Nearly 90% of AGE Africa scholars finish secondary school and 64% pursue higher education.

Advancing Girls Education in Africa

AGE Africa’s mission is to provide life-changing opportunities for young women in Malawi through targeted initiatives in education, mentoring and leadership development. Our vision is that all girls in Africa will have equal access to education, and will be empowered through their own learning to become leaders in their communities and beyond. AGE Africa currently supports the education, sexual and reproductive health programs, and leadership development of over 550 Malawian girls. Eight out of ten AGE scholars are either single or double orphans and/or first generation high school attendees. AGE Africa focuses on the rural and most impoverished girls in Malawi, providing bursaries to secondary school, support for accessing tertiary education and year-round psycho-social support in the form of school-based girls’ clubs.

AGE Africa’s Impact Today

- **Finishing Secondary School:** Almost 90% of AGE Africa scholars finish all four years of secondary school.
- **Improving post-secondary transitions:** 74% of AGE Africa’s alumnae are pursuing higher education, have wage-based employment, or are engaged in small businesses that put their income well above the poverty line (> $2/day).
- **Accessing Higher Education:** 64% of AGE graduates qualify for higher education—20% qualify for University (compared to less than 1% nationwide), and 40% more will qualify for Teacher Training College or other diploma/certificate level courses.
- **Ending Early Marriage and Early Pregnancy:** In Malawi 50% of girls will be married or raising children by the AGE of 18, yet less than 16% of AGE Africa alumnae have children, and less than 10% had a child under before the age of 19.
  - AGE Africa alumnae wait at least 3 years longer to marry and have children as compared to their peers nationwide.

Immediate & Long-term Vision

AGE Africa’s **immediate goal is to graduate talented and disadvantaged young women in Malawi who are equipped with the knowledge, resources, and self-confidence they need to make healthy and informed choices about their futures.** AGE Africa’s **long-term vision seeks to narrow the retention gap, and produce better outcomes for girls nationwide** by creating a model for girls’ achievement and retention in public school that can inform public education throughout the country. AGE Africa’s program strategy simultaneously seeks to achieve transformative outcomes for individuals, community level impact, as well as systemic change in Malawi. AGE Africa is active in five districts in the Southern Region and more than 15 schools; providing programming to
extremely needy girls, and year-round extracurricular programs that build girls’ self-confidence and self-advocacy skills, educate young women about their sexual and reproductive health choices, and expose girls to opportunities beyond high school.

**Beyond Simple Scholarships**

At AGE Africa we recognize that cost is just one of the many factors contributing to girls’ early dropout from school. Unlike many NGOs, AGE Africa takes an innovative and wrap-around approach to support our students in fundamental ways that are often overlooked. Forced marriage, early pregnancy, gender based violence, distance to school, and misinformation about the value of school are just a few of the reasons that rural Malawian girls drop out before they finish high school. AGE Africa’s programs are designed to target the multiple causes of girls’ dropout, strengthen girls’ ability to self-advocate for their own life choices, and to improve their health and economic outcomes in the long term.

AGE Africa’s Programs:

- **AGE Scholarship Fund:** provides comprehensive scholarships for extremely vulnerable and impoverished young women at eleven Malawian public high secondary schools and three colleges and universities. In October 2013, AGE will support 150 scholarships at schools in Zomba, Mangochi and Mulanje and will provide support to nearly 20 alumnae pursuing higher education. AGE Scholars participate year round in after school leadership training, life skills and career guidance education through AGE Africa’s innovative and unique CHATS curriculum (see below). Additionally scholarship students are supported by AGE Africa’s Tertiary Transitions Program, and targeted academic support.

- **AGE CHATS Curriculum:** *Creating Healthy Approaches to Success* (CHATS) is a two-year after school program that combines sexual and reproductive health education, with leadership training and career guidance. Utilizing a unique peer-led approach, CHATS is designed to target the most common causes of dropout for girls, giving them the information and tools they need to stay healthy, safe, and in control of their futures. Organized as a series of informal conversations that is co-facilitated by peer groups, ‘CHATS’ features topics in sexual and reproductive health, self-advocacy, gender based violence awareness and prevention, entrepreneurship, problem solving skills, and accessing higher education.

- **Tertiary Transitions Program:** is designed to support school to work and school to tertiary education transitions for girls once they’ve completed secondary school. In 2011 AGE Africa launched its Tertiary Transitions program, to coach students through the applications and entrance examinations for vocational training schools, Teacher Training Colleges, Nursing Schools, and the University of Malawi.

- **GirlsCHAT:** GirlsCHAT is an innovative new initiative we seek to launch in 2014 that will pilot AGE Africa’s CHATS curriculum at scale in partnership with other NGOs and the Ministry of Education and Technology. GirlsCHAT will offer AGE Africa’s two-year life skills and career guidance curriculum to over 500 girls attending eight rural government community day schools. The program aims to improve girls’ academic performance, retention and attendance, knowledge gain and leadership skills, targeting some of Malawi’s most rural and impoverished communities in the Southern Region. In addition to the immediate and long-term impact on these girls’ lives, this intervention offers several avenues for potential systemic change. Documented success of a low-cost implementation model will help AGE Africa grow the GirlsCHAT project to full scale and reach secondary school girls nationwide in Malawi. Also the robust monitoring and evaluation of the GirlsCHAT pilot will provide an evidence base to influence curricula and girls education initiatives nationwide.