

WEZESHA VIJANA GIRLS' ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM (GAP)

East Africa (Kenya and Tanzania)
Outcomes Report

May 2017



OUR EXPERIENCE IN KENYA HAS BEEN THAT INCREASING GIRLS' PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL OVER TIME YIELDS SOME OF THE HIGHEST RETURNS OF ALL DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENTS, WITH PRIVATE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS ACCRUING TO INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND SOCIETY.

MARGARET KENYATTA, FIRST LADY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA



Educating Children | Transforming Worlds

www.asanteafrica.org

OAKLAND, USA | NAROK, KENYA | ARUSHA, TANZANIA

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work would not be possible without strong support from our funders, partners, staff and supporters.

We would like to sincerely thank Proctor & Gamble (P&G), Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation and other funding partners for their generous support to this program over the years.

We are indebted to the organizational support from all the schools, head teachers, teachers and educational boards in realization of the program.



The community support of CBOs has been critical in the implementation and success of the project. Our gratitude goes to Angaza CBO, Isiolo, Nailepo Women Group, Kajiado, Imani Community Development Program, Siaya, Pastoralist Education and Training Initiative, Marsabit, Enyauata Olosho Women's Organization, Laikipia, Wamba Community Development program, Samburu, Ministry of Education TSC, Nyandarua and Progressive Youth, Narok.

The global collaboration was initiated with Statistics without Borders with the intent of

seeking their expertise in data analyses and synthesis. We would like to thank the passionate volunteers for their help with the survey data analyses on this program.

Lastly, we acknowledge all of Asante Africa Foundation's Girls' Advancement Program team members, alumni and volunteers, whose tireless efforts have made this program a resounding success. The program is implemented by local staff teams in KE and TZ with project management and data analytics support from US staff and interns, alumni and volunteers. While it is not possible to list everyone who has contributed to this effort, we would like to mention some key team members who have led the program in KE, TZ and the US.

- KE: Carolyne Sunte, Fred Lesakale
- TZ: Julita Kessy, Ewald Tesha
- USA: Ashely Orton/Shweta Chooramani & Erna Grasz (CEO)



KEY FINDINGS

Asante Africa Foundation has partnered 8 women's community-based organizations, and trained over 170 teachers and mentors. Through this collaborative effort we have jointly directly reached almost 9,200 girls, over 3,400 mothers, and 514 boys.

Evidence validates that the Wezesha Vijana program keeps girls in school and develops economic, health and social assets to assist them to build stable foundations leading to futures of greater opportunities and stronger family support.

- There has been a 90% decrease in drop out rate due to pregnancy of program participants.
- School attendance has increased by 80% across a majority of the 134 schools.
- Wezesha girls demonstrated significantly knowledge increase.
 - They correctly responded to sexual and reproductive health and rights questions 1.5 times over control group girls.
- 50% + participants are saving on a regular basis after program participation.
- Boys' participation improved their own learning and stronger support for sisters and friends.
- All programming includes community support, parental engagement, peer-peer mentoring.

INTRODUCTION

Education is fundamental to a person's ability to achieve both personal successes and contribute to developing communities in times of sustained economic or political change. In an increasingly complex global economy, educating young people, specifically girls, is one of the most cost-effective ways to promote advancement and economic growth.

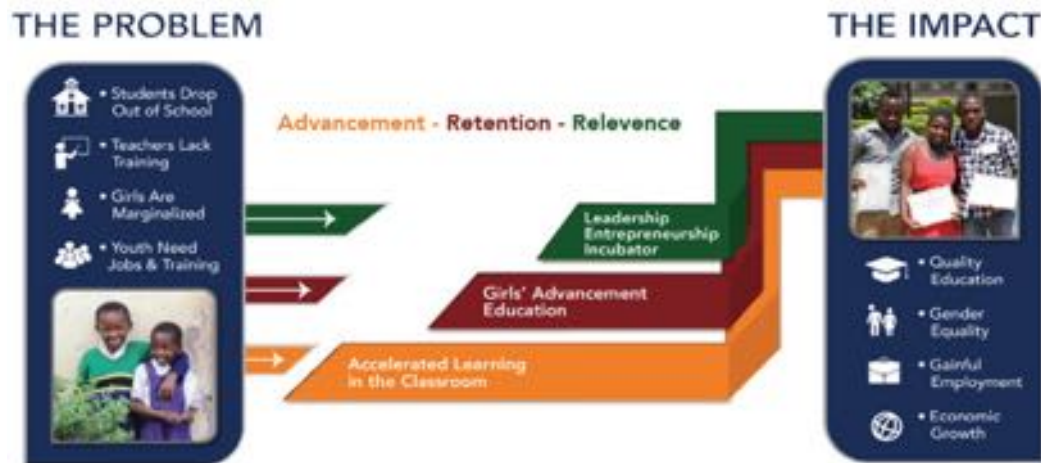
In Kenya and Tanzania, gender discrimination has traditionally denied girls access to the equitable education which yields these benefits. While both governments have adopted free primary

