



# AKIBA COMMUNITY COLLABORATORY IN KARATU DISTRICT OF TANZANIA

**Grantee**  
**DAGENO GIRLS CENTER**

**Grant amount**  
GBP 212,560

**Project duration**  
October 2015–December 2017

**Beneficiaries**  
Secondary school-age girls

**Location**  
Karatu District, Arusha Region



## PROJECT BACKGROUND

In Tanzania, girls and young women face disproportionately worse outcomes in education and health. For example, while the proportion of girls enrolled in primary school is slightly higher than boys, at secondary school stage girls are much less likely to still be in school. At age 13, 18 per cent of girls nationally are not attending school, rising to 34 per cent at age 14, and 44 per cent at age 15 (compared to 16 per cent, 24 per cent and 34 per cent for boys of the same age).

Dageno Girls Center (Dageno) is an entrepreneurial education centre that provides girls and young women aged 14–21 with the opportunity to obtain a secondary school education despite previous interruptions in their education and difficult, sometimes desperate, conditions in their households.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Dageno uses a 'design thinking and doing' approach that integrates creative thinking, problem solving and self-reliance with local traditions and the standard Tanzanian academic curriculum. Their student-centred learning approach is project based, with learning activities embedded in the curriculum. In using this approach, Dageno sought to:

- ▀ Increase girls' own voices and exercise leadership over life decisions;
- ▀ Encourage input from girls for key decision-making activities; and
- ▀ Provide an educational system that offers productive pathways to marginalised girls.

HDFIF funded the Akiba Community 'Collaboratory' model, a hands-on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and maths) initiative for out-of-school girls to gain practical experience with new technologies and innovative processes. The 'Collaboratory' introduced a way of thinking and doing that could enable the girls to solve community problems while making an income. It also focused on the value of savings and investing in the future.

## PROJECT RESULTS

- ▀ Dageno established a permanent educational site and has grown from 40 to 140 students – 20 more than the target in the business plan.
- ▀ All 12 Dageno students who took the Form 4 (secondary school) exam in 2015 passed. This stands in sharp contrast to the neighbouring government school where no students passed, and where only 67 per cent of students nationwide passed this exam.



- ▀ The school adapted the curriculum to correspond with government requirements while teaching more effectively and fostering higher level learning, leadership and entrepreneurial skills.
- ▀ One unintended consequence of the project was the teaching of women. Two adult mothers in the Karatu area joined the centre as a way to recover their own interrupted education

## KEY LESSONS

- ▀ *Organisational and administrative stability is critical:* The educational aspect of the Dageno project was highly effective but the administrative side struggled. Key staff were overstretched and were performing multiple roles. As a consequence, the longevity of the educational innovation was compromised.
- ▀ *Increase the role of the Parents' Council in understanding the financial requirements of the centre and ensuring payment by parents:* During the final year of the HDIF project, only 25 per cent of parents paid their child's school fee. A sliding scale fee and corresponding sliding scale scholarships, as well as some kind of enforced consequences of non-payment may have helped to address the high level of non-compliance and improve the overall financial health of the project.

## NEXT STEPS

Although HDIF's support ended in 2017, Dageno continues to work towards building a sustainable and stable business model by exploring new fundraising opportunities and reviewing its governance structure.

## GENDER EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Girls and young women's self-empowerment was central to Dageno's ethos. The centre allows girls to access skills, information and the self-confidence that comes from living and learning in an environment centred on their own wellbeing. Dageno helped build girls' self-determination by supporting the students to take their school experience back to their homes and communities, be strong role models for other girls, and create social change as they transition into adulthood.

## PRINCIPLES FOR DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT

*Design with the user:* Dageno's students were at the heart of the project's design. By using a student-centred approach to learning, Dageno challenged students to learn through practical application and problem solving – skills that are then applied to decision-making issues relevant to the school itself. For example, students co-designed the school campus, and gave their input on school uniform, desks, the sanitation block and the bunk beds for the dormitories. In each case, they analysed various options to select the best one for their school.



### CONTACT DETAILS

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