



KENYA

# Gender Responsive Education

- Empowering students in the classroom and beyond
- Teacher Tool Kits
- Shaping the future
- Voices of hope and victory
- Field Perspectives



# GENDER RESPONSIVE EDUCATION



Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS Kenya) promotes Gender-Responsive Education (GRE) as an inclusive and transformative approach that goes beyond access to learning — it challenges inequality and advances empowerment. GRE seeks to create safe, equitable, and enabling learning environments where all learners can thrive, free from discrimination or gender-based violence. Through this approach, JRS integrates gender considerations across all levels of education — from policy and infrastructure to classroom teaching, community engagement, and school leadership.

JRS's framework for GRE focuses on:

- Equal access, participation, and completion for girls and boys;
- Elimination of gender-based barriers, including violence, bias, and social norms;
- Empowerment through gender-sensitive teaching and inclusive leadership; and
- Institutional sustainability - embedding gender equality into systems and practice.

In essence, Gender-Responsive Education, as defined by JRS, is education that not only provides opportunities for all learners but also transforms gender relations to advance equity, dignity, and empowerment for every child.



# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the **GRE Magazine, Kakuma Edition**, a platform dedicated to advancing **Gender-Responsive Education (GRE)** EAGLES\_K project in Kakuma refugee camp. This magazine aims to highlight the voices, achievements and challenges, of teachers, students, and education stakeholders working to create inclusive and equitable learning environments. Education in emergencies, especially in displacement settings like Kakuma, comes with unique challenges, ranging from cultural barriers and resource limitations to gender disparities in access to learning opportunities. Through this magazine, we seek to amplify success stories, share best practices, and provide insights into innovative approaches that foster gender equity in education.

In each issue, you can expect inspiring stories of resilience, expert opinions on GRE, updates on teacher training programs, and practical strategies to enhance learning experiences for both boys and girls. Our goal is to not only inform but also empower educators, students, and the wider community to take actionable steps toward a more inclusive education system.

Join us in this journey as we work towards a future where **every learner, regardless of gender, can thrive in education and beyond.**

Welcome to **GRE Magazine – Kakuma Edition!**



*JRS Staff members during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence Celebration at Kalobeyei Stadium, Kakuma*



# Welcome Note



## Caroline Onyango

Gender Responsive Education Officer – Jesuit Refugee Service Kenya

In this magazine, I share the journey of the GRE project, **the challenges faced, the milestones achieved, and the vision we hold for the future**. Most importantly, it is a call to action for all stakeholders, thus, teachers, parents, policymakers, and the community, to join us in making education truly **inclusive and transformative**.

I invite you to read, reflect, and engage with the ideas shared here. Together, we can build a future where **every learner, regardless of gender, has an equal opportunity to succeed**.

I am honored to introduce the first edition magazine on the **Gender-Responsive Education (GRE)**, a project dedicated to promoting **equity, inclusion, and empowerment** in education. As someone deeply committed to ensuring that **all learners, especially girls and marginalized groups, have access to quality education**. I take great pride in the work we do as JRS to **accompany, serve and advocate for refugees and forcibly displaced people**.

Education is a powerful tool for change, yet many learners face **barriers that hinder their ability to thrive**. Through our initiatives, we strive to **break down these barriers** by advocating for gender-responsive policies, equipping teachers with the right skills, and creating safe and inclusive learning environments for all learners.





# Preface



**GIACOMO CONCINA**

GRE OFFICER

International Office

At a time of growing uncertainty and dwindling support for refugees and forcibly displaced communities, one might ask: Is there really space for celebration? It's a difficult question – but one worth asking. Today, more than ever, we should reflect on what we can achieve as a community if we work together.

This platform is meant to celebrate the transformative journey that JRS is supporting in Kakuma refugee camp through its Empowering African Girls to Learn and Excel in Schools in Kakuma (EAGLES\_K) project.

When I last visited Kakuma, I had the chance to talk to some of the female students from our schools and it was truly powerful and inspiring to see the change in their attitude. They were so confident and vocal in expressing their ideas and their aspirations, in challenging the everyday barriers they face to access school, and in advocating for gender equality within the schools and in the wider community. This is where hope is, this is why we should never give up and always strive to grant every child and youth a seat in school.

Through our Gender-Responsive Education approach, we are seeing real, meaningful change. Girls like Skovia, once at risk of dropping out, are now thriving academically and leading youth clubs. Teachers are receiving training in gender-responsive pedagogy, and schools are being equipped with science labs, incinerators, and inclusive infrastructure.

This magazine captures the stories of brave students, tireless teachers, and engaged communities working together for a more gender equal world where access to education is a right for each and every individual. In this jubilee year of hope, let us reflect on the power of education to uplift current and future generations, to create dreams and hopes that can drive our lives, and to improve and strengthen the societies and communities we live in.





## **ANDRE ATSU**

Eastern Africa

Regional Director

### **Education in Crisis: Breaking Barriers for Refugee Learners**

Around the world, millions of refugee children wake up each day without the certainty of a classroom to sit in. The numbers are sobering. According to UNHCR's Global Education Report 2024, nearly 7.2 million refugee children are out of school—almost half of the world's school-aged refugee population. Enrolment rates remain worryingly low: just 37% at pre-primary, 65% at primary, 42% at secondary, and only 7% at tertiary level. Each step up the education ladder narrows the path for refugee learners.

Yet, behind these statistics are young people with dreams of becoming doctors, teachers, engineers, and leaders in their communities. For them, education is not only a right—it is a lifeline, a bridge to dignity, hope, and opportunity.

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) has placed Education as one of the six (6) Priorities of its Global Strategy for 2025–2029. We are committed to ensuring that forcibly displaced people have access to quality education, recognition in national systems, and opportunities that foster resilience and growth. Teacher training and alternative learning pathways, especially for girls and other marginalized groups, remain central to this mission.

In 2023, JRS launched the Gender Responsive Education Project (GRE) in Kakuma, Kenya, to break down barriers that keep refugee children—particularly girls—out of classrooms. To date, the project has made a difference, helping more young people enrol in and complete secondary school. The progress is encouraging, but challenges remain: from overcrowded classrooms to limited resources and the ongoing struggle to finance education in crisis.

This magazine shines a light on these realities—on the progress made and the hurdles that remain. More importantly, it tells the story of resilience, of children and youth who continue to pursue learning against the odds, children and youth who continue to dream.

We invite you to walk with us in this journey—to accompany, serve, and advocate the cause of forcibly displaced people, so that together, we can build a future where every refugee child has the chance to heal, learn, and determine their own destiny.





## **OBED OBUTU OMBUNA**

Regional Education  
Coordinator•

“In crisis settings, every lesson taught is a step toward healing and hope.”

When conflict, displacement, or natural disasters disrupt the lives of millions, schools often become more than just places of learning. They are sanctuaries of safety, hope, and resilience. But what does “quality education” mean in such fragile contexts like Kakuma, Kenya? How can we measure it when the very foundations of daily life are under threat?

The Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) and organizations like Jesuit Refugee Service working in crisis zones highlight that quality education in emergencies must go beyond academic achievement. It must ensure safety, inclusion, protection, and continuity.

JRS education programmes aligns with INEE Minimum Standards. The Gender Responsive Education (GRE) project in Kakuma provides opportunity for girls and other marginalized learners to access and participate in education through initiatives such as cash support to teenage mothers. Through the GRE project, the safety of the learning environment has been enhanced. Physical safety has been improved through construction of new classrooms and gender responsive spaces like latrines and incinerators for disposing used sanitary towels. The girls’ and boys’ clubs promote psychosocial well-being. Training teachers in gender responsive pedagogy has improved the quality of learning. Active involvement of parents, teachers and learners in the GRE project has enhanced ownership and sustainability.

In crisis settings, quality education cannot be reduced to test scores. It is about safety, dignity, hope, and future opportunities. A quality education system in emergencies allows children not only to learn but also to heal, adapt, and dream of a future beyond conflict and displacement.

As the global community works toward inclusive education, we must remember: every lesson taught in crisis is a step toward rebuilding lives, communities, and nations.





## GEOFFREY SHIKUKU

Country Manager  
JRS KENYA

### Advancing Gender-Responsive Education in Kakuma

Education is a powerful tool for transformation, yet girls in refugee and host community settings often face barriers that limit their access and participation. Since 2023, our gender-responsive education project in Kakuma has been working to close this gap by fostering inclusive learning environments, strengthening school systems, and promoting equity in secondary education.

The results are encouraging. Between April 2023 and May 2025, girls' enrolment in Kakuma secondary schools has shown notable improvements. Overall, the proportion of girls increased from 35% in 2023 to 37% in 2025, reflecting steady progress in participation. Importantly, despite overall reductions in total enrolment, the share of girls has continued to grow, a testament to the project's impact.

Through targeted interventions—ranging from mentorship and safe spaces, to teacher training on gender

inclusion, and engagement with parents and community leaders—we are breaking down structural and cultural barriers to girls' education.

This progress underscores that with sustained investment, collaboration, and community ownership, gender equity in education is achievable. As we continue this journey, our commitment remains firm: to ensure that every girl in Kakuma has the opportunity to learn, thrive, and lead. Some schools have recorded remarkable gains:

- Somali Bantu Secondary rose from **33% to 41% (+7.83%)**,
- Blue State Secondary from 26% to 31% (+5.69%),
- Starlight Secondary from 31% to 35% (+4.46%).

Even where changes are modest, such as Kakuma Refugee Secondary and Vision Secondary, the trend remains upward. Importantly, despite overall reductions in total enrolment, the share of girls has continued to grow, a testament to the project's impact.

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**ENOS KABELLE**  
Kakuma Project  
Director- JRS KENYA

When I first set foot in Kakuma Refugee Camp, I was struck by the sheer resilience of its people. Here, in one of the most challenging environments on earth, hope is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Education, especially for girls, is the most powerful expression of that hope. Yet, for too many young women and girls in Kakuma, the learning path is obstructed by barriers that are as entrenched as they are unjust: poverty, early marriage, gender-based violence, and deeply rooted cultural norms that prioritize boys' education over girls'.

