



Our Impact: Kisa Project 2019

About AfricAid

AfricAid mentors secondary school girls in Tanzania to complete their education, develop into confident leaders, and transform their own lives and their communities. We equip girls to overcome challenges and reach their full potential because educated girls create lasting, positive change. The outcome is resilient, proactive, and socially responsible girls who secure better jobs, raise healthier families, and increase the standing of women in society.

Introduction

Dear Friend,

Thank you for joining us in celebrating another year of impact for Tanzanian girls! As you will see in this report, the outcomes for Kisa graduates are clear: they pass their national exams, enroll in university, avoid early pregnancy, take on leadership roles, and exude confidence. To better understand the wider impact of confident, educated girls on society at large, this year we reached out to village leadership, school staff, and community-based organizations.

In our first study of community data around the Kisa Project, we found that Kisa Scholars have brought up gender issues to tens of thousands of people across Tanzania. 88% of Kisa Scholars are actively working on community improvement projects, and their neighbors have noticed. Scholars report significant changes in their communities, like reduced early pregnancy rates and increased gender equality, and members of their communities espouse the importance of educating girls and their value as leaders.

In order to better evaluate our impact, this year we revised our Theory of Change for Kisa (see page 4) to emphasize Kisa's impact on our Scholars' broader communities and on their confidence and leadership abilities. For this report, we focused on the community-oriented outcomes of the new Theory of Change. We found that the presence of confident, empowered leaders who happen to be girls and young women is beginning to cause a shift in how Tanzanian communities perceive women. Our vision is that Kisa will spread ripple effects around Tanzania, leading to a society where girls and women are equal. Thank you for joining us in making this change.

With gratitude,



Jess Littman
Director of Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

Findings

In 2019, AfricAid mentored 2,713 young women in the two-year Kisa Project. 700 of these Scholars graduated in mid-2019, at the end of their secondary education. Mentors supported Scholars to build confidence, explore their leadership potential, and create a positive impact in their communities.

But the impact of Kisa goes far beyond the class of 2019, and beyond the more than 3,000 Scholars who have participated in Kisa to date. Kisa Scholars are proactively bringing change to their communities. Witnesses to their 2 Day Challenge community service projects are awed by their abilities, and are gaining a new appreciation for the capabilities of women in general. Girls in Kisa Scholars' home communities now have powerful female role models who grew up just like them.

AfricAid's Impact in Brief

We measure three outcomes of each of our projects. This report focuses on Kisa, but below you will also find the most important indicators of our other program, Binti Shupavu. More details can be found in this report, and in our past [Impact Reports](#).

Binti Shupavu is a four-year extracurricular life skills course for lower secondary school girls covering topics such as study skills, personal leadership, health, and self-confidence with the goal of increasing graduation rates for vulnerable girls.

Outcome 1: Binti Shupavu Scholars graduate from lower secondary school.

99% of Year 4 Binti Scholars graduated from lower secondary school in 2018. This is a 30% higher graduation rate than the national rate for Tanzanian girls.

✓ *Outcome achieved*

Outcome 2: Binti Shupavu graduates are resilient and prepared for future challenges.

96% of Binti graduates in 2018 **said the program had helped them overcome their greatest challenges**, which included everything from lack of confidence to academic struggles.

✓ *Outcome achieved*

Outcome 3: Parents of Binti Shupavu graduates are supportive of their daughters' education.

100% of parents surveyed gave positive feedback about the impact of the program on their daughters. Parents of Binti graduates are **more likely to believe that their daughters will graduate from lower secondary than their sons**, despite the fact that boys are statistically more likely to graduate.

✓ *Outcome achieved*

Kisa Project is a two-year leadership course that prepares girls in their last two years of secondary school to attend university and create positive social change in their communities. Kisa means "story" in Swahili. Through the Kisa Project, young Tanzanian women are empowered to become the creative authors of their own future stories.

Outcome 1: Kisa Alumnae engage in community development.

The most popular plan for the future among Kisa graduates is to **work in community development**. **87% of Kisa graduates report having already brought up gender issues** in their communities.

✓ *Outcome achieved*

Outcome 2: Kisa Alumnae's communities recognize the worth of girls and women.

85% of Kisa graduates in 2019 report that a change has taken place in their communities due to Kisa. Changes include improved gender equality and less pregnancy.

✓ *Outcome achieved*

Outcome 3: Kisa Alumnae are confident leaders.

78% of Kisa graduates in 2019 report that they hold a leadership role, 20% more than at baseline. **100% of Kisa graduates** (whose results we obtained) **passed their final school exam in 2018**, and **97% of Alumnae transition to higher education**.

✓ *Outcome achieved*



Kisa Project is a two-year leadership course that prepares girls in their last two years of secondary school to attend university and create positive social change in their communities. Kisa means “story” in Swahili. Through the Kisa Project, young Tanzanian women are empowered to become the creative authors of their own future stories.

