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Investigating the Educational Experiences of Girls in Tanzania: The Efficacy of a Girls' Leadership and Empowerment Program

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By

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ABSTRACT

Considerable research has been conducted to identify the barriers to girls' education in sub-Saharan Africa and the reasons for their existence. These factors can be grouped into three different categories: economic, socio-cultural, and contextual. There are steps that can and must be taken in order to support girls in their educational endeavours in sub-Saharan Africa. These steps include, but are not limited to, addressing cultural biases towards girls and education; eradicating gender-based violence in schools; improving infrastructure issues; and increasing the number of female teachers in classrooms. This study will explore the educational experiences of secondary school girls in Singida, Tanzania and possible strategies to empower girls through enhanced self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy. Specifically, the study will examine the effects of a girls' leadership and empowerment program among the program's participants. The goal is to assess the potential of scaled-up programs like this to change the trajectory of girls as they transition to womanhood.

Keywords: Advocacy, Agency, Barriers, Bridges, Girls' Education, Self-efficacy, Sub-Saharan Africa

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother who has always believed in my ability to succeed in anything I undertake. Throughout my life, she has been the driving force behind many of my accomplishments and it is because of her that I have become the woman I am today. This thesis serves as a testament to the strong women around the world, who despite adversity, shout their worth and demand equity for all. My mother has molded me into the feminist I am proud to be, with great strength, care, and compassion. A wise woman once said to me, “Enjoy even the challenging times, as they will make you appreciate the journey of life ever much more. It’s the day-to-day struggles to overcome that make you a better person, wife, and one day a mother. Wisdom not only comes from words, but from experiencing life at all levels; the highs and the lows that make you, YOU. Someone I love, admire, and respect.” Ditto, mom. And there is no one with whom I would rather weather the highs and lows. With love everlasting, your daughter.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

In 2011, I travelled with a team of teacher candidates from the University of Windsor to the Kititimo Children's Centre in Singida, Tanzania for education, research, and development work through the Global Education Research and Development Initiative (GERDI). The Centre was a residential home for orphaned and vulnerable children, including girls. The goals of the team included, the development of a sustainable food and nutrition plan, the improvement of water supply, the building of new sanitary facilities, the professional development of teachers, and the educational enrichment of most vulnerable children at the Kititimo Centre. These goals mirror what I believe should be the goals of the education system in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) to improve girls' access to and maintenance of such a system. One of the main lessons I took away from that experience was the disadvantages women and girls face in school and in life.

The team visited local primary and secondary schools in the Singida and Kilimanjaro Regions, including a primary school for the Maasai, where we worked with students and teachers on developing innovative, inclusive, and gender-sensitive educational strategies. We developed culturally responsive curriculum resources around issues like personal hygiene and HIV/AIDS. "Culturally responsive teaching can be defined as using cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them" (Gay, 2000, p. 29). North American designed materials, such as those based on the concerns of girls in Canada, simply did not respond to the needs of girls in SSA and particularly, do not necessarily match those of the girls in Tanzania. It became apparent to me that I needed to use my still developing cultural knowledge of female stereotypes and superstitions in SSA, as well as prior experiences dealing with my own womanly

changes in Canada, to guide effective curriculum development. At the Kititimo Centre, we planned educational activities for the children, including one-on-one tutoring, and directed the development of study skills. At the time, I did not realize the potential meaning and impact of these seemingly small contributions to what seemed like a dizzying array of issues faced by marginalized and vulnerable children, manifested in the experiences of the children at the Kititimo Centre. However, after conducting a thorough literature review for this current study, the potential effects of these actions came into light and will be discussed herein.

Eight years later, in March 2019, I returned to Singida, Tanzania, as part of the Faculty of Education, Global Community Engagement Program (GCEP). Unfortunately, the Kititimo Children's Centre had been closed, but another, more far-reaching opportunity presented itself. One that was near and dear to my heart and my research goals: a girls' leadership and empowerment program for secondary school girls in Singida municipality and their female chaperone teachers. Sixty girls from ten local secondary schools and ten female teachers participated in this program funded by a District Community Grant from Rotary District 6400, the Rotary Club of Windsor (1918), and the Global Community Engagement Program. The goals of the project were to "develop and deliver a series of workshops with academic, vocational, social, and leadership activities designed to equip girls with the tools, which will build their capacity and empower them to achieve self-determination, develop economic independence, and help them to access safe and fulfilling employment and become leaders in their communities" (Beckford 2018-District Community Grant Application, p. 1).

For one week, every day after school, the girls and their teachers arrived by *bujaji*, a popular form of transport in Tanzania, to participate in a three-hour session developed and facilitated by the Global Community Engagement Team comprising seven pre-service teacher

candidates from the Faculty of Education, University of Windsor and myself, the graduate researcher. Day one explored their aspirations and goal setting; day two focused on mental health and well-being; day three enveloped career counselling; day four presented stations covering female health, menstrual hygiene, pregnancy, love and relationships, oral hygiene, health and fitness, poverty, prostitution and sexually transmitted infections; and day five taught first aid and CPR. On the sixth day, the team held a graduation ceremony in which local community leaders encouraged the girls to believe in themselves, stay focused on their goals, support each other, and reach for the stars. The girls were presented with certificates of completion and the look of accomplishment on their faces indicated that the team had just accomplished something truly impactful and long lasting. Seeing the girls return to their schools, form girls' clubs, and spread the knowledge they had attained at the girls' leadership and empowerment program was inspiring and led me to believe that the reverberation of this program would be felt for generations to come. This stimulated an interest in studying the potential of this and similar empowerment programs to change the trajectory of girls' and women's lives and thus that of their children and communities.

Background of the Problem

In early 2019, Plan International Canada launched an online campaign to increase awareness surrounding child marriage (Plan International, 2019). Between 2011 and 2020, more than 140 million girls globally will have become child brides, according to the United Nations Population Fund (Crowe, 2013). From this total, 50 million will have been under the age of 15. By any measure, this is an appalling and unacceptable statistic. As a devout feminist, I argue that child marriage is a violation of human rights, which robs girls of their health, education, and general life prospects. What can be done to counter this problem? In 2018, Rebeca Gyumi was

awarded the UN Human Rights Prize for challenging the Tanzania Marriage Act, which allowed girls as young as 14 to be married with their parents' consent (United Nations Human Rights, 2018). Thanks to her petition and campaigning by her organization, *Msichana Initiative*, the High Court in Tanzania declared sections of Tanzania's Marriage Act of 1971 "unconstitutional" and raised the minimum age of marriage for both boys and girls to 18. Tanzania's Attorney General launched an appeal against this ruling arguing that child marriage could protect unmarried girls who get pregnant. In October 2019, Tanzania's Supreme Court of Appeal dismissed the Attorney General's appeal and asked Tanzania's government to respect the previous ruling. Children's rights campaigners have urged local advocacy groups to continue to pressure the government to implement this ruling. Tanzania has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world, with two out of five girls being married off before their 18th birthday (United Nations in Tanzania, 2020). Young committed advocates, such as Rebeca Gyumi, and her organization, *Msichana Initiative*, which translates to 'girl' in Swahili, aim to empower girls through education and address challenges which limit their right to education.

Plan International Canada is supporting youth-led groups that promote children's rights in the community, ensuring children are legally registered at birth, supporting girls' access to vocational skills training, and most importantly, informing communities on the importance of girls' education. According to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), if all women had secondary school education in sub-Saharan Africa as well as South and West Asia, child marriage would drop by 64 per cent (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2014). Also, if all women had a secondary school education, there would be 49 per cent fewer child deaths (Girls' Education, 2017). Furthermore, investing in girls so they can complete their next level of education could lead to lifetime

earnings of up to 68 per cent of annual gross domestic product (Chaaban & Cunningham, 2011). The benefits that come as a result of girls' education are obvious. Yet, the unanswered question remains: why are girls not receiving this education in the first place?

Statement of the Problem Situation

Girls in Tanzania, like in all of SSA, face numerous barriers to education, the effects of which are long-term and intergenerational. Culturally sensitive and appropriate interventions are needed to improve girls' self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy. What kinds of programs are effective in achieving female empowerment? Millions of girls around the world are not in school and those in school struggle to stay there for numerous reasons. What can be done to improve girls' access to and maintenance of education?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the educational experiences of secondary school girls in Singida, Tanzania and possible strategies to empower girls through enhanced self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy. Specifically, the study seeks to better understand barriers facing this marginalized and vulnerable population, and to examine the effects of a girl's leadership and empowerment program on self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy among the program's participants. The goal is to assess the potential of scaled-up programs like this to change the trajectory of girls' lives as they transition through school to womanhood.

Research Questions

The study will be guided by the following qualitative research questions.

1. What are the barriers faced by high school girls in Singida, Tanzania?

2. How do secondary school girls in Singida, Tanzania experience education?
3. What is the impact of a week-long leadership and empowerment program on girls' self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy?
4. What are the lessons or implications for the development and design of empowerment and support programs for girls?

Theoretical Framework

Several theoretical frameworks including a broad Feminist theoretical perspective and those surrounding girls' education, vulnerability, and marginalization underpin this study. Feminist theorists utilize the concepts of intersectionality, interdisciplinarity, and the intertwining of scholarship and activism to address critical questions (Ferguson, 2017). Intersectionality, founded by Crenshaw (1989), Collins (1990), and others in the 1980s, is a crucial tool to avoid either/or thinking and instead engage in inter-relational thinking. It facilitates a "matrix orientation (wherein lived identities are treated as interlaced and systems of oppression as enmeshed and mutually reinforcing)" (May, 2015, p. ix). Feminist theory attempts not only to describe the present conditions of women and men but also to present ways of understanding them together and to prescribe methods to move those conditions towards the elimination of gender, race, class, and sexual hierarchies. In this study, I first describe the current barriers to girls' education in the African and Tanzanian contexts and the reasons why these barriers exist. I then denote the ways in which secondary school girls in this study experience school and schooling, and their perceptions of the barriers they face as girls. Intersectional thinking requires willingness to listen to unfamiliar insights with raw openness (Keating, 2009). Trying to understand the barriers facing these girls without their voices and histories is like trying to understand colonialism without the voices and histories of indigenous people (Simpson,

2014). In order to employ intersectionality in a robust manner, it is not enough to read, speak, or reach out to these girls. Although each is important, I must encounter them in their native environment and become fluent in their history (Alexander, 2002). Armed with a deep knowledge of these girls' struggles, I examined strategies and approaches to overcome and diminish these barriers and address the sexual hierarchy that so debilitatingly affects girls in Tanzania and virtually all of SSA. "Intersectional sensibilities invite us into a necessary process of critical engagement, not to appropriate but to learn" (Ferguson, 2017). Feminist theory also lends itself to interdisciplinarity as many feminist theorists insist that multiple and diverse types of sources, modes of inquiry, and practices of writing are required to substantiate claims. In this study, I will use an interdisciplinary approach by sourcing studies relating to girls' education, vulnerability, and marginalization from not only SSA, but from various regions around the world. Interdisciplinary feminism is not "simply an adding of fields but an intermeshing of inquiries" (Ferguson, 2017, p. 275). Finally, feminist theory is a change-oriented scholarly practice that challenges oppression and works towards justice. It is therefore effective at explaining reality and facilitating change both locally and globally. I hope that through facilitating this empowerment program and conducting this research, new insights will be gleaned that can impact policy and encourage initiatives to promote gender equality in Tanzania and the wider East African region. A feminist theoretical approach is useful in this regard.

Significance of the Study

This study carries a great deal of importance on a local, national, and global scale. It is widely held conventional wisdom that "education is the foundation for development" (Gachukia, 2004, p. 1). The more any population is exposed to quality education, the more the nation prospers, and thus its citizens (President's Office Planning Commission, 2011). Girls around the

world are disadvantaged within the educational realm when education is, what should be considered, a human right and vital to the advancement of all nations. In 1990, the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) was held in Jomtien, Thailand. There, UNICEF set a goal of placing a heavy focus on girl's basic education and literacy, as they made up two thirds of illiterate people at that time (Coleman, 2017). President Moi of Kenya stated, "The warming of relations between East and West…and the reduction of the manufacture of arms, are all developments that should release huge amounts of resources…[which] should be put to better use of providing education for all" (Haddad et al., 1990, p. 6). Furthermore, President Borja of Ecuador claimed, "The cost of a nuclear submarine would finance the annual educational budget of 23 developing countries and meet the needs of 160 million school-age children" (Haddad et al., 1990, p. 7). Flash forward thirty years, it is clear that while some progress has been made, gender inequality is still a fundamental issue in the developing world. Sub-Saharan Africa and Tanzania remain parts of the epicenter of this injustice.

According to a report published on April 29th, 2019, by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), global military spending last year rose to $1.8trn, the highest level in real terms since reliable records began in 1988. In July 2015, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai, urged world leaders to cut eight days of military spending to give all children access to 12 years of free education. It is estimated that 39 billion dollars would be needed each year to fund this schooling (Malala Fund, 2018). The urgency of this issue demands that girls' voices be heard, and this study will provide a megaphone for Tanzanian girls and their female teachers. The academic community also serves to benefit from this study because it expands our knowledge about the challenges girls face in Tanzania. By adding to the existing literature on the subject of girls' education, we enhance our understanding of these issues and can begin to

develop possible solutions. The relevancy of this study to girls, organizations that work with girls, governments, and other stakeholders in developing countries increases its significance.

As will be discussed in the literature review, there are several key policies, which guide the provision of education in Tanzania. At the national level, these policies include: Tanzania Development Vision (2025); National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty, NSGRP/MKUKUTA I 2005/06-2009/10, NSGRP/MKUKUTA II 2010/11-2014/15; Tanzania Five Year Development Plan 2011/12-2015/16 (FYDP I) and 2016/17-2020/21 (FYDP II); and National Policy on Disability (2004). Sectorial policies and programs include: Education and Training Policy (2014), the overall policy on education; Technical Education and Training Policy (1996), currently under review; Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) phase one (2002 -2006), phase two (2007-2011), and phase III (2012-2016); Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP) (2004-2009); and the Educational Sector Development Plans (ESDP), the overarching policy and strategic objectives for the education sector since 1997. The results of this study would benefit the government of Tanzania as it could be used to further inform future national macro policies, plans, and strategies as well as various education sector policies, programs, and strategic plans. The latest ESDP covers the five-year period from 2016/17 to 2020/21, which is aligned with the current National Five-Year Development Plan (NFYDP) for the same time frame. Being that we are now in the latter years of the current ESDP, the information contained in this study could be used to plan for the next ESDP covering the period of 2021/22 to 2025/26. These policies enact major changes for the students and teachers to whom this study applies and could result in significant improvements to the quality of education they receive and deliver. Similar to the objectives of the Universal Primary Education (UPE), I hope that the this study will enhance access and equity in education, improve the quality and

capacities of the system, identify issues especially those of girls, strengthen institutional agreements, and encourage further monitoring and evaluation of the education system currently in place in sub-Saharan Africa (President's Office Planning Commission, 2011).

Development enables people to improve in a sustained manner, to keep healthy, to provide basic needs for their families, and to acquire knowledge and information pertinent to their well-being through education. However, development is hindered by a slow rate of economic growth, a trait experienced by many African nations (Gachukia, 2004). The education of girls is widely recognized as the most effective development investment a country can make because education serves as a catalyst in breaking the cycle of poverty nationwide (UNESCO, 2014). Furthermore, equitable access to education for both girls and boys is an important pillar to the advancement of a country (Coleman, 2017). In this study, I explore one type of investment Tanzania can make, that of enrolling its school-aged girls in focused leadership and empowerment programs. There is a large disparity between primary school gross enrolment rate in Tanzania for females, which in 2018 was at 82%, versus that of secondary school at 30.3% (UN data, 2018). It is through intervention programs such as the leadership and empowerment program discussed in this study, that girls can be encouraged to continue in school and follow their dreams, through feelings of increased self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy.

This study presents data from only female student and teacher participants, a unique trait, which sets it apart from other studies in Tanzania. The participation of female teachers from each of the 10 schools fulfilled the need of these girls to have someone in a position of leadership acting on their behalf to protect their rights and reinforce their importance in society. Their attendance also provided a unique opportunity for the program facilitators to work with the teachers on enhancing their capabilities to mentor, inspire, and support girls in their path to

leadership and empowerment. As community leaders, these teachers can use this service-learning experience to have a positive and meaningful impact on all girls as they walk through their classroom doors for years to come. Advocacy groups and Non-Governmental Organizations that work directly with teachers also serve to benefit from this study. In planning appropriate intervention and follow-up programs, they might look at our leadership and empowerment program and the information that I gathered from the participants to assist them in targeting appropriate areas of study.

At a local level, I hope this study will encourage more people to educate themselves on the current state of affairs for girls and their access to education so that they can take action to support this worthy cause. New insights will be provided to those living in developed countries of the struggles that girls face in developing countries such as Tanzania. I present the results of this study in an authentic way, where possible including direct quotations from the participants. I wished for the girls and their female teachers to be able to speak directly to the reader through the pages of this study, insisting on progressive, productive, and timely changes to the education system and all its components. By re-telling their stories, I provided them voices through which other people will learn about the barriers facing girls' education. A fulfilling education for all children, especially girls, is necessary now, and has always been, for the following reasons: "Girls' education raises economic productivity, reduces fertility rates, lowers infant and maternal mortality, improves the health, nutrition and well-being of families, and ensures better prospects of education for children" (Gauchukia, 2004, p. 5). Yet over 30 million girls in sub-Saharan Africa are missing from school (Gauchukia, 2004), and it is for them that the greatest significance of this study applies.

