



GPE KIX TUSEME

A Voice for Internally Displaced and Refugee Children



RESEARCH SUMMARY

Overview:

The Phase 1 study of the GPE KIX Tuseme Innovation Project assessed the implementation of the Tuseme empowerment model, Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP), and Centres of Excellence (CoEs) across primary and secondary schools in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda, aiming to adapt these initiatives for refugee and IDP communities. Using qualitative methods, including focus groups, interviews, and validation workshops, the study found that Tuseme strengthened students' self-esteem, leadership, and social skills. However, challenges such as resource shortages, gaps in stakeholder awareness, and sustainability concerns were identified. Overall, the findings emphasize the need for community-driven, context-sensitive strategies to empower marginalized youth.



What is Tuseme?

In crowded classrooms and dusty schoolyards, Tuseme, Swahili for "Let us speak out" is changing the story for young people across Africa. Launched by FAWE and the University of Dar es Salaam, the Tuseme model gives students, especially girls, the mic they have too often been denied. Through plays, poems, debates, and action plans, girls step forward to voice their struggles from early marriage to gender violence and lead change in their communities. In one rural school, a skit about a girl forced into marriage sparked real conversations that convinced village elders to rethink old customs. In another, poems pinned to classroom walls spoke louder than textbooks ever could. Tuseme is not just about talking; it is about transforming fear into confidence, problems into projects, and silence into leadership. Across Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda, students are no longer waiting for change. They are making it happen — one voice, one story, one bold step at a time.

Research Location:

The pilot study was conducted in December 2024 at Bashewam Primary and Secondary School, located in the Kolfe Keraniyo Sub-City of Addis Ababa to test the tools, methods, and assumptions of the research before rolling out full-scale data collection.

This study focused on understanding how the Tuseme model is being used in four secondary schools across Ethiopia: Millennium Secondary School in Addis Ababa, Nafyad Secondary School in Adama (Oromia), Tabor Secondary School in Hawassa (Sidama), and Bahir Dar Academy in Bahir Dar (Amhara). These schools provided a diverse representation of Ethiopia's educational landscape, ranging from large government schools to private institutions, urban to regional schools. The research team engaged with teachers, students, and administrators to assess the impact of Tuseme and gather data on its implementation, challenges, and successes.

Key Findings:

The findings from Ethiopian schools highlight the challenges and opportunities for adapting the Tuseme model. Factors such as urban versus regional locations, private versus government schools, and language diversity (particularly Amharic and Oromo) influence the implementation process. The shift system at large government schools like Tabor Secondary School and the unique K-12 structure at Bahir Dar Academy require tailored scheduling and flexible activity formats. Key implications for adaptation include developing linguistically appropriate materials in Amharic and Oromo, accommodating school structures, addressing resource disparities between school types, and leveraging the K-12 system to foster long-term impact on student confidence and expression.

Enabling Factors:

Enabling factors for the successful adaptation of the Tuseme model in Ethiopia include strong institutional support, particularly from schools like Bahir Dar Academy, which offer a K-12 structure that facilitates phased and integrated implementation. The flexibility of the Tuseme model itself, with its focus on open expression and leadership, can be tailored to different educational levels. Additionally, the growing interest in gender equality and empowerment within Ethiopian educational institutions supports the model's uptake. The linguistic diversity of the country also presents an opportunity to adapt the model's materials in Amharic and Oromo, ensuring accessibility and relevance to a broader audience. Finally, the presence of active community and parental engagement in certain regions provides a strong foundation for sustaining the model's impact.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The primary data collection tools employed in Phase One were:



SEMI-STRUCTURED FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) GUIDES

Developed for discussions with different stakeholder groups (students, teachers, parents) around key themes
Included open-ended questions



SEMI-STRUCTURED KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) PROTOCOLS

Designed for interviews with school principals, directors of studies, senior teachers, government officials, and FAWE trainers



OBSERVATION (INFORMAL)

Researchers engaged in informal observations of school environments and interactions

RESEARCH METHODS

A qualitative approach was used to gather detailed, real-life insights.



Participants included students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and government officials who had experience with or knowledge of Tuseme.