Young women in Tanzania are not generally taught to believe they are equal to their male counterparts and rarely have role models to show them otherwise. Kisa supports young women to build the confidence and skills they need to pursue excellence in leadership, prepare for future employment, and initiate to meaningful societal change. We recently updated our Theory of Change, on the next page, to show the five outcomes we seek to achieve. This report covers three of those outcomes:

1: Kisa Alumnae engage in community development.

2: Kisa Alumnae’s communities recognize the worth of girls and women.

3: Kisa Alumnae are confident leaders.

The following pages explore each of these outcomes in depth, demonstrating how the presence of confident, educated girls in Tanzanian communities results in broader changes in how society views girls and women. The final section demonstrates how Kisa achieves these outcomes. Future reports will include data on the other two outcomes shown on the next page.



PROBLEM
 Tanzanian girls lack role models and support from their communities to become confident leaders.

- ACTIVITIES**
- Kisa Classes
 - Health Symposium
 - Career Day
 - Year 1 Presentations
 - 2 Day Challenge
 - School Staff Meetings
 - All-School Seminars
 - Emergency Fund
 - Social Worker
 - Scholarships
 - Kisa Alumnae Network
 - Job Readiness Workshop

- OUTPUTS**
- Girls learn leadership and life skills in weekly classes
 - Girls build a relationship with a trusted female mentor
 - Girls gain knowledge and resources
 - Girls engage with successful and inspiring women
 - Girls begin to participate in community development
 - Communities recognize girls' abilities and rights
 - Girls have psychosocial and financial support to stay in school
 - Girls continue to tertiary education
 - Alumnae connect and collaborate after graduation

- OUTCOMES**
1. Kisa Alumnae are confident leaders
 2. Kisa Alumnae's communities recognize the worth of girls and women
 3. Kisa Alumnae engage in community development
 4. Kisa Alumnae are mentally and physically resilient
 5. Kisa Alumnae go on to university and/or gainful employment

IMPACT
 Girls lead positive change in their communities and have a higher standing in society.

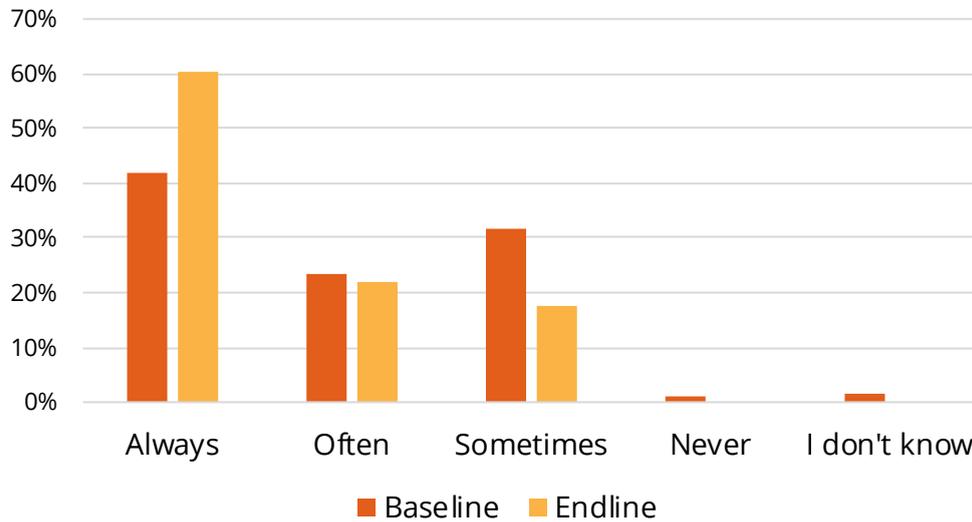


Kisa Alumnae engage in community development

Kisa Scholars are active in their communities

"I always try to be the source of change." – Anna, Kisa graduate

"I think about the needs and issues facing my community."



Kisa Scholars are not just aware of issues in their communities - they are working for change. 88% of Kisa graduates say that they are actively working to better their community. The survey also asked *how* Kisa Scholars are improving their communities - and 83% gave a substantive answer, such as a project that they are working on or an issue they have brought up to village leadership.

The most frequent methods of community improvement mentioned were: mentoring and role modeling for other girls, cleaning up the environment, advising youth (both boys and girls), educating people about entrepreneurship, and providing health information. Much of this impact is catalyzed by the 2 Day Challenge (2DC), Kisa's capstone community service project. Many Kisa Scholars extend the 2 Day Challenge into longer-term initiatives.

