

SAFIRE

SAFIRE

NOVEMBER 2022



CENTRE FOR
THE STUDY
OF ADOLESCENCE

**READS OF THE
YEAR**

**SAFIRE AT
A GLANCE**

A LOOK AT SAFIRE'S
YEAR AND ACTIVITY
PHOTOS

A group of Big Sisters after a review meeting in Ruiru, Kiambu

Young people are shaping our world. It is an opportunity to celebrate the contributions young people make to our society and the challenges they face. It is also a chance to highlight the importance of investing in young people so that they are able to reach their potential and build better futures for themselves and the world around them

Through SAFIRE we have engaged Mama Champions, who have played a big role in impacting SRHR information among adults and community gatekeepers. This has enabled a change from negative attitudes toward comprehensive sexuality education and access to reproductive health services ultimately reducing the number of teenage pregnancies, unplanned pregnancies, and deaths due to unsafe abortions.

It gives great satisfaction that this model has significantly improved the girl's uptake of modern, quality, and safe services in the community and averted injury and deaths that would have otherwise arisen from services and procedures procured in unsafe environments.

Reproductive health issues are an inclusive concern for both men and women. To improve maternal health, strengthening Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) knowledge gaps in reproductive health information is an important public health initiative.



Engaging AGYW in planning and program implementation holds promise as a means to improve access and use of reproductive health services. We must make sure to increase awareness of women's right to make decisions about their bodies. To improve male participation in family planning, improving male knowledge and attitudes towards family planning is essential.

We must make sure to increase awareness of women's right to make decisions about their bodies. To improve male participation in family planning, improving male knowledge and attitudes towards family planning is essential. Supporting adolescent girls to access Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) information and services is a big step towards removing barriers that hinder many girls from realizing their full potential. In Kenya, data shows that pregnancy-related complications are the biggest cause of death for girls aged 15-19 years. The elephant in the room is, unsafe abortion- which until now is easily accessible to girls in Kenya.

This newsletter shares powerful stories and experiences of beneficiaries and girls who were involved in the project that would increase access to SRH information and link adolescent girls to service providers. Since February 2021, over 5,000 girls have been referred to the Girl Approved Care Providers for various SRH services including contraceptives, STIs screening, HIV/AIDs testing, and access to Safe Abortion. An equal number of girls have also been followed up on after service uptake and have shared feedback on the quality of services.

The girls can also get counseling and psychosocial support from the counselor and hotline thus making informed choices and improving their overall reproductive health. I invite you to read this newsletter and champion access to SRH information for adolescents, as a solution to help them navigate the challenges that come with puberty and still keep them focussed towards achieving their social goals and keep a healthy life.

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

We focused on various SRHR thematic areas having twitter chats and Facebook lives to support our online engagements



The Centre for the Study of Adolescence •••
Feb 16 at 5:54 PM •

The long awaited launch is finally here, catch us tomorrow for our live stream event that will take place here on CSAs facebook page. #KaaRadaNa... See More



Josphine Odhiambo and 37 others • 2 Shares



CSA
@CSA_Kenya - Aug 12

It's not about their age, background, gender, race, or any other demographic. It's about their development and their progress. It's about their learning and their growth. It's about their future.

Equip young people with skills and provide the platforms.
#CSAEngage #IYD2022



Billi Now Now! and 4 others • 24 • 59



The Centre for the Study of Adolescence •••
Feb 9 at 5:07 PM •

Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), is the the provision of wholistic reproductive health education and information. #CSAEngage #kaaradanaCSE



Josphine Odhiambo and 13 others • 1 Share

Our Reach

During this 1 year period, we earned **342,538** impressions on Twitter and **47,190** on Facebook and **11,630** on Instagram

Audience reached.

