



## **GPE KIX TUSEME**

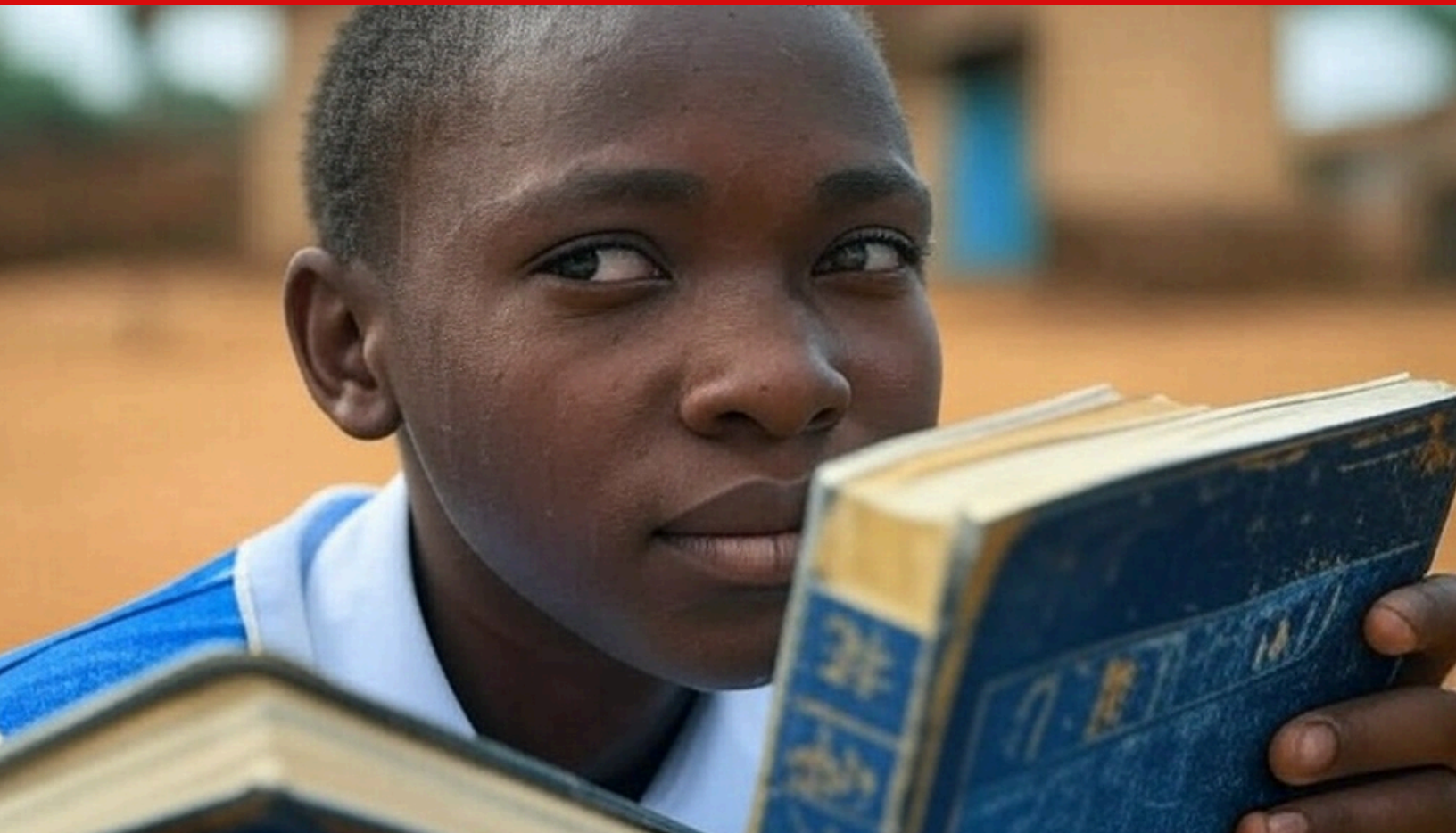
**A Voice for Internally Displaced and Refugee Children**



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 FAWA 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 kicked off at Balawoli Secondary School in Kamuli District, where research tools were first tested.

From there, full-scale data collection spread to diverse schools across Uganda in February 2025: Bukomero Secondary School in Kiboga District, St. James Kagulu Senior Secondary School in Buyende District, Balawoli Secondary School, and Namasagali Secondary School, also in Kamuli District. These sites provided rich, comparative data from rural and semi-urban settings, and enhanced the understanding of how the Tuseme model could be adapted for both refugee and host community girls.

## Key Findings:

In Uganda, key findings highlight the importance of adapting the Tuseme model by building on existing club structures, addressing sustainability challenges, and tailoring content to local issues in districts such as Kiboga, Buyende, and Kamuli. Differences between government-aided and partnership schools point to varying levels of autonomy and community involvement, while the presence of both day and boarding students requires flexible strategies to ensure equitable participation. Insights from the Namasagali case study stress the need for strong local ownership, teacher empowerment through training, and early resource mobilization to ensure the model's long-term success across diverse school settings.

## Enabling Factors:

In Uganda, enabling factors for adapting the Tuseme model include schools' stated visions and missions that emphasize holistic student development, aligning well with the empowerment goals of Tuseme. The existence of other active student-led clubs demonstrates a general openness to extracurricular initiatives, while strong school support—through land, finances, guidance, and engagement with partners further reinforces this environment. Policies encouraging student participation in multiple clubs, parental appreciation of club-acquired skills, and opportunities to integrate clubs with the curriculum and use school land for projects also create fertile ground for Tuseme's success. The initial support from FAWE provided a strong foundation, and the dedication of the teacher who led Tuseme was critical to its early achievements.

## 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 Uganda:

*"Girls advocated for a changing room, and it was provided by the school."*

*"FAWE helps girls stay in school by teaching and supporting them to make reusable sanitary pads."*

*"When FAWE pulled out, everything ceased"*

*"FAWE beautified this place... they put the plants that you see...they put a chain link the other side. They supported the girls' dormitory construction"*

*"The resources, the land. The land space, yes. And the availability of the teacher to supervise the project"*





## Collaborating Institutions:

### **Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)**

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