

BREAKING THE SILENCE: YOUTH ADVOCATES FOR THE RIGHT TO SEXUALITY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT”.

Breaking the Silence: Youth Advocates for the Right to Sexuality and Civic Engagement’ is an intervention that takes place where formal education makes little room for student participation beyond recitation and answering the teacher’s questions with yes or no. This means that pupils find it difficult to express themselves in analytical and critical thinking where answers are more blurred, complex and independent.

Breaking the silence is a continuation project after the pilot one, which was implemented both in rural and urban setup in twenty four schools in Baringo County and Mlolongo of Kenya. We aimed to pursue the objective through 3 strategic goals:

1. A continued trust based dialogue between the teachers and the pupils in selected schools;
2. School clubs and
3. The Digital Ambassadors Programme.

The project funded by CISU through 100% for children a Danish organization and implemented in Kenya by two local partner NGOs; PLK and HMDS in thirty four learning institutions and communities.

The project was launched in the month of February 2020 in Nairobi, in attendance were the key stakeholders; 100% for children, Periamma, HMDS, PLK and role models. The project kicked off well with first introduction to the schools where the implementation will be taking place for the next two years. At HMDS we managed to visit the first twelve schools and Sub-County Director of Education in Mogotio, Baringo County, which is the immediate office where the schools are located.

Below is the list of the schools visited before the closure of learning institutions due to the pandemic of Covid-19 which has led to suspension of the project until when the situation gets back to normal.

LIST OF BENEFICIARY SCHOOLS VISITED FOR PROJECT.

1. Oterit primary
2. Kabarbesi primary
3. Embogong primary
4. Kures primary school
5. Kapchelukuny primary
6. Nato primary
7. Borokwo primary school
8. Chemoinoi primary
9. Kimose primary
10. Sosion primary
11. Kipchobet primary
12. Oterit secondary

During our project visit to the above mentioned schools, both the teachers and the pupils were appreciative and welcoming the project again. Some of the expressions were that since the pilot of the project, there is a big difference schools have noticed i.e. good performance in final exams, and haven't witnessed teen pregnancies and they are ready to participate in the project. They are very much looking forward for the project.

We didn't come across any conservativeness.

We were able also to meet County officials in their offices at Mogotio Sub county office where we held briefs on the breaking Silent project. The officials welcomed the project and also gave us names of the five secondary schools in Baringo. We expect to visit the secondary schools when schools will open.



A photo with sub-county educational director and colleague – Mogotio (Baringo)



After introduction of the project to the head teacher and teachers of Kapchelukuny.



We met the pupils too of Kapchelukuny primary.

Outcome per school

1. KAPCHELUKUNYI PRIMARY SCHOOL.

We were able to meet six teachers at the school, the head teachers was not there at the time of visiting but deputy head teacher MR. Kipkoech welcomed us to the school and assembled other teachers for the meeting. We told them about the new project we will be doing at the school for the next two years 2020-2021.” *Breaking the silence: youth advocates for the right to sexuality and civic engagement*”. The school welcomed the idea of having the training at the school unlike before when it was being done at clusters. We found out by this year the school has a population of 155 students of whom 80 of them will be participating in the training. The challenges they foresee was the internet connectivity in case of digital ambassador program but we told them that will be on particular selected schools and also we will have smart phones for video taking as a solution to internet connectivity.(Later head teacher Joint us towards the end of the meeting and appreciated our efforts of prolonging the project)

2. SOSSION PRIMARY SCHOOL

We had the meeting with Deputy Head Teacher Mrs. Monica Chebo and senior teacher Mrs. Susan. We agreed that what we were discussing will be passed over to the head teacher of the school and that the two should discuss with us instead of stopping learning for other teachers to participate. The school this year had 130 students and 45 of them are mature enough to participate in SRHR program as agreed during the meeting. The teachers expressed that its good idea for dialogue between teachers and students in regards to SRHR but as far as community is concerned, it is a taboo for them (Parents) to talk to their children. So the responsibilities of that are on Ngo’s and teachers. The others challenge was Ambassadors’ program and their concerned in regards to internet and the answers we gave was just same as one we Kapchelukunyi Primary School above.

3. KIPCHOBET PRIMARY SCHOOL

The school has 164 children at the beginning of this year and of this population 50 will be attending the SRHR training for they are of the required age. We managed to have a meeting with Head teacher Mr. Elija Koskei, deputy head teacher Mr. David and the chairman of the school who came we had already started. It was agreed that we will have one lesson during school day for the young ones to be trained on SRHR. Mrs. Florence Cheboi- senior teacher will be the matron of the project. They said that from the pilot they have noticed that girls who attended the training are more proactive unlike the boys and to add on that they are more disciplined than before.

