

Educating Children | Transforming Worlds



**Wezesha Vijana:
Girls' Advancement in Rural Tanzania**
2014 Final Narrative and Financial Report

February 17, 2015

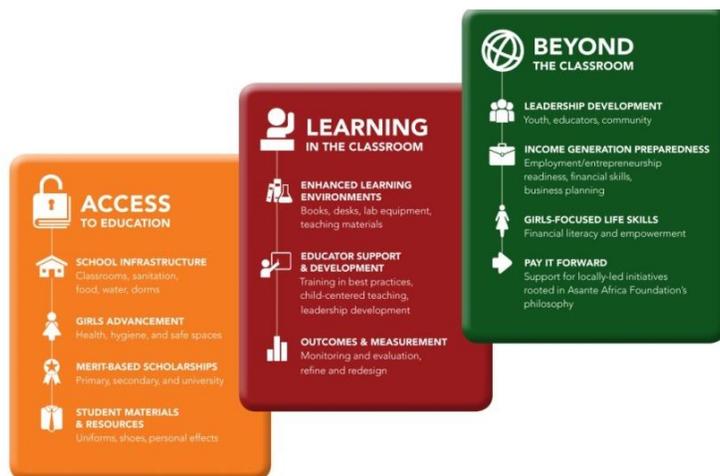
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ASANTE AFRICA FOUNDATION OVERVIEW

Asante Africa Foundation's mission is to educate and empower the next generation of change agents, whose dreams and actions transform the future for Africa and the world. We know that enriched minds collectively create better solutions to whatever challenges their communities face. Therefore, our work addresses the root causes of why children are not in school and paves the way for success in the classroom and beyond. Asante Africa Foundation's approach targets three key areas:



Access to Education – girls' retention and advancement, merit-based scholarships, school infrastructure.

Learning in the Classroom – educator support and development, technology and other classroom resources

Beyond the Classroom – youth leadership development, financial literacy and income generation preparedness, Pay-It-Forward youth initiatives

Monitoring and Evaluation enables regular reflection and improvement across all themes.

Asante Africa Foundation excels at building collaborative partnerships to support educational initiatives in deeply rural and remote communities.

- ✓ We ensure community and school leadership buy-in.
- ✓ We foster deep relationships with community leaders and parents, school leaders, Regional and District Education Officers, and educators.
- ✓ We have a proven track record of improving girls' enrollment and keeping youth in school with merit-based scholarships and a high rate of university enrollment.
- ✓ We create sustainable change through our beneficiaries who lead locally-based Pay-It-Forward initiatives.

PROGRAM THEORY AND MODEL

The goal of the Wezesha Vijana Program is to keep girls in school and develop health and social assets to help them build stable futures with greater opportunity.

Wezesha Vijana is based on the theory that providing sexual maturation and reproductive health awareness workshops grounded in a human rights framework will increase girls' knowledge of menstrual hygiene management, reproductive health issues, awareness of their rights, and it will provide them with the tools to make healthy decisions (refer to figure on page 4). In addition, the knowledge gained will make them self-confident and comfortable attending school during their periods. The assumption is that these knowledge, behavior and confidence changes will decrease drop-out due to pregnancy, allowing girls to advance further in school and will ultimately improve their school attendance, favorably impacting

school performance. The program focuses on primary schools in an effort to reach the majority of girls who, based on historic trends, do not progress to secondary.

Wezesha Vijana Program Theory



With the generous support of Small Projects Foundation and P&G, in 2014 Asante Africa Foundation adapted its Kenyan model to the Tanzania context and replicated Wezesha Vijana in 14 rural primary schools in the northeastern districts of Karatu, Monduli, Siha and Hai. **1,095 girls directly benefitted from the intervention. Wezesha Vijana also increased community awareness through parents meetings and the capacity of young women facilitators to act as community-based role models.** Additionally, safe and sanitary girls' latrines were constructed at one of the intervention schools with the support of another donor.

Objectives of Wezesha Vijana:

- Increase girls' sense of self-confidence and knowledge of how to manage menses at school, resulting in increased attendance.
- Decrease school drop-out due to pregnancy, specifically in upper primary Classes 4-7.
- Engage parents and daughters in an examination of beliefs and cultural practices that limit girls' educational opportunities and increase health risks.
- Build a network of peer support to aid girls in decision-making and leverage the educational outreach to impact as many young girls as possible.
- Improve girls' sanitation facilities to promote student health, where funding allows.