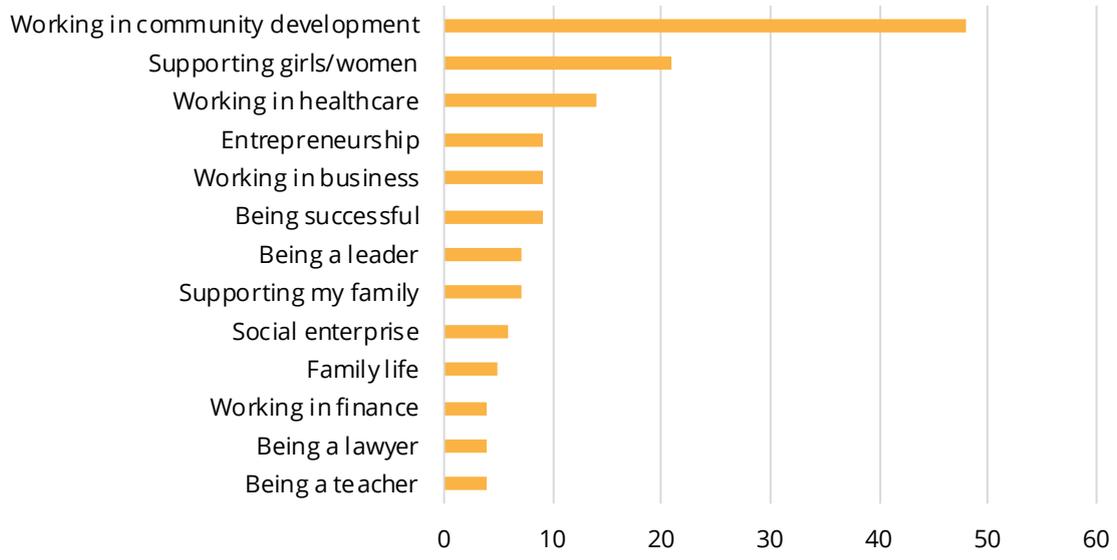
The survey also asked Scholars if they have brought up gender issues in their communities since joining Kisa. An impressive 87% said yes. When asked how many people they had spoken to about gender issues, the average was 13. Extrapolated across all Kisa Scholars since the project's inception in 2010, this would mean that over 35,000 people have heard from Kisa Scholars about gender issues.



Kisa Scholars have plans for change

"There will be no girls/women in my community who will be depending for all of their needs on their parents and husbands." – Sharifa, Kisa graduate

What is your vision for your future? What do you imagine yourself doing in your life?



Community development work is by far the most popular vision for the future among Kisa graduates, followed closely by working with girls and women or in healthcare. These plans demonstrate that Kisa Alumnae are prepared to continue the essential work of developing their communities that they started in Kisa, and to empower other women and girls to do the same. As one Kisa graduate put it, "I want to be the one who will change the lives of other girls like me who face some challenges in their life, to make their life reach positive effects for better development of our Tanzania."

In a focus group discussion, another graduate expressed her hope of bettering both her own life and the lives of other girls: "I wish to help girls in my community to realize their potential. I also want to establish my own organization, but I am thinking of doing a social enterprise so that I will be helping people and get myself a profit."