education policies regardless of gender, challenges such as cultural stigma associated with menstruation, exposure to gender-based violence, and cultural beliefs around early marriage have precluded girls from achieving the same economic and social equalities as their male counterparts.

Enabled by our funding partners, Weyerhaeuser Family and Proctor & Gamble over the last three years, Asante Africa has made significant strides toward helping girls overcome these challenges, empowering them to effect change within their family structures, communities and individual lives.



Asante Africa Foundation's Success Model



System level problems need system level solutions

In addition to Asante Africa's other programs, the implementation of the Wezesha Vijana Girls' Advancement Program (GAP), we have had a direct positive impact on school attendance, academic performance and healthy and empowered lifestyles, leading to gainful employment and entrepreneurship.

As an external validation of our program's accomplishments, in 2016, the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) recognized Wezesha Vijana as a [promising practice in girls' education and gender equality](#).

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Our multi faceted model empowers highly vulnerable adolescent girls (ages 10-14) to stay in school, provides practical, accurate information of health and sexual development, strengthens communication and support for education within the family and fosters the development of adolescent male allies within the community. These girls' begin to achieve financial autonomy by training them how to set realistic financial goals, budget and save, and better understanding the power dynamic linking

money, relationships and sexual health. This systematic approach provide girls with greater opportunities that will pave the way to success.

As the community and parental level increase knowledge, education, and empowerment to access to services and support girls health and education toward goal to end gender based violence, early/forced marriage and power imbalance.



Asante Africa Foundation has refined a multi-asset approach through comprehensive, educational workshop curriculum and hands on participatory content delivered in a school-based, safe space.

Our model includes the following undertakings, which are designed to help educate, elevate, and empower our students:

HEALTH

- ✓ This project advances the education and empowerment of rural Kenyan girls in upper-primary grades, by building their knowledge of puberty and menstrual hygiene management, sexual and reproductive health and children's rights.
- ✓ Keep girls in school, improve their attendance and increase girls' sense of self-confidence and knowledge of how to protect their bodies, manage their sexual and reproductive health, and manage menses at school

SOCIAL

- ✓ The development of **social assets** is critical to keep girls in school in communities where traditional cultural practices dictate that an adolescent girl's value to the family and her future stability are inextricably linked to female circumcision and marriage.
- ✓ Create a network of support to aid girls in decision-making with their male and female peers, female role models and mentors to foster self-confidence and resiliency with the goal of increasing school completion rates and decreasing early marriage rates.



- ✓ Social assets take the form of increased communication and support within the family, particularly between mothers and daughters concerning sensitive topics such as sexual maturation and discussion of strategies to address challenges to girls' success in life, including lack of education.

ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL

- ✓ Economic assets gives the girls knowledge through money management, saving habits and income generating to help them meet their reproductive health needs and also help their families to manage small economic burdens. These financial lessons in saving, increased girls' knowledge of money management to build the foundation for greater autonomy.
- ✓ The assumption is that these knowledge, behavior, and confidence changes will improve girls' confidence to stand for their rights, decrease pregnancy-related dropout, and keep them healthy and enabling girls to advance further in school.
- ✓ We enable girls to have increased earning power and financial autonomy.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

To achieve the objectives outlined above, we undertake the following program activities:



School Selection

As part of the school partner identification process, Asante Africa Foundation visits and conducts assessments in the schools recruited which best met the criteria for partnership. Criteria includes strong school leadership, accessibility, willingness to partner and support project implementation and a compelling prevalence of barriers to girls' advancement including adolescent girl dropout, early marriage and early pregnancy.



Collaborate with Stakeholders

We identify a partnership approach with community-based organizations to help scale the program to new counties. The CBOs are identified in counties using a matrix to ascertain their suitability to help in the process. Important criteria include the skills of the CBO participants, capacity, permanent physical location and common areas of interest. We also consider willingness to partner and support the project, strong leadership skills, and critical areas of interest such as prevalence of early pregnancy, high dropout rate for girls and early marriages.