Program Model

Wezesha Vijana incorporates four components: "safe space" participatory workshop sessions at schools led by female, community-based mentors; parents meetings to explore barriers to girls' education; and improved girls' toilet facilities (at one Tanzanian treatment school in 2014) to provide a safe and sanitary place for girls to manage their needs. In 2014, girls at Wezesha Vijana treatment schools also benefitted from a P&G product donation of disposable sanitary napkins.

2014 PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

a. Relationship Building and Partner School Identification (February–March 2014)

It was critical to build relationships with government education officials to facilitate the goal of bringing this program to rural primary schools that Asante Africa Foundation had not worked with in the past, with the exception of two schools. Under the advisement of District Executive Directors, four districts were ultimately selected to allow for a core density of schools in each from which to spin off possible future expansion to additional schools. The Executive Directors of Karatu, Monduli, Siha and Hai Districts

assisted in identifying and introducing the organization and program to potential partner schools based on criteria including: strong school leadership, rural but accessible, willingness to partner and support project implementation and a compelling prevalence of barriers to girls' advancement including adolescent girl drop out, early marriage and early pregnancy.

In 2014, Asante Africa Foundation worked with a total of 14 primary schools with one especially large school hosting two separate workshop groups. To allow adequate management and monitoring of workshops, implementation was divided into two phases. The first was launched at the end of Term 1 and consisted of seven workshop groups at seven schools. The second began at the start of Term 2 and consisted of eight workshop groups at seven schools.

b. Training Material and Evaluation Tools Adaptation (March 2014)

The girls' workbook and facilitator guide were adapted for the Tanzanian context, reviewed by a third-party youth educator and translated into Kiswahili, the medium of instruction in Tanzanian primary schools. Pre- and post-intervention surveys were also revised and translated. Workshops were divided into eight, 60-minute sessions with the following themes:

- Body Changes
- Coping with Body Changes
- Male and Female Reproductive Systems
- Understanding Rights
- Understanding Relationships
- Teenage Pregnancy
- HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections
- My Decision, My Future

A total of 540 workbooks were produced for participants and matron teachers with an average ratio of one workbook for every two girls. It was agreed that upon completion of the intervention, the workbooks would be given to the schools to be kept in libraries and by life skills teachers for future reference and use by students.

c. Mentor Recruitment, Selection and Training (April 2014)

With the guidance of school administrators and teachers, 15 community-based, female "mentors" were selected from respective local areas to facilitate Wezesha Vijana workshops in schools. To build community support for the program, it was introduced to the local village authorities during the mentor recruitment process to inform them about what their daughters were going to be taught. Mentor selection criteria included:

- Must be a local resident
- Knows Kiswahili fluently
- Has some knowledge of health issues, especially reproductive health
- Form 4 secondary school graduate or above
- Has experience working with youth and demonstrates the potential to motivate girls

From April 14-16, 2014, the 15 community-based mentors attended a three-day Training-of-Trainers (ToT) in Arusha, led by Hilda Lema and Mary Kwena, Girls' Advancement Program Associates for Asante Africa Foundation Tanzania and Kenya, respectively.

ToT objectives:

- To empower female role models with an understanding of puberty and related hygiene, sexual and reproductive health, children's rights and relationships.
- To practice the use of participatory techniques to engage participants
- To learn how to implement specific monitoring and evaluation tools



The ToT was interactive and provided mentors opportunities to practice participatory training skills that included leading energizers, role-plays, brainstorming and small group work. At the end, mentors signed a Memorandum of Understanding that summarized their role and responsibilities. Soon after the ToT, the Program Associate met at each school with the respective mentor and head teacher to discuss the timing and location where girls would meet for after-school workshops.

d. Distribution of P&G Sanitary Pad Donation (May 2014)

Thanks to a generous donation of sanitary pads from P&G's Dar es Salaam office, girls at each Wezesha Vijana school received a supply of disposable pads. For many students it was the first time they had seen a pad, so a half-hour instruction session was given at each school on how to use and dispose of pads properly.



e. Girls' School-based Workshops (June-October 2014)



