Vusha Girls Employability Program
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A demand-driven workforce development program intended to improve employment prospects and income-generating capacities for 1,000 young women aged 19-24 years.

Funded by the US Department of State, Office of Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC), through the DREAMS Innovation Challenge.

TARGET GROUP

The Program targets young women whose socioeconomic circumstances heighten their vulnerability to and risk of HIV infection. The fishing bays in Kisumu and informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya are the target sites for the project.
Our Approach

Vusha uses a multi-pronged approach to enhance both skills and confidence of young women participants.

In order to level the playing field for females entering male-dominated fields, a few additional steps are purposely engaged. Five key features of this combined strategy include:

1. Rapid survey to establish skills gaps in the labor market and follow up on performance post-employment, including roundtable and one-on-one meetings with actual employers. By qualifying young women for actual labor needs, they are afforded an edge in the market.


3. Three-month internship and placement with employers that have been pre-screened for code of conduct on sexual harassment, equal opportunity compensation, and other gender-linked concerns, with regular follow-up on site.

4. Equipping trainees with practical life skills, including digital literacy, financial literacy, workplace readiness, healthcare planning, and how to respond to discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace.

5. Integrating support for overcoming sexism and reducing HIV risks are important in leveling the playing field. HIV prevention education and referrals to sexual and reproductive health services; sensitization to gender discrimination and sexual harassment; and linkages to social and legal redress are intentionally embedded within the program to ensure that young women have holistic support in crossing the gender divide in labor.
Leveling the field for females entering male-dominated fields
Intermediary Outcomes Based on Tracer Survey

Program Impact

65% of those that were interviewed were either employed on permanent basis, as a casual, on internship or having their own business.
Beneficiaries per Trade

Of the 612 girls, most (171) of them took ICT as their choice of trade followed by food and beverage (160), hairdressing (104), electrical and electronic (80), motor vehicle mechanic (37), fashion and design (41) and only 19 having taken plumbing.

A total of 612 interviewed, 93% mentioned having finished training. Of the 7% that dropped out, majority stated personal issues as the reason they had to drop out. The rest mentioned financial constraints and further studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trade</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Casual</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Paid Internship</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Technology (Plumbing/Masonry)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical and Electronic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion and Design</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and Beverage/Catering</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair Dressing and Beauty Therapy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MVM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost all of the respondents recognized the impact of the training in their lives. Most common responses were;

- Helped them acquire skills; more prepared for the job market; able to start their own business
- Able to depend themselves ad provide for their dependents; through earning an income
- Boosted their self-esteem; self-motivated;
- Are confident; can protect themselves
- Are better aware of gender based issues; HIV prevention and economic empowerment
- Gave them the interest to further their studies
Results

After 29 months of operation (Oct 2016-Feb 2019):

1. 1,195 young women (119.5% of life of project – LOP – target) completed training and internships.

2. 723 (73% of LOP target for employment) found better economic opportunities, including higher paying jobs through ACWICT’s employer network (with average monthly income of KES 10,000-20,000), or self-employment.

3. 252 (43%) of graduates were employed in male-dominated fields like auto mechanics, electrical, electronics, masonry, plumbing, and information and communication technologies, or established businesses of their own.

4. 723/1,195 (62%) demonstrated significant increase in knowledge of HIV transmission and how to prevent infection.

5. 423/1,195 (39%) demonstrated changes in their acceptance of gender-based violence (GBV) following exposure to the program.
Project Enabling Factors

1. Short, customized, market-driven curricula for AGYW at various education levels

2. Coordination with the larger DREAMS program and DREAMS IC, National, County governments, (targeting, training, service layering/ completing referrals)

3. Employer engagement meetings – skills gaps and feedback platform

4. Capacity building by JSI: Organizational Capacity development; Grants Management Database (resources)

5. PEPFAR Support
Dream Girls

MARGARET MACHARIA
Graduate, ICT

In this technical field, some men will try to intimidate you by calling you a secretary, but I am tough!

After completing form 4, Margaret's dream was to pursue a degree in supply management but due to lack of fees, she had no option but do odd jobs like hawking.

On joining the Vusha Program, realized she actually loved Information Technology especially the networking aspect. Margaret completed her training in ICT and was immediately placed as an intern at Gaza as fiber technician where she later got employed full time. Her job involves fixing internet for home users; router placement, cable rollup and networking.

She feels the training adequately prepared her well for the job market, reducing her fear if people to make her a good communicator who is able to express herself well.
After completing high school, Mercy, resorted to taking the only job she got at the time which was that of a house girl.

A resilient Mercy, who at the time had very little information about what the Vusha Girls Employability Program, was all about, knew only too well to grab at any opportunity that came her way and immediately visited the training centre, applied, was accepted and started training.

On graduating, she was placed at Tuju Garage, where she completed her internship and thereafter retained as an employee due to her can-do attitude and willingness to learn and adopt.

The technical skills she had learnt in the course, have helped her perform well at work; understanding the industry jargon and fixing cars as if she born to do just that. In addition to her trade, she reports that the life skills training has also come in handy as the only female employee, surrounded only by male colleagues. Navigating through the work day has not been difficult as she is able to integrate well with the team and provide value to her employer.

Just recently, she applied for a course at Toyota Kenya Nairobi Academy. Out of 900 applicants, she was selected among the top 15 to join the course will include training on motor vehicle mechanics, basic wiring and entrepreneurship. She looks forward to getting a job in Toyota Kenya after completing the course.
The African Centre for Women, Information and Communications Technology

Established in 2001, ACWICT is a Kenya-based ICT for Development (ICT4D) Organization.

About

We work to address challenges faced by high potential but disadvantaged women and youth in Kenya and regionally to improve their access to education, employment, health and leadership opportunities reaching over 25,000 women and youth annually.

What we do

ACWICT has developed wide experience implementing successful workforce development programs that provide women and youth with Digital skills, Software Development & Networking, Vocational Trades, Online Work, Soft Skills, Financial literacy and Entrepreneurship skills.

Our workforce development programs target women and youth at different levels of transition from education to the world of work including those with primary education, high-school education, and post-secondary/tertiary education.

We have developed tools and resources including training curriculum developed with flexibility to adapt to the labor market needs as well as training needs of young people.
- We have many youth testimonies demonstrating program impact and with many beneficiaries being reached with efficient data tracking tools to maximise program impact.

- Positioned as best for youth & women training and empowerment by County Governments, Government Agencies, UN bodies and International Foundations.

- Received accreditation from Cisco Networking Academy since 2007. Accredited Certiport Testing Center Accredited Microsoft Imagine Academy since 2014.

- Consistently creating relevant programs with a focus on youth and women empowerment whose model can be replicated.

- Has played a key role adding value through online work training, mentorship and deployment; Coding; driving change and staying ahead of trends.

- Successfully sought and acquired donors and partnerships with various corporate bodies and governments.

- Successfully implemented National and County based youth employment and empowerment programs that have impacted hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries.

- The-go-to organization in issues of gender inclusivity; integrated Sexual Reproductive Health in youth empowerment programs.

Join us as we change the future

- Train 500,000 youth in market driven skills for improved employment by 2022
- Secure job placement support for 80% of the youth trained
- Expand our services from the current 11 to 47 counties
- Set up an ICT Innovation Centre & Centre of Excellence
CONTACTS

Makueni Road, Off Othaya Road
Tel: +254 20 2068162/3862907
admin@acwict.org
https://acwict.org