Identify Community-Based Mentors and Teachers

Head teachers and the CBO officials are directly involved in the recruitment and selection of either life skill teachers or community-based mentors, who in turn facilitate the workshop sessions. To facilitate honest conversation and safe space dialogue, mentors are ideally within five to ten years of age of the program participants. The mentors are selected using a simple structured questionnaire as a guide which asks the candidates to identify their experience working with girls as well as challenges that girls face in their own communities. We further assess candidates to ascertain suitability for working with young girls, especially in the area of reproductive health and life skills.



Train Mentors

Community-based mentors and life skill teachers attend a multi-day training workshop organized in different regions; large number of participants necessitate the trainings to be organized in phases and in locations where cluster trainings can be conducted. The trainings are largely conducted by Girls' Advancement Program Staff but in a few cases external facilitators have been brought in to provide support in specific topics. Mentors are trained on participatory techniques for content delivery. CBO officials also provide training on the accounting procedure and monthly reporting system. These officials are expected to help with monitoring and evaluation.



Workshop Content and Materials

The girls' and boys' workbooks have a total of 16 and 9 sessions, respectively, alternating between financial literacy, human rights and reproductive health to help the girls, and boys, gain better knowledge, understanding of how to apply their knowledge and how to share what they learn with others in their families. Girls' and boys' training materials are disbursed to schools in readiness for sessions kick-off.





Participatory modules and parents' meetings

Training materials include facilitation guides, girls' workbooks and other demonstration material provided by the organization. The mentors use participatory techniques to engage girls in topics and model interactive facilitation to the girls, who are expected to share their knowledge as peer educators in the future. The Girls Advancement Program team monitors progress with the help of the Quality Standard Assurance Officers (QASOs) to make sure the sessions are all covered in good time and the content delivered in the right proportions.



Evaluate through quantitative and qualitative best practices

Asante Africa Foundation relies on qualitative and quantitative data to assess the impact of this project through the use of attendance records, surveys, and observational studies before and after intervention. We conduct focus groups and video recordings. We involved a control groups in surveys and regularly collect data about workshop and school attendance and grades. Changes in girls' knowledge, behaviors and attitudes are evaluated using pre- and post-intervention surveys and focus groups/interviews with stakeholders. Similarly, changes in boys' knowledge, behaviors and attitudes are assessed with pre-intervention and post-intervention surveys. The surveys gauge girls' knowledge of sexual maturation, reproductive health, money, savings, budgeting and their comfort level with money issues. They also assess girls' sense of self-esteem, self-confidence at school and the nature of their support networks. U.S.-based staff facilitates the analysis of data and drafts/edits the appropriate reports.



WHAT MAKES THE GIRLS' ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM UNIQUE?

The Wezesha Vijana Project's sustained success lies in changing gender norms. We do this with active participation and empowerment of girls and women, men and boys, all of whom play a critical role in transforming gender norms and roles. We are working to create a community network of support to aid girls in decision-making with their peers, female role models and mentors to foster self-confidence and resiliency. The mixed method approach we are proposing will enable us to engage communities to achieve significant change in how girls are valued in society, girls' educational attainment, attitudes and practices regarding family planning, HIV and gender-based violence.

To build an enabling environment at family level and bring sustainable change, GAP promotes parental support for girls' education, health and saving activities in the form of "mother-daughter meetings." This forum fosters interaction and discussions of sensitive topics including traditional beliefs and cultural practices that limit girls' opportunities. It also improves trust within the family by opening dialogue related to



parental concerns about sexually maturing girls and girls with money. Financial autonomy impacts long term sexual health by empowering women to manage their own reproductive health needs without relying on risky behavior or using their bodies as a form of currency. Girls who have control of their finances have more control in their personal relationships. Further, with budgeting and savings skills, they will become more attractive candidates for micro-lending programs. This stimulates their entrepreneurial skills and creates opportunities for them to rise out of poverty and prosper. By involving the entire household in the savings group, we create a much stronger, self-reliant community long after Wezesha Vijana has ended.



GAP Program Highlights

Savings and Business Clubs

Youth and community mentors attend a half-day, regionally-based workshop on savings group methodology so as to be able to train and help girls initiate saving activities in their groups. After the mentors are trained, girls start to practice saving activities in their groups and even in their homes. Girls save once per week guided by the rules established within their groups.



