Kenya Country Highlights, Adolescent Girls
Program Results – 2018 -2019
Introduction
Wezesha Vijana Highlights from Kenya, 2018

The Wezesha Vijana-Girls’ Advancement Program is a rights-based approach to building social, economic, and health assets.

The school-based programs give girls a safe place to discuss challenges, create solutions, and find support in their community. Unique features of our program include community support, parental engagement, peer mentoring, and the active inclusion of boys.

Knowledge leads to awareness, action, and recognition of personal rights and collective power. Skill-building for money management and income generation has been a game changer for these rural communities. Girls and boys support each other. Children and parents start small businesses together. Schools offset operational costs with the contributions of youth-led gardens.
Summary of Beneficiaries

In 2018, with support from Procter and Gamble-Always Keeping Girls in School (AKGIS), the Girls’ Advancement Program (GAP) was implemented in a total of 38 schools across three counties - Samburu, Kajiado and Narok, in Kenya, reaching a total of 2000 girls & 1000 boys between the target age of 10-19 years from upper primary school adolescents’ grades (4-8), and 1700 parents (600 mothers). This was accomplished by training 58 life skills teachers as program mentors in school based Wezesha clubs with membership of 50 boys or girls and additional support from the head of schools and 3 Community based organizations (CBOs).

The outcomes of the project were showcased at the 2019 Comparative International Education Society (CIES) and She Is Equal Summit during Global Citizen Week.

Key Program Objectives and Components

- Keep girls in school longer and improve their attendance.
- 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.
- Support school club and income generating initiatives to serve as foundational knowledge for building girls’ financial stability.
- Foster parent dialogues to examine and address barriers that limit girls’ opportunities.
- Create a network of peer support to aid girls in decision-making, including buildin boys’ support as community-based allies.
The theory of change outlines the main channels through which GAP influences age at marriage, education, and sexual reproductive health. It is guided by Asante Africa’s overarching hypothesis that adolescent girls will be able to make informed reproductive health and other critical choices, including those relating to marriage, education, and livelihood if they have the right information, understanding, and skills to navigate their contexts, and they are free from fear and violence, valued by society, and live in a supportive environment both within and outside home.

*Five key specific mechanisms have been identified for program effects to include:*

(i) improvement in knowledge
(ii) changes in attitudes
(iii) increased social support
(iv) enhanced non-cognitive skills and sexual health
(v) creation of enabling environments within the household and community

**Program components include** - ‘safe spaces’, reproductive health, financial literacy sessions, savings, business planning, and community mobilization activities. The program model fosters the development of economic, health, and social assets that included sexual and reproductive health, child rights, prevention of violence (including gender-based violence), savings and budgeting, relationships, HIV and AIDS. Key components of GAP included establishment of peer savings clubs, as well as, community-based interventions such as peer educators, boy inclusion, and involvement of parents and the community through dedicated parents’ meetings.
Project Highlights

The key components of the project included – (i) girls and boys training sessions, (ii) training of trainers, (iii) parent meetings (activities with mothers and fathers of the adolescent girls), (iv) community mobilization and engagement meetings, (v) community based organizations (CBOs) involvement in program monitoring and (vi) economic strengthening for girls and their families and school income generation initiatives.

• **SCHOOL SELECTION:** Selection of the 38 schools was based on set of criteria in consultation with County Education and Quality Assurance Officers who oversee education matters at the county level. The criteria included strong school leadership, “last mile” pastoralist communities and a willingness to partner and support the project implementation and a compelling prevalence of barriers to girls’ advancement including adolescent girl lower retention and transition, dropout, early marriage, and teenage pregnancy. Involvement of the school management, community-based organizations and stakeholders in identifying, planning, and implementing the program created a sense of community ownership and enabled the program to run more smoothly, effectively, and sustainably.