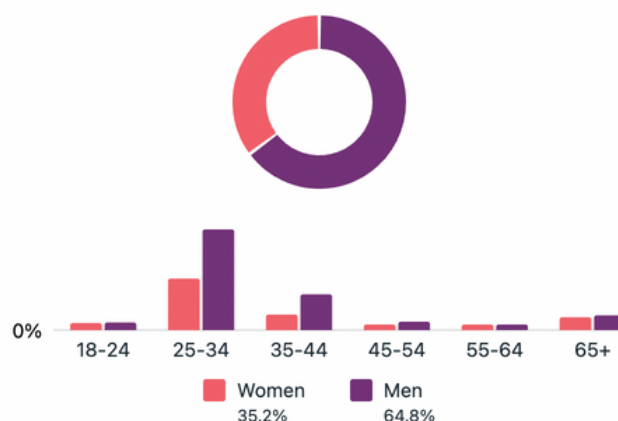
Posts Reach During this 1 year period, we earned **342,538** impressions on Twitter and 47,190 on Facebook and **11,630** on Instagram The new page likes this year on Facebook is **743**

Posts Reach on Facebook and Instagram so far is as shown above.

Facebook Page likes (i)

10,187

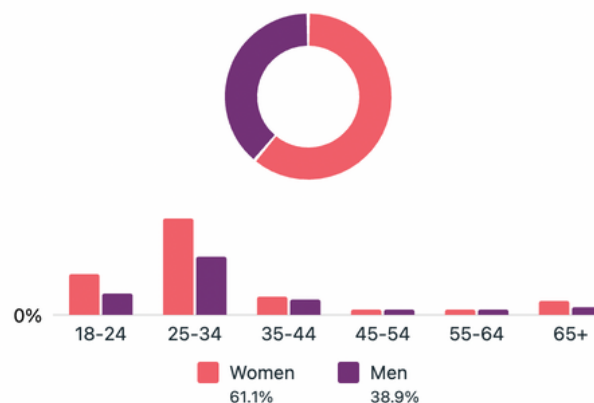
Age & gender (i)



Instagram followers (i)

561

Age & gender (i)



WALL OF CHANGE

#MYWORD



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Having participated as a Big Sister in the SAFIRE program, I have become more confident to discuss issues of sexual reproductive health. I have seen how engaging young people can significantly increase information provision and program success in general. Being involved in the development and listened to, is the most empowering and fulfilling feeling. It gives me a sense of belonging to the solution, encouraging me to engage more.

EUNICE WANJIRU
BIG SISTER, KIAMBU COUNTY

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In a world of myths and misconceptions about our reproductive health, the SAFIRE program has enlightened me and provided me with a platform to impact more girls from my community with correct and factual reproductive health and rights information.

DORCAS DAVID
BIG SISTER, KIAMBU COUNTY

#MYWORD

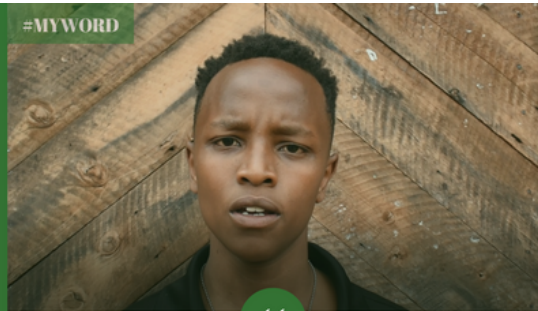


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I believe equality is a matter we should continue talking about and thinking of as an eventuality. This addresses societal issues such as Safe Abortion, which shouldn't be taboo. To achieve a safer and open society, we must cease shaming adolescent girls and young women and strengthen service delivery systems for easy access to quality and affordable services. I'd like to see more conversations around creating safe spaces for AGYW to heal mentally, physically, and emotionally.

MUMINA MOHAMEDNUR
BIG SISTER, KIAMBU

#MYWORD



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A notable reduction in the rate of stigma and myths around access to family planning services shared among adolescents and young people in the community has been achieved. The decline has been influenced by the involvement of young people like me in implementing SRHR programs like SAFIRE among people my age.

ALEX
SRHR CHAMPION, KIAMBU COUNTY

Among the human rights principles that guide the provision of contraceptive services is informed decision-making. Anyone including young people using any method deserve to know how to use them, how effective and what side effects they have if any. That's why we talk of awareness today ~



#MYWORD



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Being an SRHR youth advocate I have learned I cannot do this alone, we as a collective need to bring our voices together. This speaks to our commitment to the inclusiveness of young people in all their diversities. I believe humanity is the greatest religion of all as we serve and ensure all young people are represented and heard.

JUDY MWANGI
BIG SISTER, KIAMBU COUNTY

READS OF THE YEAR

From Reproductive Health Freedom to Financial Freedom.