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS Kenya) has long believed that education is not merely about acquiring knowledge — it is about restoring dignity, building futures, and transforming communities. Our Gender-Responsive Education (GRE) program in Kakuma is a deliberate, focused effort to ensure that every learner, regardless of gender, has equal access to quality education in a safe and supportive environment. We have learned that achieving gender equity in education is not a matter of chance; it must be intentionally designed into every aspect of the learning experience.

#### **This means:**

- Creating safe, inclusive spaces from classrooms to schoolyards where girls and boys feel equally valued and protected.
- Training teachers in gender-responsive pedagogy so that lessons, language, and classroom management actively dismantle stereotypes rather than reinforce them.
- Addressing practical barriers such as menstrual health management, access to WASH facilities, and safe routes to school.
- Engaging communities to challenge harmful norms and champion the education of all children.



## **The Three Pillars of the EAGLES-K Project**

Empowering African Girls to Learn & Excel in Schools – Kakuma Refugee Camp

In the dusty, sun-scorched fields of Kakuma, where thousands of refugee families rebuild their lives amidst daily hardship, education stands out as a powerful beacon of hope. For the young girls of Kakuma, however, this hope is often clouded by barriers—poverty, cultural norms, insecurity, and limited opportunities. To respond to these challenges, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) launched the EAGLES-K Project (Empowering African Girls to Learn & Excel in Schools – Kakuma).

At its core, EAGLES-K is built on three interlinked pillars - Access, Quality, and Wellbeing. The three pillars together provide a holistic pathway for girls to not only enroll in school, but also to succeed, stay safe, and thrive through the secondary school education.

### **1. Access – Opening the School Gates**

For too long, education has been out of reach for many refugee girls in Kakuma. Cultural expectations push them toward early marriage or household duties, while the cost of uniforms, books, and fees force families to make impossible choices. As a result, girls make up only about one-third of the secondary school population in the camp, representing 34% of the school population.

The EAGLES-K project is deliberately breaking this cycle. Its first pillar, Access, focuses on increasing girls' enrollment in secondary schools, aiming to raise the enrolment rate from 34% to 37% over three years. Through scholarships, provision of scholastic materials, transport support for learners with disabilities, and childcare assistance for young mothers, the project removes practical and financial barriers that keep girls out of classrooms.

By engaging parents, community leaders, and opinion shapers through dialogue forums and advocacy, EAGLES-K also works to challenge harmful cultural norms that undervalue girls' education. In Kakuma, every girl enrolled is a victory, not just for the individual but for the entire community.

### **2. Quality – Nurturing Minds, Unlocking Potential**

Getting girls through the school gates is only the beginning. The second pillar, Quality, ensures that once inside, girls receive an education that is meaningful, inclusive, and empowering.

Teachers are trained in gender-responsive pedagogy, equipping them with tools to create classrooms where every student, regardless of gender, can actively participate and learn.

Science laboratories, textbooks, and exam preparation resources are being provided to improve academic outcomes, particularly in STEM subjects where girls are often underrepresented.



Beyond academics, mentorship programs and career guidance sessions connect girls with role models—women who have defied the odds and pursued higher education or professional careers. These encounters spark ambition and prove to young girls that their dreams are valid and attainable. Through these interventions, EAGLES-K is raising not only test scores but also confidence, leadership, and critical thinking skills. Education becomes not just about passing exams but about unlocking the full potential within each learner.

### **3. Wellbeing – Safe, Supported, and Strong**

Education cannot flourish without safety and dignity. For many girls in Kakuma, insecurity, stigma, and lack of menstrual health support threaten their ability to remain in school. The third pillar, Wellbeing, focuses on creating safe, protective, and empowering environments for girls.

Through initiatives such as youth clubs, mentorship programs, and self-defense training, girls are gaining skills to protect themselves and build resilience. Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) interventions, including the provision of dignity kits, construction of incinerators, and awareness sessions with both boys and girls, are reducing stigma and ensuring that periods no longer lead to absenteeism or shame.

Psychosocial support, walking groups to ensure safe passage to school, and training on protection from exploitation and abuse further strengthen the safety net around learners. The result is a community where girls feel supported, respected, and free to focus on their studies.

#### **A Holistic Vision for Change**

Together, these three pillars Access, Quality, and Wellbeing, represent more than just project outcomes. They embody a vision of education as empowerment, where girls in Kakuma can break through barriers, claim their right to learn, and build brighter futures for themselves and their communities. Already, the impact is visible. Enrollment and retention rates are climbing, teachers are embracing inclusive practices, and students, especially girls, are standing taller, dreaming bigger, and refusing to be left behind.



The EAGLES-K project reminds us that when we invest in girls' education, we are not only shaping individual lives but transforming entire societies. In Kakuma, each girl who learns and excels becomes an eagle, spreading her wings, soaring high, and inspiring others to follow.

## Quantitative Analysis

### 1. Overall Enrollment Growth

In April 2023, total enrollment across the six co-educational schools stood at **14,277** learners, of which **4,640** were girls (**32%**). By May 2025, enrollment dropped to 10,814 learners due to shifting camp dynamics and paradigm curriculum shift from 8-4-4 system the new Competency Based Education system summarized as 3-6-3-6, yet **3,689** girls (**34%**) were enrolled. Including Tumaini Girls' School, female enrollment rose to **3,977** girls (**37%**). This represents a net increase of 1.8 percentage points in girls' enrollment ratio in just two years, moving closer to the project's target of 37%.

### 2. School-Level Performance

Strongest gains: Somali Bantu Secondary (**+7.83%, from 33% to 41%**), Blue State (+5.69%), and Starlight (**+4.46%**). Marginal gains: Vision (**+0.24%**) and Kakuma Refugee (**+0.56%**). Stagnation: Green Light saw a negligible decline (**-0.08%**), maintaining a stable but high baseline of **37%**.

### 3. High Impact of Tumaini Girls' School

As the only girls-only school, Tumaini significantly boosts the overall gender ratio. Without Tumaini, the average sits at **34%** girls, but including Tumaini, it rises to **37%**, directly meeting the program's target.

## Qualitative Analysis

1. Access (Enrollment Outcomes) The steady increase in girls' enrollment across most schools demonstrates that barriers like fees, uniforms, and community resistance are being effectively tackled. Scholarships, scholastic materials, and community dialogues have clearly contributed to gains in schools like Somali Bantu and Blue State. The presence of Tumaini Girls' School also shows the importance of dedicated safe spaces for girls who might otherwise be left behind.

2. Quality (Equity in Learning Opportunities) Although absolute numbers of learners declined overall (due to shifting camp demographics and assistance withdrawals), the proportion of girls improved, signaling that gender-focused interventions are cushioning girls from dropping out at the same rate as boys. This implies that gender-responsive teaching, mentorship, and exam support is not just keeping girls in school, but ensuring they stay competitive academically.

3. Wellbeing (Safety and Inclusion) The stronger gains in Somali Bantu (**+7.83%**) and Blue State (**+5.69%**) suggest that where mentorship clubs, menstrual health interventions, and safe school initiatives are more robust, the outcomes are most visible. The marginal or stagnant gains in Vision and Green Light point to areas where social stigma, insecurity, or inadequate facilities may still be barriers.



## Summary of GRE Outcomes (2023–2025)

- Access: Girls' enrollment rose from **32% to 34%** (or **37% including Tumaini**), achieving the program's target despite shrinking overall school populations due to unavoidable changes by the government's education system. Other reasons possibly linked to assistance withdrawal, population shifts, or data reporting changes. However, bigger margins in the following schools: Somali Bantu Secondary School: Girls' proportion grew from **33% → 41% (+7.83%)** Blue State Secondary School: Improved from **26% → 31% (+5.69%)**. Starlight Secondary: Improved from **31% → 35% (+4.46%)**. The project's interventions, scholarships, provision of materials, mentorship, and community engagement, are visibly shifting the gender balance. The marked improvements highlight how targeted strategies are dismantling barriers for girls.

- Quality: Retention of girls is improving relative to boys, it is notable that attendance of girls also improved greatly to **77%** which is above the previous low attendance, by girls in secondary schools, signaling progress in equitable participation and performance. While the data set is focused on enrollment, the gradual increase in the proportion of girls shows that retention strategies (mentorship, teacher training in gender-responsive pedagogy, and MHH support) enable girls to stay in school longer. Schools with structured youth clubs and mentorship (e.g., Somali Bantu) show sharper gains, linking qualitative interventions to quantitative outcomes.

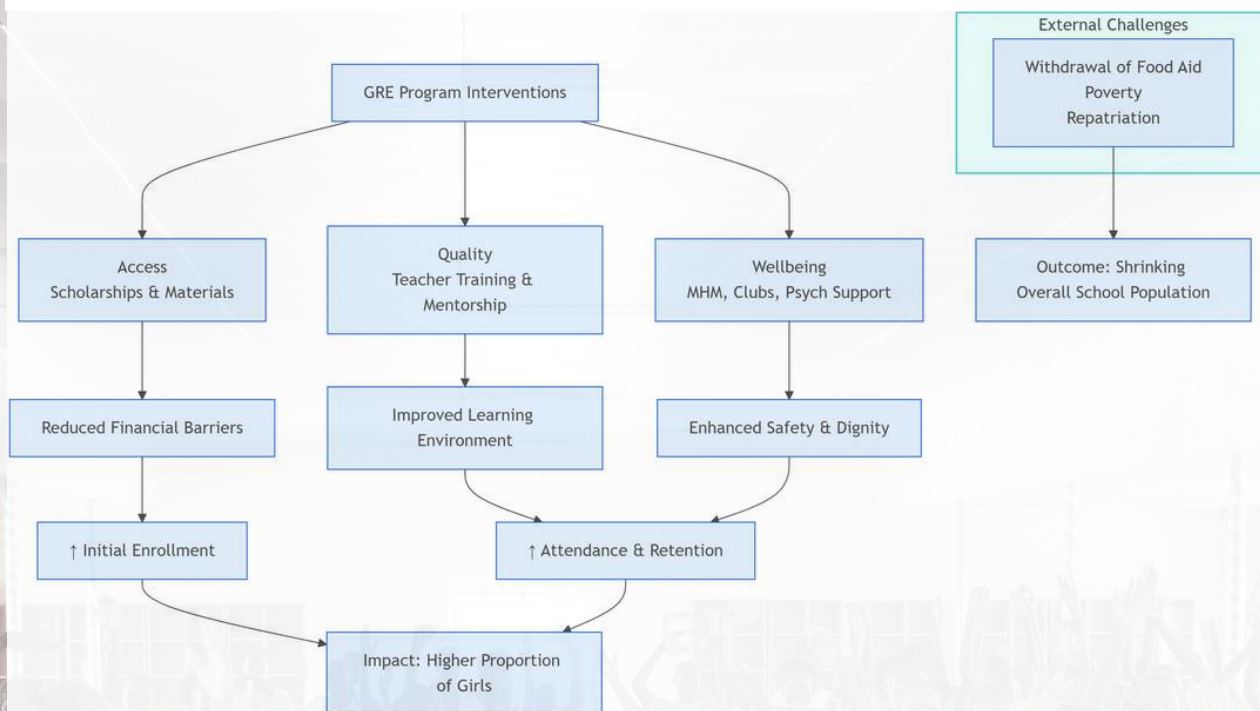
- Wellbeing: Schools with stronger gender-responsive interventions (clubs, MHM, psychosocial support) recorded the largest enrollment gains for girls, showing the effectiveness of the holistic EAGLES-K approach. The secondary schools developed stronger protection and wellbeing mechanisms, such as incinerators for menstrual

