

team kenya

Training, empowerment and much more



Programme profile:
Girls Support Group

'The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provide a basic roadmap for development. Gender equality is the third goal, but it is also integral to achieving all eight MDGs, from preventing the spread of HIV to sustaining the environment in the face of climate change.'

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.



Introduction...

Team Kenya recognises that girls and women are particularly vulnerable in Kenya and believe that women are an integral part of the community and critical to addressing the Millennium Development Goals.

Team Kenya and its partners are working hard to empower women and girls in order to improve their lives. We want Kenyan women to realise their rights and their full potential, and become equal and respected members of families, communities and society. We work closely with the Karibuni Women's Development Initiative (KWDI) to address needs during girlhood, young adulthood, through to womanhood and old age.

Women face discrimination in accessing education, leadership positions, economic empowerment and employment. They are affected by gender based violence, physical, psychological and sexual abuse and harmful tradition practices including wife inheritance and polygamy. Girls often drop out of school, marry young, and teenage pregnancies and illegal abortions are widespread.

The majority of girls in Ndhiwa schools come from poverty stricken families. In order to source things they need, whether it be food, clothing or essential sanitary products, girls find opportunities to work for other people in exchange for the goods that they require. In extreme cases where there is no work girls resort to having sex in exchange for what they need. Inevitably these girls find it difficult to survive and generally are unable to attend school. Many resort to early marriages and never complete their education.

As part of our Girls Support Group Programme, we endeavour to strengthen the skills of girls in Ndhiwa and enable them to stay in school and receive an education. In this way, girls can be given the opportunity to make positive and informed life choices in order to improve their future.

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About the programme...

As part of the Girls Support Group Programme, Team Kenya along with its strategic partners in Ndhiwa are working towards the following key outputs:

- 1) Improved school attendance and educational attainment of girls in Ndhiwa schools
- 2) A developed and sustainable support network for girls
- 3) Increased awareness of HIV and AIDS, along with knowledge about safe sex practices
- 4) Increased self confidence, skills and economic independence amongst Ndhiwa girls and women
- 5) Increased number of sustainable income generating projects and businesses within the Ndhiwa community

Projects that form part of the Girls Support Group Programme aim to work towards one or more of these key outcomes.

The Girls Support Group

Support - offers girls a positive and safe environment to meet and discuss everyday issues as well as address serious issues such as sex, abuse, drugs and the girls' futures.

Project development – Schemes are established to address needs. Female empowerment is very much at the centre of the programme and the girls have developed projects that address problems that they have identified. They are in control and responsible for the planning, preparing and operation of many of the projects.

Padi Bora project

- In Swahili padi = pad and bora = better.
- Involves the production and distribution of reusable cotton sanitary towels.
- Provides an alternative to the expensive disposable sanitary towels that a majority of the girls cannot afford due to the high poverty levels in the region.
- Allows girls who could not previously afford an effective material to protect themselves to continue going to school during menstruation.

The project struggles to produce enough sanitary towels to provide for the most needy girls and also to produce enough to sell cheaply to other female members of the community. Funding is needed for more sewing machines and materials so that production can increase.



A member of the Girls Support Group making Padi Bora.



The sewing project in action.



One of the BCC football teams.

Sewing project

- A very successful sewing project that has been fully supported by the community.
- Girls use their skills to provide a service for the wider community whilst also making a profit for the project and the girls who participate. Profits have also been used to support other projects in the Girls Support Group programme.

Future income generating projects

- Hopefully the Padi Bora project will become a successful income generating scheme in the future.
- The Girls Support Group are also looking to launch a poultry income generating scheme soon.
- The group frequently visit other small scale income generating schemes to gather ideas on best practice.

The future of our Girls Support Group Programme...

The Girls Support Group is growing from strength to strength and has proven itself to be an effective mechanism for change in Ndhiwa and in targeting, engaging and empowering particularly vulnerable community members.

However, the programme is hugely hindered by a lack of funding to support the various projects. The Girls Support Group has not yet reached its full potential and Team Kenya along with its partners are working together to realise the programmes key outcomes.

Behaviour Change Communication Football project

- A girls' football league has been set up alongside health education sessions focused on drug and substance abuse and safe sexual practices.
- A coach oversees the training sessions.
- Training courses are attended by the girls to enhance their transferable skills.
- Friendly matches are arranged with local boys' teams to demonstrate equal opportunities and to improve the girls' confidence.

Health care worker project

- Integrates health education talks, in particular HIV education, into normal school practices alongside the football scheme.
- Sessions provide opportunities for girls of different ages to meet and interact so that messages about safe sexual practices and health awareness are disseminated.

Get involved...

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Ecotourism...

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