Definition of Key Concepts

Self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy are key concepts fueling this girls' leadership and empowerment program; therefore, their operationalization is essential to the understanding of this study. Self-efficacy is the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the sources of action required to manage prospective situations (Bandura, 1986). In this study, girls will show improved self-efficacy as they demonstrate a stronger belief in themselves and their ability to accomplish something they set their minds to. Bandura also defined human agency as "the human capability to exert influence over one's functioning and the course of one's action" (2009, p. 8). Whereas self-efficacy is one's perceived ability to deal with a task or situation, agency is one's actual ability to deal with a task or situation. Over the course of the week-long leadership and empowerment program, I observed and requested the reflection of the girls' own sense of agency when confronted with tasks outside of their comfort zone. While definitions of advocacy are widely contested, most include the struggle for fairness, empowerment, and social justice (Boylan and Dalrymple, 2011). Boylan and Dalrymple went on to say, "The central philosophy underpinning the concept of advocacy is the belief that children and young people should be accorded rights, recognised as citizens and be treated as equals" (2011, p. 1). A display of self-advocacy and advocacy on behalf of others by the girls in this leadership program was essential to the continued teaching and learning of this program. At Girls Leadership (2020), leadership is defined as making others and situations better as a result of one's presence and making that impact last even in that person's absence. This is practiced at interpersonal, intrapersonal, and societal levels. Intrapersonal leadership represents an awareness and respect for your internal voice and feelings. Interpersonal leadership encompasses speaking up for yourself in order to build healthy relationships. Societal leadership behooves speaking up for others, especially those marginalized, to create justice and equity (Jacobs, 2020). All three facets of leadership were

deeply engrained into the delivery of this program and were echoed in the participants' wishes. Finally, just as the development-oriented Africaid aims to empower girls through education – we too echo their definition of empowerment to denote a transference of power, a flow from the powerful to the disempowered, here recognized as girls (Banet-Weise, 2015). It is hoped that our female participants will feel empowered at the end of our program and going forward in life.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This section identifies some issues that should be taken into consideration when this study is read and interpreted. Because the study was written from a Feminist Theoretical Framework, there are inherent biases in the way the information was selected and presented. I tried to, where possible base my observations on statistics and facts, however some inferencing and personal observations weaved their way into the information presented. Furthermore, I took a personal interest in the success of this program since I was a facilitator and formed relationships with the girls and their teachers during the short while that I was there. Although I was impartial in reading the program reviews, my personal interest in the program's positive impact on the participants may have affected how I interpreted the data that I read.

With regards to the outlined suggestions in the bridging the barriers section of this study, it must be acknowledged that limitations of government funding will make it difficult for school sanitation facilities to be upgraded as well as better hiring and training policies to be implemented. Therefore, I suggest a collaborative community approach to improving girls' education so that the changes are made for the community, by the community. In this way, each country can operate within its own parameters to meet their specific needs.

Furthermore, this study is based on the thoughts of one group of girls, the top performing females from various schools who exhibited qualities of leadership, and they may not be representative of all girls their age in Singida, or Tanzania. While developing the evaluations, I decided to offer the participants a choice of language between English or Kiswahili. The reason for this was so that the girls and their teachers could answer in the language in which they felt most comfortable expressing themselves. Consequently, translating their evaluations required the use of Google Translate and resulted in some level of misinterpretation and confusion. Finally, due to the physical distance between the girls (my subjects), and the researcher (myself), it will be hard to follow up for any clarification and additional information I wish to pursue. The lack of access to technology and outbreak of the COVID-19 global pandemic exacerbated this challenge.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This review begins with an overview of the education system in Tanzania up to and including 2015, as well as the changes that await the system once the new Education Act takes effect. Further explored in this section are the prevalence, causes, and consequences of girls' education across a diverse range of contemporary sub-Saharan African and global societies.

Education System

Up to 2015, the education system in Tanzania followed a 2 – 7 – 4 – 2 – 3 + structure. Children between the ages of 5-6 begin with 2 years of non-compulsory pre-primary education (PPE), followed by 7 years of compulsory Primary Education (Standards I to VII), which is 'free, universal and compulsory' for all children aged 7-13. At the end of Standard IV, there is an examination, and upon completing Standard VII, the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) is administered which guides selection of students into Secondary Education. This level of fee-paying education is broken into two cycles: 4 years of lower secondary Ordinary Level (O-Level Forms 1 to 4) for students aged 14-17, followed by 2 years of upper secondary Advanced Level (A-level Forms 5 and 6) for youth aged 18-19. Selection and enrolment into senior A-level courses is based on a student's performance in "relevant A-Level subject combinations after the attainment of appropriate credits in the Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (CSEE) taken at the end of Form 4" (UNESCO, 2015, p. 7). The CSEE and the Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (ACSEE) signify the conclusion of the junior and senior secondary education cycles respectively, and their results inform the selection of students for three or more years of higher education.

The education system in Tanzania is now being restructured to offer 12 years of free compulsory basic education, which would move it to a 1 – 7 – 4 – 2 – 3 + structure. This is yet to be accommodated in the new Education Act, however, when it takes effect, the new structure will include one year of pre-primary education as well as four years of lower secondary education, both free and compulsory for all students (MoEST, 2017). Tanzania has prioritized education because it is considered imperative to human development. The right to education is guaranteed by the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania (1977), which states: "Every person has the right to self education, and every citizen shall be free to pursue education in a field of his choice up to the highest level according to his merits and ability…. The government shall endeavour to ensure that there are equal and adequate opportunities to all persons to enable them to acquire education and vocational training at all levels of schools and other institutions of learning" (The Constitution of The United Republic of Tanzania). However, research shows that equal opportunities do not exist for all, notably for girls.

Barriers

Considerable research has been conducted to identify the barriers to girls' education in SSA and the reasons for their existence (Chege & Sifuna, 2006; Kasente, 2003; Kwesiga, 2002; Kadzamira & Chibwana, 1999; Odaga & Neveld, 1995; Obura, 1991). The barriers that are most often cited can be grouped into three categories– economic, socio-cultural, and contextual.

Economic barriers. Financial constraints exist at both the familial and national levels. Most SSA countries have a low Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which places a great deal of strain on the funding allocated to education. With poorly trained or unprepared teachers and high student-to-teacher ratios, the quality of primary schooling quickly deteriorates (Deininger, Garcia, & Subbarao, 2003; Kadzamira & Rose, 2003). Also, an inadequate number of schools

appears to have a particularly severe impact on girls living in remote rural areas with poor physical access to services. Porter (2011) tells the story of Faustina, a 13-year-old pupil who always walks the four-kilometre walk with her girl friend who lives close by.

> If her friend is sick she prefers not to attend school, as there are places along the route where the road is narrow, and the grass is high. She has heard stories of people being beheaded there and is scared to pass on her own. When she was late to school earlier in the week (because of jobs she had to finish at home), the teacher made her carry sand to school (for classroom construction) as a punishment. (p. 69)

It can be seen through this story that distance to school plays a role in absenteeism as many girls consider their walk to school to be dangerous without a peer present. The story also brings into perspective, the role that teachers play in discouraging students from going late to school, in order to avoid the harsh consequences for lateness, including corporal punishment imposed by their teachers. Porter (2011) details the concerns raised by three schoolgirls whom she accompanied on their four-kilometre route to school from their homes in a remote area of Malawi.

> In this case, the girls normally walk together along a narrow footpath, which crosses five streams. In the wet season the route is potentially dangerous because of the slippery path, steep slopes, and streams in full spate. If the rains are very heavy they sometimes wait to see if water levels subside but may then have to take a more circuitous route. None of these girls have shoes for the walk to school. (p. 70)

This quote provides further support to the argument that with fewer schools available, children living further away from school must usually take a more treacherous path if they wish

to be educated and many lack the necessary tools to do so, including footwear. Samaritan's Feet, a non-profit organization that promotes and supports the use of footwear in developing countries, notes that there are many hazards associated with going barefoot in areas where there are contaminated sand, soil, and dirty water (Samaritan's Feet, 2015). More than 1.5 billion people worldwide are infected with parasitic diseases transmitted through contaminated soil (and dirty water) that could be prevented by wearing proper footwear (World Health Organization, 2013). Parasitic infections often prevent children from being able to attend school. The relationships between illness, access to education, and poverty have been well-documented by organizations such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF), and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Furthermore, if children are late to school as a result of their circuitous route, they are sometimes allowed to join the lesson in progress but, at other times are sent directly home, to walk alone on the long and potentially hazardous path once again, this time having been denied their basic human right of education.

Further economic barriers present themselves when financial constraints cause a family to have to choose between sending their son or daughter to school, in which case the son is most often favoured (Bunyi, 2008). In many African cultures, inheritance is by primogeniture wherein sons are set to inherit the family land and as a result are responsible for taking care of their aging parents. By contrast, daughters are expected to marry and live with their husband and his family. It is therefore seen as a wiser investment to educate sons, as their success will provide more direct returns to the parents as they age and will keep family wealth in the family.

There are also direct and indirect costs associated with schooling, which act as barriers to girls' education. The fees for students aged 6 to 13 attending primary school systems of many

SSA countries were eliminated through the Universal Primary Education Policies in the mid 1990s (Behrman, 2015). The implementation of this policy was a highly decentralized process with individual districts across the region carrying out implementation as they saw fit with secondary school education remaining a costly option for many families. Many governments also sought to eliminate indirect fees such as contributions to school development funds, donations to parents' funds, and the requirement to wear uniforms to school. However, Vavrus and Moshi (2009) would argue that although school fees have been eliminated in Tanzania, mandatory contributions continue to plague poor families, causing their children to be pulled from school.

To examine Tanzania's current educational fee structure, one must understand the financial history of this country. In the 1970s, Tanzania experienced an economic downturn beginning with the oil crises, followed by a costly war with Uganda, and then the stagnation of its agricultural sector (Holtom, 2005; Wagao, 1990). Within the decade, the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) provided a recommendation that Tanzania liberalize, privatize, and deregulate its industrial and agricultural sectors, which the then President Julius Nyerere refused to do as it did not align with the philosophy of *ujamaa*, or African socialism (Vavrus & Moshi, 2009). This created tension between the Tanzanian government and the international financial institutions who began to pull back on loans, further exacerbating the economic crisis. Once Nyerere resigned in 1985, the new President Ali Hassan Mwinyi agreed to the terms of the WB and IMF and international aid was restored to the country (Harrison, 2001; Holtom, 2005). Despite the improved relations, in 1999, the IMF decided that Tanzania had an "unsustainable debt burden" and recommended debt relief as part of the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative (IMF & IDA, 1999, p. 37). In its application for relief, the Tanzanian government was required to detail how funds would be redirected from servicing their debts to

bettering areas such as education and health in a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The first PRSP was approved in 2001 and the second PRSP in 2005, both of which helped improve the quality and quantity of primary education (Vavrus & Moshi, 2009).

The first PRSP stated that educational access would be enhanced by eliminating school fees: "The government will…abolish primary school fees in order to ensure that children, especially from poor families, will have access to primary school education" (United Republic of Tanzania, 2000, p. 26). The IMF and the International Development Association (IDA), a subsection of the WB, assessed the 2001 PRSP and had the following to say:

> In education, the [Tanzanian] government, along with several donor partners, has articulated a comprehensive basic education strategy that addresses most of the systemic issues needed to improve service delivery and quality over the medium term. During 2000/01 it has also abolished school fees at the primary level, increased significantly the budget allocation for education, introduced capitation grants and an investment fund to directly support schools at the local level, and established an education fund to support children from very poor families. (IMF & IDA, 2001, p. 2)

The comprehensive basic education strategy mentioned above is the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP), a five-year effort (2002-2006) to improve the quality of, and access to, Standards 1-7 for children aged seven to thirteen. This effort resulted in more than 1.5 million students enrolling (Sumra, 2003), 30 000 new classrooms built (World Bank, 2005) and in 2006, a 70% pass rate on the national Primary School Leaving Examination administered at the end of the seven-year primary cycle as compared to a 22% pass rate in 2000 (MoEVT, 2006; Namkambe, 2006).

The second PRSP, approved in 2005, came after the IMF and IDA, and stated that all school fees and mandatory contributions by parents would be eliminated in 2001. However, the quote which follows suggests this process was still in the works and not yet complete: "The government will maintain its current policy of abolishing primary school fees and related contributions" (United Republic of Tanzania, 2005, p. 44). The use of "abolishing" rather than "abolished" allows the government to present one front to international stakeholders, of having achieved this goal, and another to local policymakers, of working towards achieving this goal, but not without the use of additional contributions from parents (Vavrus & Moshi, 2009).

Vavrus and Moshi's 2009 study, *The Cost of 'Free' Primary Education in Tanzania,* was consulted due to its similarities to the community referenced in this study, that of Singida. Their primary goal was to explore the impact of post-primary education on boys' and girls' lives in a community on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, Old Moshi. Here most children of primary school age are enrolled in school, and their parents try hard to keep them in school through Standard 7 and beyond. Standard 7 is the graduating year for primary school students after which they go on to secondary school if they meet the requirement in a national standardized examination (Standard 7 Examination). This longitudinal study asked parents of children in primary school how much they had paid for the following in 2000 and 2006: (a) general school fees; (b) exam fees; (c) uniforms and sports clothes; (d) books and supplies; (e) transportation; (f) tuition classes; (g) pocket money; and (h) other expenses which parents were asked to specify. The concerning results showed that instead of a decline, there had in fact been a rise in minimum, maximum, and median costs of education for families, with most paying more than 18,000 shillings in 2006 as compared to 11,000 shillings in 2001. This is more than what could be expected due to inflation costs, which the government estimated to be steady at around 5%

(Mramba, 2002). Vavrus and Moshi (2009) showed that the difference in the means of the two samples was significant at the .01 levels, suggesting that the cost increase was not due to chance but to other factors. If the government had mandated in 2001, through the PRSP, that they would abolish primary school fees, how is it that the costs of education were increasing for families?

Vavrus and Moshi found that "principals were unanimous in their opinion of PEDP being the main reason for the higher pass rates on the Standard 7 examination, the improvements in school buildings, and the greater availability of textbooks and other teaching supplies" (2009, p. 6). PEDP seemed to be the source of funding for the improvements in textbook provision and teaching supplies at most schools examined by these researchers but they found that it was not the sole source of the money used to expand and renovate school buildings over the course of the six years. One headmistress they interviewed indicated that the PEDP government grant could only be used to purchase certain building supplies and the remainder of the cost had to be contributed by community members. Another headmistress revealed that although students do not pay "school fees", they must contribute a certain amount of money for food. Parents are also expected to contribute to building projects to pick up from where the PEDP funding runs out. If either of these "contributions" are not provided, a student is sent home. Additionally, parents must purchase costly uniforms, shoes, and sweaters, costs which further demonstrate the mandatory contributions expected from parents, and not met by the government. If Education For All is the goal, then the whole cost of educating a child must be considered, not just the formal school fees. Vavrus and Moshi (2009) suggested that many believe that:

> Barriers to universal, high-quality education can be eliminated through sound national policy guided by broad international benchmarks. Yet this…does not pay sufficient attention to disparate local-level power relations. In some cases, the most important ones

> relate to gender…in other cases, the critical power differences lie in wealth disparities, ethical hierarchies, racial distinctions, or a combination thereof. (p. 10)

Even if fees and contributions were to be completely covered by the government, simple costs such as nourishing children continue to overburden some parents as described by Porter (2011) who spoke of Abigail, a 14-year-old girl, whose only source of nutrition came after she had returned home from school. As a result, she struggles to concentrate at school, tired and hungry. My first visit to Singida in 2011, further illustrated the lack of nutritional sustenance with which vulnerable children had to function each day. Several children shared their stories of how they would walk several kilometres to school, complete their academic day, and return home before they had eaten or drank anything. When these children finally got an opportunity to nourish themselves, it was with ugali, a type of cornmeal porridge with limited nutritional value, and if available some vegetables, but rarely meat. Water had to be collected from a distance before it could be consumed. Stunting is what happens to a child's brain and body if he or she does not get the proper amount of nutrients in his/her first one thousand days of life. Most of these children suffer from decreased IQ's, cognitive deficits, poor school achievement, and an increase in school drop out (UNESCO, 2015). According to the 2010 Tanzania Demographic and Health survey (TDHS), children stunting decreased from 44 per cent in 1999 to 42 per cent in 2011, however there is still a long way to go before it is eradicated (NBS, 2011).

In addition to the cost of nourishing their children, parents must also consider the negative opportunity costs associated with loss of income school-enrolled children would have brought into the family. "Child labour is widespread in SSA, which accounts for 32 per cent of the world's children engaged in the practice" (Bunyi, 2008, p. 183). Families in extreme poverty often require children to work the family land, undertake paid employment, and engage in petty

business such as hawking. During my first trip to Tanzania, I noted several young children tending to livestock, walking to and fro, instead of attending school. Even if children are not required to engage in child labour, girls may be kept home from school to provide domestic labour such as taking care of siblings and doing household chores so that their mothers can go to work. Porter (2011) shared the tale of Effie, an 11-year-old living with her sister, who was forced to return home because her sister was unable to pay the school fees. As a girl, she had many tasks to complete before she could attend school including fetching water, sweeping, and disposing of garbage. Her brother on the other hand is usually ready to leave home before her because he has fewer household tasks to perform.

Despite the mandates of the PRSPs, poverty levels still ran high, and it was acknowledged that to reduce inequalities in Tanzania, more resources would be needed to bring about growth. In June 2005, Tanzania prepared the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP) with Kiswahili acronym: Mkakati wa Kukuza na Kupunguza Umasikini Tanzania (MKUKUTA). This task was implemented for the period of 2005-2010, informed by the aspirations of Tanzania's Development Vision 2025 formulated in 1999 (United Republic of Tanzania, 2005) and the Education Sector Development Programme developed in 1997. The MKUKUTA had "an increased focus on equitable growth and governance compared to the first PRSP, and it is an instrument for mobilizing efforts and resources towards targeted poverty reduction outcomes" (Rweyemamu, 2009, p. 7). The third-generation poverty reduction strategy, MKUKUTA II, covered the period of 2010 to 2014. Key targets set during the implementation of this NSGRP II included: (i) Universal access for boys and girls to quality pre-primary and primary education; (ii) Achieve a Net Enrolment Rate of 100 per cent for pre-primary and primary education; (iii) Improved primary school (Forms I to VII) survival rates for boys and

girls; (iv) Improved pass rate for boys and girls at primary schools; Improved primary school transition rate by 27.5 %; (v) Train, deploy, and retain quality teachers to achieve a recommended pupil qualified teacher ratio of 1:40; and (vi) Enhance monitoring and evaluation of primary education activities (President's Office Planning Commission, 2011).