Inclusion of Boys as Peer-Allies

In 2015, Asante Africa Foundation successfully implemented parallel workshops at select schools to reach adolescent boys with the objective of building a new generation of community-based allies to challenge the thinking and practices, hence playing a critical role in the empowerment and independence of adolescent girls. The program imparts knowledge about relationships, HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, gender-based rights, decision making and female genital cutting. In reaching the boys, our goal is to provide them with important information that gives a greater understanding and sensitivity to the challenges that girls face in their society.

Parent-Community Participation



We hold meetings aimed at creating an avenue to discuss with parents their concerns and how to support girls, especially in regard to sexual maturation bringing boys on board to create allies. The parents are engaged in conversations about how the girls and boys can get out of the cultural beliefs that hinder their education, such as the image of the girl seen as a source of wealth to her father, and the boy the only preferred child to be educated.

Youth Peer-to-Peer Mentoring

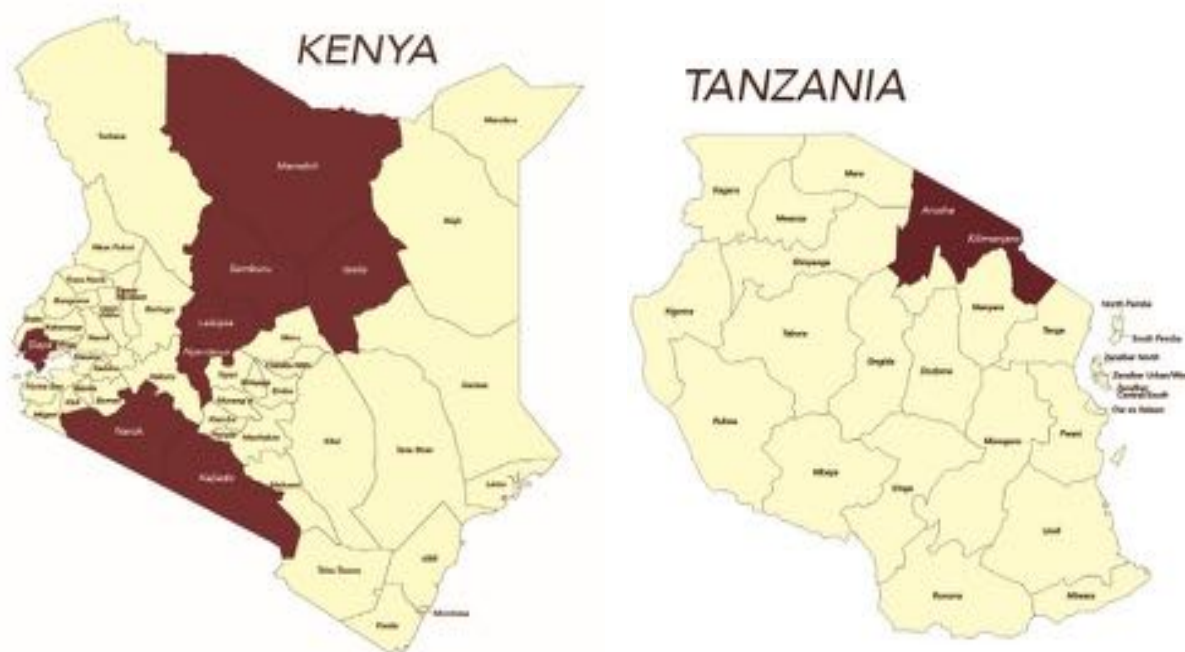
Slightly older girls mentor and facilitate “safe space” dialogue for the girls and for the boys. This creates honest conversation about real issues. For example, in one Kenya school, an eleven-year old brought out that “I had just been forced by my father to have an illegal abortion.” The other girls in the group and her mentor helped get good medical care.

As highlighted above, integrating education modules for the boys is a vital part of the sustained success of this project. The boys of today are the husbands and fathers of tomorrow, whose decisions about the need to marry a circumcised woman or to curtail their daughters’ education by marrying them off at puberty will ultimately influence the practice of traditional customs and the opportunities available to girls in rural communities. This safe space also allows boys to be part of candid conversations and conflict resolution on challenging issues. For example, an anonymous question addressed: “how do I fight with my wife if I cannot beat her?”

OUR IMPACT

Asante Africa has transformed the lives of thousands of girls and parents who have participated in Wezesha Vijana. Between 2012 and 2016, we directly impacted 9,157 girls and 3,447 of their mothers as well as 514 boy peer-allies.