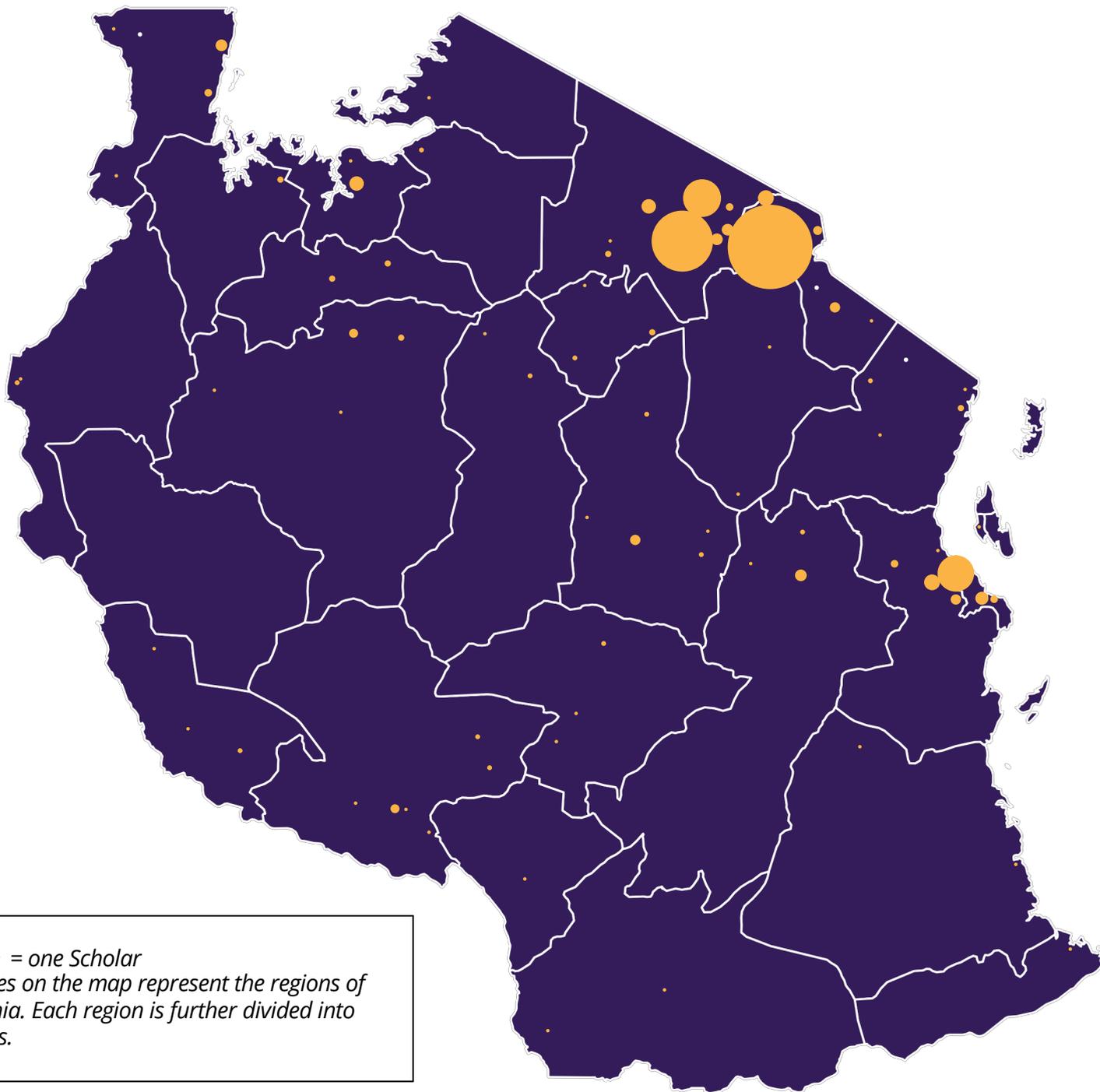
The following pages explore the positive impact of confident, educated girls in Tanzania. Kisa Alumnae's dedication to community development demonstrates the sustainability of AfricAid's mentoring and leadership model.



Community change is happening across Tanzania

"My community knows me. My [village] chairperson is proud of me and what I did for the community." – Elizabeth, Kisa graduate

AfricAid's programs are based in the Arusha and Kilimanjaro Regions of Northern Tanzania, but the ripple effects of Kisa are widespread. Nearly all A Level schools (the Kisa level) are boarding schools, which means that Kisa Scholars come from (and return to) cities, towns, and villages throughout the entire country.



This map shows the homes of each member of the Kisa Class of 2019, who represent nearly half of the districts of Tanzania. Their transformative 2 Day Challenge community service projects and commitment to drawing attention to gender issues in these communities are raising awareness of girls' capabilities and value throughout Tanzania.

Kisa communities are changing

"I would still think girls are weak if they hadn't come and did what they did." – Village Chairman



Voices of Impact

In focus group discussions, recent Kisa graduates explained how their communities are changing.

Joyce: "My community thinks of girls as people who do not understand themselves because of the type of girls that are in our community. Most of them choose marriage, not school; most of my age mates are married now and some are not but they have children already and they have no jobs." But Joyce is changing things: "My community thinks I am determined and so serious. Sometimes they would tell their children to hang out with me so that I could inspire and motivate them."

Hadija: "Most of my age mates at my community are now married so they look at me with a 'Why eye'. They think I have pride just because I have chosen to go to school." But she said of her 2 Day Challenge service project: "it's something that has never happened before. I remember there was a teacher came and told us like, 'I never knew that Kisa is this meaningful! We are happy for what you are trying to do.'"

85% of Kisa graduates in the class of 2019 stated that they have witnessed a change in their community that can be attributed to Kisa. To ensure responses were accurate, we asked about the changes, and 88% of those who had witnessed a change were able to describe it in detail. The most common changes that Kisa graduates have witnessed in their communities were: girls are more confident, girls are leading, gender equality has improved, girls know their rights, girls speak up for themselves, there is less pregnancy, and there are improvements at the school.

This mix of developments - both changes that have occurred in girls' behavior, like becoming more confident, and changes in the community, like improved gender equality and better schools, confirm our belief that educated, empowered girls can transform every aspect of their communities. In focus group discussions, many of the graduates said that while their communities overall have negative perceptions of girls, they themselves are seen positively and are held up as role models. This demonstrates that Kisa is slowly but surely transforming community attitudes towards girls.



Voices of Impact

2 Day Challenge: Teaching community members to make charcoal

Village Executive: "What they did gave me a different picture of what girls could do if they are given other opportunities. I was inspired and proud to have worked with them.... I was puzzled how girls can be that ambitious."