Tanzania's Five-Year Development Plan (FYDP) for 2012-2016, also had as its focus the education sector, notably the improvement of quality at each level, while facilitating access to the people most in need. Operational objectives comprised: creating a conducive environment for teaching and learning; training an adequate number of teachers and instructors; increasing enrollment and retention at every education level; and developing the skills necessary to implement the interventions in the priority sectors. Relevant strategic interventions included: improving accessibility and equity at all levels of education; improving quality at all levels of education; and increasing student enrolment in science and engineering, education, agriculture, and the health profession (President's Office Planning Commission, 2011). The FYDP objectives recognize that to become a Middle-Income Country, its populace must be educated. By 2013, most regions in Tanzania had reached a Net Enrolment Rate (NER) above 95 per cent for the number of students enrolled in primary school, however one third of the regions still had a NER under 90 per cent which demonstrated that the initial momentum of the 2000s to universalize primary education had slowed, and the efficiency of the system was in decline (President's Office Planning Commission, 2011). The 2013/2014 UNESCO Global Monitoring Report also showed that at least 1 million children were out of school in Tanzania.

Socio-cultural factors. Across SSA, social norms, values, beliefs, attitudes, and practices work against the education of girls. According to the United Nations Children's Fund, an estimated one in ten girls in Africa skip school during menstruation or drop out because of the

lack of proper lavatory sanitation. In fact, LaFraniere (2005) showed that enrolment rates for girls in Guinea increased 17 per cent between 1997 and 2002 after improvements were made to school sanitation facilities. Socio-cultural practices such as female genital mutilation, early marriage, and teenage pregnancies also contribute to high dropout rates amongst girls (Bunyi, 2008). Some parents fear sending their daughters to school because they believe that it will cause them to develop corrupted morals leading them to engage in premarital sex and as a result, bring dishonour to their families. Other parents raise the issues of rape and teenage pregnancy citing that most girls do not finish school because they get pregnant. One of the girls with whom Porter (2011) had walked, revealed that five older boys intent on raping her had recently chased her. To make the situation worse, sexual harassment and gender-based violence (GBV) at school pose a tremendous concern due to sexual abuse by teachers, who sometimes demand sexual favours for a passing grade, even if the student's academic work has already merited such a grade (Coleman, 2017). During her time as an English teacher in Guinea, Coleman (2017) learned of the story of 14-year-old Maria, the older sister to one of her students.

> Her teacher, Mr. H seemed highly qualified and caring. However, soon, complaints from other students began to be brought to the school administration. Students complained that Maria was getting better treatment from Mr. H. The administration investigated the issues and found out that Mr. H was using his position of authority to demand sexual favors from Maria in turn for better grades. (p. 268)

Unfortunately, Maria was too scared to ask for academic help from other teachers and felt that pleasuring Mr. H was her only option to improve her grades. The school administration fired Mr. H but there were no legal ramifications for his actions. Soon after, another school hired him, and he once again had unfettered access to hundreds of vulnerable girls.

Owing to an unequal gender power relationship, girls are often verbally abused and demeaned by teachers if they struggle with the curriculum (Coleman, 2017). Many consider girls to be less intellectually gifted than boys especially in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) subjects (Bunyi, 2008). The socialization process in SSA leaves girls feeling disenchanted and disempowered. They begin at a young age to develop low expectations of themselves and feel incapable of competing on the same playing field as boys. In fact, as they grow older, girls tend to fulfill the diminutive norms and values expected of women in society and adopt a subservient role to serve men (Bunyi, 2008). Schooling, however, can also positively affect the "socio-cognitive" determinants of behaviour including knowledge, attitudes, and perceived control over behaviour (Jukes et al, 2008). The cognitive and non-cognitive skills developed in school may also change the way individuals process risk and increase perceived control over behaviour (Behrman, 2015). It is thus important for teachers and administrators to serve as role models in creating gender positive socialization norms for both boys and girls.

Finally, the prescribed gender roles for girls and women in SSA countries act as a barrier in their education. Girls are expected to help their mothers with domestic work whereas boys are simply required to concentrate on their academic performance. When girls are not able to complete school assignments due to the heavy burden of household chores, they become less engaged with school, their attendance drops off, and eventually they drop out of school (Bunyi, 2008). Uwezo conducted a Literacy and Numeracy Survey in 2014 in the three regions of Dar es Salaam, Mbeya, and Mtwara. The findings revealed that parental ignorance had been a major reason for students dropping out (63.5%), followed by poverty (14.7%), parents separation (14.4%), health problems (6.2%), bullying (6.2%), early marriages (1.2%), and distance to school (1.2%). School attendance is especially affected in rural areas where, for example, some

girls are expected to act as transporters twice a week when markets are held in nearby towns. Porter (2011) explains:

> Unsurprisingly, girls in this village tend to be less successful in the competitive examinations for entry to secondary school. Only five out of 30 eligible children (four boys, one girl) had been selected in the previous year, so the remaining 25 who were not selected (boys and girls) are mostly enrolled as 'night scholars' at the secondary school eight kilometres away (i.e. paying for lessons from the teachers after the school day has finished there). The night scholars (usually around 13 to 15 years old) walk to school in daylight but must return home in the dark: this poses hazards for girls. 'The older girls who attend [the secondary school], because it's so far and it's a night school and they come back late with the boys, they form "marriage", then they get pregnant and drop out.' 'Girls just fall into marriage.' (p. 70)

It is devastating to see so clearly laid out the series of steps that cause girls to lose sight of their futures, full of hope. Girls lose out on opportunities to attend higher education due to gendered expectations placed above that of education.

Contextual barriers. Many countries in SSA have experienced armed conflict or are rebuilding from recently diffused civil wars. In conflict situations, parents often take their daughters out of school for their safety, especially when they need to walk long distances to and from school. Girls often serve as victims of gender-based war violence including rape, mutilation, forced prostitution, unplanned pregnancy, and sexual slavery. These grotesque sexual offenses also place them at greater risk for contracting human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). Over 35 million people infected with HIV currently live in SSA (UNAIDS, 2013). As discussed earlier, social norms at play in SSA put

girls at greater risk of contracting this disease. The prevalence of relationships between older males and young girls, who tend to play subservient roles in sexual encounters, serves to increase their rate of contraction to four to seven times that of boys (Fleischman, 2002) with increasing partner age differences associated with higher HIV incidence (Schaefer et al., 2017). It has been shown that intergenerational relationships tend to increase HIV incidence, but not intragenerational relationships, largely dependant upon the fact that HIV prevalence is higher among older men than in younger men, so young women engaging in sexual relations with older men are at greater risk of contracting HIV (Dellar et al., 2015). Women are also biologically more susceptible to contracting the virus through sexual intercourse than men (Padian et al., 1991; Ramjee & Daniels, 2013). "Women have a greater mucosal surface area exposed to pathogens and infectious fluid for longer periods during sexual intercourse and are likely to face increased tissue injury" (Ramjee & Daniels, 2013). "In Africa today women comprise over 60 per cent of HIV infections, a dramatic shift from the early days of the epidemic when infection rates were higher in men" (UNAIDS, 2013). Within this percentage of women infected with HIV, 76% are 15-24 years old (International Council of Nurses, 2006). Secondary education is associated with reductions in intergenerational relationships (Schaefer et al., 2017), and girls are at an increased risk for infection when they leave school thus, increasing girls' schooling has been suggested as a mechanism to reduce HIV transmission (Behrman, 2015). The more education a girl receives, the greater capacity she will have for reducing risks of contraction through condom use or other preventative behaviour. Girls who are more educated, tend to marry later and choose partners with more education so by increasing girls' schooling, there is a positive effect on the age of marriage and the type of partner chosen; often those who are less likely to have, and therefore transmit HIV (Behrman, 2015). However, even if a girl does not

contract the disease, her education can still suffer the consequences of its impact on society as girls are often taken out of school to care for their parents and relatives suffering from HIV and AIDS-related illnesses. The financial resources required to care for a loved one suffering from HIV will have to come from somewhere and it is often from the education funds of daughters.

Bridges

There are steps that can, and must, be taken to support girls in their educational endeavours in SSA. These steps include, but are not limited to, addressing cultural biases towards girls and education, eradicating GBV in schools, improving infrastructure issues, increasing the number of female teachers in classrooms (Coleman, 2017), and reducing fees. Furthermore, the impact of a weeklong girls' leadership and empowerment program will be discussed.

Address cultural bias. This is best accomplished with a community-based approach, which involves a partnership with the local people in all stages of the project (UNHCR, 2008). This whole community approach lends credibility to the issue of cultural bias and encourages change from members of said community. It is best if individuals in positions of authority lead the change, for example, by holding meetings and running campaigns stressing the importance of educating girls. In this way, parents will be more inclined to send their daughters to school. Policies also serve to enact change such as mandatory completion of primary school up to standard seven. This ensures that young wed mothers continue their education until they receive a basic knowledge of reading, writing, and mathematics (Coleman, 2017). Policies also need to be put in place to decrease the prevalence of child marriage by establishing child protection laws. As mentioned in the background of this study, Rebeca Gyumi was awarded the UN Human Rights Prize in 2018 for challenging the Tanzania Marriage Act, which allowed girls as young as

14 to be married with their parents' consent (United Nations Human Rights, 2018). Children's rights campaigners have urged local advocacy groups to continue to pressure the government to uphold Tanzania's High Court ruling to change the minimum age of marriage for both boys and girls to 18. Child marriage is harmful to girls' health and it slows progress toward development goals, a concern that should encourage many governments to make changes. It is imperative that girls have equal opportunities as boys to receive education in order to develop a fruitful society. In Tanzania, secondary gross enrolment of females versus males was 30.3% and 33.1% respectively in 2018 (UN data, 2018). However, when one examines the tertiary gross enrolment ratio for education, the results are bleaker with a 2.7% for females and a 5.2% for males. The media can serve as a positive influencer in this facet by creating television and radio programs to educate the general public and create a new mentality towards the importance of all levels of education for both boys and girls. When parents and guardians understand the importance of education, they will begin enforcing the enrolment of girls in school (Coleman, 2017).

Eliminate gender-based violence. The government should mandate a zero-tolerance policy towards violence and harassment in schools. Any cases arising from such actions should be dealt with accurately and efficiently. The safety of both boys and girls must be held to the same high esteem. There must be a national registry to record and account for those found to be guilty of such inhumane actions, including teachers. Teachers who sexually abuse students must be punished (Coleman, 2017). Furthermore, teachers who are fired from schools, like Mr. H referenced earlier in this study, should not be rehired at other institutions that work with youth. To further strengthen the hiring process, newly employed teachers should be required to sign a mandatory code of conduct and complete training on the issues of GBV where they are made to understand gender analysis, mainstreaming, and the universal declaration of human rights

(United Nations, 2018). In September 2019, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) published a news article entitled, *Engaging men to end gender-based violence in Kigoma*. Musoga, a Priest/Reverend of the Pentecost Church, facilitates the Engaging Men in Accountable Practice (EMAP) GBV Prevention Programme. This program, implemented by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) with the support of UNFPA, encourages men to reflect on their behaviours. Men attend training for 16 weeks to learn about gender, gender equality, GBV, women's empowerment, and human rights. Women also attend the training and offer their opinion on the types of behaviours they think males should address, and this is integrated into the men's training. This type of professional development should be made available to teachers over the course of their careers to keep them abreast on how to create and maintain a safe, supportive environment for all students, regardless of gender. Finally, open lines of communication should be maintained between Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), management, teachers, and government representatives in order to maintain a safe school environment. With this open line of communication, however, comes the responsibility to protect those that speak out against GBV; someone of influence in the community should lead the way. In this regard, others will follow (Coleman, 2017).

Improve infrastructure. In 2012, UNICEF Sierra Leone – acting on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation – conducted a study to evaluate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services in schools, pupils' behaviour, and the health and educational status of students in rural Sierra Leone. Of the girls who had reached menarche, 10 per cent indicated that they had missed an average of 4.2 days of school over three months. The most common reasons were pain, fear of leakage, and shame – although heavy flow, lack of water, lack of privacy for cleaning, and lack of disposal facilities

were also reported (Caruso et al., 2013). This study, in addition to many more, insist on improvements to latrines for girls, including offering completely enclosed toilets which are separate for boys and girls, and seminars lead by health professionals offered each school year, stressing the importance of hygiene. Deadlines must be set for the mandatory construction or renovation of such facilities. There must be locks on each stall door and proper signage on bathroom doors indicating the assigned gender. The Ministry of Education should move to create a section of its department that specifically handles school bathrooms including their maintenance by custodians. Schools that have not implemented proper toilets by the end of the grace period should expect to be fined by their local government (Coleman, 2017).

In May 2017, UNICEF published an article entitled, *WASH in schools, Female hygiene management in Bahati School, Temeke District, Dar Es Salaam*. Thanks to the promotion of WASH in Temeke Primary Schools, a project implemented by the not-for-profit organization Sanitation and Water Action (SAWA) and supported by UNICEF, Bahati school now has fully functioning water and sanitation facilities.

> [In one year] the project reached nearly 14,000 pupils and 380 teachers in nine primary schools in Temeke Municipality with improved access to water and sanitation and improved overall hygiene behaviour. In addition to 10 drophole latrines for boys and 10 for girls, both with individual handwashing facilities, Bahati School now has 4 group handwashing stations on the school ground, two tippy tap handwashing stations, one toilet for children with disabilities, and safe drinking water tanks. (UNICEF, 2017)

Additionally, the girls' toilets have a room dedicated to menstrual hygiene with a box containing sanitary pads, a disposal bin, and an exterior incinerator for used products. SAWA along with the Water, Health, Community Development and Education Team (WAHECO),

trained the school personnel on good hygiene practices, and teachers have since trained students. Following the project, Ms. Hadija Msongoro, a Health Teacher at Bahati school, noted improved attendance especially amongst girls who would not attend school during menstruation due to the absence of a clean, private space for them to use on the school grounds. Now they take great pride in their menstrual hygiene room and toilet block for the exclusive use of girls. It is evident that when schools have adequate facilities, a major obstacle to consistent attendance is removed. As part of its Vision 2025, the Government of Tanzania pledged to increase access to improved sanitation to 95 percent by 2025. The Second Five Year Development Plan (FYDP II) also set as a target, 85 percent access to improved sanitation facilities in rural areas (Mkapa, 2005).

Increase female role models. In a 2016 article posted in the Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam) Hilda Mhagama, freelance journalist, was quoted as saying:

> In the modern world, women need to support one another and face challenges as one. Women with influence and power have the ability to transform a generation, as do their male counterparts. However,…women across the world are still facing difficulties including sexual abuse and domestic harassment. Media have been reporting on the rape, murder, denial of education and physical attacks against women. (Mhagama, 2016)

It can be seen from this quote that sensitive topics are openly discussed in public forums, paying acknowledgement to their presence and need for diminishment, yet large gains have yet to be made. Before substantial change can come about, young girls must see women in non-traditional positions of leadership so that they can model their own aspirations after the examples they have before them. With high aspirations comes high motivation to stay in school, the ultimate desired outcome of this study.

For Tanzania to attain the Middle-Income Country (MIC) status, the country needs to reduce the estimated gap in highly skilled workers (UNESCO, 2015). In the education sector alone, more than 900,000 qualified teachers must be employed, in addition to the 2007 level of 238,000 that existed according to Tanzania's Integrated Labour Force Survey. The governments of SSA should set a quota for the numbers of female teachers they will hire, and they should work hard to improve the quality of working conditions for all teachers. Through ethnographic case studies conducted at three Tanzanian schools, Sharan Tao (2015) concluded that although men and women experienced similar material conditions, their opportunities and constraints largely differed, and female teachers could readily relate to instances of absenteeism and distraction. To further support female staff in schools, there should be no gender-discrimination based hiring practices and pay and benefits must be equal for both males and females. When change comes from the top down, its effects will be seen on the ground level. As gender biases begin to disappear from the society, we will begin to see them diminish in the schools, which are simply a microcosm of society at large. It is important to note that female teachers are rarely the perpetrators of GBV, so their increased hiring and prevalence around the school will help reduce school-based sexual harassment (Dee, 2006). It is imperative that they also occupy positions of power such as a principal. Just as scholarship programs can be used as an incentive to have girls continue into secondary and tertiary education, incentive programs can encourage young females to become teachers. Female teachers can make classrooms feel safer and more inviting for girls. With the increase of positive female role models in school, girls will become more empowered and motivated to continue in school. However, to get more qualified female teachers in schools, girls must first finish school (Coleman, 2017). One of the aforementioned suggestions will

hopefully serve to break the vicious cycle of fewer females graduating, leading to fewer female educators.

The beneficial impacts of maternal schooling on child development have been widely studied. Maternal education improves birth outcomes (Currie and Moretti, 2003; Tuncalp et al, 2014), child health and nutrition (Abuya et al., 2012; Makoka & Masibo, 2015; Thomas et al., 1991), child education (Harding et al., 2015; Haveman and Wolfe, 1995), and children's test scores (Moore and Schmidt, 2007; Rosenzweig and Wolpin, 1994). So, if older daughters also play a significant role in raising their younger siblings, the above beneficial impacts should also be seen from the schooling of daughters. Qureshi (2018) studied the effects of an older sister's schooling in rural Pakistan where 75% of mothers and 40% of fathers have no schooling. As a result, the older sister fulfills the role of academic tutor 70% of the time and if she is further educated, there must be spillover from that benefit into the family. The older sister's intellectual development provides a rich opportunity for teaching younger children (Qureshi, 2018; Zajonc & Markus, 1975). Younger siblings also view their older sibling as a role model from whom to observe, imitate, and learn (Behrmester et al., 1992; Whiteman et al., 2007). Qureshi (2018) found that an additional year of schooling completed by the oldest sister increased the younger brothers' schooling by 0.2 years or 7% relative to the mean. It also led to statistically significant increases in the probability of a younger brother being able to read (4.7%), write (4.3%), add/subtract (3.4%), and count (3.2%). She found that these "oldest sister schooling effects" were to the same order of magnitude as those for maternal education found in past studies (Behrman, 1997). It is evident that having an educated older sister benefits the entire family, and it may be from this vantage point, that some families will need to be convinced of the equal benefits of educating their daughters, as well as their sons.