hygiene, walking groups, and psychosocial support which are demonstrating higher retention. The fact that Vision and Green Light schools recorded only marginal growth suggests gaps in safety, wellbeing, or cultural acceptance that need deeper intervention.

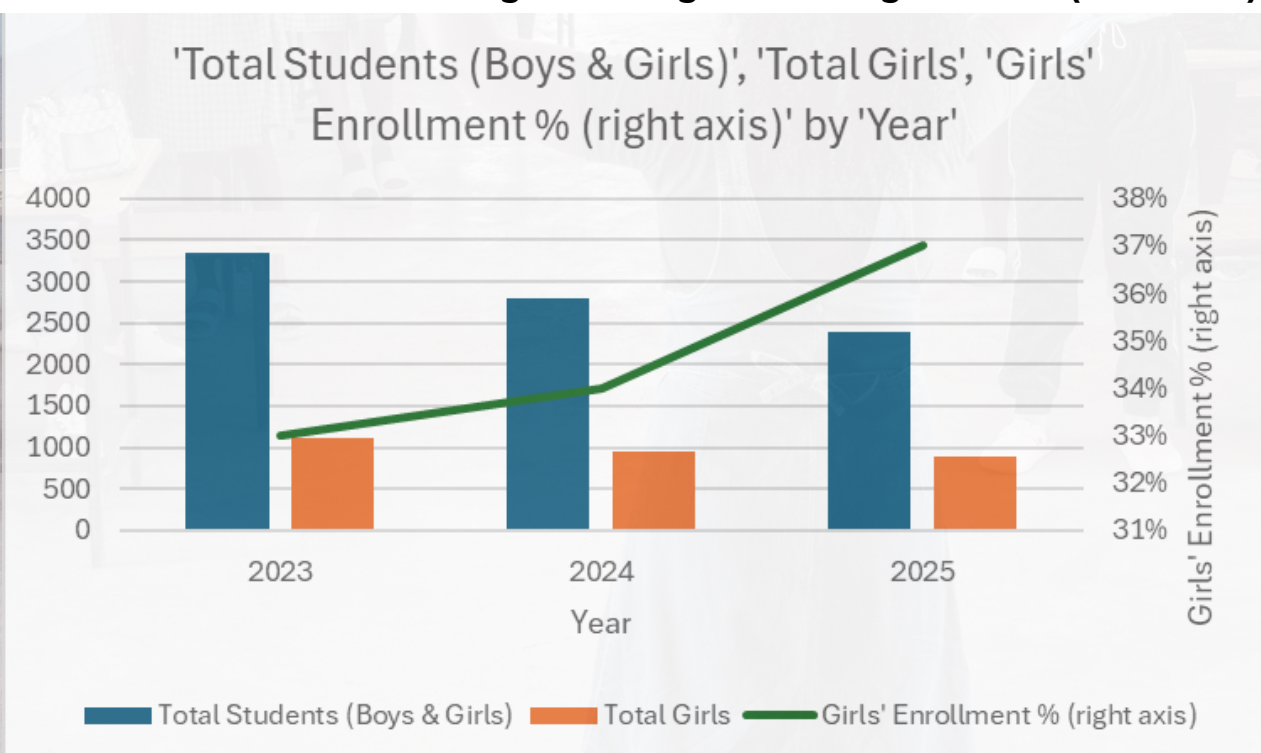
The data reflects both progress and persisting challenges in achieving gender equity in education under the GRE framework. The reduction of nearly 1,000 girls between 2023 and 2025 is concerning. While percentages improved, external pressures—such as food assistance withdrawal, poverty, or repatriation—are reducing the overall school population. This highlights that GRE success depends not only on internal school programs but also on broader socio-economic stability in the camp. The GRE / EAGLES-K Project has successfully improved gender parity in Kakuma's secondary schools. Girls' representation increased from **33% → 37%** (with Tumaini Girls included), and individual schools have shown remarkable gains in access. However, the declining absolute numbers underscore the need to sustain support systems, scale protective interventions, and address external challenges affecting enrollment and retention.



## The Holistic Approach - How Interventions Drive Outcomes



## The Enrollment Paradox: Rising Percentage but Falling Numbers (2023–2025)





# Secondary Education Department



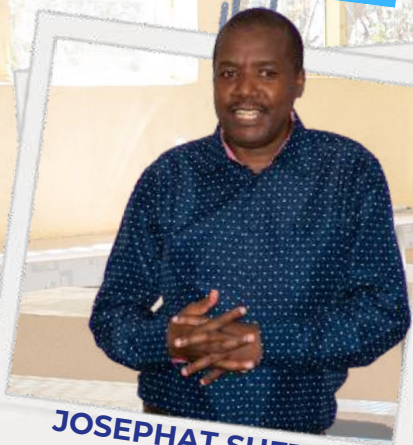
**EPHANTUS MWANGI**  
EDUCATION COORDINATOR

**#Education is the key  
that opens every door**



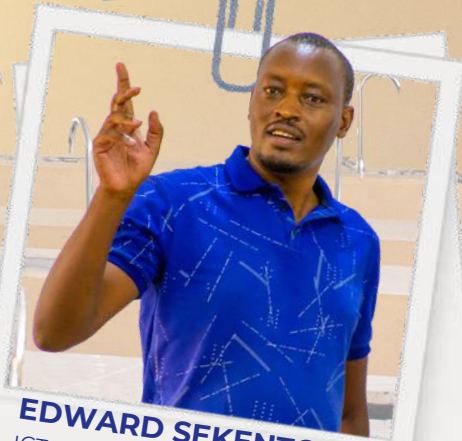
**SANDRA ABUYA**  
SCHOOL COUNSELLOR

**#No health without  
mental health**



**JOSEPHAT SHETE**  
EDUCATION OFFICER

**#For refugee children,  
education can not wait**



**EDWARD SEKENTO**  
ICT

**#ICT makes education  
interactive and innovative**



**CAROLINE ONYANGO**  
GRE OFFICER

**#Equality begins with  
you**



**SOPHIE LIMAIYA**  
MEAL ASSISTANT

**#Information is in the  
right data**



# Empowering African Girls to Learn and Excel in Schools in Kakuma Refugee Camp

EAGLE\_K PROJECT



Empowering African Girls to Learn & Excel in Schools in Kakuma Refugee camp (EAGLES-K project) is a JRS initiative designed to promote inclusive, safe, and gender-responsive education in refugee and host community schools. The project focuses on breaking down barriers that limit girls' access to education, while strengthening teaching practices, student leadership, and community engagement.

The project is anchored on three core outcomes. The first seeks to increase girls' enrollment in secondary schools from 34% to 36% within three years, thereby expanding access and opportunities therefore more girls to pursue education. The second focuses on improving learning outcomes among girls through mentorship, responsive teaching, and strengthened teacher capacity in gender-sensitive pedagogy. The third aims to enhance the safety and well-being of girls in Kakuma secondary schools by addressing harmful practices, reducing stigma, and ensuring safe and supportive learning environments.

Since its inception, the EAGLES-K Project has made steady progress in building equitable and inclusive learning spaces, increasing enrolment, retention and high percentage of transition for girls. Teachers are increasingly applying gender-responsive methods, communities are demonstrating stronger commitment to girls' education, and learners are showing greater confidence and participation in school life enhanced by mentorship sessions, self-defense trainings, and Mental Health and Psychosocial support. Together, these achievements are steadily transforming education in Kakuma into a powerful tool for empowerment, resilience, and equality.



## A glimpse at Gender-Responsive Education (GRE)

The **Gender-Responsive Education (GRE) Project** is an initiative implemented by **JRS Kenya** in seven secondary schools in **Kakuma Refugee Camp** to create inclusive and equitable learning environments for both girls and boys. The project addresses key barriers to education by recruiting teachers at different levels and equipping them with specialized training in **gender-responsive pedagogy** and **transformative education** to foster inclusive, student-centered learning spaces. To support effective teaching and learning, the project provides essential scholastic materials, school uniforms, and fee waivers to vulnerable students, ensuring that financial constraints do not hinder access to education. Infrastructure improvements, including the construction of incinerators, urinals, classrooms, and a fully equipped laboratory, enhance school facilities and create a safer and more conducive learning environment for all students.



A student at Blue state Secondary School during a chemistry practical

Recognizing the unique challenges faced by teenage mothers, the project implements cash-based interventions to support their return to school. Additionally, transport assistance is provided to learners with disabilities, ensuring they can access education without barriers.

Beyond academics, the GRE project fosters holistic student development through youth clubs for both girls and boys, structured mentorship programs, and self-defense training to boost confidence and personal safety. The project also integrates Menstrual Health Management (MHM) training and distributes Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) products, ensuring that menstruation does not disrupt girls' education.

