



## Wamba Girls Education Project:

### Generating Ideas

Community stakeholder participatory research project

*Final Report*

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## Community stakeholder participatory research project

### Executive Summary:

The aim of this project was to assess some of the challenges girls face in completing their education in Samburu County. It was designed to generate solutions as to how those challenges can be overcome. A situation analysis was done across Samburu East Sub-County. Four communities were selected - all within about 25 km of Wamba, and all with an established but typically poor-performing mixed primary school. Over 100 community stakeholders were interviewed by a team of young, local women. They interviewed school teachers, School Management Committee members, community-administration leaders and girls and boys in their final years at the primary school, and some girls who have dropped out of school recently.

Results confirmed many of the reasons why girls fail to finish primary school, or those that do finish KCPE do not move to secondary school. The main reasons given by the community are pregnancy and/or followed by marriage and poverty. Most girls are given extensive work in their homes from the age of 10. They work after school and at the weekends, and are frequently kept back from school to look after children, mind the household during market days or look after sick parents. The absentee rate of girls from Class 3 onwards (aged 10) is very high – on average girls miss half of all the days in school. Consequently they drop academically in all subjects and the trend in the area schools show even those girls that do make it to KCPE score systematically and significantly lower than their male peers.

Underlying all these reasons for why girls fail is a lack of value placed on girls' education, compared to boys' education by most in the Samburu communities. The cultural and monetary value of girls is realized when they marry, and schooling is seen as getting in the way, and delaying the marriage age, for the families of girls.

Recommendations from the community included:

1. Build facilities to allow girls to board fulltime – this places them beyond the domestic chores and will greatly enable them to focus on their school work and not drop behind.
2. Conduct a campaign to educate the community around the value and legal requirements for girls to attend school. Beyond basic education, use role models and study tours for parents. A follow up education on the legal framework for dealing with extensive absenteeism is needed.
3. Enhancement of skills for teachers and improving the knowledge base of the School Management Committees.
4. Development and improvement of bathroom and other infrastructure facilities for students and teachers.
5. Enhancing the extracurricular activities for girls and boys – with a major emphasis on lifeskills (including sexual and reproductive health, career mentorship).

Detailed lists of further recommendations and ideas are given in the results and discussion section in this report.

To follow the community assessment, a workshop was held to further consider these ideas. The five key areas identified as most urgent, that were further discussed in focus groups, were:

1. Strengthening the idea of education for girls? Educating the community – how to change the perceived value of girls' education; right to education;

2. Absenteeism and formal follow up for girls who are or who have dropped out. Legal aspects, community mechanisms, parent-girl relationships?
3. Advice and mentorship for girls for a) sexual health education for in-school girls and b) the wider mentorship for girls outside school including career guidance, life skills, financial literacy... The role of role models.
4. Enterprise development to reduce poverty that keeps girls from joining and maintaining their schooling.
5. Teaching and the quality of education – ideas as to what is needed in a good teacher for girls?

The summary discussions from these focus groups are presented on p 17-19.

Many, in fact most, girls in Samburu, continue to drop out of school. It is rare for girls to complete primary, let alone secondary school. While there is growing recognition amongst many community members that this needs to change, resources and dedication at multiple levels are absent. From attitude change within many families, to practical investments in boarding and other infrastructure facilities, to mentorship and even strong back up in the legal implications of absenteeism, early marriage and other cultural aspects of girls lives.

With these investments and a multi-pronged approach to improving the experience of girls in primary school in Samburu, we believe the objective of reducing girl child dropout rates can be reached and maintained.

There is political will within the County leadership but this will not be enough to turn the situation around quickly.



The Minister for Education, Samburu County, is surrounded by stakeholders and members of the joint team of SAIDIA and BSWN standing outside the Malaria meeting room, December 2015.