Reduce fees. Guided by the Tanzania Development Vision 2025, as well as several policies and programs, Tanzania established several education sub-sector plans aimed at putting into action the goals of EFA. This framework was established at the 2000 World Conference on Education held in Dakar, Senegal, a follow-up to the 1990 conference held in Jomtien, and includes six targets: (1) Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children; (2) Ensuring that by 2015, all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality; (3) Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes; (4) Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults; (5) Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality; and (6) Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy, and essential life skills (President's Office Planning Commission, 2011, p. 9).

Through the EFA initiative, international organizations, and national governments in SSA have worked to abolish fees and other mandatory contributions. Research indicates that the elimination of school fees in East Africa has rapidly increased enrolment in primary schools (Glewwe & Zhao, 2005; International Monetary Fund and the International Development Associations, 2001, 2004; Orodho, 2014). It has been shown that drop out rates and absenteeism decrease when school uniforms are provided which can also encourage grade progression (Duflo

et al., 2006; Evans et al., 2008). Even though Tanzania is committing to providing 12 years of free and compulsory basic education, encompassing pre-primary, primary, and four years of ordinary level secondary education (MoEST, 2017), indirect fees must also be considered when looking to reduce barriers to education such as transport, examination papers, and lunches, to name a few. Governments must step in with subsidies to offset the funds previously provided by school fees. Grants have been lower than what the schools in most Sub-Saharan countries would have collected from parents, putting them in a position where they are managing more students with fewer resources. There has also been well-documented corruption in capitation grant programs, the amount of money the government sends schools per student enrolled, in SSA countries such as Kenya and Uganda (UNESCO, 2014). If the government decides on a per capita allocation per pupil, it will need to account for changes in value over time. Despite its challenges, EFA has been heralded as a new era for girls' education in Africa and it continues to draw global attention toward addressing gender disparities in enrolment and attainment (Bloch, Beoku-Betts, & Tabachnick, 1998; Samoff, 1999; Sutherland-Addy, 2008).

Koski et al. (2018) studied the impact of eliminating primary school tuition fees on child marriage in sub-Saharan Africa. They also examined randomized studies that showed that providing financial incentives for girls' education could delay marriage however, this is not a sustainable tactic and it was further mentioned that larger-scale interventions are needed. Our Global Community Engagement Team provided a less cost-prohibitive, large-scale program: a week-long girls' leadership and empowerment program for 60 girls and 10 teachers which, through analysis, has shown to be effective at encouraging girls to remain in school and even pursue higher education, through feelings of improved self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

To begin the search for the barriers plaguing girls in their path to education, I began where most 21st century scholars do, with Google. After typing in the keyword *girls' education*, I was brought to websites like UNICEF, Plan International Canada, and the World Bank. It was determined that many barriers exist and that preliminary research questions would provide for an in-depth look into the lives of girls around the world.

Reflection on my 2011 trip to Tanzania, where the issues first permeated my consciousness, seemed to be a logical starting point. On that trip, visits to several elementary and high schools highlighted social issues that vulnerable children faced, including, but not limited to, lack of nutrition and hydration, costs associated with uniforms and school materials, and extremely high student to teacher ratios. In Singida, I made a promise to never forget the children at Kititimo and it is through this study that a small part of their memory lives on.

Once a part of the world had been selected for study, I moved to a web-based search through the University of Windsor's online library portal, Leddy Library. Here I used the keywords, *girls' education*, *sub-Saharan Africa, Tanzania,* and *barriers* to generate search results and the associated abstracts were examined for relevancy to the issue of girls' education in SSA. While reading these articles, I highlighted key points and determined further articles therein contained that might help to develop and/or support the points to be made. These subsequent articles were then perused, and I began to formulate a conceptual map for writing. Current news articles and international affairs were also included to bring present day relevance and authenticity to the study.

When an opportunity emerged in 2019 to return to Tanzania to plan and implement a week-long girls' leadership and empowerment program, I instantly and enthusiastically committed. Sixty girls from ten local public secondary schools and ten female teachers participated in this program funded by a District Community Grant from Rotary District 6400 and the Rotary Club of Windsor (1918). The year in which I participated was the second year that the girls' leadership and empowerment program was run in Singida, Tanzania, however it was the first time that any data was collected. While there, I collected data as part of the program evaluation process to monitor the effectiveness of the program and the general receptiveness of its participants to the components that were being delivered. After each day's delivery, the facilitators convened, and notes were taken on the debriefing that took place in order to reflect upon points of strengths and potential opportunities for improvement for next year's program delivery. Both the program evaluations completed by students and teachers, and the debriefing observations compiled with the facilitators, were used as data in this study.

Research Design

A qualitative study states the purpose and research questions in a broad and general way, centered on the participants' experiences. This requires a qualitative researcher to rely more heavily on the views of the participants and less on the results of prior research, in contrast to quantitative research which is rooted deeply in the results of prior research (Creswell, 2002). I chose to study girls' experiences with education and, although I read about and cited studies that provided evidence of girls' experiences around the world, I did not use this literature to specify my research questions. Instead, the first two research questions were left general: "What are the barriers faced by high school girls in Singida, Tanzania?" and "How do secondary school girls in Singida, Tanzania experience education?" By asking these questions, I could observe and read

first-hand, the girls' own personal experiences. It can therefore be said that this qualitative study explored research questions for which the variables were initially weakly known by the researcher, and which necessitated exploration prior to commencing the study.

I first attempted to understand a central phenomenon, the educational experiences of girls in Tanzania, and then tried to explain how an independent variable, "the weeklong leadership and empowerment program", could influence this central phenomenon, "girls' educational experiences in Tanzania", which had now become the dependent variable. It is through my subsequent research question, "What is the impact of a week-long leadership and empowerment program on girls' self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy?" that I sought to bridge the gap between how a week-long leadership and empowerment program could lead to educational gains for girls over the course of their lives. It is my hope that the program will make a difference in their lives by changing how they perceive themselves, their education, and their place in society. Finally, my last research question, "What are the lessons or implications for the development and design of empowerment and support programs for girls?" will follow from the results of question three. From this analysis, I will find out whether or not the leadership and empowerment program had an effect, and to what extent its programs and interventions could be further developed and used for future interventions.

In conducting this qualitative study, I pulled aspects from both Grounded Theory and Ethnographic Designs, as presented in Creswell's 2002 text on Educational Research. Grounded Theory allowed me to examine a number of individuals who all experienced an action, interaction, or process, in this case, the girls' and their teachers' participation in the leadership and empowerment program. Grounded theory designs employ systematic, qualitative procedures that I used to formulate a general explanation of girls' educational experiences, grounded in the

views of the participants. I collected survey data from the program evaluations, which I examined with the intention of developing and relating themes of information. I then used this information to compose a visual that portrays the general explanation (Creswell, 2002). From this, I compared my findings with those of previous research to show how the experiences of our program participants resemble or differ from those of other girls in similar or different settings.

The ethnographic design allowed me to study one group of individuals, by examining them in the setting where they live and work, and in developing a portrait of how they interact. This is why it was essential for me to travel to Singida to observe and participate in the girls' leadership and empowerment program rather than just collecting back the completed surveys from the facilitators and analysing post-program data from Canada, never having experienced the reality of the program, or the girls' lives for that matter. By having immersed myself in their culture through participant observation, I was better equipped to describe, analyze, and interpret the people of Singida's shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that developed over time (Creswell, 2002). Through ethnography, I provided a detailed picture of girls' educational experiences by drawing on various sources of information, before, during, and after the program.

Site and Participant Selection

When an opportunity emerged to return to Tanzania to plan and implement a week-long girls' leadership and empowerment program, I instantly committed. The program took place in the municipality of Singida, a central town in Tanzania, with a population of approximately 150,000 at the time of the 2012 census. Being that the region of Singida is mostly rural, the local economy is based heavily on agriculture, and most of its population, upwards of 90% including children, work extensively on farms (Philips, 2018). Other main productive sectors include livestock keeping, natural resources, tourism, manufacturing, fishing, and mining (NBS, 2015).

Singida contributes 1.85% to the government of Tanzania's GDP (NBS, 2015) and while the socio-economic status of Singida's people is decent, its rates of infant and maternal mortality, as well as health unit ratio to population, positively exceeds national standards (Regional RCH report, 2015). In the education sector, the Singida region has an underdeveloped primary and secondary school system with an average of 4 schools per ward at a density of 1.1 school per 100 square kilometres (NBS, 2015). This fact further prompted our interest in choosing this region for the girls' leadership and empowerment program; that where its benefits would be largely felt.

This study used purposive sampling to select participants whereby individuals were selected intentionally because they possess the important trait of being a female participant in the girls' leadership and empowerment program. The 2019 sample consisted of all 60 secondary school female students and 10 female teacher supervisors who participated in the one-week leadership and empowerment program in the Municipality of Singida. These students were recruited by their principals following a letter that Dr. Clinton Beckford, the program's affiliate professor, sent to the Director of Singida Municipal Council. This letter requested the support of the Director for our Girls' Leadership and Empowerment Program. It further asked permission of the Director to involve 60 girls and their teachers from ten schools in our program, including documents that provided details about the project specifying the activities that would be undertaken and the follow-up visits to the schools for the facilitation of the girls' clubs. After granting us permission to run the program, the Director of Singida Municipal Council directed the principals of the selected schools to choose student and teacher participants.

Consent of participation was then arranged between the parents of selected students, the students themselves, and the principals of the schools. Teachers given the opportunity to participate by the principal, provided consent by accepting their nomination to attend the

program. Upon arrival at the program, students and teachers were informed that we would be collecting feedback about the program and that they would be asked to complete program evaluations but were made explicitly aware that it was not a mandatory component of the program. If they chose not to complete the survey, they simply would not fill it out, leaving it on the table. Consent for use of data forms were prepared for signing by both students and teachers.

In convenience sampling, a type of nonprobability sampling, participants that are willing and available are studied and therefore, may not be representative of the population as a whole. The principals selected participant girls from amongst the top performing female students who exhibited qualities of leadership in their respective schools. As a result, the participants in our program may not be representative of all girls their age in Singida or Tanzania. It should also be noted that there are sixteen secondary schools in Singida municipality however, because of the remoteness of six schools, their students were not included in the program. It is possible that the students of these schools might have added some unique perspectives to the study given the more rural and isolated nature of their communities. As with any type of sampling, there will always be some degree of sampling error, the difference between the sample estimate and the true population score.

Data Collection

The data that was used and analysed in this study was collected as part of the program evaluation of the girls' leadership and empowerment program. Questionnaire instruments with pre-set questions (surveys) were employed to collect qualitative data based on the words from numerous individuals, with their views taking centre stage. Due to the relatively large sample size, some specific, narrow questions were used to obtain data on a few, select variables.

However, the majority of questions were posed in a general way so that participants could provide individualized responses instead of responding in a pre-set way.

With the parent involvement study conducted in 2005 by Deslandes & Bertrand, they needed to translate their survey items into French to fit the Québec contact. I too needed to translate all survey questions into Kiswahili to fit the Tanzanian context and chose to have the same questions in English on the front side of the survey to offer the participants a choice of language employment. Even though there were some difficulties in translating the survey responses post data collection, I anticipated in the moment of survey creation that with a choice of language, the responses would be richer and more authentic for those who chose to respond in Kiswahili due to difficulties communicating in English.

While in Tanzania, I engaged in observations through changing observational roles. First, I adopted the role of a nonparticipant observer during which I made notes with a protocol while watching the girls engage in the leadership and empowerment program. The next day, I took on the role of a participant observer to truly learn about the program while experiencing it myself. As a woman, I was interested in observing my own reaction to the program and whether my sentiments aligned with those of the participants. Additionally, I made notes while debriefing with the group of facilitators after each day of the leadership and empowerment program. In this way, I garnered responses from both the participants and the facilitators of the program regarding its potential effects on girls' self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy.

During the program, the participants completed five surveys to help gauge their impressions of the program. A Pre-Program Survey was distributed at the beginning of Day 1 and included questions to determine what the participants wished to garner from engaging in such a program. Separate to this survey, but also distributed on Day 1, was the Returning

Participants Survey, given to girls and teachers who had participated in the program the previous year, the first year of its operation. I was particularly interested in the comments these participants had to offer as they could be used in a longitudinal review of the experiences of girls in this leadership and empowerment program. At the beginning of Day 4, the Mid-Program Survey was distributed to gather feedback about the most significant aspects of the program according to the girls and teachers who had hitherto participated. On Day 6, the day of graduation, the girls and teachers completed the Post-Program Survey, which asked the participants to reflect upon their experience and how it helped them both personally and academically. At this point, I returned to Canada for work, but the seven teacher candidates and accompanying professor stayed in Singida for another week to return to the girls' schools and help them implement girls' clubs so that they might further disseminate the information they gathered at the weeklong leadership and empowerment program. At the end of this week, the fifth survey, an After-Program Survey, was distributed which asked the girls to detail their plans for the future and describe if this program had in any way changed their educational experiences. The following week brought the final instalment of the program during which the team gathered the girls together for one last day to wrap up and debrief, helping them through the emotional pain of the facilitators leaving and to ensure that they understood they were not being abandoned and that we would be back. Many girls were very distraught at the award ceremony on Day 6 of Week 1 and the team also experienced some level of grief. It was therefore decided to bring everyone back together one final time to have closure for all involved.

Data Analysis

Upon returning to Canada, I sought permission from the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board (REB) to use the program evaluations and observations I collected as secondary

data for my research. Once permission was obtained from the REB, I began to analyse the qualitative program evaluations for consistent themes among the educational experiences of the girls and teachers involved. I followed the six steps in analyzing and interpreting qualitative data as outlined in chapter eight of Creswell's 2002 publication on Educational Research:

> Preparing and organizing the data for analysis; Engaging in an initial exploration of the data through the process of coding it; Using the codes to develop a more general picture of the data - descriptions and themes; Representing the findings through narratives and visuals; Making an interpretation of the meaning of the results by reflecting personally on the impact of the findings and on the literature that might inform the findings; and Conducting strategies to validate the accuracy of the findings. (p. 237)

Qualitative research follows a bottom up, iterative process whereby data is collected first and then themes are developed as the data is analyzed, cycling back and forth between data collection and analysis. Qualitative researchers such as I, amass large sums of data so it is important to be able to organize that data. This was accomplished during the program through the organization of surveys in binders, and observations in files on my computer. The survey data was later converted into text data through the process of transcription. Text data was then analyzed using software programs including Microsoft Excel and Qualtrics. I then explored the general sense of the data by reading over their transcripts multiple times, trying to get an overall sense of what the participants were trying to convey through their written word.

Reliability and Validity/ Establishing Credibility

Text analysis was used qualitatively to interpret the data for description, themes, and the larger meaning of the findings. I divided the results into text segments and then determined the

meaning of each group of sentences to describe the central phenomenon under study. Broad themes and categories then began to emerge to represent the findings, which described both the individuals and how they relate to existing research. I also included my personal reflections about the significance of the study and the larger, more abstract meanings therein contained.

Methodological Assumptions

The role of the researcher in this study was reflexive as I reflected on my own biases, values, and assumptions and actively wrote them into the research. As a female researcher, I have my own biases toward the struggles that females must endure in the gender role assigned to them as I myself have lived out this implied gender role. Although I have not been banned from attending school while menstruating, or taken out of education to become a wife and mother at a young age, I have endured my own struggles as a female in the education system and these experiences tinted the glasses through which I viewed my participants and their stories. As a teacher, I value education highly and as a professional woman, I place the importance of completing school and following a fulfilling career path before that of getting married and having children. These values could have easily played a role in how questions were formatted, so I made sure to pay close attention as to how I phrased the questions so as to avoid imposing my belief systems on those surveyed. I also ran under the assumption that these students wish to pursue a career post-secondary however, this may not be the case, and that is something I took into consideration. Finally, being that I am a white, female, Canadian from a middle-class family, my own cultural background and experiences may have affected how I interpreted my participants' responses and the conclusions I drew from the study.

Ethical Considerations

Care was taken in considering the potential risks to the participants and site of the study, the protection of their anonymity, the level of respect that was maintained and continues to be directed toward the research site and the ways in which I plan to "give back" to reciprocate the generosity shown by the participants in being open with their answers on the surveys and their participation in the program. Only one hard copy of the data existed and was kept under lock and key in my office. The digital text files were stored on my password-protected computer. The hard copies of the data were securely shredded, and the virtual copies of the data deleted once the study was completed. Pseudonyms were used for participants when being referred to directly, although it was my intention to generalize many of my findings across several responses so as to give more weight to the conclusions I drew. The information I deduced from this study will hopefully allow for change to take place both locally and nationally. This potential is of high importance to me as I currently am, and will continue to be, an advocate for girls' rights to be educated around the globe.