To date, we have worked with 119 schools in 11 regions between Kenya and Tanzania. We have successfully trained 172 teachers and mentors, with 8 community organizations engaged, and our



impact continues to grow. The following section highlights some of our most notable successes for both girls' health and financial literacy.

Across all the aspects of girls having a better life we have measured and witnessed such changes as:

- Increased knowledge of sexual maturation, reproductive health, rights and money management Increase in self-confidence, self-esteem and goal setting
- Increased capacity to cope with body changes
- Improved school attendance and Significant decrease in dropouts due to teenage pregnancies.
- Increase capacity to handle peer pressure.
- Girls feel more supported by and supportive of other girls through peer support networks.
- Increased knowledge of how HIV ISTDs are transmitted and proper methods of HIV/STD prevention.
- Increase understanding of rights related to reproductive and sexual health.
- Increased comfort and openness in discussion sensitive topics with parents and peers
- Increased knowledge of saving for their short- and long-term goals
- Increased application of involving their parents in planning for personal goals

HEALTH OUTCOMES

SEVENTY PERCENT (70%) OF GIRLS HAVE INCREASED KNOWLEDGE ON BODY MATURATION AND PUBERTY.

*Survey of participants from Kenya who participated in the program supported by P&G.

Increases in Knowledge Attributable to Wezesha Vijana

Correct responses to knowledge assessment questions for:	Participant sample	Control group	Impact
Transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV	95.2%	76.9%	+18.3%
Rights: Where to seek support services for gender-based violence	89.9%	61.5%	+28.4%
Pregnancy	96.6%	74.4%	+22.2%

After completing the Wezesha Vijana program, our students demonstrated an increased understanding of the body's functions and the importance of sexual health. The majority of our post-intervention students (74%) believe that it is important to have responsible sex as an adult, avoid early pregnancy (75%) and prevent the contraction of HIV (70%).

*UNGEI Case Study – Wezesha Vijana – A Girls' Advancement Education Initiative Empowering Girls to Create Their Futures

Through the program's teachings, girls learn about their bodies and develop the skills to manage menstrual hygiene in order to attend school while menstruating. After Asante Africa intervention, 85% of girls attend school during their time of menstruation.



The corresponding drop-out rate has also decreased significantly. In Kenya, 60% of schools experienced a 96% decrease in drop-outs due to pregnancy.

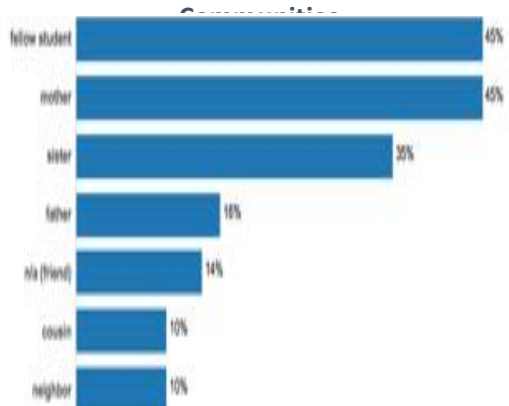
SOCIAL OUTCOMES

Knowledge Transfer (Paying It Forward)

SIXTY-NINE PERCENT (69%) OF PARTICIPANTS FEEL COMFORTABLE DISCUSSING THEIR FINANCES WITH PEERS AND FAMILY.

*Survey of participants from Tanzania who participated in the program supported by P&G.

Increases in Girls Sharing Knowledge Within Communities



We believe that communication surrounding health issues is critical between girls and their male-peer allies, families and communities. After Wezesha Vijana intervention, most students expressed an increase in communication and knowledge sharing with peers and family, most commonly knowledge sharing occurs with fellow students, mothers, and sisters between a student and a fellow student or the student and her mother. More girls share knowledge acquired between each other.

Young girls became empowered and eager to educate the next generation. As the eighth grade girls completed their education modules, they enthusiastically went on to mentor the next cohort of fifth and sixth grade girls. This evidence of mentorship indicates greater communication and access of education within the community.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND ATTENDANCE

Academic performance is on the rise, with most schools showing an improvement after intervention.

OUT OF 34 SCHOOLS IN TANZANIA, EIGHTY-NINE PERCENT (89%) EXPERIENCED AN AVERAGE OF 20% IMPROVEMENT IN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AFTER FIRST YEAR OF WEZESHA VIJANA INTERVENTION.