Local teacher: "I believe AfricAid is proof that women can do great things in their lives. I could see it from the Kisa Scholars: things they do are incredible. Even we men can't do it sometimes but they do."

2 Day Challenge: Fixing a school's roof

School administrator: "To some extent it changed the way I used to think about this generation, it's full of creative and ambitious people like them.... The fact that my perception changed was very significant because I use to think differently about the girls."

Interviews with school staff, village leaders, and local NGO staff revealed that perceptions of girls are changing. These interviewees specifically commented on the impact of Kisa's 2 Day Challenge, where groups of Kisa Scholars work together to complete a community service project.

Voices of Impact

2 Day Challenge: Cleaning a local hospital

Hospital watchman: "There is nothing they can't do. I saw how Violet was trying to lead others when they came to clean at the hospital and it made me believe that women can make good leaders especially these of this generation. Those girls made me think twice about girls."

Village Chairman: "The girls made me change my perceptions towards girls since they came to the place where most of the people are always scared to come. They devoted their time and resources to people they don't even know.... How I used to think about girls has completely changed ever since they came to clean the hospital. I would still think girls are weak if they hadn't come and did what they did at the hospital.... No one has ever come to me and convinced me to change my beliefs the way they did."

One group held a skill-building workshop at a local women's empowerment NGO - an environment where we would already expect a high level of belief in girls' abilities. But after the workshop, the chairwoman of the organization said: "The girls who came to train us about paper making inspired me. They made me increase my trust in girls and women in the community." Her assistant added, "I started believing that girls can do big things. What the girls did was beyond the expectations."

This example demonstrates both the deep entrenchment of gender stereotypes, even among those who seek to empower women, and the power of Kisa Scholars to change these deeply held beliefs. The potential for ripple effects from community members' exposure to Kisa was revealed in another interview, with a teacher who witnessed Kisa Scholars building a path to help children reach his school safely during the rainy season. "I have my younger sisters, I also have daughters so these changes make me believe in them," he said. "I have come to realize that even some of the work I used to think girls can't do, they can possibly do."

Kisa Alumnae are confident leaders

Kisa Scholars excel academically

"The education that [Kisa] gives to different girls...helped them to expand their brains." – Rehema, Kisa graduate

Kisa Scholars graduate from upper secondary school, perform well on their national exams, and enter university at astonishingly high rates. Every Kisa graduate whose results we received passed the Form 6 exam in 2018.* 97% of them scored in the top three Divisions, and 43% scored in the top two Divisions. (On Tanzanian exams, the students who score in a higher division are eligible to attend better universities.) 97% of Kisa Alumnae surveyed are either attending or have graduated from university. Kisa graduates' academic achievements are a stepping stone on their journey to becoming leaders. We believe that the development of soft skills and the presence of a supportive Mentor contributes to these achievements.

*National exam data is not yet available for 2019; we were able to obtain the results of 87% of graduates in the class of 2018.



Kisa Alumnae avoid early pregnancy

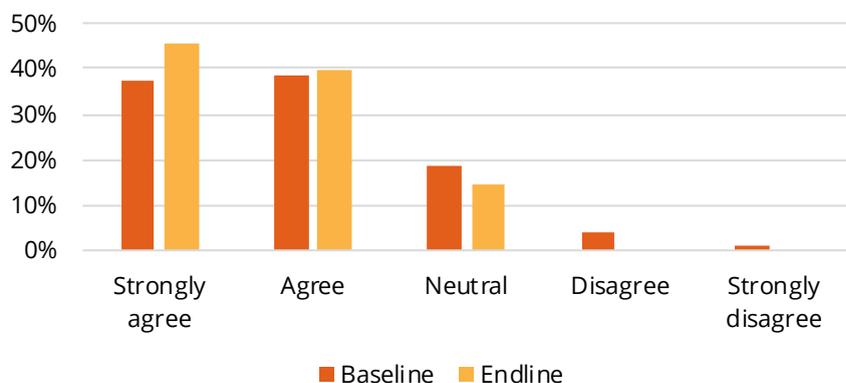
"[I'm] becoming more careful about early pregnancy and preventing...HIV/AIDS." – Carolyn, Kisa graduate

Of Alumnae surveyed, less than 3% had been pregnant, compared with over 50% of Tanzanian women in their age group. Of those who did become pregnant, two thirds said their pregnancies were planned. This is one of our most significant achievements, because women who have children early, especially during their teenage years, are at a perpetual disadvantage. Women who have a child during adolescence earn less money throughout their lives ("[Having](#)", 2019) and are at greater risk for some diseases later in life ([Lee & Ryff, 2016](#)). By avoiding early pregnancy, Kisa Alumnae are staying on track to become successful leaders.

