

Ensuring
Safety for School
Girls in Mafia

SVAGs PROJECT

99.9%
GIRLS SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE IN 2018

*Girls attendance in
schools has greatly
increased from
99.3% in 2015*

BACKGROUND

Mafia District is among of the district in Tanzania where school girls face many hurdles in realising their educational dreams. An average of 10 girls (0.2%) drop out of school each year due to early pregnancies and violence they encounter at home. One in four girls is subjected to emotional abuse from relatives that degrades her self-worth, confidence and agency, which stifles motivation and further frames education as a wasted investment. Girls who manage to attend classes are disincentivized to stay, as 1 in 10 reports being sexually abused while more than half report being physically abused by a teacher.

In collaboration with Sauti ya Wanawake Mafia (SAWAMA), AATZ is implementing Stop Violence Against Girls' in school in Mafia District, Tanzania. The project works with 23 villages, 34 primary schools and 6 secondary schools, and is home to 9,552 students, where 52% of them are girls.

PROJECT GOAL

To ensure girls' right to a free, quality, public and inclusive education while also protecting their right to safety and self-determination through addressing the legal barriers, cultural beliefs, norms, attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate violence against girls in and around schools.

CHANGES INFLUENCED BY THE PROJECT

The project improved the learning environment (classrooms construction, improved sanitation facilities, enhanced the review and amendment of school by-laws) which has facilitated an increase in the number of school girls' enrollment, attendance and performance from 30% to 70% since the project inception and has enabled them to access secondary education.



- Community structures and networks established by the project (such as Women's Rights Association known as SAWAMA, community mother groups, school management committees, Boda boda ambassadors and children school clubs) have created a space for sustainable involvement of various stakeholders' in safeguarding children rights against VAC.
- Reduction of child marriages by 10% eg religious leaders are now demanding birth certificate before officiating marriages. This is also supported by the fact children are now capable of identifying possible risks of child abuse and avail from them.



- For the year 2015 reported child marriage cases were 9, in 2016 7 cases reported, in 2017 3 cases reported, while for the year 2018 2 cases reported.
- Girls attendance in schools has greatly increased from 99.3% in 2015, 99.8% in 2016, 99.8% in 2017 to 99.9% in 2018. This demonstrates that parents are now more aware and conscious of educating girls which is the result of the knowledge they have received through community sensitization done by the networks.
- There is notable increment in violence against children (VAC) reporting, from 5 cases per year in 2016, in 2017, 15 cases reported and 2018, 19 cases. This reflects change of community perspective on the importance of reporting VAC incidents.
- Establishment of the Juvenile courts because of advocacy work by ActionAid and the community has created conducive environment for entertaining children cases. In the past children related cases were dropped from the court.
- The project successfully lobbied other government agency to fight and address muhali¹ through Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB)
- Through the project, Mafia has attracted a spotlight for more donor engagements e.g. the world bank has shown interest to engage SAWAMA for financial capacity development program as Training of Trainers to escalate this knowledge for entire women in Mafia.

HOW WE GOT HERE

Community empowerment through trainings, dialogues, mobilization, commemoration of key moments and awareness creation through IEC materials.

Research & documentation evidence based advocacy at different levels. Integrating the project into existing structures eg School Management Committees (SMCs), police gender desk.

Use of the national media from the mainland added value to the advocacy work of the project.

¹ Muhali is word originated in Mafia means feeling shy in taking action on issues related to VAC in favor of blood ties relationship within the community.

REASONS FOR SUCCESS

- The use of reflective approach. A participatory approach which enables people to analyze their socio-economic and political status and take actions.

PROJECT LESSONS

- Legal framework remains a barrier towards addressing VAC at local level
- The absence of media in the district is still a stumbling block in communicating community concerns to duty bearers and the right holders.

WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE

- Focus on the documentation and sharing of most Significant change stories
- Facilitate more engagement with policy/decision makers at the national level, to influence amendment of the penal code and include a clause that restricts sexual offense from being bailable offense, advocate for the establishment of the district level

laboratory for Government Chemist Laboratory Authority (GCLA) and establishment of one stop center system to handle children violence related cases.

- Enhance project ownership by beneficiaries by creating a space for them to showcase the contribution they have made in the project and influence more community change
- Engage in advocacy work. This will include research on existing community radios, proposal development, establishing what happened with the government proposal and sounding out potential partners (government and development partners)
- Continuous awareness raising through radio programs, TV sports and the engagement of youth led organization and Activists
- Engage government officials to advocate for the establishment of One Stop Centre
- Institutional capacity building of the established networks to lead the agenda of violence against children