By emmanuel I. mutwiri

Big sisters are sexual reproductive health and rights champions from Kiambu, who play a big role in ensuring all the adolescent young girls and women they mentor have healthy reproductive health lives while still accessing quality services. To enable them offer accurate, correct and factual information to the AGYW they engage with in their communities, their capacities are continuously strengthened, to better how they carry out their sessions, how they handle the AGYW and how they make best financial decisions for themselves.

Village Savings and Loans association (VSLA) is a group of young like-minded women who are big sisters that came together to pull their resources and save to ensure they are financially stable and secure.

In Kiambu we have two groups of Big sisters that is from Thika/Juja and Ruiru. The two groups recently had their VSLA groups registered named Seraphim Self Help Group and Pretty Savers to enable them get access to financial institutions such as sacco/banks and government loans/grants.



FINANCIAL FREEDOM

Seraphim Self Help group and Pretty savers group are financial safe nets meant to ensure the Big Sisters have the correct financial disciplines to enable them make well informed decisions about their financial lives which will in turn have effect on how they handle their roles and responsibilities as Big Sisters.

With this groups the girls have managed to pull their resources and help out each other establish their own businesses while supporting ones in need of financial aid through lending of loans which they pay at an agreed percentage interest thus creating more income within themselves. They aim to go further with investing hoping to provide more employment to the rest of the AGYW they engage with while still continuing to impact with sexual reproductive health and rights information.

They believe with financial stability and the correct and factual reproductive health information, there will be a great reduction in the numbers of unplanned teenage pregnancies, sexual and gender-based violence against AGYW. They also envision to set up a joint venture as Big Sisters including other areas of investments such as lands, government bonds and hold stakes in their local transport industries which will also create a haven for AGYW.



RELIGIOUS LEADERS AS CHAMPIONS FOR SEXUAL HEALTH

Elias Njaramba is a young religious leader, and sexual reproductive health champion living in Kiambu. He was introduced to the SAFIRE program by his friend.

"Start your day to count your blessings and be grateful on the things you already have."

In his first interaction with the program, he learnt the goal and objectives of the project being spearheaded by the Centre for the Study of Adolescence in Ruiru Kiambu. He mentions the major aim of SAFIRE is reducing cases of unsafe abortion, deaths, and injury among adolescent girls as part of integrated sexual and reproductive health services and reduce stigma around adolescent access and increase uptake of integrated reproductive health.

Njaramba narrates some of the issues affecting adolescent girls in his community, that he knew but never had an opportunity to learn how to address at his level. The young leader was particularly concerned with high numbers of school dropouts among adolescent girls, being driven by the increasing cases of early unintended pregnancies, which in his view lack of proper information on sexuality is a major contributor to poor sexual health decisions among the young. As a religious leader who has the potential of influencing members of the community, he felt the obligation to bring change and protect the young girls.

With knowledge and skills on sharing sexual reproductive health information received from the SAFIRE program in Kiambu, and Njaramba says he has reached nearly 50 adolescence with accurate age-appropriate sexuality information supported linkage to service providers. Njaramba indicates that among the girls who have received information on sexuality have exercised better sexual practice and utilized reproductive health services that include the use of pregnancy prevention methods.

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Elias Njaramba, Youth Religious Leader and SRHR Champion

Njaramba cites SAFIRE as an impactful program with the strategic partnerships between parents, girls, young women, men, religious leaders and service providers, that is addressing the poor reproductive health outcomes in the community. He further encourages religious leaders to become partners in addressing the issues that face adolescent girls in the community. He says religious leaders can organize community forums and invite healthcare workers to share information and provide related services.

MAKE UNSAFE ABORTION HISTORY NOW

"Gender equality cannot be achieved without giving women the freedom to make informed choices about their Sexual and Reproduction health."

A

ccording to World Health Organization (WHO) unsafe abortion remains a preventable public health tragedy and a violation of women and girls' human rights.

It accounts for 13% of global maternal mortalities, with hundreds of thousands of survivors living with long-term complications, including infertility and chronic pain.

Criminalization of abortion has led to many young people seeking unsafe abortion methods such as drinking detergent in attempt to terminate their pregnancy which has led death, mental health illnesses, damaged reproductive health systems, abandoned and neglected children to mothers who were not ready to bear children to increase in number of teen mothers in the country.

