Kakenya’s Dream

Investing in girls from rural Kenya through educational, health, and leadership initiatives to create agents of change.

WHERE WE WORK

Our programs operate in southwestern Kenya, one of the most marginalized regions in the country, where nearly 80% of girls undergo female genital mutilation (FGM) at puberty, 50% are married before the age of 19, and only 17% complete a primary education.

OUR MODEL

Kakenya’s Dream is a nonprofit organization operating a range of holistic education, health, and leadership programs to empower girls and transform communities across rural Kenya. Our wraparound programs are designed to nurture and support the whole girl and all of her unique needs from childhood to adulthood, because we believe an educated and well-supported girl has the ability to transform her family, community, and the world at large.

OUR PROGRAMS

Holistic Education

Our education programs include the Kakenya Centers for Excellence (KCE I and II), which are full-support girls’ boarding schools that provide high-quality education to the most vulnerable girls in rural Kenya. When our students graduate from our boarding schools, they enter our Network for Excellence program, which supports our KCE I and II graduates as they make the critical transition to secondary school (high school) and tertiary education (college/university), a time when most girls in our community experience increasing pressure to get married and drop out of school. Through the Network for Excellence, we provide college and career guidance, scholarships and financial aid, tutoring, and social support so that our girls are set up for success in adulthood.

725 girls educated and supported by our world-class Center for Excellence boarding schools

100% transition rate from primary to secondary education compared to the county average of 17%

92% transition rate from secondary to tertiary education compared to the county average of 2%

330 girls receiving continued financial, academic, and social support to complete secondary and tertiary education through our Network for Excellence program
Health and Human Rights
With extremely limited healthcare resources and education in our region, most community members know little about their bodies or rights. This lack of sexual health and rights-based education leads to increased rates of female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage, unplanned teenage pregnancy, and cyclical intergenerational poverty. To combat these problems, we equip our students and boys and girls in partner schools across rural Kenya with comprehensive sex education, information about the dangers of FGM and child marriage, knowledge of their legal rights, and life skills training through our Health and Leadership Training program.

To further meet our region’s healthcare needs, we are building the community’s first and only youth-friendly health and wellness clinic! Once operational (spring 2023), the clinic will provide basic healthcare, mental health support and counseling, stigma-free sexual and reproductive care, and an emergency hotline for reporting incidences of violence.

15,000 girls and boys educated on their health and human rights through our Health and Leadership Training program

131 schools across southwestern Kenya served through our Health and Leadership Trainings

54 local community members staff the organization, ensuring our programs are sustainable and guided by local knowledge and expertise

CONFRONTING COVID-19
The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdowns that followed led to an alarming surge in unintended teen pregnancies across Kenya, largely due to increased sexual violence during girls’ isolation at home and girls being forced to resort to survival sex. In response, we launched the Linda Dada Campaign (“protect a sister” in Swahili) to raise awareness about this issue and reduce unplanned teen pregnancies through educational workshops for youth and adults alike about sexual and reproductive health, safe sex practices, and healthy interpersonal communication and relationships. We partnered with local media to disseminate this information via radio and television messaging to educate and drive behavior change within the adolescent community.

1,629 boys, girls, parents, and community leaders engaged in educational workshops

325,000 people reached across southwestern Kenya via educational radio and television programming

“Joining this program was a dream come true. It became the start of a journey that is changing my and my family’s future.”

– Lilian, University Student

A replicable model for girls’ education and empowerment across Africa
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