Summary and/or Restatement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the educational experiences of secondary school girls in Singida, Tanzania and possible strategies to empower girls through enhanced self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy. I reviewed the literature to determine what other researchers found with regards to this topic so as to not repeat what had already been done, but instead build on existing knowledge, adding to the accumulation of findings on the topic. I observed and facilitated a girls' leadership and empowerment program, run at a centrally located hotel in Singida, Tanzania. I also surveyed the girls and their teachers to find out if this program helped, hindered, or did nothing to affect their access to education, and their feelings of self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy. Returning home from Tanzania, I analysed and interpreted the data from

which I drew conclusions and provided answers to my research questions. The final step involved reporting and evaluating the research for other audiences such as fellow teachers, faculty members, and those interested in improving education in developing countries with a special focus on girls. In order to assess the quality of the study, the research will be evaluated using standards advanced by individuals in education at the local, provincial, or federal level.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH/PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Introduction

For one week after school, sixty girls from ten local schools in Singida, Tanzania, along with their ten teachers, met with the Global Community Engagement Team to participate in a girls' leadership and empowerment program. Each day of the program was designed to improve the girls' self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy beginning on Day 1 with Aspirations and Goal Setting, continuing to Day 2 on Mental Health and Well-Being, extending through Day 3 with a focus on Career Counselling. Day 4 encompassed seven learning station rotations exploring Menstruation, Pregnancy, Love and Relationships, Oral Hygiene, Mental Health, Health and Fitness, and Poverty, Prostitution and Sexually Transmitted Infections. Day 5 exposed the girls to training in First Aid and CPR followed by Day 6, the day we celebrated the girls' graduation from the program. In subsequent weeks, as a follow up to the program, facilitators visited the girls' schools to help establish, or strengthen already existing Girls' Clubs and deliver donated resources. As the time in Tanzania came to a close, the facilitators and participants gathered once more to plan for the future. At the conclusion of the 2019 rendition of the program, it was clear that the program would have lasting effects on the girls and teachers who participated, however to have a broader regional and national impact, the program needs to be scaled up and replicated.

Day 1: Aspirations and Goal Setting

On Day 1 of the Girls' Leadership and Empowerment Program in Singida, Tanzania, the girls arrived at different times, some schools as early as 3:00pm and some as late as 5:00pm, since some principals forgot to send their teachers and students. To begin the first evening of the program, the girls were provided a nutritious, hot meal to eat while completing pre-program

surveys, and returning student/teacher surveys if this applied to them. Once dinner was complete, our team moved onto introductions. We decided to start each of our personal stories with a fill in the blank style quote, “I am good at _____, I am still learning _____.” We wanted to begin the week with a growth mindset, to let the girls know that we all have strengths as well as areas within which we can improve. We then moved onto a game called Cups and Downs, where we placed 30 cups in the middle of the room, with half of them upside down and the other half the right way up. The girls were divided into two teams, the 'up' team whose goal it was to turn as many cups up the right way as possible, and the 'down' team who needed to flip them upside down. When the allocated time ran out, we counted all the cups and whichever team had the most turned their way won. The reason for playing this game to start with was to engage the girls in a fun activity to break the ice and begin the development of teamwork skills. Next we moved on to building our “dream tree”. We had the girls trace out their hands on green construction paper and in the middle of each of their hands, they wrote a sentence, summarizing their greatest aspiration. It was wonderful to see the girls stating goals that defied stereotypical gender roles, such as those of becoming a doctor, pilot, engineer, and President of Tanzania. These girls had big dreams and we were determined to help them down the pathway to achieving them. On each of the fingers of their hands, the girls wrote adjectives to describe themselves, their hobbies, and their goals. Later that night, we stuck their hands to the wall where we had traced out a trunk to complete our “dream tree”.

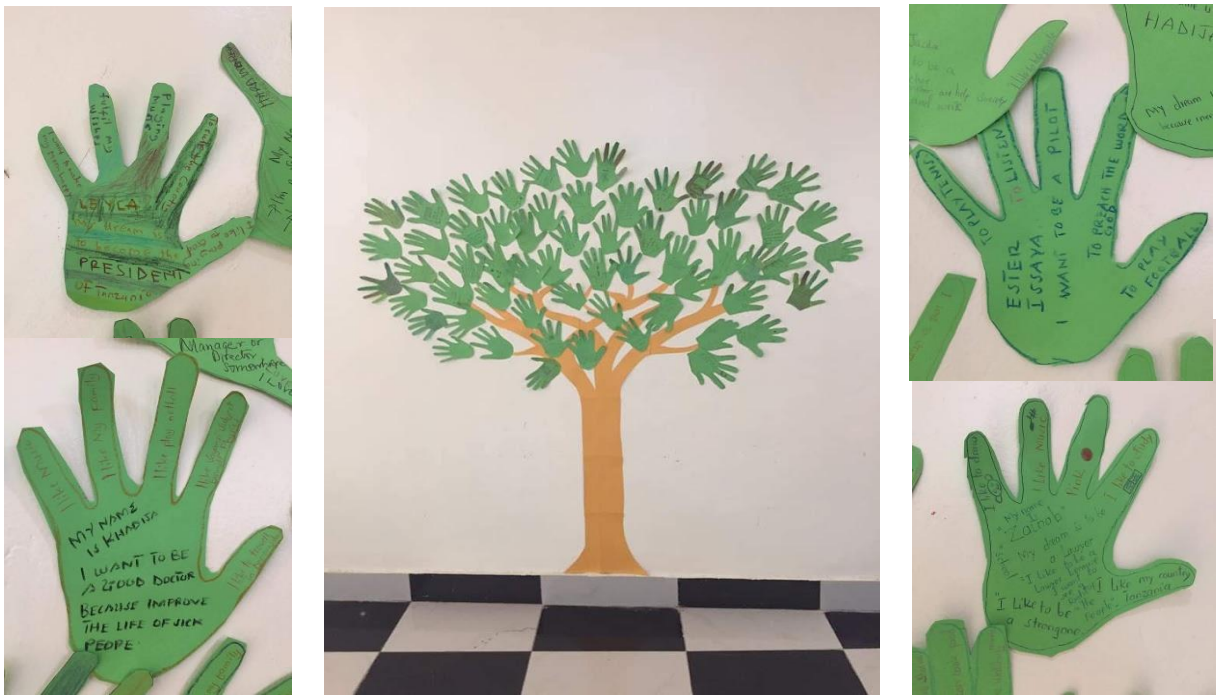

Figure 1: Dream Tree with hand excerpts

After this activity, and for each day this week, we passed around "exit tickets" on which the girls wrote questions, comments, or concerns they had so that we might address them the following day. These questions also provided insight into my second and fourth research questions: "How do secondary school girls in Singida, Tanzania experience education?" and "What are the lessons or implications for the development and design of empowerment and support programs for girls?"

The girls had questions concerning the following topics: Career, Love and Family, Poverty, Canada, Learning, Female Health, and the Girls' Leadership and Empowerment Program. Examples of prominent questions from Day 1 included: "Why do many girls not achieve their goals, and what methods [exist] to control that issue?"; "Why [do] girls suffer with different problems because of money?"; "How did you find [out] that girls of our country are facing different problems?"; "Why are many girls in society discriminated by their family? Or, if she has been married, she is treated harshly and this is against the rights of humanity"; "Why

must girls that are engaging in love affairs, lose their academic performance and confidence?"; "I have friends that are living in hard places so I want to help them. How can I help my friends?"; "In this program, how can you help girls who live a poor life?"; "If I want to help street children, which ways can I use?"; "I want to come to Canada. What method can I use in order to come and visit you my best friend?"; "Most people state that science subjects are very difficult. Is this true or false?"; "What things cause a menstrual period to stop for three months?"; "Can we get some pads?"; "Why do girls have cramps when they are on [their] periods? How can we control [this]?"; "As a team, why do you want to help us Tanzanian people?"; "Will you only come to Singida region in Tanzania?"; "What is the aim of establishing this girls' program in our country Tanzania?"; "Will you come here every year?"; "Why did you choose only girls to be [a] part of this program and not boys?"; "I am the one who came last year and in our school we made a girls' club but the challenge/problem that hindered our club was the lack of cooperation from our teachers. Sorry, we want your help to show us [in] which ways we can improve."

The girls had many interesting queries and were forthright with their personal concerns. This was surprising given that we had just met them, however, it was nice to know that they were open to hearing our suggestions for some of their most intimate affairs. The girls also had some comments to offer in regards to Day 1 including: "I am very happy for today because I like this program, and I love all people, and all [the] perfect [parts] of this program."; "I enjoyed today because I like to repeat sitting and playing a game."; "This day is a surprise for me because I enjoyed my feeling [how I felt] with my fellows."; "In short, today I am feeling happy because I'm learning things and enjoying [myself]." We ended Day 1 with a group dance along to the *Cha Cha Slide*, to once again bring everyone together and celebrate a successful first day!

After we finished saying our goodbyes to the group for the day, we gathered as a team to discuss the merits of Day 1 and the ways in which we thought we could improve for Day 2. Members of the team felt that the energy level was high even though students in Tanzania wake early, some as early as 4am, and end late, usually after 6pm. After greeting the girls as they entered, telling them all about ourselves, and asking them about themselves, we noticed that we began to bond quickly with the girls. All the girls seemed to feel comfortable and some even started putting in song requests during the dance portion and sharing interests with us during the creation of the "dream tree." We saw smiles all around including on the teachers who joined in on the games that brought everyone together. Also, the opportunity to submit questions and comments provided for a cathartic component, a chance to air the things that were troubling them, and this allowed the girls to open up. For the duration of the evening, they could just be girls and let go of their problems. As a team, we made sure that none of the tables where the girls were seated were left alone, and we tried our best at using some Kiswahili, the local language, to communicate with them, although their English was good for the most part. We made a point to interact with all the girls and get their teachers participating in the activities as well. Each member of the team was able to contribute something different and when we noticed a lull in the activities, we came up with an idea of what to do in the meantime.

Some ways in which we thought we could improve were to have something prepared that the girls could do while waiting for others to finish an activity. We wished we had brought more resources and supplies with us to Tanzania however, it was beneficial to the community that we were using their copy, print, and stationery services. Also, we found that since we are all enthusiastic teachers, wanting to make a difference in these girls' lives, we all wanted to be

speaking at the same time. So, we thought more preparation, organization, and structure to the program's schedule would be beneficial in the days to come.

Day 2: Mental Health and Well-Being

The focus of Day 2 was on Mental Health and Well-Being. As one of the first facilitators to arrive at the conference centre, I sat with a group of students and took the time to truly relish in their company. I was amazed that they had not played any of the simple games I introduced to them from my childhood. I could hardly wait to move from one game to the next; teaching them something new brought me great joy as an educator. But, at the same time I felt such jubilation watching them enjoying the game and laughing along with them as one opponent overtook the other. We circulated through tic tac toe, stella ella ola, arm wrestling, thumb war, rock paper scissors, and various hand-clapping games. It was a great way to pass the time while transitioning from one activity to the next.

After enjoying a hot meal, we responded to some of the girls' most pressing questions from yesterday. Dr. Beckford addressed the question of why we had chosen to come to Tanzania, and more specifically to Singida, to run this program. He spoke about how Tanzania is a country with significant educational challenges but where education is highly valued. With regards to Singida, he spoke of his history of supporting the Kititimo Center for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children and how this girls' leadership and empowerment program grew from there. Facilitator Joe spoke to the question of why we were running the program and why we invited only girls to participate. He alluded to the struggles that girls around the globe face in accessing education and that we hoped with this program, we could help bridge any gaps they had in the pathway to achieving their dreams. He insisted upon their education and progress as being important not only to us, but to their families, communities, and society as a whole. He let them know that their

participation came with a responsibility to empower other girls, their sisters, their friends, and their community members, once the program ended. It is important to note that we chose a male facilitator to deliver this message so that the girls could hear from the lips of a man that they are valued, important change-makers.

After these important addresses, I lead a rainstorm activity, beginning by explaining that a rainstorm is coming but not to worry as it will not last long. We sat in a circle and I had the girls at one position of the circle begin one of the actions I demonstrated and had it continue with each girl until it had propagated around the entire circle at which point, a new action was given to the starting position. The sequence of actions was as follows: rub hands together, snap fingers, clap hands, slap thighs, stomp feet, slap thighs, clap hands, snap fingers, rub hands together. At the end, I explained that storms may come and go in our lives, but as long as we stay grounded and connected to those around us, we will always weather the storm, and perhaps even find the rainbow at the end.

Next, three facilitators lead the girls in singing the Zimbabwean wedding song "Wai Bamba". This song is sung in repetition, with each contributor adding his or her own part to the chorus. The lyrics of the song roughly translate to, "He's got her, she's got him." This song was chosen to convey to the girls, the importance of developing healthy relationships wherein each partner is treated equally. The girls responded very positively to this musical activity, so we taught them another song, this time originating from Jamaica. "Three Little Birds" by Bob Marley and the Wailers is a song that delivers a message of hope and motivation, one we wished the girls to carry forward. Another hit! A 2011 study by researchers from McGill University in Canada found that listening to music increases the amount of dopamine produced in the brain – a mood-enhancing chemical. It certainly helped to lift the mood in the room and bring us together.

From there, we decided to further strengthen our bond by creating a sister oath. We wanted to develop something that could bring us all together; a pact that we could stand by in order to lift each other up and support our needs during the program and afterwards. Here is what we created:

> As sisters we promise to be respectful, honest, confident, trustworthy, faithful, hopeful, and helpful to each other. We promise to know, understand, appreciate, and love each other. I will protect and help my sisters when times are tough. We are the future, and together we can do anything!

After repeating our oath aloud several times, facilitator Sarah led us in a yoga exercise. In a 2018 study by Bazzano et al., the effects of mindfulness and yoga on quality of life for elementary school students and teachers were shown to be associated with a significant improvement in emotional and psychosocial quality of life in the intervention group when compared to the control group. This suggests that yoga/mindfulness interventions may improve symptoms of anxiety among students, and may facilitate stress management among elementary school students, or in our case hopefully, high school students. As a result, we decided to add it as a complement to the social and emotional learning activities that would take place all week. Following yoga, we gave the girls a chance to write out their questions and comments regarding the day and ended the evening with a group freestyle dance to music of their choosing.

The girls' questions from Day 2 revolved around the program, girls, exercise, music, goals, adversity, promises, and visiting Canada. It appeared from their questions and comments that despite addressing the two main questions at the beginning of today, "Why Tanzania?" and "Why girls?" some participants were still unsure as to why we were running the program, and why we invited only girls. Questions such as, "In this program, what is the main aim?", "Why is

this program for girls only?" and "Why are you protecting girls instead of boys?" showed that we needed to drive home our purpose again tomorrow, and each day. Also, it appeared that we needed to preface our activities with a better explanation regarding their purpose and conclude each activity by consolidating the learning, almost like a three-part lesson, beginning with the minds-on, followed by action, and concluding with consolidation. This inspiration drew from the question, "What is the importance of these things that we learned today in our daily life? How can we apply them?" We could see that the girls were finding value in the program because the question arose as to whether "this program is repeated every year or what? My suggestion is that this program [runs] every year because it teaches us many things." Questions of self-efficacy arose including, "Why do other girls not believe [in] themselves?" and "Why [do] other girls not [have] confidence?" One girl intimated, "Sorry, we want to know our rights and our position in society." The way that this question was stated, with an apologetic tone, spoke to the need to educate girls on their rights and inform them that they need not apologize for seeking information that is rightly theirs. One comment that befuddled me was, "I want to know how to be a good girl." What constitutes a good girl in Tanzanian society and is that something our girls should aspire towards?

Questions as to the benefits of yoga were also brought up such as, "Those exercises help us to be confident or what?" and "I like this exercise we did today, but what would you like to see from us?" Some seemed to understand the activity's purpose, "I have learned that yoga exercises are very important to make our bodies strong. Let's continue." Some were not so clear and mused if "there is any importance in a person being strong?" Others wondered, "Does yoga help someone to bring back their happiness when they are sad?" In the days to come, it was

determined that we would spend more time on front-loading an activity with a description of its purpose and conclude by discussing its importance.

For goal setting, the girls wondered, “Which things can we do in order to achieve our future goals?” On the topic of adversity, one girl asked, “When you [are] met with many challenges, how can you struggle…and survive under difficult situations? E.g. Being segregated in school or class.” We hoped to address issues of challenge and change in the coming days. Some comments forwarded by the girls included, “I think that you are very important to us, because I learn many things and [thanks to] this program, I am learning that it is good to be confident” and “I want to thank all of you because you make me feel so happy and [believe that] I can do anything without fear.” Some even referred to our mantra in their comments, “I am strong, I am beautiful, and I can do anything.” It was nice to see them internalizing some of our teachings and making meaning out of it for themselves.

That night at our debriefing the facilitators reflected on things that went well and aspects that could use improvement. Joe noted that the day went really well, with a lot of positive feedback coming from the participants during the activities. Chris made mention of the fact that the activities today were well-balanced with both active and static moments, while Marie commented that she hoped we could go outside for more activities in the coming days. Jason was surprised by the girls’ range of questions, including everything from polygamy to nationalism. Sarah was engaged in conversations with the girls about healthy relationships but ran out of time and would like to return to this topic in the future. Dr. Beckford noted the commitment level of the participants, and although one teacher could not attend today’s program, she sent someone in her place; this appeared to be the case with the students as well. In discussing the following day’s programming, the group was split on whether to teach the girls to write a resumé or prepare them

for interviews. It was finally decided that although they may need to write a resumé in the future, their current efforts would be better focused on how to best introduce oneself to make a lasting impression as well as incorporating some English language learning skills into the day's curriculum.

Day 3: Career Counselling

After our communal dinner tonight, we took the opportunity to repeat the abridged sister oath, or mantra, aloud, bringing us together in our unified purpose: "I am strong, I am beautiful, and I can do anything." Next, Chris addressed their questions about physical health from the day prior and Sarah answered their queries about yoga. Following this, the facilitators broke the girls into groups and began the process of creating a word cloud. We used Mentimeter to create a visual representation of words that showcase what we shall do to make our dreams come true. As each group entered their brainstormed words into this program, greater prominence was given to words that appeared more frequently amongst the groups, displaying them larger on the screen.

