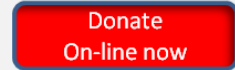




Kenya Children's News

August 2024



Thank You

Thank you very much for your continued support for the children. You are helping some of the most disadvantaged children in Kenya to survive and have a brighter future. Your support is specially appreciated during a period of higher cost of living and social challenges. Your generosity is being rewarded by the children's lives you have helped to transform, the happiness that you have generated and the successes of young people that you have assisted.

This newsletter describes our project to help teenagers avoid sexual abuse and unwanted pregnancies. It is helping young boys and girls deal with many other emotional issues caused by their domestic circumstances, with group and one-to-one counselling.. You can read more about the project [on our website](#).

Kujali Reproductive Health and Wellbeing Programme

Rape, misogyny and period shame, all contribute to the hardship of women in Kenya. Women constitute over 50% of Kenya's population, but the majority of them are among the illiterate and poor in the country. Studies identify a range of critical vulnerabilities for impoverished young girls such as having to walk 100 metres or more to a communal toilet at night, running the risk of rape – or being seduced into sex with promises of food, shelter, sanitary towels or medicines. As in many countries, most abuses are committed by relatives or close family friends.

65% of women and girls in Kenya cannot afford sanitary pads, which leads to shaming in school and missed education. Many resort to traditional alternatives, which have a very high risk of infections such as urinary tract infections (UTIs) and adverse long-term impacts on health.



Most young people in the poorer areas of Kenya receive no guidance on sexual matters or support for their adolescent concerns due to absent parents and overworked teachers. KCC aims to fill that gap. We want to help girls and boys avoid unwanted pregnancies, which result in them being stigmatised and rejected, discontinuing school, suffering poverty and ill health, and risking further abuse.

The Reproductive Health and Wellbeing Programme was set up to equip children to deal with these issues. Its primary goal is to reduce sexual abuse of teenage girls and unwanted pregnancies and it is aimed at children aged 10-14 years. It has been funded by a grant from the Geoff Herrington Foundation and it is delivered by a team of six counsellors that engage with children through their schools.

The program includes both girls and boys and gives a rare opportunity for discussion in a child-friendly, safe environment, in both individual and group sessions. After running the initial events, it became clear that the children had many other emotional issues that were caused by domestic circumstances, dysfunctional family relationships, and a lack of adult guidance. We responded by expanding the scope of sessions to provide a range of life skills that deal with peer pressures, puberty, menstrual health, self-discipline and drug abuse.



The issues discussed include reproductive health knowledge, understanding and appreciation of their body changes, and menstrual health. The girls learn the use, handling, and disposal of single use and reusable sanitary towels. Other topics include the cause, effects and temptation of drug and substance abuse.

Life skills are also discussed at length. These include assertiveness training, decision-making, non-chemical addiction, social media, stress management, respect for others and relationships in general.

Working closely with the schools we have been able to bring tangible benefits to the children involved. After two years, the counsellors, children and school staff reported that it has already:

- Reduced teenage pregnancy
- Improved school attendance
- Reduced the number of school dropouts
- Created positive behaviour change
- Improved academic performance

800 boys and girls and have participated in the Reproductive Health and Wellbeing Programme so far. Eventually each child will spend 4 years in the programme before they move on to Secondary School at 15/16 years old. We have secured additional funding, which will allow us to continue the project, help an extra 200 children each year and the continue to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies.

It's only possible with your support...

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