We have significant results in attendance of students after participation in Wezesha Vijana. Since 2014, for the 40 schools in KE & TZ schools that were supported through the Weyerhaeuser and P&G funding, school attendance has steadily increased, rising by 6% in 2015 and 13% in 2016.

For example, the Head teacher of Michinda Primary School reported, that in 2015 they were able to send 4/28 girls to National schools, which they had never done before and that the majority of

the girls who sat for KCPE (grade 8 exams) 100% of the girls secured places in secondary schools (national average is 42%) which was a uniform experience across all the schools.

BOY INCLUSION

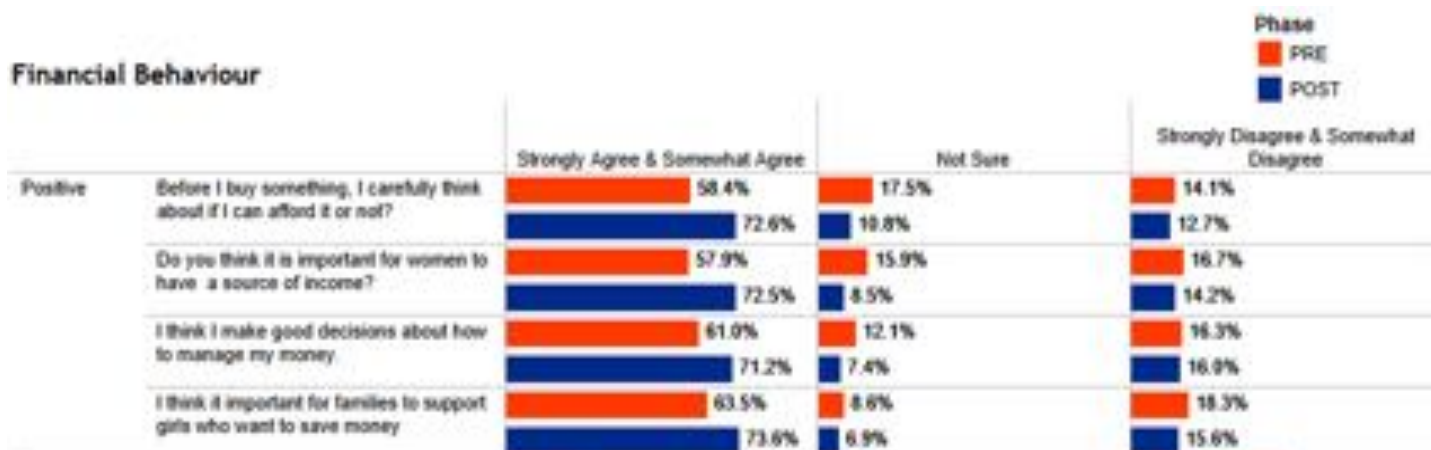
In 2015, Asante Africa implemented the inclusion of boys with the purpose of forming an inclusive peer-support network. After two years of inclusion, we witness the boys listening. Our data shows that boys are equally as invested in understanding the risks of gender-based violence, STIs and unhealthy relationships. In some cases, they reported higher percentages of increased understanding (see Table). We are witnessing the boys participating in helping the girls create income generating ideas, “marketing” on their behalf and wanting to start their own Wezesha Boys Clubs.

INCREASED UNDERSTANDING		
Gender-Based Violence	Boys	Girls
Boyfriend forcing a girl to kiss, touch or feel his sex organ when she does not want to	33%	38%
Someone made to have sex when she/he does not want to	32%	31%
A teacher pressuring a student to have sex in exchange for a good grade	54%	66%
Unhealthy Relationships	Boys	Girls
A relationship in which a partner buys you gifts in exchange for sexual activities	60%	45%
A relationship in which the partner puts pressure on you to have sex	44%	37%
Correct Preventative Measures Against STIs	Boys	Girls
Reducing the Number of Sexual Partners (True)	51%	17%
Taking the Contraceptive Pill (False)	13%	48%
Incorrect Preventative Measures Against STIs	Boys	Girls
Reducing the Number of Sexual Partners (True)	36%	28%
Taking the Contraceptive Pill (False)	26%	42%

ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

NINETY-FIVE PERCENT (95%) OF GIRLS UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF SAVING FOR THEIR SHORT- AND LONG-TERM GOALS.

