



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:

By December 2024, the pilot phase for Kenya was underway, trialing the research tools at AIC Kajiado Girls Boarding Primary School in Kajiado County.

From there, full-scale data collection expanded across a diverse range of schools including Wasamo Girls Secondary School in Homa Bay County, St. Veronica Chebukaka Mixed Secondary School in Trans Nzoia County, Masaku Primary School for the Physically Disabled in Machakos County, and County Council Secondary School in Garissa County. Data collection captured perspectives from urban, rural, mainstream, and special needs education contexts.

Key Findings:

In Kenya, the key findings emphasize the need to adapt the Tuseme model to diverse educational contexts by prioritizing gender responsiveness, inclusivity for students with disabilities, and strategies tailored to remote settings. The inclusion of a girls' boarding school, a mixed secondary school, a primary school for the physically disabled, and a school in a remote county highlights the importance of accessible communication methods, resource-sensitive implementation, and age-appropriate approaches. Effective adaptation will require empowering girls' voices, ensuring full participation of students with disabilities, and developing contextually relevant modules for both secondary and primary school learners.

Enabling Factors:

In Kenya, key enabling factors for the adaptation of the Tuseme model include the presence of committed schools willing to integrate gender-responsive and inclusive practices, an existing focus on girls' education, and growing awareness of the needs of students with disabilities. Additionally, the willingness of schools in remote areas to participate offers opportunities to tailor the model to diverse contexts. Supportive leadership, teacher engagement, and an openness to adopting resource-sensitive and accessible communication strategies further create a strong foundation for the successful implementation of Tuseme across different school environments.

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 Kenya:

"Before I became a Tuseme member, I was afraid to speak in front of people, but now I can stand before people and talk confidently."

"What motivated me to join Tuseme was seeing how some of the Tuseme members behaved... I can now speak out when I have a problem."

"Tuseme has helped me know my talent... Tuseme can open doors for someone."

"My parents saw Tuseme as a good group because, since Tuseme came to Wasamo, the number of early pregnancies has decreased, so they really appreciate Tuseme."



Research Summary at a Glance:

KENYA FINDINGS

Conclusions & Recommendations



Build on Success
Adapt the Tuseme model to fit each school context, focusing on improving student agency and engagement in clubs.



Address Sustainability
Plan for long-term continuity by involving teachers and community leaders.




Engage the Community
Involve local parents and school leaders to tailor the program and ensure local relevance.




Prioritize Resources
Secure adequate funds, materials, and teacher support for the clubs to thrive.


KENYA FINDINGS – TUSEME STUDY SUMMARY



STUDENT EMPOWERMENT
Tuseme helped girls and boys build confidence, speak out, and take on leadership roles



GIRLS BENEFIT MOST
Girls involved in Tuseme clubs reported improved self-esteem, communication skills, and courage to challenge harmful norms



BARRIERS REMAIN COMMON
Cultural norms (especially in pastoralist communities), limited services and community taboos

WHAT HELPS	WHAT HINDERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Committed and trained teachers ✓ School timetable adjustments ✓ In-free-time activities (e.g., communication skills) ✓ Community engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❗ Financial constraints ❗ Lack of resources ❗ Staff turnover ❗ Deep cultural barriers ❗ Time limitations (e.g. pastoralist communities)



Collaborating Institutions:



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