Kisa graduates are confident and inspired to lead

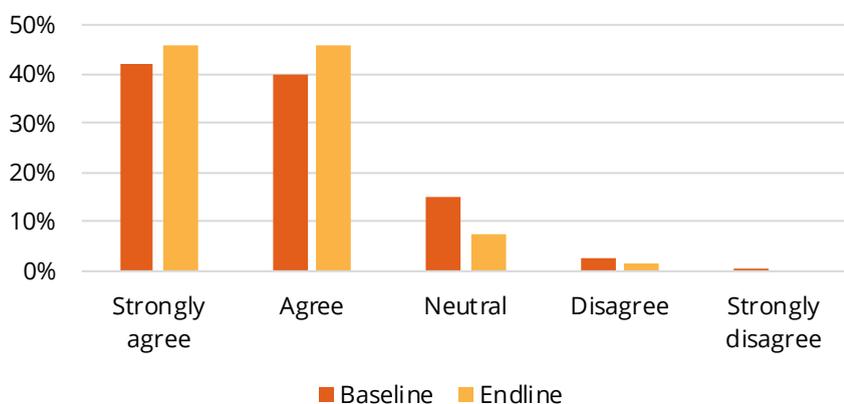
"Through the program I have learned to express my opinion." – Sara, Kisa graduate

"I feel confident making presentations in front of a group."

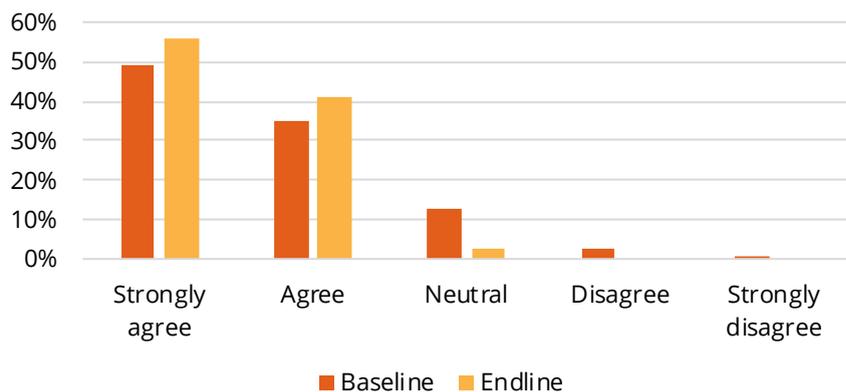


Confidence is a fundamental component for success, but it is common for girls in Tanzania to be discouraged from raising their hands, speaking their minds, and following their dreams. Kisa Mentors provide examples of confident, educated women for Scholars to emulate. Throughout their time in Kisa, Scholars participate in confidence-building exercises such as presentations in which they present their own ideas to an audience of their peers. Kisa Scholars develop the confidence they need to take major steps toward becoming leaders, as well as for essential, everyday actions, like asking for help when they need it. As one Kisa Alumna put it, "I gained a lot of confidence. I became confident in everything I was doing; I can now proactively overcome any challenge that I see in front of me."

"I express my ideas and opinions confidently."



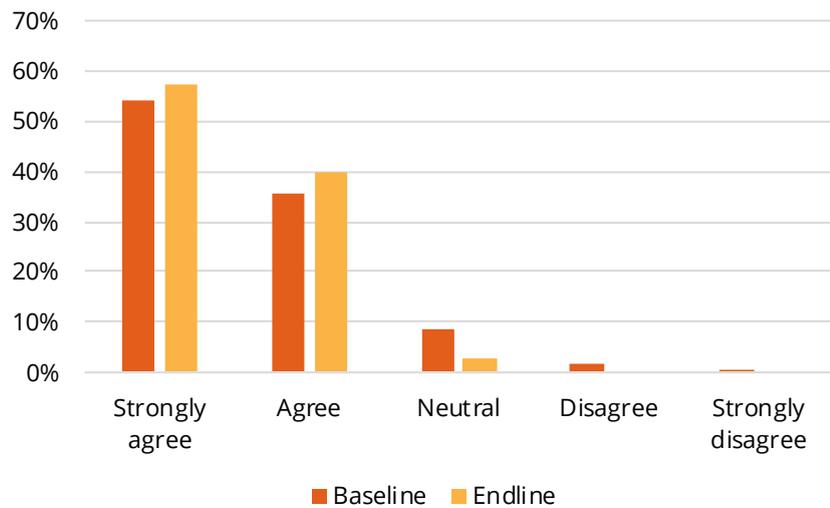
"I consider myself a confident person."