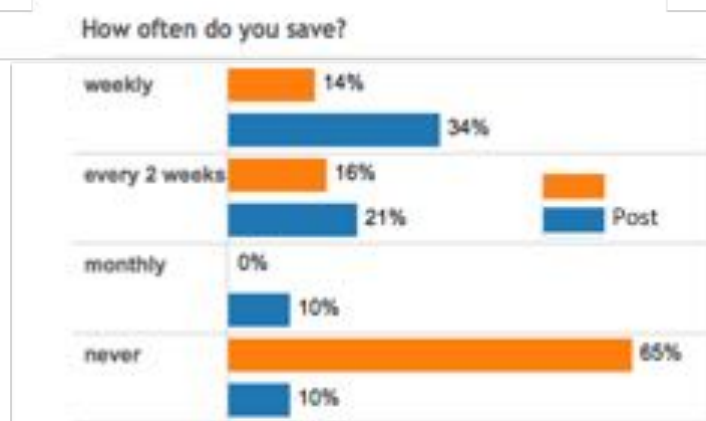
*Survey of participants from Tanzania who participated in the program supported by P&G.



Assessments of mother daughter meetings came out clearly that participants and their parents live below poverty levels and at times it is very difficult for them to assist their daughters with sanitary

products on a regular basis or in sufficient quantities. In some cases girls cannot acquire pants to facilitate the use of sanitary napkins during their menstruation.

We see an increase in the understanding of the importance of savings. Pre-intervention data showed that 65% of girls never saved, whereas only 14% saved on a weekly basis. Post-intervention, the percentage of girls that never saved decreased to 10%, while 34% reported that they saved on a weekly basis.



Girls from the program now understand the importance of saving for their short- and long-term goals and that they can involve their parents in planning for those goals. This encourages parents to plan for school expenses in advance and may reduce girls' vulnerability by keeping them in school longer and decreasing enticements to engage in premarital sex.

"Asante Africa Foundation through its Wezesha Vijana training curriculum is the only organization that has integrated life skills trainings with financial literacy that has proven workable." Head teacher, Kenya.

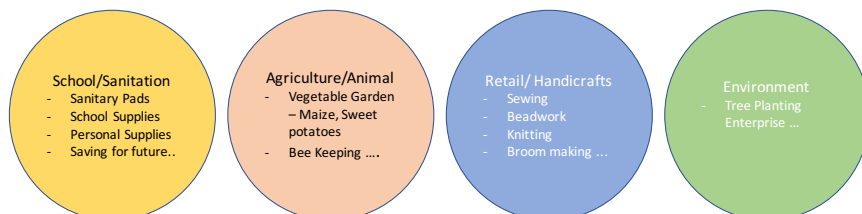
Young women mentors reported that it was easy for them to link reproductive health and financial literacy for the girls to realize the importance of saving money and managing money for their own personal effects for them to avoid the inducements from people who may want to take advantage of their financial needs.

STUDENT INITIATIVES: SAVINGS AND ENTERPRISE CLUBS

OUR STUDENTS FORM SAVINGS CLUBS TO SAVE TOWARD A RANGE OF INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING: SCHOOL/SANITATION, AGRICULTURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND RETAIL/HANDICRAFT ACTIVITIES.

Among the achievements are the student initiatives created and implemented to contribute to their own personal successes and better their communities. Our students form savings groups and use the saved money towards range of different income-generating activities.

Income Generation Activities



RECOGNIZED BEST PRACTICES

The Wezesha Vijana Project's sustained success lies in the success of changing gender norms. We do this with active participation and empowerment of girls and women, men and boys, all of whom play a critical role in transforming gender norms and roles. Lessons drawn from Wezesha Vijana research inform the following key criteria for an effective and sustainable intervention that supports girls' education.



Multi-Asset Design

The mixed method approach enables us to engage communities to achieve significant change in how girls are valued in society, girls' educational attainment, attitudes and practices regarding family planning, HIV and gender based violence.

Integrating the Financial Training and Income Generation Application is empowering girls to manage their own reproductive health needs without relying on risky behavior or using their bodies as a form of currency. Girls who have control of their finances have more control in their personal relationships. Further, with budgeting and savings skills, they will become more attractive candidates for micro-lending programs. This stimulates their entrepreneurial skills and creates opportunities for them to rise out of poverty and prosper. By involving the entire household in the savings group, we create a much stronger, self-reliant community long after Wezesha Vijana has ended.

Site visits demonstrated that the Wezesha Vijana workshop series yields health assets that build girls' confidence managing menstrual hygiene, equip them with the knowledge to make healthy decisions about sexual and reproductive health, and improve their awareness of children's rights and protections.