Quantitative data, although limited in this phase, was used primarily for descriptive statistics to summarize participant demographics.



Voices from Ethiopia:

"I joined the club because I was inspired by the idea of empowering women"

"We are seeing evidence of influence on women in social media. As men, we should protect them; that's why I joined this club"

"Before we called it TUSEME, we were already doing what TUSEME is about, such as organizing events for March 8."

"A positive aspect of the school's infrastructure is a library built by FAWE, which is well-established..."

"FAWE's direct support includes 'financial assistance, tutorial sessions, and reference books to these students, especially female students..."



Research Summary at a Glance:

METHODOLOGY – ETHIOPIA

Study Sites and Population



Millennium Secondary School in Addis Ababa

- Nafyad Secondary School Adama, Oromia Region
- Tabor Secondary School Hawassa, Sidama Region
- Bahir Dar Academy Bahir Dar, Amhara Region



Sampling Procedures

Purposive approach

Data Collection Methods



Focus Group Discussions



Key Informant Interviews



Informal Observations

Findings – Ethiopia



Student Empowerment

Tuseme helped girls and boys speak out, gain confidence, and take leadership roles



Girls Benefit Most

Girls in Tuseme clubs showed lasting gains in self-esteem and communication



School Support Matters

Strong teacher leadership and FAWE-trained staff improved results



Low Parent Involvement

Some parents supported clubs, but many were unaware of Tuseme



Context Shapes Success

Private schools had more resources and space for clubs

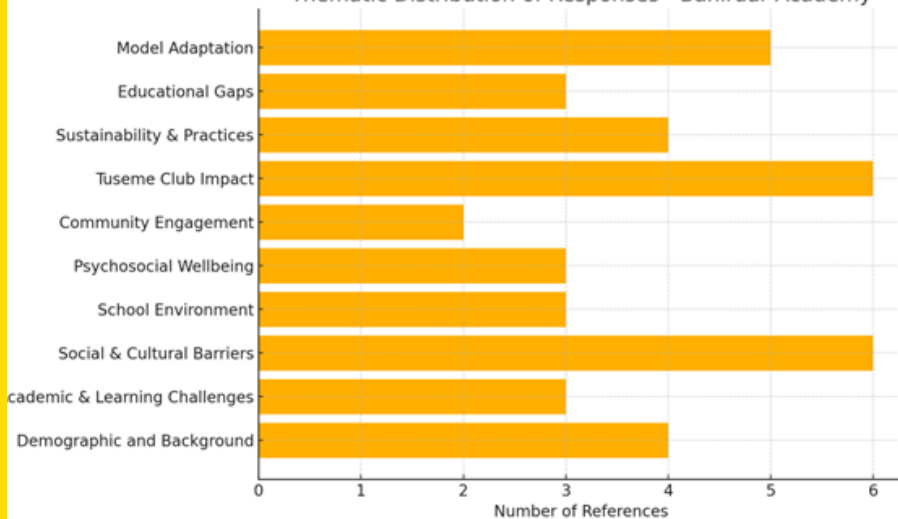
What Helps

- ✓ Committed teachers
- ✓ Clear school support
- ✓ Club space and resources
- ✓ Involving parents and communities

What Hinders

- ⚠ Staff turnover
- ⚠ Lack of awareness
- ⚠ No budget or handover plans
- ⚠ Limited parent engagement

Thematic Distribution of Responses - Bahirdar Academy



Conclusions & Recommendations

Tuseme yielded positive empowerment outcomes for students in Ethiopia but also faced challenges related to sustainability and context. The following recommendations aim to strengthen and expand the program.



Build on Success

Focus on what works well, with particular attention to empowering girls. Adapt the program to fit each school's unique environment.



Address Sustainability

Plan for how Tuseme clubs can continue even with staff changes. Explore how to include Tuseme in national education policies and curricula



Engage the Community

Involve parents, community leaders, and government officials early on. Integrate Tuseme clubs into existing school and community structures



Prioritize Resources

Ensure financial and material resources are allocated to support and grow the program
Train teachers with skills in empowerment and gender sensitivity



Collaborating Institutions:

Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)

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