4. KURES PRIMARY SCHOOL

The school started in 1964 but picked up in 1966. There is an enrolment of 358 students including ECD. Those who will attend training on SRHR are approximated to be 60 children but the number may increase as the project progress. We managed to get Head teacher Mrs. Jane Cherijor who has skills in lifeskills. We agreed that the lessons will be in the afternoon. We also agreed that he will have meeting with parents and update them on the project.

5. KIMOSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The school started in 1962 and it has 10 teaches – 2 male and 8 female with a population of 202 children. 60 of these students will be attending SRHR training and it was agreed that it will be better to be done in the afternoon during school days. We managed to have meeting with Madam Josephine the head Teacher of the school with two senior teachers and the deputy.

6. NATO PRIMARY SCHOOL.

We held meeting with Mr. Raymond Cheserem with two senior teachers at the school. We started by explain to them the new project – breaking silence.

They started praising the previous pilot project and said that it was a good idea to roll full project at the school. They told us due to pilot training there was no single drop out of the girls at the school during the year and also no single pregnancy. They said with the project at school it will reach many children unlike the pilot one. The school had a population of 203 children and 50 will participate in the training. The training will be done in the afternoon.

7. BOROKWO PRIMARY SCHOOL

We met Madam Monica the Head Teacher, Mr. Evans N. Sirma with other two teachers. Were informed that the school had a population of 171 children and 60 will be attending SRHR training. Feedback from pilot, there was no sing pregnancy during the year, No drop out and that all those who did class eight joined secondary school unlike before when they had dropout of between 2-5 girls due to pregnancy. The SRHR training to be done between 3pm to 4 pm at the school.

8. CHEMOINOI PRIMARY SCHOOL

We managed to have a meeting with Deputy Head teacher and senior two teachers at the school. We agreed to have SRHR training at school in afternoon. The school has a population of 250 children and 60 of them are of the age to attend SRHR lessons. The school has had positive changes after pilot project thereby no single pregnancy was recorded.

9. OTERIT SECONDARY SCHOOL

We meet Madam Deputy Principal with other two teachers. We informed about the SRHR project and welcomed it again since Oterit sec. was on the piloting phase and they expressed how it was beneficial to the students since they are in the youth age and are the right people to participate. Madam said that the school has a population of 300 students and expect all of them to participate in SRHR trainings. The challenge will be digital program due to low internet access in the area. She said that they will be willing to be among those to be chosen for ambassador program.

Feedback from pilot, such trainings are the best as they make the work **easier** for the teachers and enabled the school to perform better in the national exams. They have not had cases of dropout due to pregnancy and indiscipline. Madam concluded that they will share with other teachers and looking forward for the program.

10. KABARBESI PRIMARY SCHOOL

This is one of the schools which were in the piloting phase of SRHR project. During our visit to the school, we had the meeting with head teacher, deputy both new in the school and senior teacher. We introduced the project to them and their response was positive even the senior teacher said it helped a lot since pupils interacting with people from outside who are not their teachers had a big difference and enhanced best performance in the national exams giving them position two in the division. The school has a population of 355 pupils and those who will be participating in the project are 206, and 16 teachers. The head teacher commented that it's a good program and will share with the whole team in the school.

11. EMOGONG PRIMARY SCHOOL

We visited the school with the main aim of introducing the Breaking the silence to the school. We held a meeting with head teacher with other three teachers. Having already had the pilot project in the school, it was easy to explain to them about the "Breaking the silence project". After explaining how it will work for the two year period, they expressed that they are happy to be considered again since it will help their 102 pupils out of 206. They will be enlightened.

12. OTERIT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Oterit primary school has a population of 434 pupils of these 200 will participate in the project for they are of the required age. We held meeting with Head teacher, Deputy head teacher and two senior teachers at the school. The main challenge of the project that we discussed was lack of internet connectivity in the school and its surroundings in regards to Digital program of the

project. We informed them that we will have smart phones which we will use to take videos as a solution to that issue.

General comments and concerns towards the project were as follows.

Most of the schools said that lack of communication skills and parents' belief that adolescents are too young to learn about sexual health will contribute to low rates of sexual health discussion and this will require more time from HMDS discussion and particularly on new students who did not participate in pilot project.

Challenge will come when children are at home-Parents' reluctance to discuss sexual health could have a significant impact on adolescents' reproductive health choices and this is contributed by beliefs in the community about the topic.

Some teachers will face challenges in addressing key topics such as condom use, which may be associated with promiscuity. They may also be uncomfortable discussing subjects like sexual orientation, masturbation, and contraception because some of the students may be their children.

The school said that; "Life Skills" curriculum is limited, and provides basic sexual health education with a focus on puberty. Some components of reproductive health, like sexuality and reproduction, are covered in other subjects like science subjects but not real deep as needed to be. It was observed that this project will fill this gap in life skills.

What all the school main challenge towards the project is lack of internet for digital program.

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