• **CURRICULUM:** As development partners, P&G and Asante Africa Foundation have been on the fore-front of championing the implementation of a comprehensive program driven by the Ministry of Education. To contribute to these efforts, the Girls’ Advancement Program is designed to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights education in schools. A curriculum has been developed and is awaiting approval from the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD).
• DELIVERY METHODS: Two manuals were developed for the GAP training and life skills: Participants Work book for boys and girls and a Facilitators Guide. Highly participatory teaching methods were used, including group discussion, brainstorming, role-play, small group work, educational games, drama, case studies, and storytelling. Participants also had many opportunities to practice using new skills, such as budgeting, communication, and decision-making. In schools, the curriculum was taught as 16 modules within existing life skills classes or as after-school clubs to provide a safe space for girls to come together and participate in the program.

• TRAINING OF TRAINERS: Each school was represented by two mentors for boys and girls training, as well as, two CBO coordinators. Through the training, mentors came to recognize and strengthen their roles as protectors and agents of change in their schools to create a safe learning environment for all pupils.

• BOY INCLUSION: Parallel workshops were conducted 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. Integration of boys as an ally to the girls in the program, as well as, providing additional topics on gender-based violence was also implemented. This activity was done to gain the support of boys in addressing issues affecting the girl-child.

“I thought I was sick the first time I got my periods. I wanted to ask but people would laugh at me. The Wezesha Vijana club has helped me to ask friends without fear and be confident. The club provides me the space to ask without feeling embarrassed.” - Celestine, AIC Girls Kajiado, Club Participant

Students at Olkiloriti Primary School, Kenya
“As parents we were relaxed, even if a child brings something home, we didn’t ask anything, we would just receive the item and eat. With the awareness created by Asante Africa, we now know that we should ask the girls where they got the items from. Now girls don’t dare to bring anything home because they know that their parents will ask them where they got the item.” - Mausa Primary School Parent, Participant
Salient Outcomes of the Project

Knowledge Acquisition: Baseline and end-line surveys were conducted to assess knowledge, opinions and attitudes of teachers and adolescents towards the GAP intervention themes before and after the training. Listed below are some of the key learnings from the survey results.

1. Knowledge about puberty, STD, and risky health behavior:
   - After the intervention, the proportion of program participants that had knowledge about body changes during puberty increased by **15.8%** (from 52.1% to 67.9%).
   - A similar trend was observed in knowledge of why girls get their periods where the proportion of participants with this knowledge increased by **20.7%** from 38.3% to 59.0%.
   - **224 girls** (28.8%) said they were very comfortable attending school when they had or were ready to experience their periods at pre-survey compared to 306 (39.5%) who said the same at post-survey, increase of 10.7%.
   - Preventing STIs among adolescents and teenagers has been found to have many positive social, medical and economic outcomes. GAP provides knowledge on modes of transmission and methods to prevent STIs as well as risky and non-risky sexual behaviors. There was an overall improvement in their understanding of STD.
     1. For ex. nearly three quarters (63.3% pre-survey versus 70.5% post-survey) of the respondents correctly recognized blood transfusion as a risk factor. The number of those that learned this fact increased by 7.2% after GAP intervention.
     2. There was an improvement by 4% of those with correct knowledge that practicing safe sex (using condoms) prevents STIs (58.1% pre-survey versus 62.1% post-survey).

2. Financial knowledge and behavior:
   - **Increased ownership of the financial decisions** - The % of other people making decisions about their money decreased after intervention. Ex. for the girls, there was a 18% decrease from 72.7% to 54.7% in parents making the financial decisions.
   - **Improvement in responsible spending behavior** - The number of girls who achieved financial autonomy and engaged in some form of work to raise some pocket money increased from 37% to **63%**. Higher % of girls were reporting spending pocket money on sanitary needs + school items vs. sweets + others. For ex. there was a 13% drop in expenditure on sweets by the girls from pre to post survey.
• The number of girls and boys that saved money on a longer term increased significantly. At pre-survey, none of them reported to have saved monthly or annually. At post-survey, 44.4% of the girls & 56.5% of the boys repotted to have saved monthly.