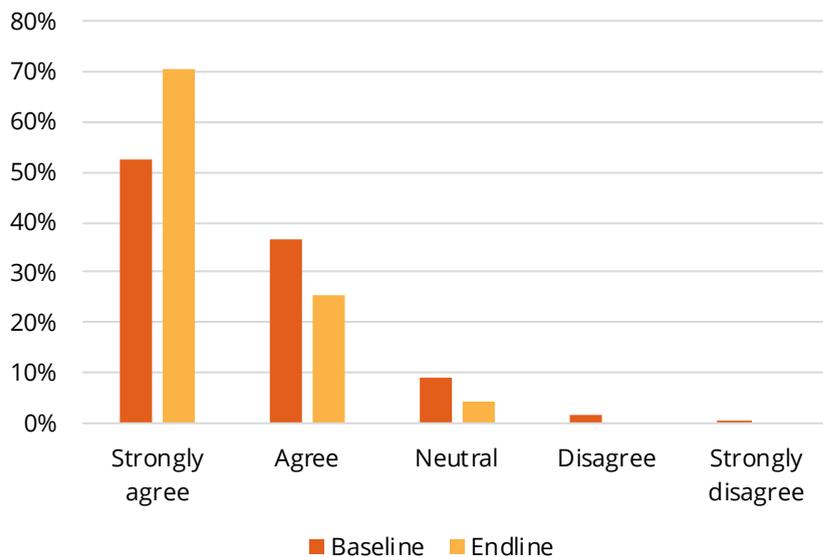
Kisa Alumnae are confident leaders

Kisa Alumna Ndiini Kidoko's experience shows why wanting to be seen as a leader is an essential first step for a girl: "I never believed in leadership before, but soon after I joined Kisa I started liking being a leader and started to create for myself the leadership environments," she explained. "Then I started contesting for leadership positions, and I realized that by that I will be getting to interact and know people I am around. It didn't stop there; I kept doing that even in the university, and I learned a lot." After excelling as a leader in Kisa Classes and then at university, Ndiini joined AfricAid as a Binti Shupavu Mentor and was later promoted to be a Kisa Mentor.

"I want to be seen as a leader by my peers."



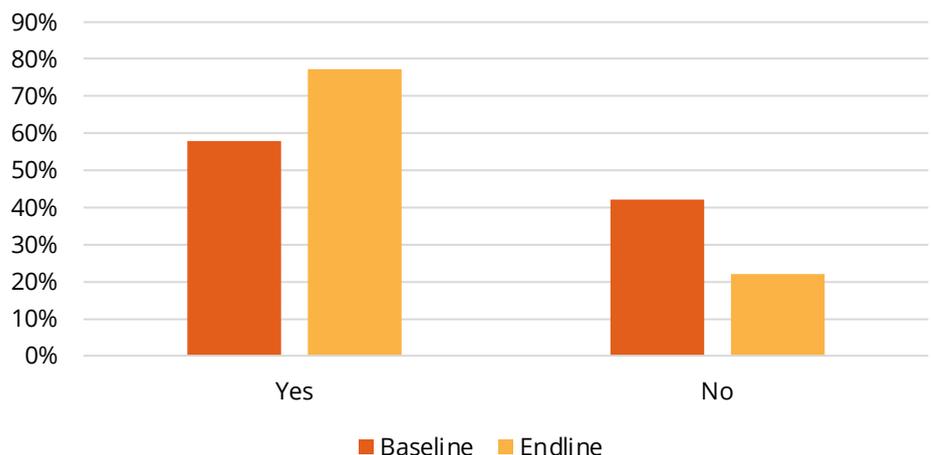
"I consider myself a leader."



The next step on the path to leadership occurs when a girl considers herself a leader. "The first thing you have to do is to believe in yourself, that is one of the ways that will lead you to success," one graduate explained in a focus group discussion. "The fact that you believe in yourself that you can lead is enough to prove to people that you are ready and enough to lead them because you believe in yourself. And you don't listen to what people say, you don't have to give up." Being able to see oneself as a leader is an essential step for each girl to take, before she begins to actively seek out leadership positions.

Kisa graduates explained the leadership positions they held on the endline survey: 60% of graduates held an official leadership role, such as being a club or student government leader, and 26% held an informal leadership role, such as mentorship of younger siblings.* Kisa Alumnae continue to be role models of girls' leadership, with 17% of Alumnae who currently attend university holding student government positions.

"Do you currently hold a leadership role in your school, work, and/or community?"