The phrases that appeared largest included 'study hard,' 'never give up,' 'be confident,' 'listen to good advice,' 'respect teachers,' and 'protect my rights' while the largest traits included, 'empathy,' 'cooperation,' 'creativity,' 'initiative,' and 'persistence.' After bringing them together as a group to analyse and make conclusions from the word cloud, we began a cooperation game. We had pairs sit back-to-back with their arms linked, and from this position they needed to stand up together. Once they were successful, we made groups of four and had them attempt the same task. We continued to add more and more people and saw the collaborative and communicative efforts increase amongst the groups.

Following this activity, we engaged the girls in a career counselling activity. The number of managers, senior professional, technicians, and skilled and clerical workers in Tanzania lags

far behind the workforce proportions of the average Middle-Income Country (MIC) (UNESCO, 2015). The latest ESDP has as its goal, "the progressive expansion of Technical and Vocational Education and Training to provide Tanzania with the pool of skilled human resources needed to advance to becoming a semi-industrialized middle-income country by 2025" (MoEST, 2017, p. ii). To encourage the girls to start thinking about their future in the workforce and prepare them for entry, we had them respond to three prompts: "Tell me about yourself." "Describe your greatest strengths and weaknesses." and "Describe the biggest obstacle you have had in your life. Explain how you were able to overcome this obstacle."

In groups, facilitators sat with the girls as they wrote their answers and provided feedback on improving their English language skills. After this check-in, the girls were encouraged to mingle to music, during which time music was played and once it stopped, the girls were taught to look the person closest to them in the eye, shake their hand firmly, and answer the first question they prepared. After a few minutes, the music continued to play and once it stopped the second question was discussed, then the third. Hearing their responses to the third question on the topic of their greatest obstacle was very moving and provided insight into the first research question I posed for this study, "What are the barriers faced by high school girls in Singida, Tanzania?"

Some of their biggest obstacles included peer pressure and negative influences, unhealthy relationships, absent parenting, unqualified teachers, lack of collaboration amongst students, long distance to school from home, female social stigmas, lack of educational resources, lack of basic needs and poverty. Suby began by commenting on "peer pressure and influences. There are some friends who advise other students to drop out of school or to be involved in bad behaviour or bad situations…like prostitution." Sophy claimed, "The biggest obstacle is how to control the feeling

of love." Tuliza admitted that "I have come across temptation from boys" and Otesha further detailed, "I come across temptation from a certain boy who passes along my home. He told me that he loves me [and] while I am a student he needs me to be his wife…I rejected him because I am a student and I am strong and I have my dream to become a nurse."

Suby also mentioned a "lack of advice from parents. Some parents do not advise their children to be good children and to respect each other." Panya admitted that, "I didn't get any support from my family" to which Lisha added that "the biggest obstacle in my life is that when I plan to do such big things, which can give me good results…I don't have any support at home, at school, and in society too." Pili divulged, "My biggest obstacle in my life is a lack of cooperation between my parents and my teacher in my school about me studying hard."

Suby went on to say that she felt a "lack of education from teachers who help to educate and to advise us [on] how we can prevent diseases like HIV/AIDS and the negative effects of these diseases. Also [they] help to educate girls when [they] begin menstruation." Tamu shared this sentiment in stating, "I want to know science subjects like biology and chemistry" but Farha indicated, "There is loss of science teachers so I can't reach my dream." Shamya added, "My biggest obstacle in life is to know [the] English Language…to speak and write."

Finally, Suby mentioned a "lack of teamwork or group work. If students have no teamwork, that causes the students to lack good advice from other students or friends." Kirie clarified that "this can happen if a student lives far from other students' homes. If you are studying and there is something hard, you can't get a solution to that problem." Anitha lamented the "long distance from home to school, so I'm always late [arriving] at school." Nuru admitted that the consequence of being "late to school, [is] to get punishment." Linzy added, "I [am] tired because I [am] going far away from home to school. I borrow money [from] my brother [who]

says [we] have no money for transport…I took [the] bible and prayed [to] my god [to] help me [make] my dreams come true." Onya provided a detailed overview of her struggles:

> The greatest obstacle, which faces me, is a bad environment for study. For example, I live far from my school. After leaving the school, I reach home late. At home there is so much work to do which can make me tired. For example, I [travel] very far in order to fetch water. After reaching home, I [must] cook food and clean [the] dishes. After all this work I become very tired, so there is no more time for studying at home therefore I go to bed. I wake up early in the morning at 6:00am. I clean the house and the surroundings [and] I cook tea before going to school. To overcome this obstacle, I want advice from you please. Thanks.

It is evident from Onya's comment that there are many barriers at play: the distance from school, the household chores she as a female is expected to carry out, and the resultant lack of time to pursue her studies. She seeks advice, but what advice can we offer her? Pili keeps herself up late into the night "by washing my body with cold water and doing regular exercises and then I continue to study until 1:00am. I study hard in order to reach my dreams." But this is not a healthy or sustainable alternative to finding time to conduct one's studies. Perhaps the solution would be to build more schools, closer to students living in rural areas, but this would require additional funding from the government. According to my literature review, the funding allocated to education is already being drawn thin, to the point where parents are still required to pay various fees.

On the topic of fiscal needs, Tamu indicated a lack of educational resources: "I am not getting the things I want as a student, like books, pens, pencils, and exercise books" which Martha echoed in stating, "I haven't got books for reading in order to reach my dreams." Halima

added, “I haven’t [any] money to buy my needs at school like…[a] dictionary and reviews.” Pili noted that she lacks a “mathematical set used by the students so if she/he doesn’t have it, [that] means [she/he] also can’t study.” Asnathy identified some of her basic needs that were not being met, including “food, clothes, and shelter.” Martha disclosed, “I haven’t got money for buying instruments for cleaning e.g. soap.” Kalere exclaimed, “[I] failed [an] examination I had because I couldn’t eat.” Pili explained that “I cannot understand and reason well if I have extreme stress, hunger, and am angry.” Clara admitted that her struggle is wanting to “give up. Sometimes when I think about my future plans, I give up because of my life…and poverty.” Linzy added, “Poverty in my family takes place in large [poverty is a big problem for my family]. Life is not good and sometimes I sit and [experience] painful headaches about my family. But I go to my brother…to work any job…[we] don’t [have a] choice [of] job because of poverty.” Evelyne’s struggle is similar: “My life at home is not good which causes me to think [of] many things and causes [a] headache [about] what could happen to my life. But my life at home cannot cause me to give up. I study hard and advise my mother to work hard and to do any jobs which can [help us to] meet [our] basic needs.” With hope Bahati confirmed, “I know education is the only thing which can help me to solve this obstacle of poverty which faces me in my life and I will overcome it by making sure I study hard [to be] successful [with] my dreams.” For those such as Linzy’s brother or Evelyne’s mom outside of the formal education system, Folk Education (FE) is offered in community-based colleges providing knowledge and skills to communities, enabling learners to become employed, and seeking to arrest the cycle of poverty. FE is in place to solve problems in the community related to social, economic, and cultural development. “FE develops the personalities of individuals, their ability to think, feel, and appreciate people’s problems so that they may help others participate more fully in the social and economic activities of their

community, as well as advancing the knowledge of adults so that they make better decisions relating to personal and public matters" (President's Office Planning Commission, 2011, p. 8).

Personally, Tamu mentioned, "I have faced many obstacles which are under-confidence, how to know people's wishes, [and] how to reach my goals." Linzy added that she "sometimes [wants to] give up because people around me say bad words about me." Social stigmas played into Wanthanee's response: "Many people have been telling me that since I'm a girl, I can't be someone that I want to [be], because they think that only boys can be the one that they want to be….[T]o overcome this obstacle…I'll ignore all the words that they'll say to me and the only thing that I'll focus on is to study hard and try hard in the subjects that seem to be hard to me in order to reach my dreams." Winnie declared that her biggest obstacle is "to be discriminated [by] my friends when [I] am getting the chance to be a project leader in my school. In this situation I feel unhappy and so bad because I remain only myself." Tamu offered some hope in light of the struggles she faces: "My fellow students used to look down on me but now I have gained strengths from this program that help me to think that those things just want to stop my future. I have overcome those obstacles by feeling confident in myself [and] respecting myself and others, because I have learned that everything can be done in this world, and nothing is difficult."

At its conclusion, one student had the following to say about our communicating for careers activity: "I like the way that we talked to each other, because that made the ones that are shy to gain [confidence]; meeting through talking to each other." We ended the evening by informing the girls that tomorrow's program would consist of information stations based on topics of their choosing. We asked them on their exit tickets to list topics of study that they would like to see presented during tomorrow's session. The girls' suggestions centred around the topics of female development, menstruation, health, disease, feelings, relationships, pregnancy,

poverty, teaching, learning, and the program. There were many questions that arose regarding female development:

> How can girls control themselves to be clean and better when they are in puberty? How does adolescence affect somebody's behaviour? At what time does a woman reach menopause? How can you control your puberty in order to escape peer pressure? How to protect ourselves during [our] periods? I want to learn how to overcome pain during [my] menstrual cycle. I [would] like to know why some women haven't a pain in [their] stomach during their period? If someone does not get her period, what was the cause that made her not get her period? Why does [the] menstrual period change every month? Why [does the] period of other people change daily? Why are other girls' days for bleeding [different] (2-4 weeks)? Why [do] some girls…get more blood when drinking ginger tea? Why [do] women when they are in their period, like to [have] sex? What are we supposed to do as girls to keep ourselves clean during menstruation? How can you control emotion during this period? I like to learn…what I can do in order to be confident in this period and control anger? How can we control [our] menstrual cycle at school? How to help us as students control truancy during [our] menstrual cycle even if we are in school? Many girls, if it is their period, fail to go to school because [of] either no pad or no confidence. This is a problem that causes many girls to fail the examination, so I need education about this.

With regards to female health, the questions posed included:

> Can you tell me how women can retain their health and how women can destroy their health? What things should a girl do in order to remain [in good] health and how can girls avoid stress? In our society there are many obstacles, which hinder many girls, for

> example poverty. I want to learn about why other girls decide to be prostitutes. They don't know its disadvantages, or they are ignorant? Please educate the students on how to avoid STDs and how to protect their health from epidemic diseases? What is [the] historical source of HIV? It came from where? Who was the first to get it before it came from Africa?

On the topic of healthy relationships and pregnancy their questions included:

> How can you develop positive relationships? How can I control peer pressure/bad friends during school because me, I like to study hard. Help students to learn that problems within the family [are a] part of life and through it they can be strong enough, [even] after being scolded. Why [do] many girls favour [risk] a [the] problem of being pregnant [while] they are still young or students? To give girls the techniques which can [be] used to protect [a] pregnancy or to avoid pregnancy at school. Ways to protect yourself from pregnancy while on [your] period? How is pregnancy formed? Why do pregnant women not have a period? Why is female pregnancy 9 months? Why [is there] pain during the time of delivery?

On the topics of teaching and learning:

> How can I manage my timetable like you? I need to study about health and if I want to become a nurse, what subjects [should I] study? Help students [with] how to learn from mistakes. Help them to be self-motivated from their studies. To know about sponsorship: How can we get this sponsor to learn? How can you help us with economic problems?

Some comments the girls offered regarding the program thus far included, "I am so happy today to study about cooperation and dreams in my life" and "We are begging you to increase the

program time since it is good for us." One of the translators asked how many girls want to be sent back to school and have others sent to the program in their place; they all screamed 'No!'

At the facilitators' debriefing, Sarah mentioned that during the evening, some of the girls would say, "I am bad at History and Math", so she encouraged them to say, "but I am getting better." It was important for us to teach them what it meant to have a growth mindset, the belief that one's most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work (Dweck, 2008). We began the program by introducing ourselves in this manner and wished for this concept to thread itself through our program. Sarah added that she felt that the timing of the evening was well managed and that even though the girls were doing more work-based activities, they were still having fun. Mandy expressed that she learned so much about the girls through the career counselling activity, and this sentiment was echoed by all members of the team. Marie added that she liked that they girls could walk around to meet someone with whom they had not yet interacted. Joe noted that when he showed up this evening it appeared as if there were only nine schools that had arrived but soon realized that two separate schools had sat together, showing a level of bonding at this stage in the program that he hoped would continue.

I mentioned that this program causes us to check in with ourselves and the glasses through which we view the world. Today, one girl's biggest obstacle was not having soap with which to wash herself. These kinds of revelations change how you see your own life and its inherent challenges. Dr. Beckford shared with us that he saw one of the participants stuffing her bag with the used water bottles. When asked why, she said that her family is poor so for her to go to school, she makes juice to sell so she is collecting the bottles to hold the juice she makes. These kinds of stories ground you. He went on to express that he found that tonight's activities were substantive, important, and mentioned that although the content was quite serious, he

thought they thoroughly enjoyed engaging in the activities. He enjoyed seeing their words appearing on the screen during the Mentimeter activity and found that the reason they were so comfortable sharing with us was the level of security they felt knowing that we genuinely have their best interests at heart. He also noted that we should be doing professional development specifically with the teachers, since one of the returning girls mentioned that her teacher was an obstacle to starting the girls' club at their school last year. He also told us that he had overhead one of our girls stating that she would like to be a pilot to which a teacher replied in a mocking tone, "You'd be the first female pilot in Tanzania." Dr. Beckford concluded the evening by saying, "Coming here and doing this program…it is not easy work, but I want you to know that you come here, you are here for only a short period of time, and you cannot measure the impact that you are going to have. Do not sell yourselves short, the impact you are having here is important." I could feel the impact we were having, but in the days to come, I would be able to see it firsthand.

Day 4: Learning Stations

During dinner on Day 4, the girls completed the Mid-Program Questionnaires. I began the evening with a presentation on Female Health, covering the following topics: What is Puberty?; What is Menstruation?; How can you keep track of your menstrual cycle?; Some things to expect with menstruation; How can you manage menstrual pain?; What should you not expect to see during menstruation?; Manage your menstruation well; What materials can you use during your menstruation?; How to manage reusable sanitary materials?; How to handle disposable sanitary material?; Personal hygiene during your menstruation; Proper nutrition during menstruation; Physical exercise during menstruation; and Understanding mood changes. At the end of the presentation we repeated the following mantra, "I am unique. I love my body. I

love myself. I walk tall and proud. I focus on my attributes. I am Amazing. Period!" This resource came from online Ghana Education Service resources. After this presentation, the girls were broken into groups and moved from station to station, spending 10 minutes with each facilitator at one of the following stations: Menstruation, Pregnancy, Love and Relationships, Oral Hygiene, Mental Health, Health and Fitness, and Poverty, Prostitution and Sexually Transmitted Infections. At the end of the seven station rotations, all of the girls were gathered back on the floor where we presented them with care packages containing pads, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, toothpaste, toothbrushes, floss, pencils, pencil crayons, pens, erasers, sharpeners, notepads, sticky notes, rulers, binders, dividers, hand sanitizer, and Kleenex. Also included were brochures from my female health presentation, a book translated into Kiswahili on menstrual hygiene, and a poster to bring back to their girls' groups on menstrual hygiene management. The reaction from the girls upon receiving their care packages is something I will never forget. The sheer joy and gratitude they exhibited is something I rarely witness and reminded me to count my blessings each and every day. They also sang Happy Birthday to me, hoisting me in the air and throwing water on me followed by the gifting of a bracelet. What a memorable moment! As the girls left, along with their teachers, I began to feel in my heart that we were truly making a difference that will reverberate through generations to come.

On their exit tickets, we asked the girls to comment on which station was their favourite and why. Reflecting upon my fourth research question, "What are the lessons or implications for the development and design of empowerment and support programs for girls?" I analysed their responses indicating which station they each preferred: 35% preferred Physical Health, 23% Menstruation, 14% Healthy Relationships, 10% Oral Hygiene, 9% Mental Health, 8% Pregnancy, and 1% Poverty, Prostitution and Sexually Transmitted Infections.

Here are some of their comments about each station, beginning with the menstruation station: “I liked to learn about menstruation because it educates girls after entering puberty to maintain hygiene in your period for any month.” “It helped me in my life…to know my body well especially in [my] menstrual cycle and…it gave me [a] chance to…protect my body.” “I enjoyed [it] because I know how to…manage stress on myself.” “We learned many things including how to keep your body healthy and clothes clean during menstruation and also during normal periods.” With regards to the pregnancy station: “I have learned how to prevent [an] unwanted pregnancy by avoiding sexual intercourse, middle abortion, and birth control.” Commenting on the healthy relationships station: “I liked healthy relationships because I know how to make a good relationship with others…like respecting, loving, talking [to], [and] supporting each other.” Some comments on the oral hygiene station: “My favourite station was oral and dental hygiene because it helped [me] to know how to brush my teeth [and] how to prevent virus in my teeth.” “I know how to [protect] my teeth from gingivitis and other diseases.” “It helps us to keep our mouths clean.” “I know how to keep my teeth safe.” Finally, the most popular station, physical health: “My favourite section was about physical health. I liked [it] because if you want to [experience] good menstruation you have to get a good sleep. You have to eat [well] and do physical exercise.” “To make people strong…and to avoid diseases such as blood pressure and heart disease.” “Physical health like football, running, [and] netball, help to keep me in a good situation [shape] especially [to] manage stress.” Overall, one girl summed it up by saying, “I loved all [the] lessons because it made me to be strong, to maintain cleanliness, and it helps me to avoid prostitution and how I can control stress, mood, and emotion.”

