**M1-CS1**

**Case study: Mabinti Tushike Hatamu (Girls Let’s Be Leaders), Tanzania**

**About the project**

Mabinti Tushike Hatamu is a scalable and cost-effective model, which engages out-of-school adolescent girls aged 10-19 girls to empower them to make safe choices regarding their sexual reproductive health and rights, economic and social well-being, ultimately contributing to reduced vulnerability to HIV, pregnancy and gender based violence.  
  
The project was piloted in both rural Tanzania (where over 80% of Tanzania’s population lives), and in urban Tanzania (where perceived economic opportunity is leading to rural-urban migration and creating new risks for girls). For the rural pilot, Restless Development has been working in Iringa rural, Mbarali and Mbeya rural districts, in Iringa and Mbeya regions respectively. These primarily rural areas have some of Tanzania’s highest rates of HIV prevalence Mbeya (9%) and Iringa (9.1%)[[1]](#footnote-0).

In phase two the age of recipients increased to include out of school girls from age 10 -24 because it was noted that girls in their early 20s take time to transit to adulthood and still need knowledge and information to make informed decisions about their lives. Increasing the age to include 10-24 year old will help reach and support a greater number of girls that are in immediate need.

**What happened?**

Girl leaders were recruited and received training to conduct the research within their communities among their fellow girls. The participatory research informed interventions of core programming changes that needed to be taken into account. The girls were involved in scanning their environment and identifying the type of livelihood projects they would like to undertake. In addition, Restless Development involved the girls in high level consultation meetings with government and donors on feedback, assessment or research on the potential of the project or project effectiveness. We do this by providing an opportunity for them to lead in brainstorming sessions and focus group discussions (FGD), among others. For example, the Swedish parliamentary group had a 3 hour meeting with the girls on the areas they would like the Swedish government to channel its funds to in Tanzania. Most recently, 10 members of our youth networks led the development of advocacy asks for the global FP2020 forum held on the 30th of October, 2016.

Young people are the main implementers of the Mabinti programme where they carry out the role of peer educators as either community volunteers or national volunteers.

1. Community volunteers - recruited through collaboration with local government leaders’ representatives who either recommend or advertise the opportunity to the community for the young people to apply for the positions. The community volunteers are recruited from the area of implementation and are usually of the same background as the target beneficiaries in terms of level of education, income and social background.
2. National volunteers - we usually recruit graduates or young people with a higher level of education following the formal Restless Development recruitment process. The role of the national volunteer is to support and compliment the community volunteers.

There are 27 community volunteers and nine National volunteers in Iringa, Ruvuma and Dar es Salaam. All our volunteers receive training to enable them to carry out their role as well as ongoing support.

While fostering partnerships are imperative to the sustainability of the project, community advocacy events are an equally vital part of the Mabinti project. They give community members a space to interact with one another in an informal, friendly, and fun environment while learning about the Mabinti project, challenges facing adolescent girls and their rights to access services. Girls identified key issues to them and that would like to see change in and then through edutainment, community theatre performances, songs, drama and role plays sensitize members of the community and government sort for commitments from them publicly pledging to support the girls and advocated for issues like access to SRHR services.

End of program reviews took place annually and there were the chances for program participants, beneficiaries, staff and other stakeholders to review in detail the program design and implementation to identify and reflect on impact. For ongoing reporting we conduct monitoring field visits to implementation areas where we involve the volunteers and group members through individual and group interviews as well as case studies through group or individual interviews.

**Lessons learned:**

* Girls respond better and openly to their peers and people they know and trust. Using volunteers from the local community makes it easy for them to establish a relationship with the girls (youth network's’ members) and other stakeholders as they are known in their communities, they have a similar social background, and they can relate to the problems faced within their area.
* There can be a difference in needs among different age groups. Therefore understanding the distinction between age groups also ensures that the intervention we do is suitable to the beneficiary for example - girls aged 15-19 are more focused on livelihoods opportunities and empowering themselves through income generation, whereas the younger girls aged 10-14 are more concerned with education and seek support to go back-to-school.
* Girls feel comfortable working in groups as long as the groups are not too large, groups of 10 have been very practical.
* Girls tend to feel shy to voice out issues related to group members, personal matters or volunteer conduct therefore providing them with a private space helps in identifying any issues critical issues
* Involving the girls groups during evaluation or for brainstorming allows us to get an overview of what is happening as well as identify approaches that work best to meet the requirements and needs of the different groups.

**Why it worked**

* This approach allows us to work from the grassroots level with a real focus to tailoring the approach to the specific needs of the community at a really targeted level, working at ward level provides us with an opportunity to tailor the implementation to address the difference in attitude, culture, and needs of the community at a street level. This allows us to engage with the right people and the right issues.
* Using young people to lead change and problem solving in their community boosts their confidence and involvement.
* Livelihoods training and business development supports girls in economic security and independence, and is an integral component of the MTH program that helps ensure group cohesion and longevity.
* Self-confidence and assertive attitudes for vulnerable adolescent girls can be fostered through girl-only groups.
* Our Youth-led peer-to-peer education approach for SRHR allows for open communication between peer group members and ensures opportunities for greater understanding.
* Girl-led identification of livelihoods pursuits and vocational training opportunities helps foster buy-in among group members.
* Connection to youth-friendly services is imperative in improving access to core social services and groups are an excellent platform for making these connections.
* Using non-formal education techniques such as edutainment, sports, cultural events, radio,and on site advice, the project raised awareness of girls’ rights, their need for protection, and supported communities to strengthen mechanisms for identifying and referring vulnerable girls at risk of violence, risky sexual behavior and dropping out of school.

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**Mini Case Study: Working in groups through Information Resource Centers (safe spaces)**

In the Mabinti programme we work with girls in groups of between 10 and 15 members. The girls form their own agency and through the leadership of community volunteers and national volunteers they are supported to carry out various activities in the girls safe spaces provided by communities. In addition the girls also access psychosocial support. The girls are adequately trained and supported on accessing services Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights, gender based violence, education and livelihood skills. Currently we work with 27 girls groups.

We provided the girls groups with opportunities to listen to the Shuga radio series, an award-winning television show that has been developed into a radio drama, with input and support from Unicef and Canal France International (CFI) with input from Restless Development Tanzania. Shuga Radio provides a raw and uncut view of the lives of a group of four young fictional characters aged 15-24 in 12 eight-minute episodes. The series tells a story about their choices, dreams, friendships, challenges and triumphs in a world where HIV and AIDS are an ever-present threat.

Volunteers meet in their respective Information Resource Center (IRCs) to listen to the radio program once a week and facilitate discussions. Through the Shuga radio series, the girls received knowledge on the effects of gender-based violence and the importance of reporting cases of rape as soon as possible to the appropriate authorities and to seek treatment from the local health centers. These radio shows on SRHR and follow up seminars involving community sensitization, are impactful to the social welfare of the girls. As a result of listening to the Shuga radio series, the girls stated that they had learned new skills, which contributed to their assertiveness and self-confidence. They also reported an increased knowledge and understanding specifically on how HIV is transmitted and how to avoid early pregnancies.

1. 2011-2012 Tanzania HIV and Malaria Indicator Survey (THMIS), HF43, DHS program, <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/HF43/HF43.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-0)