By integrating these comprehensive interventions, the GRE project is transforming education in Kakuma, empowering students with the tools and opportunities to **thrive in safe, supportive, and gender-responsive learning environments**.



Gender responsive officer during a home visit to a teenage mother



# Empowering Classrooms and Beyond...

Teachers are very crucial in the heart of education, shaping young minds and inspiring future change. Investing in **capacity building** is not just about acquiring new skills and knowledge, it's about **growing as leaders, mentors, and advocates** for quality and inclusive education. Every training with teachers, every shared experience among teachers and trainers, and every new approach learnt and mastered, strengthens a teacher's ability to **create safe, engaging, and gender-responsive learning spaces**.

Through a **Community of Practice (CoP)**, educators come together to **collaborate, learn, and support one another**, turning challenges into opportunities and ideas into action. A teacher's dedication to continuous learning fuels the dreams of their students and builds a foundation for a more equitable and empowered society.

A teacher is required to play different roles, and each role requires a different set of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and the like. The same can be achieved through in-service teacher trainings and capacity development.



*Teachers training on education in emergency/ CBC*

Through GRE project, teachers were trained on Education in Emergencies (EiE) to enable them to understand the context where they are expected to deliver their services of teaching and nurturing. This came with understanding the diverse walks of life that we have under one classroom and one school. Gender responsive pedagogy and transformative education pegged on the Ignatian pedagogy formed part of the training to enable the teachers to be gender sensitive and supportive in their delivery of lessons. The teachers code of conduct and regulations, policies that support gender inclusion in education and preparation of professional documents were trained by support of Ministry of Education (MoE) & Teachers Service Commission (TSC) officers of Turkana West Sub-County.





*JRS Kenya is committed in creating an environment where teachers will keep striving, keep sharing knowledge and skills, and keep inspiring learners because every lesson you teach today shapes a brighter tomorrow!*

Guidance and counselling focal point teachers were trained on provision of Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) to enable them support learners to be in good head spaces to learn.

Teachers were engaged in exchange program with exemplary performing teachers at Lodwar Boys High School to borrow a leaf from the good work exhibited from the said school. They returned and formed community of practice with the rest of the teachers especially pairing with the teachers who have not gone through professional training.





# TEACHER TOOL KITS



Continuous capacity building for teachers, especially new and incentive teachers, is essential to ensure they remain equipped with the latest knowledge, skills, and strategies to effectively support learners within Kakuma Camp schools. Regular training enriches their ability to navigate emerging challenges in EiE, implement best practices, and create inclusive, gender-responsive learning environments. We are grateful for the capacity-building opportunities we have had. They have strengthened teachers' teaching approaches and improved education outcomes. As JRS, we remain committed to ongoing learning and collaboration to enhance the quality of education for all.





# ENGAGEMENT WITH PARTNERS



It ensures that different entities, whether in education, healthcare, or governance, work together efficiently, reducing duplication and optimizing impact. By streamlining decision-making processes, fostering transparency, and leveraging data-driven insights, such systems enhance resilience and sustainability. Ultimately, strong coordination mechanisms contribute to better service delivery, accountability, and long-term development outcomes.



Our engagement with other partners, government and community has strengthens systems by improving collaboration, communication, and resource allocation among stakeholders.





# SHAPING THE FUTURE OF LEARNERS IN KAKUMA

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS Kenya) in Kakuma provides a holistic approach to education by integrating extracurricular activities that shape the future of learners, especially girls. These programs not only enhance academic learning but also equip students with essential life skills, resilience, and empowerment in a challenging environment

## OUR KEY INITIATIVES:

### 1. Girls' Youth Club & Mentorship

Providing a safe space for girls to receive guidance, build self-confidence, and learn from mentors who inspire them to pursue their dreams.



### 2. Sports & Physical Education

Football, volleyball, and athletics foster teamwork, discipline, and physical well-being, while also creating opportunities for scholarships and leadership.





### 3. Self-Defense Training for Girls

Equipping girls with techniques to protect themselves, boosting their confidence and ensuring their safety in and outside school.

### 4. Cultural Festivals & Arts

Promoting self-expression through music, dance, drama, and storytelling, preserving cultural heritage while nurturing talent.



### 5. Debate & Public-Speaking Clubs

Enhancing critical thinking, communication, and leadership skills, preparing students to become future changemakers.



### 6. STEM & Innovation Clubs

Encouraging students, especially girls, to explore science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, creating skills for future careers.



### 7. Counseling & Psychosocial Support

Offering professional counseling services to help students cope with trauma, stress, and personal challenges, ensuring their emotional well-being.



### 8. Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) & Training on Menstrual Health & Hygiene (MHH)

Distributing sanitary products and educating girls on MHM, breaking taboos, and ensuring they stay in school with confidence.

Through these initiatives, JRS ensures that learners in Kakuma, especially girls, are not only educated but also empowered to overcome challenges and build a future filled with opportunities.



# BOYS AS ALLIES IN GENDER EQUALITY



*Dou Bol, from Starlight Secondary School, demonstrates the placement of sanitary pad during a mentorship session*

Empowering Boys as Allies in Gender Equality - Supporting Menstrual Health in Kakuma Secondary Schools

Gender equality is not a one gender responsibility and therefore it requires the active participation of both girls and boys. While much effort is placed on empowering girls, involving boys and men as allies is equally crucial in breaking the barriers and fostering inclusive societies. One of the key areas where boys can play an instrumental role is in supporting Menstrual Health Management (MHM), a critical issue that affects girls' education, confidence, and well-being in schools and in the community Kakuma Secondary Schools and Gender-Responsive Education

In Kakuma refugee camp, where educational challenges are amplified by displacement and socio-cultural barriers, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Kenya has taken significant steps to promote Gender-Responsive Education. Managing seven secondary schools in the camp,

JRS Kenya works to improve access to education for over 15,000 learners, with a particular focus on increasing enrollment and retention rates. Despite these efforts, girls in Kakuma still face significant obstacles, including early marriages, limited access to menstrual health resources, and societal norms that discourage female education. The Gender-Responsive Education project by JRS Kenya seeks to address these issues through initiatives such as:

- **Menstrual Health Awareness Programs:** Educating both girls and boys on menstrual health to foster understanding and support.
- **Provision of Sanitary Products:** Ensuring that girls have access to the necessary hygiene products to stay in school.
- **Empowering Boys as Allies:** Training male students and teachers to advocate for gender equality and create safe learning environments.





## The Role of Boys in Menstrual Health Management

In many communities within Kakuma Refugee camp, menstruation is surrounded by stigma, misinformation, and exclusion, leading to challenges for girls in school. A lack of awareness among boys is an area that often contributes to teasing, embarrassment, and an unsupportive school environment for girls during their periods. However, in Kakuma Secondary schools,<sup>27</sup> boys, 15 from Vision secondary school, 5 from Starlight secondary school and 7 from Blue State secondary school, have been educated about menstrual health, they have become champions of change by:

- **Challenging Stigmas:** Speaking out against harmful myths among the communities in the camp and schools and are now normalizing conversations around menstruation.
- **Advocating for Resources:** Supporting the provision of dignity kits and better facilities for girls in schools like the installed incinerators and shielded lavatories.
- **Creating Safe Spaces:** Encouraging and participating in talks towards a culture of respect and empathy where girls are made to feel free and comfortable discussing their needs.

By engaging boys in menstrual health discussions, schools are now fostering a more inclusive environment where both genders support each other's needs, enhancing overall education outcomes.



Through projects like Empowering AfricanGirls to Learn and Excel in School in Kakuma (EAGLES\_K), JRS is working towards a future where both boys and girls can thrive academically, free from stigma and discrimination. This project supports training of students on Menstrual Health Management (MHM), provision of menstrual kits to girls, construction of incinerators and maintenance. Boys in secondary schools are pleased to support by being allies.





# Turning the Tide on Menstrual Health Management (MHM) in Kakuma

## From Stigma to Strength: A New Era for Menstrual Health in Kakuma

In Kakuma's secondary schools, students come from diverse cultural backgrounds, each carrying different beliefs and upbringing on menstrual health management. For many girls, this has meant navigating stigma, myths, and unsafe disposal practices that threaten their dignity and well-being.



Today, the introduction of combustion chambers and incinerators in schools is quietly transforming this reality, offering safe, discreet, and hygienic disposal of menstrual materials. Supported by committed teachers who train both boys and girls on menstrual health, schools are breaking down taboos, fostering understanding, and promoting respect. This inclusive approach has greatly reduced stigmatization, enabling girls to manage their periods with confidence and privacy. In Kakuma, menstrual health management is no longer just about hygiene, it is about liberation, equality, dignity, and unlocking every learner's potential.



*With teachers leading inclusive training for both boys and girls, stigma fades and dignity rises in diverse classrooms.*





## A Collective Effort for Lasting Change

For gender equality to be realized in refugee communities like Kakuma, men and boys must be recognized as partners in the fight for girls' rights and equal opportunities. By actively involving them in discussions around menstrual health and gender inclusivity, we can create a culture of respect, support, and empowerment in the communities and within the secondary schools. Schools, teachers, and organizations like JRS play a pivotal role in ensuring that boys are not bystanders but active contributors to the change that we want. Together, we can build an education system where every learner, regardless of gender, has an equal opportunity to succeed and live to their full potential.





# Promoting Gender Equality through International Days of Advocacy



Across the world, international days dedicated to gender equality serve as powerful platforms for advocacy, education for women and girls, and a cog in the wheel of change. In Kakuma refugee camp, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Kenya, coordinates with other partners and takes part in ensuring that girls from camp schools actively participate in these crucial moments, turning awareness into action. From the **International Day of Women and Girls in Science**, where young refugee girls showcase their STEM potential, to the **16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence**, which ignites conversations on protection and empowerment, these events provide vital opportunities for learning and leadership.

The **World Mental Health Day** further highlights the importance of well-being, as JRS Kenya engages students in discussions on resilience and mental health support. Through these initiatives, participation goes beyond commemoration—it becomes a catalyst for lasting change in the lives of girls who dare to dream and lead.



All partners solidarity walk to mark the world mental health day 2024





Participation in advocacy and commemoration of international days that foster gender equity has enabled JRS Kenya to be part of the change that we desire for girls and women in society. A voice of reason that will speak to barriers and enable girls and women not to be looked at as voiceless, gullible, and weak, but to support them in having dignity, safety, and equal opportunity. When you support girls and women, you change communities.