Phase 1 of the girls' after-school workshops was conducted from June –September among seven groups at seven schools. Phase 2 was conducted from late July- October among eight groups at seven schools. Groups consisted of approximately 70 girls, ages 11-16 drawn from primary Classes 4-7. Participants attended three sessions per month held in a designated safe space (classroom). **A total of 1095 girls benefitted from at least one session and an average of 1017 girls attended all eight workshop sessions.**

Initial workshops were preceded by distribution of training materials and demonstration items, as well as pre-workshop survey implementation. Training materials included the facilitation guide, girls' workbooks, notebooks and pens. The demonstration items consisted of examples of: sanitary pads, tampons, locally made pads, cotton towels, soap, condoms and contraceptive pills.

Progress through the series of workshop modules was monitored by head teachers and visits from Asante Africa Foundation- TZ Girls' Advancement Program staff members to make sure materials were covered in good time. Workshops were concluded with a post-intervention survey.

f. Parents Meetings (October 2014 and January 2015)

Parents meetings were conducted in two schools: Wanrikati Primary School (October) and G. Arusha (January). Meeting objectives were to brief parents on the project, discuss their concerns, talk about challenges that girls face in pursuing their dreams and brainstorm how parents could support their daughters, especially in regard to sexual maturation. Parents also discussed barriers to open communication.

Examples of communication barriers:

- It is uncommon for parents to talk to their daughters about issues related to menstrual hygiene, reproductive health and relationships.
- Culturally, a father cannot talk to his daughter about issues related to body changes or relationships. Girls also do not feel comfortable learning this information from a male figure.
- Parents are so busy with daily activities due to economic hardship that finding time to talk about such issues is difficult.
- Some parents regularly abuse alcohol and are not in a condition to talk to their daughters about such issues.



At the end of the meetings parents indicated a willingness to engage their daughters on issues affecting their health, safety and academic performance. They agreed upon the importance of developing close relationships with their daughters, especially during puberty. They also focused on creating strong and open relationships between mothers and daughters.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Information collected from schools indicates that Wezesha Vijana has had the following impact:

- The number of girls missing school be due to “illness” caused by menstruation has reduced as measured by attendance records and discussions with students, teachers and parents.
- Teachers report that girls are now more active in class than observed before Wezesha Vijana.
- Girls self-report an increased sense of confidence at school and increased attendance.

Formal impact evaluation:

Staff members distributed a pre- and post-intervention survey to the 15 groups within which Wezesha Vijana was implemented. Pre-intervention surveys were administered to Phase 1 groups in late May and to Phase 2 groups in early July. Post-intervention surveys were conducted among all groups in late October, after the completion of the workshops. A random sample of 20 participants from each group was selected to complete both the pre- and post-intervention surveys, resulting in a total of 300 girls surveyed (27%). The surveys consisted of questions aimed at investigating girls’ level of satisfaction with

the program, acquired knowledge about sexual maturation, reproductive health and rights, level of self-confidence, and behaviors or intended behavior related to these topics.

Data was coded and entered by Girls' Advancement Program staff November-January. Enrolment data was also collected in January 2015. Due to the additional internal capacity and time required to systematically and rigorously analyze and summarize the data, we have entered into a partnership with the University of North Carolina- Asheville to analyze and report on findings as part of a Gender and Development applied learning project. We expect the impact report to be finalized by early May 2015.

DISSEMINATING PROGRAM FINDINGS AND LESSONS

Findings from the impact evaluation will support Asante Africa Foundation's engagement in the broader development community as a contributor to the growing body of evidence supporting the importance of puberty, sexual and reproductive health education to gender and development advances. In 2014, Asante Africa Foundation's work was recognized as a promising practice by the UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) and was featured as a country sidebar on page 26 in Booklet 9 of UNESCO's Good Policy and Practice in Health Education series: [Puberty, Education, & Menstrual Hygiene Management](#). In March 2015, the organization is hosting a panel at the NGO Committee on the Status of Women (NGO/CSW) Forum to parallel the annual UN meetings of the CSW. The panel will explore the role of multilateral development organizations, corporations and NGOs in supporting girls' advancement. In collaboration with P&G and Small Projects Foundation, Asante Africa Foundation will present Wezesha Vijana as a model to "always keep girls in school". Findings and project materials will also be shared in organizational publications such as the annual report and via our website.