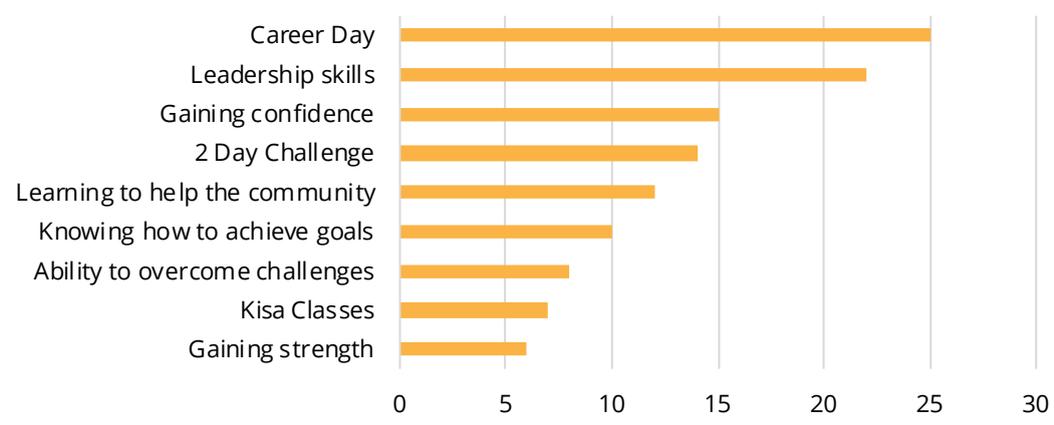


*Not all in the latter group said that they held a leadership role, hence the higher percent of leaders indicated in the leadership descriptions.

How Kisa creates this impact

The Kisa Project consists of three main types of support for girls: weekly Classes on topics related to leadership, confidence, and internal motivation; special events, including a biennial Career Day, Health Symposium, an assessment of and presentation on community needs, and the 2 Day Challenge capstone project; and one-on-one support from the Mentors, all of whom are university-educated Tanzanian women.

“What do you think was the most valuable part of the Kisa program?”



Kisa Scholars described Career Day as being the most valuable part of the project due to the inspiration and knowledge it provides, followed closely by leadership skills, gains in confidence, the 2 Day Challenge, knowledge of how to help the community, learning to set and achieve goals, and learning to overcome challenges. It is the combination of these gains that leads Kisa Scholars to become empowered individuals who create positive, lasting change to their communities.

Beyond Classes and special events, the Mentor-Scholar relationship is invaluable in providing the Scholars with a trusted advisor in times of need. 78% of Scholars said that their Mentor helped them outside of Kisa Classes. Support included general advice, building up confidence, encouragement, advice on solving a community problem, and academic advice. Girls too often do not have someone who can help them with their challenges and be their champion. Kisa Mentors provide that support, empowering their Scholars to flourish and grow into changemakers.

Voices of Impact

In focus group discussions, recent Kisa graduates described how Kisa changed them.

Anna: “After I finish university I will have enough time to deal with my community. As I once did something positive during 2DC I believe they will accept my help and work together.”

Rachel: “Lessons like win-win solution are really hard to forget and I will always use it in everything I want to do because it will help me live with any kind of people. Everything that I’m planning is because I have the Kisa knowledge.”

Fatima: “I will use the Kisa knowledge to prepare a business plan [and] the leadership knowledge to make changes in my community. And also when I have my own kids I will still use it as a path to pass and make my family stable.”

Mary: “The Kisa knowledge has already changed me as it gave me the confidence and courage to even wish to make changes in my community. So I believe that it will always guide me in everything that I’m doing in the future.”

Sakina: “Lessons like believing in myself and leadership skills will always guide me; I will forever use them.”

Zeynab: “I will use the budgeting knowledge to manage my finances. I will always apply the leadership skills in the future because I believe I will be a leader. And also when I get kids I will be leading with the Kisa leadership principles – so I will always walk with the principles that I have been taught in Kisa.”

Methodology

AfricAid measures each outcome through multiple quantitative and qualitative indicators. This report compares data from a baseline survey taken in 2018 to endline results from 2019. This allows us to see how Scholars who have completed the program compare to those who are just beginning it. In 2018, all entering Kisa Scholars took the survey; in 2019, with over 700 Scholars graduating, we switched to a random stratified sampling method. These surveys were anonymous. All Scholars took a shorter demographic survey, providing information on their family and home community.

A 2019 survey of Kisa Alumnae provided another layer of understanding as to how Alumnae use the skills and knowledge gained through Kisa in later life. Due to the dispersion of Alumnae around the country, a random, anonymous sample is not possible for this survey. Instead, we strived to reach Alumnae from as many different regions and graduating classes as possible to obtain a representative sample. We received 129 responses from Alumnae who graduated in years 2012-18, representing 8% of all Kisa Alumnae.

Additional qualitative data was gathered using interviews and focus group discussions conducted shortly after the end of the 2018-19 school year. Scholars, Alumnae, Mentors, and community members participated in the interviews, which followed a question guide but included situational follow-ups and digressions. Two focus groups of Kisa graduates from the class of 2019 each met for three sessions that covered their experience with Kisa, life in their communities, and their hopes for the future. Six different schools were represented in the groups, one of which met in Arusha Region and the other in Kilimanjaro Region. All Scholars' and Alumnae's names have been changed in this Report to protect their privacy, and some quotes were lightly edited for grammar and spelling.

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Acknowledgements

AfricAid's Director of Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning, Jess Littman, analyzed the data for this report and created the report. Maryrehema Mkumbo conducted all focus group discussions and interviews and conducted Alumnae surveys. The Kisa Project's mentoring team conducted baseline and endline surveys.

Learn More

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