JRS Kenya has always worked with, involved, and engaged parents, communities, opinion leaders, and other stakeholders in launches, reviews and decision making in our interventions. This has created an enabling environment for implementation. Trainings, advocacy and review meetings have aided us in working within schools and communities within the Kakuma Refugee Camp.





## STRENGTHENING COCURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP



*Students from the various Kakuma Camp secondary schools during KSEF Turkana County competitions*

In 2025, the Kenya Science and Engineering Fair (KSEF) has become a vibrant arena where innovation meets youthful brilliance, as secondary school students from across the country converge to showcase their scientific prowess and engineering inventiveness. These young minds, inspired by curiosity and urge to solve real-world problems, are transforming classrooms into research labs and turning bold ideas into impactful solutions. From renewable energy prototypes to current technology, the fair is not just a competition, it's an eye-opener of future scientists, inventors, and changemakers taking their initial confident baby-steps onto the global arena.

Through the Gender Responsive Education project, funded by Kakuma Gender Transformative Education budget, supported students from JRS managed secondary schools within Kakuma Refugee Camp, whose presence added a profound layer of resilience and hope to the event.

A team of 6 students from 3 secondary schools and one teacher representing JRS Kenya at regional level in Samburu during KSEF 2025

Despite facing unique challenges in their learning environments, these students demonstrated exceptional creativity and determination, presenting innovative projects that address both local and global issues.

Their participation served as a powerful reminder that talent knows no boundaries and that with the right support, even the most underserved communities can nurture the next generation of problem-solvers and critical thinkers.



*A team of 6 students from 3 secondary schools and one teacher representing JRS at regional level in Samburu during KSEF 2025*





*Jules Ndabarabiye (M) and Uwesa Umuthoni (F) from Blue State secondary school presenting a project, Fumes Absorber, at Regional KSEF.*

At the sub-county level, a total of 25 projects from the camp secondary school were submitted, marking an impressive level of engagement and enthusiasm. Out of these, 17 projects advanced to the County level, and 3 outstanding entries progressed further to the regional level of this year's KSEF competitions. Notably, among the regional qualifiers was a project led by a determined young girl, Uwesa Umuthoni, a form 2 student at Blue State Secondary School, highlighting the growing inclusion and empowerment of girls in science and technology. This promising beginning registers the critical need for more support and investment in such activities. The Kenya Science and Engineering Fair is not only opening young minds but also opening doors, propelling students toward future careers in STEM fields and the ever-expanding global job market tied to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Participation in KSEF cultivates a wide range of strengths among students, including critical thinking, research skills, teamwork, public speaking, communication skills and the confidence to pursue innovative ventures and STEM careers.

It also fosters a spirit of innovation and problem-solving which is essential for addressing local and global challenges. Several gaps remain in many schools, particularly in marginalized areas like Kakuma, lack of access to essential science equipment, laboratory materials that support their innovations, and consistent mentorship on the requirement of KSEF competition. One critical area that students endeavor to explore is the robotics category, which continues to grow in prominence at KSEF. Unfortunately, students from Kakuma and similar under-resourced regions are often unable to participate in this category due to the unavailability of robotics kits, computers, and software and training.



*Presentation at County level by students from Somali Bantu Secondary School. A project that proceeded to regionals*

Targeted funding in areas such as robotics, coding, and advanced lab equipment is urgently needed to level the playing field and give all students an equal opportunity to explore and excel in modern scientific and technological fields. Additionally, there is a need for structured follow-up programs to support and develop promising projects beyond the competition, turning them into viable innovations. Addressing these challenges through strategic investment and partnerships will strengthen the impact of KSEF and ensure that no talent is left behind, regardless of geography or circumstance.



# SPORTS

Sports play an important role in schools, contributing to the holistic development of students beyond cognitive and classroom activities. Engaging in sports enables fostering of physical fitness, discipline, teamwork, and leadership skills. It also provides an avenue for students to explore their talents, relieve stress, and develop a sense of unity amongst them given their diversity. Sports importance in schools is evident in several ways:

**Promoting Physical and Mental Well-being:** Sports help prevent diseases, boost self-esteem, and reduce anxiety and depression among students given the hardships they go through in the camp.

**Enhancing Academic Performance:** Regular physical activity improves concentration, memory, and problem-solving skills, leading to better academic outcomes as students win outside class is trickled to class.

## ***Building Discipline and Leadership:***

Training and competition instill values such as hard work, perseverance, and goal setting, essential for personal and professional growth.

## ***Encouraging Inclusivity and Social Skills:***

Team sports bring together students from different cultural, religious and political backgrounds, fostering unity, cooperation, and mutual respect within schools in Kakuma.

## ***Creating Career Opportunities:***

Talented students can secure scholarships, join professional teams, or pursue careers in coaching, refereeing, and sports management.





MUSIC FESTIVAL

## Refugee school breeds hope, unity

Kakuma school's performance was one of the highlights at the Rift Valley Regional Music Festival.

By Sam Abanda  
samabanda@standardmedia.co.ke

They are students from various war-torn African countries, schooling in Kenya, and they share one painful experience: they have never known peace and stability in their home countries.

Many of these who fled ended up in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Turkana County, Kenya.

Kakuma's Bantu Secondary Schools are one of the institutions that has welcomed these students, despite the initial language barriers. French is the first language for many, having come from francophone countries.

The students come from Somalia, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi.

Motivated by this newfound peace, they began using music to spread the message — performing in school and dreaming of one day taking their message back home.

Last week, their school participated in the Rift Valley Regional Music Festival in Nakuru, where they performed a choral verse in French — a powerful appeal for peace.

"We are happy and proud to have preached peace here. We've seen the importance of harmony, and we hope our home countries can one day adopt it," said Anella Bwanga from Burundi.

Their performance was well received by both the audience and adjudicators, but despite the warm reception, their choral verse finished fifth in its category — missing out on qualification for the National Music Festival, which admits only the top two entries.

The national competitions will be held in Meru from August 6.



Nonetheless, the smiles on their faces as they performed said it all. Their journey of over 200 kilometers to share their message of peace is testament to their gratitude and hope.

Christopher Otieno, the group's teacher in charge, said the choral verse emphasized the importance of Africans believing in themselves and their continent.

"These students have come from countries affected by civil strife. There is a pressing need for patriotism across the African continent and for the revival of African cultural values," he said.

### Welcome to Kenya

On the same stage, St Clare Girls High School from Kilgoris, Nakuru County, presented a Kikwili set piece titled 'Tenbaa Tenya' (Visit Kenya), which echoed similar themes.

Their song, which won in the Class 4-7 category and qualified for the national festival, encouraged

"These students have come from countries affected by civil strife. There is a pressing need for patriotism across the African continent and for the revival of African cultural values."

foreigners to visit Kenya and experience its spirit of unity.

Composed by Victor Oduor, the song pays tribute to Kenya's freedom fighters and highlights the country's natural treasures — Lake Victoria, Kakamega Forest, and Mount Kenya — as key tourist attractions.

It calls on Kenyans to embrace patriotism and underscore peace and unity as pillars of national identity.

"We want both local and international tourists to visit our country's beautiful sites and contribute to foreign exchange earnings that boost our economy," said Clinton Mwakundi, St Clare's music patron.

Mwakundi added that the song carries strong socio-economic messages aimed at inspiring Kenyans to work hard and uplift their standards of living.

*"Talent knows no boundaries, Kakuma students shine at the Kenya Music Festival"*

Kakuma Refugee Camp Schools Shine at the Kenya Music Festival  
Kakuma refugee camp is home to a rich and diverse mix of cultures, with students bringing together traditions, languages, and stories from across different countries. In schools, cultural festivals have become a powerful source of unity, where learners celebrate their heritage while embracing one another's differences. Music, dance, and drama have offered young people not only a way to express themselves but also a chance to foster peace, resilience, and solidarity within the camp community.

This year, students from Kakuma schools took their talents to another level by participating in the Kenya Music Festival. With determination and creativity, they sailed through from the sub-county level to the county competitions, and on to the regional level held in Nakuru. At each stage, they proudly represented their schools and the wider refugee community, presenting performances that carried messages of hope, coexistence, and empowerment.





Beyond the competition, the festival offered invaluable exposure. Moving out of the camp to perform gave students the added benefit of excursions, cultural learning, and interaction with peers from across Kenya. Watching other schools perform enriched their appreciation of Kenya's diverse cultures, while creating friendships that stretched beyond the borders of Kakuma. These experiences were as empowering as the stage performances themselves, broadening the learners' perspectives and strengthening their sense of belonging. Their achievement gained recognition beyond the festival grounds. On 20th July 2025, the story of Kakuma's young performers was featured in the Sunday Nation newspaper, bringing nationwide attention to their success. This coverage not only celebrated their artistic excellence but also highlighted the potential that refugee learners hold when given opportunities to explore their talents.

The participation of Kakuma schools in the Kenya Music Festival is a testimony to the transformative role of education and co-curricular activities in humanitarian settings. It demonstrates that nurturing creativity alongside academics equips learners with confidence, pride in their identity, and the ability to contribute meaningfully to society. Their success at the regional level serves as a unifying moment of joy for Kakuma and an inspiration for learners everywhere





# GIRLS' YOUTH CLUBS

Girls' youth clubs have become a beacon of hope and transformation. These clubs, established in the seven secondary schools across the Kakuma camp, provide a safe space for girls to build confidence, develop leadership skills, make informed decisions, be assertive, be good financial managers, understand their bodies during puberty, use and manage menstrual materials and gain critical knowledge on education, health, and their rights. Through mentorship, peer support, and life skills training, the clubs have significantly contributed to keeping girls in school, reducing early pregnancies, and addressing gender-based violence. Many girls who once faced the risk of dropping out due to cultural and economic barriers are now thriving academically and actively participating in leadership roles within their schools and communities.