Safe abortion is a human right, part, and parcel of achieving universal health care in the country. Gender equality cannot be achieved without giving women the freedom to make informed choices about their Sexual and Reproduction health. Kenya should make efforts in lifting the restrictions around safe abortion and make the lifesaving services accessible, affordable, available, and of good quality in the country.

post-abortion care should also be made accessible at the community level by trained midwives to anyone in need of them on an emergency basis. Safe abortion should also be part of comprehensive sexuality education so that youth can make informed choices about their bodies and their socioeconomic futures.



Safe abortion is a human right, part and parcel of achieving universal health care in the country.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION



Adolescence is a very crucial stage that marks the transition into adulthood. A lot happens at this stage including, physical, socio-emotional, and behavioral changes and most likely to reflect in someone's adulthood. A report from the National center for children in poverty (NCCP) indicates, that among all children, 45% live in low-income families and approximately one in every five (22%) live in poor families.

Poverty can negatively impact adolescents as the poor ones experience high levels of anxiety from lacking basic needs.

The government of Kenya recognizes that illiteracy and poor health are an impediment to national development and poverty reduction. It is therefore committed to promoting availability and access to quality education and health to all, including learners.

Kenyan pupils and students especially from marginalized regions are among the Sub-Saharan African schoolgoers who continue to face malnutrition that affects their general health and wellbeing furthermore impacting their educational journey negatively.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC 2015) reports that undernutrition in childhood and adolescence can delay sexual maturation, slow growth, and reduce a child/adolescent's ability to learn, lowering school performance and achievement. Therefore, investing in nutrition remains imperative to the desired growth and development of young people.

Good nutrition involves eating healthy foods in adequate amounts in order to ensure a child's proper physical and cognitive growth and development and prevent nutrition-related diseases. Good nutrition increases a child's attention span, learning capacity, and ability to fully engage in educational experiences and therefore reach their full potential in life.





FEMININJA IS THE WORD!

My name is Kelly Kamau, a Big Sister in Kiambu. I am passionate about empowering adolescent girls and young women to make informed decisions, and women in leadership and a volunteer under the Safire program that seeks to address Sexual Reproductive Health Rights and reproductive health Services.

Rights and reproductive health Services.

The program has impacted adolescent girls, young women, and the community on the importance of understanding sexual reproductive health and Comprehensive Sexuality Education. It has been an exciting journey contributing to the community by ensuring that I am able to be a part of change and solutions in reducing the stigma associated with young girls and boys accessing reproductive health services.

My community has slowly progressed with the level of information and changed attitudes towards sessions and seeking reproductive health services. This has greatly come from debunking the myths and misconceptions about sexual reproductive health and rights

“I am proud of my role as a Big Sister as it has contributed to the reduction in the number of teenage and unplanned pregnancies, early deaths due to unsafe abortion, Sexually Transmitted Infections and diseases(STIs/STDs), and menstrual health management stigma by providing dignity kits to girls.

Through community sessions and forums hosted by Big Sisters, adolescent girls and young women have the opportunity to explore their potential and achieve their future goals by making informed decisions about their school, careers, and sexual reproductive health.

Working in a program for girls by girls has been a learning opportunity to understand the ever-changing gender needs and dynamics in disseminating comprehensive sexuality education and the demand creation of reproductive health services. I am glad to be a FEMININJA!











BIG SISTER HALL OF FAME



Meet Ruth Waigumo,
Peer Educator

The 24-year old is a sexual and reproductive health advocate in Kiambu, Kenya. She advocates for women empowerment, gender equality and equity for distribution of resources. The advocate is disciplined, determined and mindful, she holds pride in helping and advancing youths need in access to friendly and safe reproductive healthcare services.

Ruth Waigumo



Meet Judy Mwangi
Peer Educator

She is an SRHR advocate working with the SAFIRE program. She's passionate about working with AYGW and children and has, over the past years, been committed to working in her community to promote girl empowerment through capacity building, creating SRHR awareness and child protection missions. Gender equality, empathy and commitment are her guiding principles.

She believes humanity is and will always be the most significant religion

Judy Mwangi



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