Multifunctional Center to Increase Partner Synergies

By building a multifunctional center that hosts the activities of Project Malawi's four partners, the company was able to improve synergies between the multiple services provided by each association. While various health centers can refer patients to other centers, program integration was strongest at the multifunctional center in the Kapeni district.

Working with Activists and Support Groups

Through the DREAM approach, Project Malawi has been able to improve antiretroviral (ARV) therapy adherence and reduce stigma through community support groups. Group members support each other by sharing their positive experiences with ARV treatment and encourage each other to become activists to combat stigma and the notion that an HIV diagnosis is a death sentence. This peer education and emotional support is crucial for new patients.

BROADLY APPLICABLE PRINCIPLES

Sustainable Funding Improves Adherence to ARV Therapy

Through continuous funding of the DREAM centers, patients are provided PMTCT services and ARVs free of charge. Additional services—such as nutritional support, home visits and telephone calls—further enable increased adherence to therapy regimes.

Long-Term Commitments Enhance Program Impact

By committing itself to a three-year investment, Intesa Sanpaolo was able to greatly enhance the impact its funding would have on people on the ground. Long-term investments allow for better planning and programs that can improve livelihoods in the long-run.