SKOVIA ATOO  
 STUDENT AT STARLIGHT SECONDARY SCHOOL  
 KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP

One notable success story is that of Skovia, a 20-year-old student at Starlight secondary school in Kakuma, who once struggled with self-doubt and pressure to abandon her education. Through the mentorship and facilitation provided by her school's girls' youth club, she not only excels in her studies but also became an advocate for girls' rights, inspiring many of her peers to stay in school.







The impact of these clubs extends beyond individual success stories. Schools with active girls' clubs have reported improved retention rates, up to 77% attendance for girls which as per the EMIS data of February 2025 boys' attendance was 59.8%, improved academic performance, and a shift in community attitudes toward girls' education. The confidence and resilience instilled in these young girls are shaping a generation of empowered women ready to contribute meaningfully to society. These clubs require continuous support. With more resources, we can reach even more girls, provide better mentorship programs, and equip them with the skills they need to break barriers and build brighter futures and train boys too.

*'These girls are learning, growing, and finding their voices. They're standing taller, dreaming bigger, and refusing to let anything hold them back. Every lesson they learn, every challenge they overcome, shows that with a little support, they can shatter every barrier in their way.'*





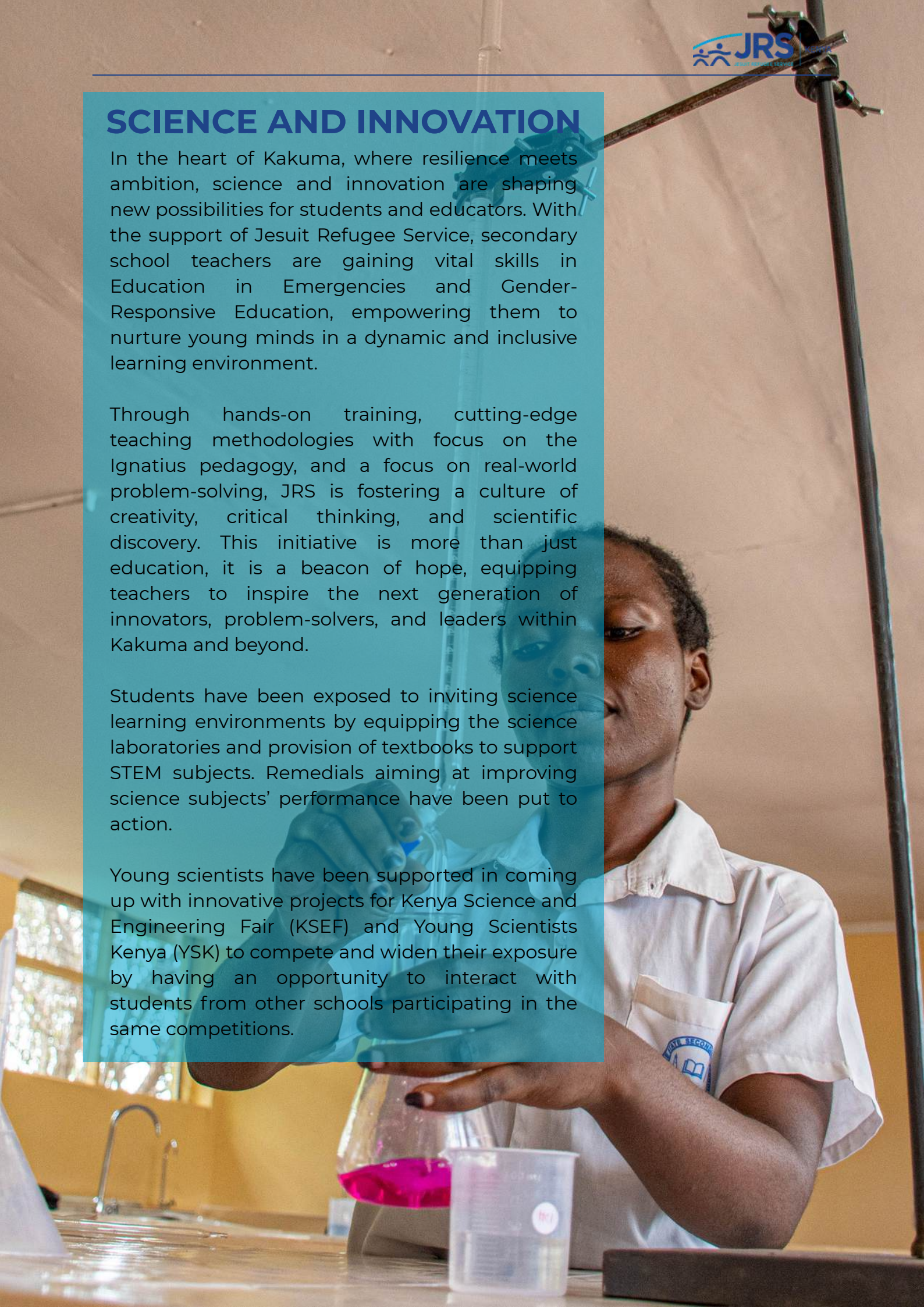
## SCIENCE AND INNOVATION

In the heart of Kakuma, where resilience meets ambition, science and innovation are shaping new possibilities for students and educators. With the support of Jesuit Refugee Service, secondary school teachers are gaining vital skills in Education in Emergencies and Gender-Responsive Education, empowering them to nurture young minds in a dynamic and inclusive learning environment.

Through hands-on training, cutting-edge teaching methodologies with focus on the Ignatius pedagogy, and a focus on real-world problem-solving, JRS is fostering a culture of creativity, critical thinking, and scientific discovery. This initiative is more than just education, it is a beacon of hope, equipping teachers to inspire the next generation of innovators, problem-solvers, and leaders within Kakuma and beyond.

Students have been exposed to inviting science learning environments by equipping the science laboratories and provision of textbooks to support STEM subjects. Remedials aiming at improving science subjects' performance have been put to action.

Young scientists have been supported in coming up with innovative projects for Kenya Science and Engineering Fair (KSEF) and Young Scientists Kenya (YSK) to compete and widen their exposure by having an opportunity to interact with students from other schools participating in the same competitions.







Congratulations to the brilliant students who traveled to Samburu to represent Turkana County at the Regional KSEF competition. Their dedication, innovation, and resilience have not only showcased the immense potential of young minds in Kakuma/Turkana but have also set a shining example of excellence in STEM. Competing at such a prestigious platform is a testament to the hard work, creativity, and determination to push the boundaries of science and technology. They have made schools, county, and community proud, and we celebrate the achievements as a milestone in inspiring future generations.



# The Power of Mentorship



In Kakuma Refugee Camp secondary schools, where hardship shape day-to-day life, education is more than just a pathway to knowledge, it is a true lifeline. Yet, for many girls, the journey through secondary school is riddled with obstacles, from cultural expectations, early marriages to poverty and lack of role models. Amid these challenges, mentorship has emerged as a game-changer, offering girls the guidance, support, and confidence they need to stay in school and unlock their full potential.

## Reducing Drop Out Rates

- Many girls in Kakuma grow up in environments where their voices are often unheard. Mentorship provides a safe space where they are encouraged to dream big, speak up, and take charge of their futures. Through role models, women who have defied the odds, girls learn that they too can become leaders in their communities and beyond. We have female presidents and other leadership posts in schools who campaigned and were elected as leaders. Without support, many girls succumb to pressures that push them out of school, whether it's the expectation to marry early or the burden of household lead.

## Boosting Confidence and Leadership

- Many girls in Kakuma grow up in environments where their voices are often unheard. Mentorship provides a safe space where they are encouraged to dream big, speak up, and take charge of their futures. Through role models, women who have defied the odds, girls learn that they too can become leaders in their communities and beyond. We have female presidents and other leadership posts in schools who campaigned and were elected as leaders







Mentorship programs provide guidance, helping them navigate these challenges while reinforcing the importance of education. Schools have mentorship programs have seen a significant decrease in dropout rates, proving that encouragement and support can keep girls in the classroom. Currently the enrolment for girls in Kakuma secondary schools has increased and attendance is commendable.

### Fostering Academic Excellence

Many girls struggle with self-doubt and lack of motivation due to their circumstances. Mentorship programs offer tutoring, career guidance, and motivational talks that inspire them to aim higher. As a result, **academic performance improves**, and more girls begin to see themselves as future professionals, whether as doctors, engineers, or educators



### Breaking the barriers of stereotypes

- Through mentorship, girls gain awareness of their rights and the courage to challenge harmful traditions and stereotypes. They learn how to protect themselves, seek help when needed, and advocate for others facing similar struggles. Many mentees have gone on to influence their families and communities, changing perceptions about girls' education and empowerment.





# Commemoration of International Day that promote Gender Equality

Across the world, international days dedicated to gender equality serve as powerful platforms for advocacy, education to women and girls, and a cog to the wheel of change. In Kakuma refugee camp, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) coordinate with other partners and take part in ensuring that girls from camp schools actively participate in these crucial moments, turning awareness into action. From the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, where young refugee girls showcase their STEM potential, to the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, which ignites conversations on protection and empowerment, these events provide vital opportunities for learning and leadership. The World Mental Health Day further highlights the importance of well-being, as JRS engages students in discussions on resilience and mental health support. Through these initiatives, participation goes beyond commemoration—it becomes a catalyst for lasting change in the lives of girls who dare to dream and lead.

*"..to all girls out there, in science there is no gender, you can do it"*

*"..dear girls, anything you want to do, put hard work to it."*

*"..do not fear to go out there and concur, do not fear to be the 1<sup>st</sup> one"*

*"..if your dreams do not scare you, then you need to wake up and dream big"*



*Commemorating Global Milestones Amplifying Girls' Voices in Kakuma*



# STORY TIME

## *The Unbreakable Spirit of Nia*

In the village of Kidogo, where the sun rose over vast sugarcane fields and children's laughter echoed through dusty paths, lived a girl named Nia. She was bright, curious, and full of dreams, but life had not been kind to her. Her parents struggled to make ends meet, and affording school fees was a constant battle. Yet, no challenge could shake her determination to learn.

Nia's stomach growled as the sweet aroma of roasted maize filled the air. It was lunchtime, and her classmates eagerly unwrapped their meals, warm ugali with Sukuma (kales), steaming rice with beans, and crispy chapatis. She swallowed hard, forcing herself to look away. It wasn't the first time she had gone without lunch.

