

BREAKING THE SILENCE

100%
FOR THE CHILDREN

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Breaking the silence is a program addressing systemic barriers that prevent youth from making informed decisions about their health and lives. The program responds to a widespread denial of reproductive health rights, particularly affecting children in slums, girls, and young women, who face significant obstacles in accessing accurate SRHR information and services. These barriers perpetuate cycles of abuse, discrimination, and poverty.

Breaking the Silence promotes equality and sustainable development through advocacy, education, and community empowerment, integrating SRHR education into schools and communities across Machakos and Baringo counties – and soon Nairobi too. Furthermore it has a dedicated focus on youth with disabilities. It focuses on building inclusive, sustainable structures, strengthening youth civic engagement, and embedding SRHR knowledge within local systems. By fostering open dialogue in communities where SRHR issues have historically been taboo, the program helps shift attitudes and ensure lasting change.

KEY METHODS

Active assessment: A trust-based, interactive approach fostering critical thinking and youth empowerment. School clubs & youth ambassadors: Peer-to-peer education platforms promoting SRHR advocacy and youth leadership.

Community dialogues: Engaging parents, religious leaders, and local authorities.

SRHR services: Strengthening youth-friendly health services and linking students with care providers.

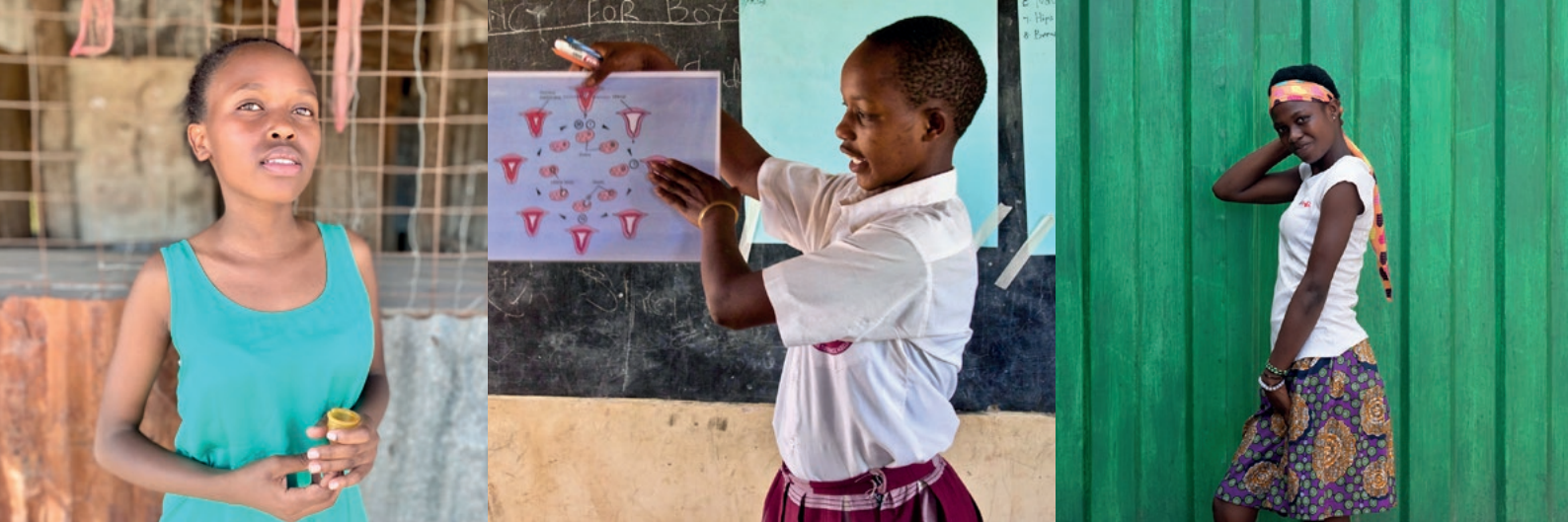
Risk mapping & safe spaces: Identifying risks within schools and communities and establishing safe environments where young people can discuss SRHR concerns.

Graduation of schools for exit of the Breaking the Silence program.

Implementation in urban and rural settings

By implementing the program in both urban (Machakos) and rural (Baringo) settings, **the methods demonstrates their adaptability** across diverse communities and the strategic advantage of testing the model in different socio-economic and cultural contexts. This dual implementation approach ensures the model is scalable, adaptable, and relevant to Kenya's broader SRHR landscape, providing valuable insights for national policy adaptation and long-term integration into local education and health systems.





IMPACT AND RESULTS

Breaking the Silence has had a profound impact on SRHR awareness, school retention, and community engagement. The project has contributed to:

Reduction in teenage pregnancies: Schools that previously reported three to five teenage pregnancies per year now record zero cases. In Machakos County, where teenage pregnancies are prevalent, Breaking the Silence has led to a decline in cases, particularly among direct beneficiaries.

Increased school retention: Between 2020 and 2022, the number of girls attending school increased by an average of 10.9% in 2021 and 21.9% in 2022. The drop-out rate due to early pregnancies decreased by 69.1% in 2021 and 95.5% in 2022.

Greater access to SRHR services: Among students sampled in secondary schools and youth polytechnics, 76.5% reported having accessed SRHR-related healthcare services, a significant improvement compared to the project's inception.

Community engagement and awareness: More than 10,000 students in 43 schools have been reached through peer-to-peer youth ambassador programs, strengthening SRHR knowledge among adolescents. Additionally, youth-led radio programs have extended discussions on SRHR to over 2 million Kenyans.

Improved academic performance: Schools participating in the project have reported better academic outcomes, particularly among girls, breaking traditional barriers to education. At Oterit Secondary School, 8 out of the top 10 students in 2022 were girls, compared to only two in 2020.

Improved parental involvement: Over 1,873 parents have been engaged in SRHR discussions through community meetings, with more than **70% of participants being women**. These sessions have tackled key issues such as menstrual health, teenage pregnancy, and gender-based violence (GBV).

Safer school and community environments: Risk mapping and the establishment of **safe spaces** in schools and communities have enabled young people to openly discuss SRHR concerns. This initiative has been particularly crucial in Baringo, where communities have identified the need for safe spaces to protect girls from harmful practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Strategic alignment & sustainability: The project aligns with Kenya's national education reforms and the Ministry of Health's youth-friendly services strategy. Institutionalization of Active Assessment pedagogy ensures sustainability, with trained teachers and student-led clubs continuing activities beyond project funding. The sustainability strategy includes a graduation model, which systematically assesses whether a school is ready to operate independently. By fostering youth agency, community support, and system-level change, **Breaking the Silence** creates lasting impact in SRHR education and civic engagement.

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