3. Boy inclusion:
• 28.7% of the boys found mothers to be the most important source of information compared to 37.2% of the girls.

• There was a significant increase in the awareness of the boys for acknowledging the importance of girls being able to talk about changes in their bodies during puberty to (i) friends and (ii) family. Combined change from 64% to 84.8%, increase of 20.8%.

• Gender norms in regard to finance showed overall improvement for both the girls and the boys. For ex. there was 13.3 & 23.5% increase in girls and boys who thought that not problematic for women to earn more than men. And a simultaneous 11 & 12.4% increase in girls and boys who thought that it is important for women to have a source of income.

In-school Performance: The academic performance is a good secondary indicator of the in-school behavior of the girl students and a good indicator of the overall emotional and physical well-being, both areas that GAP program works on.

1. Improvements in academic grades were reported by the girl respondents after the GAP intervention. (This is the grade self-reported by the students in the surveys). The % of girls with grades >250 increased by 16.8%, from 49.3% before to 66.1% after the intervention.
Knowledge Application Through Entrepreneurial Activities: In partnership with Teach A Man To Fish, each school club conducted a situational analysis to identify the economic activities available to adolescent girls in the intervention areas, identify the strongest opportunities, make recommendations on the best approach, and developed a school-based business plan.

- **The School Enterprise Challenge** seeks to strengthen girls’ economic opportunities through school enterprises, school-based savings club, and financial literacy training.

- **18 schools** out of 38 established profitable income generating activities within their schools. Six main categories of economic empowerment programs were identified: gardening, bee keeping, stationery and school supplies, beadwork, poultry keeping and school-based savings.

- The school enterprise utilized its other program components - community engagement, mother-daughter forums, and local community needs, to draw support for the enterprises.

Lolokejek Primary School from Maralal had their business model exhibited at the “Education that Pays” Conference held in Nairobi in October 2018.
Challenges

• In Maralal- Samburu region, the goal to reach the most vulnerable girls, and the broad geographical distribution of the schools posed a challenge particularly in engaging in regular monitoring of activity and progress of a typical session, which sometimes resulted in implementation delays.

• In Narok region, teachers were not actively participating in the girls training workshops. In addition, Narok currently leads in teenage pregnancy nationwide. Efforts to address this problem will require a concerted effort by all stakeholders to eliminate such barriers and norms to girls’ education.

• In Narok and Kajiado regions, additional emphasis was placed on building community mobilization skills for the local CBOs and the facilitating groups. However, local implementing partners required greater monitoring and mentoring than expected. Girls participatory approach and bottom-up education methodologies were new to many of the CBO’s members.
Next Steps

1. Sustainability: Girls’ Advancement Program defines sustainability as the long-term goal to institutionalize program interventions by collaborating with organizations and communities to achieve behavioral long-term change. The key to sustainability is building local capacity, with trained individuals working in a supportive environment with competent, committed organizations and community networks with enough local influence and continuity to sustain programs.

To achieve this following must be done:

   a. Build or strengthen the capacity of institutions in country to carry out the program.
   b. Stakeholder ownership.
   c. Multi-year fund required for project realization of the impact.

2. Recommendations: Key recommendations for amplifying the impact of the program.

   a. Longer implementation cycle: Plan for a longer implementation period due to overhauled school calendars.
   b. Deeper community engagement: Introduce the project to the wider community. Involve the formal and informal leadership from the beginning. Hold community meeting with chiefs, religious leaders and cultural leaders - engage the custodians of culture.
   c. Encourage male / boy involvement: There is a clear need to address boys’ vulnerability. Girls are vulnerable, in part, due to constructions of masculinity, but boys are vulnerable – as are girls – due to systemic weaknesses and failures. Further the role of structural interventions particularly those that respond to cultural issues such as patriarchy.
   d. Fidelity of implementation: Continual monitoring and evaluation of the project to track fidelity of implementation and improve the effectiveness.