Nia's parents could barely afford school fees, let alone lunch. Many times, she watched as her friends ate, her stomach twisting in hunger. But she refused to let hunger weaken her spirit. Instead, she would sip water and

bury herself in books, convincing herself that one day, she would never have to skip a meal again. Things got worse when she was sent home for school fees. But Nia was not one to give up. She sneaked back into class, hiding at the corner, absorbing every word the teacher said.

One day, her teacher caught her.

"Nia, weren't you sent home?"

Lowering her head, she whispered, "Yes, but I just want to learn."

Instead of scolding her, the teacher smiled. "That kind of determination will take you far." From that day, the teacher became her mentor, sneaking her extra notes and guiding her during breaks.

Given the struggles, Nia's dream of becoming a doctor never faded. She studied under streetlights, borrowed books from friends, and never missed a lesson, whether inside or outside the classroom.

Then, the unexpected happened. A scholarship program visited the school, looking for bright, determined students.

With the help of her mentor, Nia applied. Weeks later, she received the letter, she had been selected!

Tears of joy filled Nia's eyes as she held the letter. Her dream was no longer just a wish, her dreams were within reach. As she packed for her new school, she turned to her teacher and said, "Thank you for believing in me. One day, I will return to help others just like you helped me."

On that God given day, as she ate her first proper meal in weeks, she promised herself—this was just the beginning.



***No obstacle is too great for a determined heart. With resilience, mentorship, and hard work, dreams can come true.***

**By: Caroline Onyango**



# MATH

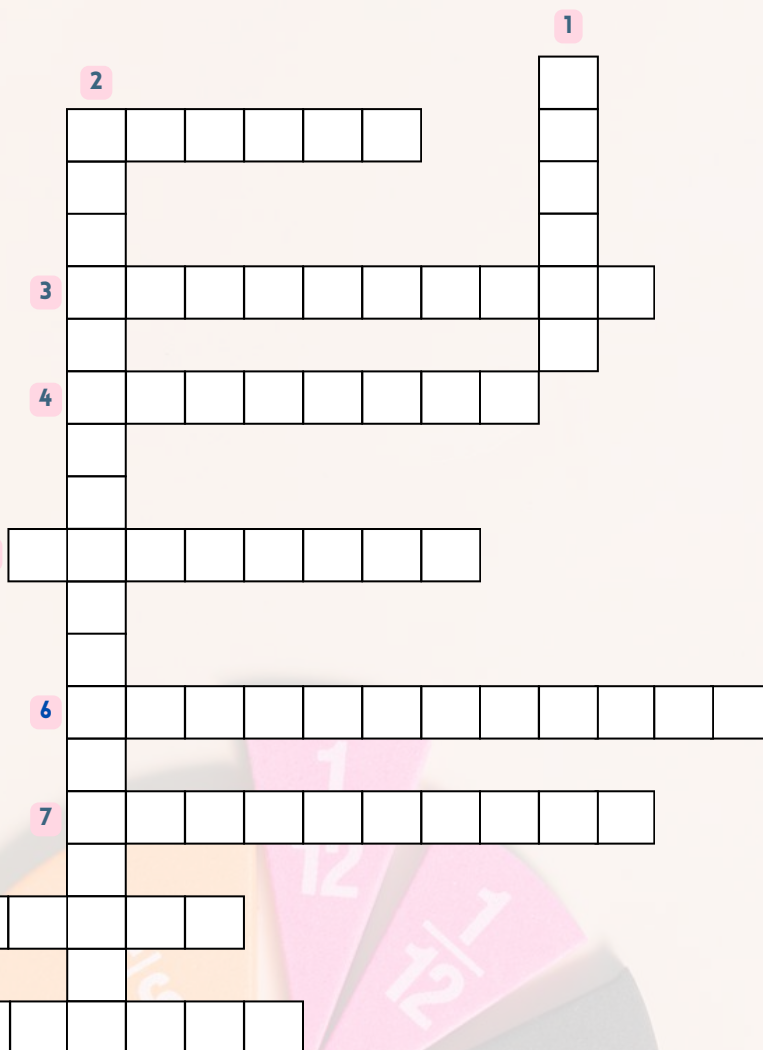
## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

### DOWN

1. A number that divides the given number exactly, no remainder.
2. The sum of two angles is 90 degrees.

### ACROSS

2. A round shape, no corners or edges.
3. A comparison between two numbers.
4. A statement that says two mathematical expressions are equal.
5. Endless or boundless.
6. The change in value over time.
7. An angle that is smaller than the right angle.
8. A shape with three corners and three sides.
9. A property that is defined as balanced and often can be divided into two equal halves.





# GRE SUCCESSES



In the heart of Kakuma, where resilience meets opportunity, a transformative journey is unfolding within the walls of secondary schools. This journey is illuminated by the stories of triumph, Gender Responsive Education (GRE). As we delve into the testimonials and success stories emerging from these educational institutions, we witness the profound impact GRE is making on the lives of students and the community at large.

In the arid landscapes of Kakuma, where challenges are as abundant as the sun's rays, secondary schools are becoming crucibles of change, nurturing a generation of young minds ready to face the future with curiosity and competence. The testimonials shared by students and teachers paint a vivid picture of the transformative power of GRE in unlocking doors to opportunities previously unseen.

From tales of students overcoming initial apprehensions to become avid problem solvers, to teachers witnessing the spark of curiosity igniting within their classrooms, each story is a testament to the potential that GRE holds. Success stories are not merely about academic achievements but also about the holistic development of individuals who are not just consumers of education but creators, thinkers, and visionaries.

The ripple effect of GRE extends beyond the classroom walls, impacting the community at large. Students especially girls are not only becoming proficient in science and mathematics but are also actively engaging in projects that address real-world issues faced by Kakuma. GRE is indeed a catalyst for sustainable change and equality.

In this captivating journey through testimonials and success stories, we invite you to explore the narratives of students who dared to dream, teachers who inspired, and a community that rallied behind the transformative power of GRE. As we navigate through these narratives, we will uncover the untold potential that lies within Kakuma's secondary schools, where GRE is not just a project but a gateway to a brighter, more empowered future for girls.







**Ban Thou That**

Bhan Thou Thot, a bright and determined student from Vision Secondary school, vividly recalls the challenges other girls faced during KCSE exams earlier, before the introduction of the feeding program. She says that lunchtime was a daily struggle. Some often had to walk long distances home, only to find that food was unavailable. For some, returning home meant being compelled to complete house chores before rushing back for the afternoon papers, an exhausting routine that made focus and performance in exams incredibly difficult.

“The feeding program changed everything for countless girls. With lunch readily available at school, girls no longer worry about hunger or the tiring midday journey home. This support allows me and other students to remain in school, focused and energized throughout the examination period”, Bhan says. Bhan’s gratitude is profound.

She credits the program for giving her the opportunity to perform at her best in KCSE, breaking barriers that disproportionately affect girls in such challenging environments. Her success will be a shining example of how thoughtful interventions can empower young women to achieve their potential, despite the odds.

## Labs in Schools

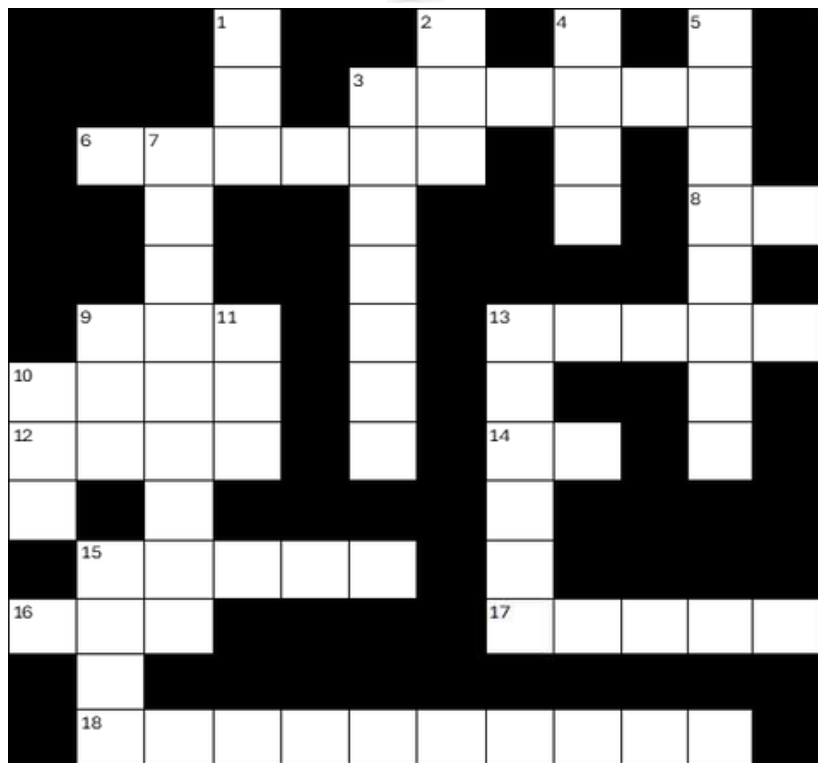
Laboratory apparatus and reagents are invaluable resources that form the backbone of practical learning and scientific discovery. Their availability enables students and researchers to conduct experiments, test hypotheses, and deepen their understanding of scientific principles. These tools not only enhance hands-on learning but also inspire curiosity and innovation, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application. Appreciating their significance reminds us of the critical role they play in fostering critical thinking, precision, and a spirit of inquiry, paving the way for advancements in science and technology.





# Fun Page

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



## SUDOKU EASY



			9		7	8		6
8	6	4					9	1
	1				4		5	
5		3			1			
	4	8			3		7	9
1	9	7		6				5
	3	5		7				
4			3		5	9		7
9	7	1			6	5		2

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

**Instructions:** Each cubicle must contain numbers 1-9 without repeating any number. Each vertical and horizontal line must contain numbers 1-9 without repeating any number.