Demand

Wezesha Vijana workshops create greater demand among girls for schools and parents to meet personal hygiene needs, including provision of disposable sanitary napkins and improving physical infrastructure such as safe and sanitary latrines and handwashing stations. Effective behavior change in sanitation and hygiene requires better and more sanitation and hand washing facilities to be in place. This should be strengthened by capacity building and training of school management committees, teachers, pupils and school communities on equity and maintenance of hygiene and sanitation facilities.



Sustainability

We are creating a community network of support to aid girls in decision-making with their peers, female role models and mentors to foster self-confidence and resiliency. Knowledge transfer is critical to sustainability. Strengthening after-school clubs achieves prolonged impact at the school level. Building an enabling environment at family level brings sustainable change. The “mother-daughter meetings” forum fosters interaction and discussions of sensitive topics including traditional beliefs and cultural practices that limit girls’ opportunities.

Monitoring and evaluation

We evaluated the quality of this program through assessing it against the criteria of effectiveness, **impact** and longer term **sustainability**. The Wezesha Vijana Club activities were

sustainable where the club patron was active and the school administration supportive. The community groups and meetings will continue where the parents felt valued had been provided. We assessed the program at the student, mentor/teacher, school, and systemic levels.

Replicating and scaling model nationally

Asante Africa Foundation’s partnerships with school leadership and CBOs will springboard for deeper learning growth and geographical replication, school to school mentoring and expansion. School districts are already using Wezesha Vijana content to augment Kenya health curriculum due to increased academic scores of 95% of Wezesha Vijana participants, both girls and boys.



Government Partnerships

Ministry of Education partnership is strengthening. As required by all counties government and ministry of education officials granting permission to operate; project and end of project activities or outcomes reports must be submitted with evidence of project implementation. Ministry officials have gained a deeper understanding of how the development of complementary financial, health and social assets in an extra curricula school setting has increased girls’ number of years of schooling, empower them and reduce their vulnerability. Slowly we are cultivating education officials as advocates the importance of full collaboration between all stakeholders; parents, administration, children, NGO’s, CBO’s, and Community Leaders.



SUCCESS STORIES

"I HAD A STRONG WILL THAT ONE DAY I WOULD CHANGE THE TREND IN THE MALE DOMINANT SOCIETY."

– CAROLYNE SUNTE, ALUMNI AND ENTREPRENEUR



Carolyn Sunte is one of Asante Africa's passionate advocates for making a change in her community of Maasai, Africa. She knows first-hand the value of an educated woman. After all, she is one, and she has seen the impact of her own growth on her community. Growing up in the male dominated society of Maasai, Carolyn was not expected to continue her education. She was not encouraged to pursue her dreams, or even to have dreams at all. It was a constant struggle to find her place.

After O level studies, Carolyn was not able to university due to lack of finances. That's when she volunteered with Asante Africa Foundation, which allowed her to pursue her education and take the first step toward changing a male-dominated trend in her community. She later got involved as a Girls' Program Coordinator. Carolyn learned social, financial and life skills that gave her confidence to pursue leadership roles in her school and her community. Her passion for journalism and entrepreneurship were ignited. Finally, she gained the confidence, and the skills, to achieve her dreams.



"[THE ASANTE AFRICA FOUNDATION] MADE ME REALIZE MY DREAM AND HELPED ME TO SEE THE LEADERSHIP QUALITIES IN MYSELF."

Today, Carolyn mentors other girls who struggle with the same issues she did and provides the same support and encouragement she received. As a mentor, she sees the necessity of her work, and finds joy in changing the lives of young people. Creating a "system approach" means engaging the locals in her community. Not only educating girls and women, but also engaging boys and men as allies to the cause. As Carolyn puts it, "change begins gradually and attained in small degrees," but taking the first step is the most important.



Economics Matter: Grace's Story



Grace Wairegia (7th grader) is the best saver in her savings club. She learned her skills in bead work from a family friend, who taught her to make necklaces and purses. Grace spends her weekend afternoons doing beadwork to sell her wares through a friend at a shopping center. She then uses the proceeds to buy more beads, threads and purses for the next batch of production as well as school stationeries, menstration sanitary towels.

Grace also manages to save some money in a saving box at home where she has already saved ksh 3,600 (\$36). As she was involved in an income generating activity of her own, it was easy for Grace to manage her finances. This became a lesson for other students, including a few from her savings group, who were given chickens to rear by their mothers and use their proceeds for their school stationaries and sanitary towels.