At our debriefing meeting, all the facilitators commented on how incredible the girls' reactions were when they received the care packages and we mentioned that we thought that it would be beneficial next time to include a pamphlet from each of the stations. Jason said that he liked the station set up for today but wished that we had more time for a game in the middle of the rotation schedule to break up the information loading. Chris mentioned that in addition to the students, the teachers seemed to learn a lot from the centres. Jason concurred and added that the teachers came up to him and told him that they appreciated this style of learning. One teacher indicated that they become ambassadors of teaching and learning at their schools after this program. Chris wished that we could have spent more time on each topic, but given the time constraints of the evening, he thought we did well. Liana reciprocated this sentiment in saying that she could see on the girls' faces that they wanted to share their thoughts on her topic but once the material was presented, it was time to move on to the next station. She added that she appreciated the impromptu speeches from the students and teachers after receiving the care packages. Hearing how they were feeling made her feel validated with respect to what we are trying to accomplish through the program. Dr. Beckford liked how we incorporated video clips and demonstrations at our stations. He noted how attentive the participants were and the curiosity that burned in their eyes. He wished that we had more time to do the things we were doing this evening and thought that perhaps, what we accomplished tonight should be done over two nights, emphasizing quality over quantity. He concluded by drawing our attention to the impact of our actions, "There are 60 girls and ten teachers, as well as Busara and Joyce [the translators], and they have lots of children and women in their lives. So, what you are doing here is going to spread." Hopefully it spreads like wildfire, quick and all encompassing.

Day 5: First Aid & CPR

On the final day of curriculum delivery, the girls began with a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) activity upon arrival since they were permitted to come earlier today from school, being that it was a Friday. Based on comments from the girls, their teachers, and the literature review, it is evident that girls are not treated equally in the STEM subjects and are generally not encouraged to pursue these subjects as they are thought to not be as adept as boys in this area. For this reason, we thought it imperative to include a STEM activity, for both exposure and confidence building. For the activity, the girls were given a plastic bottle, four plastic bottle caps, a wooden skewer, two straws, a balloon, tape, and scissors. With this collection of mostly recycled parts, the girls learned some engineering and physics concepts by building a toy car propelled by a balloon. Once the cars were built, the girls raced them against each other to see whose car would go fastest and furthest.

After the STEM activity, we served the girls dinner and then Jason led us through a blindfold activity. An obstacle course of chairs was set up and half of the girls were blindfolded. The other half of the girls lead their partners through the course, relying on the power of trust. To conclude this trust building activity, we repeated the sister oath aloud and then had the rest of the evening to teach the girls first aid and CPR. Joe led the way on this activity due to his background in this subject matter. We thought it would be beneficial for the girls to learn life-saving skills they could use to help their family, friends, or community members in times of emergency.

At our debriefing, Joe thanked the team members for their active participation during the CPR demonstration. Liana noted that excitement was high during the creation of the balloon cars and she hoped that this hands-on activity would inspire the future engineers in our group. Dr. Beckford liked that we incorporated teaching materials in the STEM activity that are not too

expensive, showing the teachers that they too can use simple items to teach big lessons. Jason thought that today was a good assortment of informative activities, making special mention of first aid, thinking it is something to which these girls have likely never been exposed. He also liked that we served the girls dinner tonight; he thought that it gave us an opportunity to show them how much we love them. Ashley commented on how much the girls lit up during the STEM activity, clearly amazed at how something so functional can be made from such simple materials. I remarked how moving it was to see them say the sister oath with their eyes closed, directing their body towards our dream tree, and internalizing everything we were saying. I also drew attention to the fact that as facilitators, we all bring different strengths to the table. If I were to try and run this program by myself, there are aspects I would not have thought of and actions that I could not have executed.

Dr. Beckford was impressed with the different strategies we used to engage the girls and how we showed the teachers the extent to which one can learn through activities and games. He said that he had issues in the past with government officials thinking that we had the girls here missing school to play games. “They did not understand the point of what we are doing here. We are showing that teaching and learning can be done in so many different ways; it can be fun and engaging! One of the reasons why students do so badly in school is because of teacher-centered teaching.” Dr. Beckford believes that the dream tree is really powerful, and he would like it on a poster for next year. He remarked that one of the biggest things to have come out of this week is the mantra, “I am strong, I am beautiful, and I can do anything.” He concluded by saying, “I feel they really believe it. I hear the teachers saying it, and you get the feeling that they are believing it. Every time I hear them say it, I get chills. A highlight of my day is to hear them say it.” The facilitators nodded in agreement; it was our highlight too.

Day 6: Graduation

The final day had come and there were mixed emotions from both facilitators and participants. We were so proud of the girls and their accomplishments, but we were sad to know that our program was over. The girls arrived at 10am and we relished the first hour dancing to shared music, taking group pictures, and engaging in a compliment tunnel. For this activity, we had the girls create a human tunnel by standing in two lines facing each other and reaching out to grab each other's hands. At one end of the tunnel, the girls broke connection with their partner one by one to run through the tunnel created by the remaining girls' connections. As they proceeded through the tunnel, the girls still holding form offered complements. One by one, each girl received the recognition and self-esteem boost that many of them came here seeking, according to the surveys they completed throughout the program. Following this uplifting activity, we enjoyed a hearty lunch together as we savoured both the food and the moment. After lunch, several presenters gave speeches including the teachers, students, facilitators, Dr. Beckford, Pastor John, and the District Commissioner who had very moving words for the girls to internalize. He encouraged them to follow their dreams and not allow anything to get in the way of their goals. I sang an uplifting song for them and enjoyed watching them walk across the stage as they received certificates of completion for having participated in the program. The girls reciprocated the music afterwards by singing two religious songs of worship, praise, and giving thanks. We also took a moment to sing the two songs we had taught the girls during the program, *Wai Bamba* and *Three Little Birds*. Finally, one of the translators that assisted during our program delivery sang Tanzania's national song. At this point, I boarded a bus to return to the airport, with memories of a lifetime, while the facilitators stayed behind with Dr. Beckford for an additional two weeks.

Over the course of the next week, the facilitators went to the health centre to hand out stuffed toys to sick kids, to the market to purchase food for the Albino Outreach Program to add to the donations that were brought from Canada, and to our participants' schools. At each school, the facilitators met with the principal and the girls of that school to distribute the donated textbooks, speak about our program, and express our gratitude for having allowed the girls and their teachers to participate in the program. At the end of each visit, the girls recited the oath with the facilitators and commemorative photos were taken to mark the occasion. At one school, an emergency assembly was called and the team was asked by the principal to address the entire school, speaking to the boys in particular about respect and drawing attention to the fact that if girls are strong, the schools will be strong and hence their communities. At the end, the team stood and said the oath with the representative girls of that school. The teachers were very moved by the strong display of unity and strength, and the girls were happy to see the facilitators once again.

On the last day of that week, the girls were brought back together at the conference centre where the facilitators and participants once again shared a meal before determining the ways in which they could work together to help them carry out their intentions. Dr. Beckford spoke to the teachers about their role as faculty advisors and how they could help direct the girls' clubs in their schools. The facilitators gave the girls ideas for establishing their clubs, such as how to set up the administrative structure, how to elect their officers, as well as how to organize and maintain their clubs. The girls sat with their school cohorts and brainstormed activities they could do in their clubs over the coming year. Some ideas that were generated included organizing garden clubs and teaching others what they had learned at our program through workshops. Beyond what they wished to do in their schools, some expressed their desire to do

charitable activities and community outreach. After this brainstorming session, the facilitators lead the girls through another STEM activity, this time a tornado in a bottle. The teachers appreciated seeing the teaching strategies of the facilitators and the student-based experiential learning activities. At the end, they reflected on how they could best incorporate these student-centered activities into their own teaching. All participants spent a meaningful afternoon.

CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Introduction

At several points throughout the program and in the weeks following, the participants were requested to complete program evaluations by responding to a series of surveys. A Pre-Program Survey was distributed at the beginning of Day 1 with questions designed to determine what the participants wished to take away from the program. Separate to this survey, but also distributed on Day 1, was the Returning Participants Survey, given to those who had participated in the 2018 rendition of the program. At the beginning of Day 4, the Mid-Program Survey was distributed to gather feedback about the most significant aspects of the program thus far. On Day 6, the day of graduation, the participants completed the Post-Program Survey, which asked them to reflect upon their overall experience in the program. At the end of week three, the fifth survey, an After-Program Survey, was distributed which asked the girls to detail their plans for the future and describe if this program had in any way changed their educational experiences. In the following section, each question has been prefaced with an identified main topic followed by several keywords taken from the girls' responses. It is my intention that these keywords help to scaffold the reading and provide a framework within which to digest the findings. It is important to note that both student and teacher program participants are second or third language speakers of English and therefore made some grammatical errors which I corrected with care, ensuring to leave their original meaning intact. The goal was to make their ideas easy to comprehend.

Pre-Program Survey – Students

On Day 1 of the program, all girls were asked to complete a pre-program questionnaire that asked questions such as:

What motivated you to join this program? What do you hope to learn from this program? Why do you think that only girls were invited to participate in this leadership and empowerment program? What struggles do you see facing girls in your school? Why do they face these struggles? What struggles do you face in school? Who causes your struggles? How do you get past struggles?

These questions were chosen because they would allow me to define the barriers faced by high school girls in Singida, Tanzania, as posed in my first research question. The answers would also provide me insight into how secondary school girls in Singida, Tanzania experience education as addressed in research question number two. Finally, by finding out what they hoped to learn from the program, we as facilitators would be better informed as to how to develop and design an empowerment and support program for girls, question four of my research.

Motivation: *acceptance of others, confidence, confidentiality, cooperation, cultural exchange, educating others, health, inclusion of girls, leadership, rights of young people, self-awareness, self-esteem, self-worth*

"What motivated you to join this program?" The girls chose to participate in our program "because this program is especially helpful for us girls to recognize and value ourselves" as stated by Nbushe, and "… to learn some of the most important things that can build me up and make me more confident" as declared by Kanika. Arusi explained that she chose to attend, "because I want to learn many things that may help me in my life." Topics of importance relayed by several girls included health, self-esteem, confidence, cooperation, the rights of young people, and how to embrace all people. Bahati mentioned, "The one [thing] which motivated me to join this program is just because it involves only girls so I see [that] I can participate well since it only involves girls." This comment highlights the reason why we chose to only invite

females to the leadership and empowerment program; to set a level of comfort for their open and fluid participation. Furthermore, Sayuni's comment emphasized the importance of confidentiality maintenance in facilitating this program, "in order to show the girls there are adventures and the walls [will] remain confident to the end [your confidentiality is ensured]." While Chiku identified an intrinsic motivating factor, "The aim of me to join in this program is that this program helps me to know myself and control myself", Dafina established an extrinsic motivating factor, "…to know much so I can teach my fellow students through clubs." This line of altruism continued in Dalila's comment: "Something that motivated me to join this program… [is that it] teaches things that are in the community and when we take care of them, we will educate our colleagues on things like confidence." Opportunity for leadership was a factor for Elea "because I would like to get involved with the academics in the schools and [point] them in the right direction." Finally, Franka indicated an incentive for cultural exchange: "What motivated me to join this program was learning different things from outside our country." For many of us facilitators, this was also a motivating factor; to learn from and help girls from another culture, hence the name of this study: *Investigating the Educational Experiences of Girls in Tanzania: The Efficacy of a Girls' Leadership and Empowerment Program.*

Program development: *advocacy, agency, building trust, career exploration, community development, critical thinking, cultivating healthy relationships, dream achievement, goal setting, personal development, problem solving skills, self-awareness, self-confidence, self-regulation, study skills, women's studies*

"What do you hope to learn from this program?" The girls wished to learn about "the life of women and the environment which surrounds them," or more globally, "I hope that I will learn many things concerning about girls or women in the world." Kalere continued, "I look

forward to learning the rights of women and how to solve our rising problems," while Chiku emphasized, "I hope to learn how girls can protect themselves and not otherwise." It was clear from these comments that we had set out on an enriching and demanding endeavour. Academically, Hadiya commented, "I hope to learn about how to perform well in my studies" followed by Mahiri who stated, "I look forward to learning things from this program that can [help me] reach my goals and my educational dreams so that I can succeed." To continue the topic of setting goals and achieving dreams, one girl stated, "I look forward to this program so [that] I can be brave for everything I [will] do to fulfill my dreams," and another insisted on learning how to "avoid things that keep you from achieving your dreams." Lisha hoped to learn "how to feel confident, self-aware, and how to achieve my goals. Also, how to convey these ideas to other girls." The topic of relationship building budded from the comment, "I am hoping to learn how to trust, cooperate with others, to love each other and to listen to others." With respect to future career prospects, Halima added, "I hope to learn about entrepreneurship" as echoed by many following her. In terms of advocacy in their community and society, Imani pondered "how a girl can get a great place in the community she lives," while Kilinda added, "What I look forward to…in this program is that every girl gets ready for everything to bring development to the community." Furthermore, Kanika stated, "I am learning a lot through this program like to recognize, trust, and be a good example in my society." On the topic of agency, Elea conveyed, "I look forward to learning how to think critically and to become a well-rounded person as taught in this program." Personal development was a goal of some with the statement, "I hope in this program, I will learn how girls can believe [in] themselves and know how to solve their problems." It was clear that we as facilitators had an expansive and important duty towards these girls.

Gender inequality: *positive keywords: advocacy, attributes, communication, entrepreneurship, importance, leadership, motivation, self-efficacy, skills, validation, women's rights*

negative keywords: abuse, academic reticence, challenges, discrimination, maltreatment, pregnancy, protection, sexual harassment, shame, social status, weakness

"Why do you think that only girls were invited to participate in this leadership and empowerment program?" Tanzania's FYDP placed special emphasis on the topic of gender inequality. Sustainable social and economic development cannot be realized without ensuring gender equality. About 90 percent of women living in rural areas rely on agriculture and livestock keeping for economic survival, making them vulnerable to poverty (President's Office Planning Commission, 2011). Furthermore, because women do not have equal rights to assets (i.e. land) and have limited access to finance and education, gender inequality remains one of the underlying causes of poverty (Peterman, 2011). I wished to examine how deeply these girls understood the prominence of gender inequality in Tanzania by asking them why they thought only girls were invited to be a part of the program. Surprisingly, their responses were split between putting a positive spin on why girls' were invited and identifying the negatively charged motivators behind including only girls. Having been influenced by all the injurious findings from my literature review, I expected identification of more adverse reasons from the participants. Panya responded by stating, "I think only girls were invited to participate because the aim of this education is making girls understand their rights and the ways that make them live well in society and how to be protected from dangerous situations." Others thought it could be due to the female subject matter of the lessons such that "it teaches about pregnancy and women with entrepreneurship." Some focused on girls' leadership abilities over that of boys' exclaiming, "I think this is because girls have power to lead other people," "because girls are leaders in the

community." Others spoke to girls' intrinsic motivation, "I think girls were invited to take part in this leadership program because girls are in a position to do whatever it takes." By contrast, Onya thought it might be due to an innate weakness in females, "because girls are the most likely to be tempted by the many temptations and barriers that [exist] to discourage [them in pursuit of] their dreams." Many spoke to the challenges that girls face, such as Fanaka who suggested, "I think only girls were invited to participate in this leadership program because girls face more challenges than boys. An example of such challenges is sexual harassment." Otesha disclosed, "Because many girls are abused and reluctant to learn…sometimes they fall behind and shame themselves." Some spoke to the vulnerable situation of girls, "because girls seem to be discriminated against in many communities…" and, "because girls are treated badly, that's why we are chosen in order to know our rights in society." On the other hand, Bahati spoke to the significance of girls in society in saying, "I think girls were invited [to participate in] this program because girls are very important in society and also, they are supposed to know their importance in order to play very well their roles in society." Some discussed the need to build girls' agency by suggesting that this opportunity could, "build their confidence to lead others, give them space in expressing their thoughts, [and] build capacity in communicating with one another." Others spoke to improving girls' self-efficacy, "because this leadership program was established only for girls to help them to know their abilities and skills in doing anything and to be successful" and "so that girls see their ideas are important." Advocacy was also a topic of great importance, "because we want gender equality to bring about equal rights in the society around us, the government and the nation at large." Dafina went on to say "Only girls were invited because [they] need special care so [that] they can be equal as boys. But there is [a] slogan [that] says, when you educate [a] girl, [this] is equal [to] you educating the whole

society." Another essential quote put forth by Nbushe was, "Girls are one of the best-known pillars to develop our current society because, [when] one girl [is] educated, the whole community has grown up." Simply put, we invited girls, "because girls are so important in this world."