Good luck

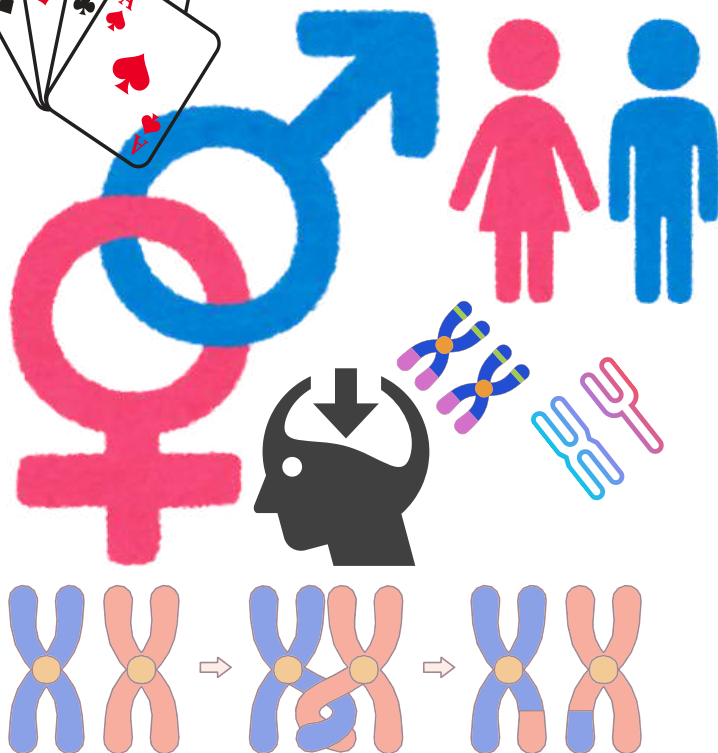
## Crossword Questions

### Downwards

1. According to the bible story, on the 6th day, God created \_\_\_\_ (3)
2. Pronoun for Mary \_\_\_\_ (3)
3. What emotion does a person experience when confronted with a perceived threat or intense uncertainty? \_\_\_\_ (7)
4. The society assigns him to provide for the family \_\_\_\_ (3)
5. What is a system of beliefs and worship often centered around a higher power? \_\_\_\_ (8)
7. What is the process of acquiring knowledge and skills? \_\_\_\_ (9)
10. What is the prefix that means 'before' \_\_\_\_ (3)
11. What is the sensory organ responsible for detecting light? \_\_\_\_ (3)
13. What institution facilitates structured learning and academic development for students? \_\_\_\_ (6)
15. We \_\_\_\_ (4) perfumes

### Across

3. What is the term for the sex that typically has two X chromosomes? \_\_\_\_ (6)
6. What socially constructed identity influences roles, behaviors, and expectations based on perceived biological differences? \_\_\_\_ (6)
8. It is the conditional conjunction that introduces a hypothetical or dependent clause in logical statements and programming. \_\_\_\_ (2)
9. What is the highest playing card in a standard deck? \_\_\_\_ (3)
10. An act that people communicate with a deity, often through words or contemplation, as an expression of faith or devotion? \_\_\_\_ (4)
12. What is the net-like structure found in certain biological tissues? \_\_\_\_ (4)
13. What is a long, narrow piece of something? \_\_\_\_ (5)
14. Third person singular form of a male individual. \_\_\_\_ (2)
15. One often characterized by biological, social, and cultural distinctions from her male counterpart? \_\_\_\_ (5)
16. \_\_\_\_ (3) decalogue forms the foundational moral code in Exodus. Were received on Mt. Sinai
17. What is the cognitive process through which individuals acquire, internalize, and apply new knowledge or skills? \_\_\_\_ (5)
18. What term describes a system or individual that dynamically adapts to changing conditions or stimuli with appropriate and timely actions? \_\_\_\_ (10)





## Teachers

Teachers in Kakuma have been at the forefront of the Gender-Responsive Education (GRE) project by JRS Kenya, driving meaningful change in classrooms and beyond. The training and support provided have equipped educators with tools to foster equality, inclusivity, and understanding, creating a more balanced learning atmosphere. Their testimonials shed light on the transformative shift in teaching practices, improved student engagement, and the satisfaction of seeing positive outcomes in their learners. These narratives underscore the pivotal role of teachers in making the GRE project a success and championing its mission of empowering all students through education.







Madam Mercy Wanyonyi (in pic) narrates, "as a Girls Youth Club facilitator at Starlight Secondary school under the Gender-Responsive Education (GRE) project narrates, "I have witnessed firsthand the transformative power of this initiative in empowering young girls. Through the club, we provide a safe space for girls to express themselves, learn life skills, and build confidence to overcome challenges both in and out of the classroom. Seeing their growth and resilience is truly inspiring and motivates me to continue making a difference.

Additionally, being a beneficiary of the staff-subsidized meals program has been a great support. It ensures I can focus on my responsibilities without the added stress of meal preparations during busy days. This thoughtful initiative not only supports our well-being but also fosters a sense of community and care among the staff. I am truly grateful to be part of a program that uplifts both its students and its teachers."



## Construction

The construction of classrooms at Somali Bantu Secondary School, generously supported by a gift from Paul and Ann Drzewiecki's family, marks a transformative step in addressing the challenge of overcrowded learning spaces. With a rapidly



growing student population, the school has faced difficulties in providing a conducive learning environment. This initiative not only alleviates the pressure on existing facilities but also came in handy during 2024 KCSE as an examination room. The classrooms also enhance the quality of education by creating more spacious and well-equipped classrooms. It is a testament to the Drzewiecki family's commitment to empowering students through education, ensuring they have the resources they need to thrive academically and socially.

Both classrooms have been furnished with 3 – seater student desks.







Desks are more than just pieces of furniture; they are essential tools that create a conducive learning environment for students. A well-designed desk provides comfort, proper posture, and personal space, enabling learners to focus on their studies and engage effectively in class activities. For schools facing challenges like overcrowding, the availability of adequate desks significantly enhances classroom management and students' overall learning experience.

Beyond functionality, desks symbolize the value placed on education, fostering a sense of ownership and pride among students. Investing in quality desks is, therefore, an investment in the future of learners and their academic success.





# What are the students thinking about GRE?

Through GRE, I learned that the equation is greater than myself. My discipline plus my hard work equals our success. This is how we shift the narrative—by every one of us focusing and working smart to build a future where no woman is seen as prey, but as a pillar of strength.



**BAIL ISMAIL**  
LIFEWORKS TUMAINI GIRLS' SECONDARY SCHOOL

GRE helps cultivate a better society by:

- Introducing innovative and creative people.
- Improving living standards and hygiene.
- Developing self-disciplined and respectful learners.
- Producing visionary leaders.



**ALI AYUB ALI**  
STUDENT AT GREENLIGHT SECONDARY SCHOOL

I once believed education was the only key to success, but I learned that failure is not fatal. I stopped competing with others and started learning from my own mistakes. Raised to be resilient, I've faced many challenges. Now, with the support of GRE, my education feels possible again. I am deeply thankful for this support.



**BADIM ANWAR**  
BLUESTATE SECONDARY SCHOOL

GRE taught me that it's enough of being told girls are weak! It is time we open our eyes to our own strength. We are not just helpers; we are the inspiration, the peacemakers, the very heart of this world. Let us rise together, claim our space, and show everyone that a world without a woman is a world without its soul.



**LYDIA NYALAM**  
VISION SECONDARY SCHOOL

Many of us face the silent challenge of menstruation, forced to miss school simply for being a girl. Thanks to GRE's support for providing sanitary towels and building incinerators, we are given our dignity and our education back. This act of care allows us to learn with confidence and pride.



**MADLIN YUSSUF**  
GREENLIGHT SECONDARY SCHOOL

Thank you GRE for coming up with a project that was initially not there. This project has aided many students to realize the importance of gender and its role in society in promoting the well-being of everyone. It also helps students to understand themselves and fight peer pressure.



**AKOY Y. ALMARAT**  
STUDENT AT GREENLIGHT SECONDARY SCHOOL



## **Celebrating Transformative Partnerships in Gender Responsive Education: The Impact of the EAGLES-K Project in Kakuma**

We express our deepest gratitude for the invaluable support extended toward the promotion of Gender Responsive Education through the EAGLES-K project in Kakuma. This transformative initiative has been led with vision and dedication by Mr. Enos Abelle Kabelle, the Project Director, whose leadership has ensured that gender equity remains a central focus in education programming. We are especially grateful to Mr. Giacomo Concina, Gender Responsive Education Officer at the International Office, for his technical guidance and tireless efforts in mobilizing the resources that made this work possible. Sincere appreciation also goes to Mr. Obed Ombuna, Regional Education Officer, for his consistent engagement and oversight, and to Mr. Geoffrey Shikuku, JRS Kenya Country Director, for his strategic leadership and commitment to advancing gender equality in education. A special tribute goes to Ms. Carol Onyango, the Gender Responsive Education Officer in Kakuma, for her outstanding work in leading project implementation and authoring the GRE Magazine, which has powerfully captured the voices and progress of learners and educators. We also sincerely thank Mr. Tito Mise, Communications Assistant in Kakuma, for his outstanding role in capturing impactful visuals and supporting the editorial process of this magazine.

We also recognize the unwavering efforts of the JRS youth clubs facilitators who continue to lead dynamic school-based sessions and mentorship activities that empower learners, particularly girls, to thrive and lead. Their contributions have strengthened student engagement and fostered inclusive school environments. We extend heartfelt thanks to the community mobilizers for their consistent grassroots engagement, which has ensured strong community ownership and support for gender equality. The impact of their outreach has helped bridge the gap between school and home, allowing for sustained dialogue and behavioral change.

Our appreciation also goes to the education counselor, whose psychosocial support has been critical in creating safe spaces for learners, particularly those facing vulnerability or trauma.

Additionally, we commend the exceptional collaboration from various JRS departments for their cross-functional support that has enriched the gender component of the project. This multi-sectoral approach has ensured that gender responsiveness is not treated in isolation, but is integrated into all facets of learner well-being and development.

Lastly, we thank all our partners and stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, UNHCR, school leadership, and community-based organizations for their steadfast support. Your collective efforts have made it possible to create safe, inclusive, and empowering learning environments across Kakuma. Together, we are shaping a future where every learner—regardless of gender—can learn, lead, and succeed.





**Accompany**

**Serve**

**Advocate**