Barriers: *bullying, childhood marriage, distance to school, illiteracy, lack of confidence, lack of feminine hygiene products, lack of intrinsic motivation, lack of proper lavatories, low self-regulation skills, low social status, menstruation, peer pressure, poverty, pregnancy, sexual harassment, shame, social stigma, temptations, unhealthy relationships, unprofessional teachers, unsupportive parents*

"What struggles do you see facing girls in your school? Why do they face these struggles?" One recurring topic was that of pregnancy: "There are many struggles, some of them are many girls get pregnant when they are young. Because they have/like many things which are out of their power." For some, it seems to be "because of their nature so people are craving sex" and perhaps the proper birth control measures are either not available or not used effectively. Others commented on the "struggles of many girls in school racing to [get] pregnant, because their parent does not have money to give them their basic needs, so girls decide to find money for their basic needs." It appears from this comment that some girls engage in prostitution to earn money and in doing so become pregnant. As Tuliza puts it, "they suffer from pregnancy because of poverty." Another issue that was brought up by a couple girls was that of childhood marriage, an issue around the globe that robs girls of their education. Menstruation was a recurrent theme amongst the girls' responses "because girls often have to face a lot of stress when it comes to menstruation, and then [they] don't have the self-esteem for this." At school, "they do not involve [girls] in making [decisions and offering] ideas [for] certain things. They

are not free to explain their needs, [for] example, when they are in [their] menstrual period." Why are girls' voices not being heard, especially when it comes to their own physical needs? According to Taabu, "Girls face the problem of menstruation at school…because they are afraid to voice their concerns to the teachers." It appears that there needs to be more support provided to girls during their menstrual cycle, not only from teachers, but also from male classmates as "[girls] are bullied by boys [and] they feel embarrassed." Furthermore, girls are "lacking a special place for self-care because many schools lack the toilets and good facilities that girls need for their own personal safety." As mentioned in the literature review, schools need to invest in proper lavatories and have them stocked with feminine hygiene products because girls "face the problem of having no things or materials which can help them to keep clean during menstruation" such as pads. For the cause of girls' struggles in school, some sought to blame girls' choices stating that, "the struggles facing girls in our school are some girls have bad behaviour" or "because girls don't spend their time properly." Onya thought that the issue might lie with the intrinsic motivation of girls or simply put, "the will of students themselves." Pili explained that she thinks girls are forced to grow up too quickly "because girls face the challenge of thinking about things they have not reached in their age." She also went on to say that some girls are "in families where they end up with various problems and thus [that] cause illiteracy." Bahati brought up the issue of peer pressure in saying, "Girls face a lot of problems in the school such as peer pressure which [causes] them to fail their studies and this is due to the lack of proper guidance, counselling, and education about their importance in society." The prevailing issue of diminished efficacy was addressed by Rasheda who stated, "The problem girls face in school is a lack of confidence in the things they do. They suffer from this because they do not think they have the ability to do as others do." As a result, "the struggles are [often manifested

as] failure in exams. They face these [struggles] because of [a] lack of self-confidence and seeing that they are inferior." Tamu goes on to suggest that the "struggles facing girls in our schools are shyness and under-confidence. They face these struggles because they do not know the futures of their lives." Arusi adds, "Most of [the] girls facing shame, they face that because they believe that they can't do anything that can lead [to] development." Zawati concludes, "A girl is faced with many problems in school, for instance [a] lack of confidence either when she is talking with others or when she is doing something because others know [believe] that girls or women have not any knowledge, but they have [knowledge]!" This comment derives from deeply rooted socio-cultural beliefs, for example, that women are inferior to men. These underlying beliefs play a major role in girls' struggles in school "because girls are not listened to for anything. And they seem to be less capable as boys." These misaligned thoughts need to be reprogrammed and this education must come from leaders in the community. Onya further examines this issue in stating that, "Absenteeism, dropping out of this school, is because of misconceptions [of] parents that girls should not have an education." In 2012, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) together with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) conducted a study to determine the factors contributing to the declining participation rates in primary school. They found that declining NER's were due to parental "lack of awareness on the importance of enrolling children in school at the right age, poor school infrastructure, inadequate sensitization of the community, lack of a conducive learning environment for children with disabilities, enrolment of under or over-aged students in standard one, among others" (President's Office Planning Commission, 2011, p. 28). Furthermore, as mentioned in the literature review, some girls must travel long distances to get to school. Increased distance to a girl's school is associated with a significant reduction in girl's schooling due to concerns for their safety, a pattern that is

not observed in boys (Kim et al., 1999). This logistical issue shines the light on the fact that "girls deal with many problems as the long distance a girl walks from home to school is likely [to include] many temptations to be seduced by boys along the way." And if girls are not experiencing sexual harassment on their way to and from school, "many girls face different problems like approachment of boys as well as male teachers in school." Many girls also reported: "being bullied by students as well as male teachers, [and] failing to come to school that day." Lack of attendance at school; is it the cause of girls' struggles or the symptom of other more pressing issues? The responses of our girls point me in the direction of the latter.

Educational experience: *antiquated learning tools, corporal punishment, disrespect, inadequate academic materials, lack of basic needs, lack of cooperation between students and teachers, lack of funds, long distance to school, low self-efficacy, menstrual hygiene issues, poor school infrastructure, shortage of school supplies, social stigmas, suppressed voice, unhealthy relationships, unqualified teachers*

"What struggles do you face in school? Who causes your struggles? How do you get past struggles?" Several girls mentioned a lack of money: "I [am] faced with [struggles in] getting my basic needs; my parent does not have a lot of money" and "I haven't got instruments for cleaning myself. I [can] get past [my] struggles only because of [with] money." On the topic of menstruation, "the problem I face is getting into my [cycle] days and then I don't have a self-made fabric." Furthermore, Panya complained "I'm not free to explain my ideas when I'm on menstrual cycle. This [is] caused by teachers because they do not know how I feel when I'm in that situation." Suppression of self-expression contributes to their struggles of girls, as remarked by Dalila, "The problem I face at school is not [being] given the opportunity to explain the problems I face at school or at home." There seems to be a "lack of cooperation between teachers

and students." The girls' comments demonstrated a dearth of school supplies such as a "shortage of reading materials and school uniforms," a "lack of adequate notebooks," and a paucity of "calculators and practice registers." Moreover, "The struggles facing me in my school are inadequate instruments or tools for learning or study; I mean books and other sources like laboratory facilities, [a] lack of science teachers" and "desks." With regards to infrastructure, "the problem we are facing at school is the environment i.e. toilets that are not in [good] quality." Boys seem to present a distraction for girls as Taabu explains, "The biggest problem is the feeling of love. This happens when a boy sees a girl is worthless and wants to ruin her dreams by tricking her with small gifts. This will lead to the girl being satisfied [with his actions] and falling in love." Put more bluntly, "people who cause [initiate] sexual intercourse are boys who force girls to enter into sex" and "the woman cannot restrain [herself] because she has no control over the man." Socio-cultural factors play into their struggles as well such as, "not being given the opportunity to express ideas as a girl. The culprits are my classmates who think that a girl has no chance [right] to share ideas. I can resist the wars of the past by educating my colleagues to avoid those misconceptions." With regards to self-efficacy, Tamu admitted, "I am facing many struggles like shyness, under-confidence, and under-respect from my students. I am [getting] past these struggles by thinking that [the] effort lies in my own hands." With respect to distance to school, Editha disclosed her "struggles faced in school [include] getting [a] punishment from the teacher when I [am] late to school. [This is] caused [by] living [a] high distance from home to school." When visiting the schools, in the weeks following the program, it was confirmed by several facilitators that some teachers used corporal punishment as a behaviour management tool in the classroom. This is something we hope to address through future professional development sessions with teachers.

Pre-Program Survey – Teachers

The accompanying teachers were also asked to fill out a questionnaire, which asked similar questions, but from a teacher's point of view:

> *What motivated you to accompany your students to participate in this program? What do you hope to learn from this program? Why do you think that only girls were invited to participate in this leadership and empowerment program? What struggles do you see facing girls in your school? Why do they face these struggles? Who causes these struggles? What struggles do you face in teaching girls? What resources do you need/want?*

These questions were asked of teachers to provide insight into research questions one, two, and four, but this time from the perspective of a teacher, rather than from the students directly.

Teachers as tools of empowerment: *classroom management strategies, how to build students' self-efficacy, position of power, program curriculum, teaching strategies, thought diversification*

"What motivated you to accompany your students to participate in this program?" Neema indicated that her motivation to join our program came from "my position as a teacher, school matron, and a guardian in general, so as to get new ideas in dealing with students, especially girls." Glory wished "to learn more about the different things that will help me in teaching girls and how to build their confidence." Irene liked that the program "stimulated the pupils to learn more by interacting with different people from different schools and re[tooling their] thinking." To build on this thought, we encouraged the participants to sit with girls from different schools at dinnertime and throughout the activities. Some teachers, such as Leah, were simply intrigued by the content of the program and wanted "to know what they are going to learn

from this program; to make them safe." From Leah's comment, I concluded that we would need to form good working relationships with the teachers in order to ensure effective program delivery. Trust needed to be built before learning could take place.

Program development: *academic development, confidence building, counselling skills, economic development, extracurricular development, knowledge procurement, learning strategies, professional competence, psychological development, self-awareness, self-control, self-esteem, skill development, social development, support strategies*

"What do you hope to learn from this program?" Neema wished to find "many ways to support me in guarding the girls psychologically, academically, socially, and even economically." Glory hoped to help the girls develop, "more confidence, new knowledge, new skills, different games, and to help girls perform well academically and socially." Mary shared, "I look forward to learning how to serve children and advise them [well]" while Janeth echoed these sentiments in wishing "to learn different things that [can] build up my confidence in my profession." Editha sought more specific skills for the girls themselves such as, "self-control and self-awareness in various things." Jackline added the hopeful development of the character traits "self-esteem and confidence" and wanted to help the girls "to organize HIV, self-awareness, and self-esteem clubs" after the program's conclusion.

Gender opportunity: *confidence development, educational support, freedom of expression, goal setting, leadership development, progression planning, self-esteem, self-love, social status, strong family figures, surmounting gender specific challenges*

"Why do you think that only girls were invited to participate in this leadership and empowerment program?" Neema explained, "because they are not given much priority in

society, they have to be supported through education, including this program." Glory brought up the need "to be able to build them [up to have] more confidence, self-esteem, self-love, and a better life later." Irene indicated the need "to learn more about girls and their challenges to help them reach their goals." Mary thought we included only girls for progression planning, indicating: "it is because they are able to rise up in [with] an education and have an understanding [so] that they can also make any leadership [become any leader] in the community." If not in the community, at least Janeth implored us to "empower them as leaders in the family and [empower the] guardians [who] also take care of them." One of the issues the girls brought up when responding to their set of surveys was that they felt their voices are not heard so, teacher Leah thought perhaps this program would provide an opportunity for the girls "to discuss their issues freely." Jackline summed it up by stating, "because girls are the best."

Barriers: *child marriage, difficult living conditions, early sexual relationships, human trafficking, lack of confidence in STEM subjects, lack of feminine hygiene products, lack of school resources, lack of sexual education, low income families, low self-esteem, menstruation, pregnancy, societal disadvantages, temptation by men*

"What struggles do you see facing girls in your school? Why do they face these struggles? Who causes these struggles?" The teachers' responses were similar to those of the girls, which had me thinking, if the girls feel the struggles and the teachers see the struggles, why is little progress made to circumvent or solve these issues? Neema brought up the topics of "MP (menstrual period) challenges [and] early sexual relationships; these are caused by [human] nature and lack of sexual health education." Mary added, "girls die for their education due to difficult living conditions, early pregnancy, [and] romantic relationships at an early age. The perpetrators are young men who are not consistent [faithful]" or as Irene put it, "sexual

temptations that are caused by men moving in the community [nomads].” This reference to men moving in the community may refer to men who have moved into their communities and may be involved in trafficking activities by luring girls with money and promises of bright city life. This theory would however require follow-up with the participants for confirmation. Glory spoke to the societal disadvantages girls experience, “the existing social system does not make a girl self-confident. Society has [experiences] a traumatic result of [from a] lack of appreciation for the girl.” Glory went on to say that because of “a lack of self-esteem, they do not do well in their studies.” Jackline advanced that their struggles lay in a “lack of requirements such as pads, school uniforms…class equipment etc.” She goes on to suggest that girls “are faced with this as a result of their family’s [low] income.” This reflects what was discussed in the literature review; that although tuition fees may be abolished, other costs still exist for girls attending school, such as those mentioned by the girls and their teachers. Academically, Alice noted that girls have “a lack of confidence in choosing science subjects.” She suggested to “give them such public seminars for learning.” Euodia wrote a comment that I found contradictory to what I had researched up to this point: “Many girls are faced with childhood marriages, since parents feel it is best for a child (girl) to get married in order to go to school.” Most research I reviewed showed that child marriage leads to high drop-out rates, however those parents who cannot afford to give their daughters an education, sometimes choose to marry them off with a verbal contract that they will be sent to school and the family’s economic needs will be taken care of. The extent to which this happens in reality is debatable.

Resources: *feminine hygiene products, nutritional sustenance, proper lavatories, school supplies (books, notebooks, pens), teacher transport*

"What struggles do you face in teaching girls? What resources do you need/want?"

Neema began by mentioning a lack of resources: "Sometimes they miss [class] periods due to MP challenges. I need more sanitary materials for MP to support girls and [a] special room for girls if possible." Glory mentioned the other "resources I need [include] books to help them learn more, notebooks, pens, and [after-school] transport so I can get enough time to stay with them for extra lessons." Alice brought up the important point of nutrition: "They do not have a good response [attention span]; they fall asleep due to lack of food in the school day." This goes back to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a theory posited by said psychologist that human needs are arranged in a hierarchy, beginning with the most basic physiological needs, such as food. When these girls' physiological needs are not met, "all capacities are put into the service of hunger-satisfaction, and the organization of these capacities is almost entirely determined by the one purpose of satisfying hunger. The receptors and effectors, the intelligence, memory, habits, all may now be defined simply as hunger-gratifying tools" (Maslow, 1943, p. 373). How can these girls be expected to focus on their education, and on bettering themselves, when they have not met their basic nutritional needs? This is the reason why we began each evening of the program with a hearty meal. If we were to expect them to take anything away from our programming, we needed to first satisfy their physiological needs before we could hope for them to progress through the hierarchy towards esteem and self-actualization.

Returning Participants Survey – Students

A separate form was prepared for girls returning to participate in the program again after having already been a participant last year (2018), the first year of the Girls' Leadership and Empowerment Program. The questions on this form included the following:

Why are you participating again this year? What did you learn last year? Please rank the top three things learned last year. How have you personally used what you learned last year? What have you done to share the information you learned in your school and in your community? With whom did you share that information? What would you like to learn this year? Have you noticed anything different with your teachers/peers since their participation last year? How have you changed since your participation last year?

I was particularly interested in the responses contained within this survey because it would be the best indicator of research question number three, "What is the impact of a week-long leadership and empowerment program on girls' self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy?" It would also provide some insight into research question number two, "How do secondary school girls in Singida, Tanzania experience education?" and research question number four, "What are the lessons or implications for the development and design of empowerment and support programs for girls?"

Many returning students indicated that they had chosen to participate in the program again this year because they wanted to learn things that they could use to help educate other girls and allow them to be good leaders in the future. The altruism evident in their comments was inspiring to me as I could see that our program's potential benefits would not stop at these girls. The girls also wished to get more information about preventing pregnancy and the transmission of HIV/AIDS. One student said, "I'm participating this year because last year I learned good things and those things help me in my life." Another indicated that she was returning to the program "because it educates us and makes us feel confident in the most effective expression of self-confidence." Improvement of confidence seemed to be a key theme throughout the girls' responses. Other key topics of learning from 2018 included puberty, the menstrual cycle, the female reproductive system, how to prevent pregnancy, abortions, HIV/AIDS, self-esteem,

entrepreneurship, teamwork, and cooperation. One girl shared an improvement in resilience, “I learned how I can survive under difficult situations or in my challenges so as to be a good person and [a] bright [student].” Another commented, “Last year I was able to identify myself [self-concept], to be confident, and to realize that I could [efficacy].” This shows an improvement in self-efficacy: confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). Fifteen of the sixty girls were returning participants, and of those girls, ten said that HIV/AIDS was the top thing they learned last year, followed by four who indicated pregnancy, three for entrepreneurship, puberty, confidence, and self-awareness, and two for menstruation, respect, love, self-care, and self-esteem. One student summed it up by saying, “What I learned last year I have spent on [applied to] my own health, physical and mental health.” From these rankings, we knew better where to begin this year’s focus. To further narrow our focus, the girls provided suggestions for what they would like to learn this year. Some wanted to learn more about their rights and responsibilities as a girl, puberty, the female reproductive system, how to protect oneself from peer-pressure, goal-setting, self-identity, entrepreneurship, leadership, how to perform well in one’s studies, and how to improve one’s English language skills. The ways in which these students used the teachings from last year included, teaching their fellow students how to protect themselves from HIV and pregnancy as well as how to maintain good menstrual health. About the learning, one student explained, “I use [it] in my daily life to drive all my life steps properly.” Another exclaimed, “I’m using my skills that I gained in last [year’s] program to change my society.” To see that this program changed not only these girls' lives but encouraged them to change society speaks to the strength of this girls’ leadership and empowerment program for increased advocacy and agency, the human capability to influence one's functioning and the course of events by one's actions

(Bandura, 2006). This study is ultimately interested in examining whether a girls' leadership and empowerment program could improve girls' educational experiences in Tanzania and from one girl's statement, we see the beginning of this connection, "I have been able to use the strengths and things I have learned to be successful in my studies." With regards to how the girls disseminated the information to their peers, some taught members of their community about the things they learned, and some introduced a new school club called WINNER GIRLS with the support of a teacher guardian. Others taught fellow girls and teachers during girls' gatherings while some simply shared with family and taught their friends "how to make their life wonderful through [the teachings of the] project." When asked if they noticed anything different with their teachers or peers since their participation last year, a resounding yes was the response with only two out of the fifteen respondents saying no. It would be interesting to find out why these two participants responded no. With this information, we could better develop a teacher professional development session. With respect to their teachers, some said, "Since last year, I saw [that] they have [better] cooperation with female students" and "My teachers are different; they are polite and so kind." With regards to their peers, "there are more kind, lovely, and honest girls in our school" and "many of them are now confident; [they] understand and know what they are doing." When asked how they have changed since participating last year, returning students indicated health wise, "I have changed a lot especially in how to be protected from dangerous diseases," "I changed on how to prevent pregnancy," and "I changed because at first I didn't know how to clean myself during menstruation, but now I know." With regards to agency, "I changed my life and [now I know] how to start my own business because we learned about entrepreneurship" and "I have changed so much since last year… I have been taking care of myself, [being] confident and understanding." In terms of advocacy, "I've got the courage to

express myself" and "now I am self-confident and cooperate with my colleagues in many of the most pressing issues." Reflecting on efficacy, "I changed all [parts of] my lifestyle. I am more confident, respectful, and obedient" and "I've got the changes [ideas] on how to make my life better." It is clear that over the course of the year, the program affected these girls' lives, both personally and academically.

Returning Participants Survey – Teachers

Returning teachers were also asked to complete a form indicating their motivation for joining us once again. Their answers would provide insight into research questions two, three and four, but from the perspective of a teacher, which would add great value. Their questions included:

> *Why are you participating again this year? What did you learn last year? Please rank the top three things learned last year. How have you personally used what you learned last year? What have you done to share the information you learned in your school and in your community? With whom did you share that information? What would you like to learn this year? Have you noticed anything different with your students since their participation last year? How have you changed since your participation last year?*

Based on their responses, returning teachers chose to participate again this year because they wished to continue their learning that had begun the year prior. One teacher stated that "because [of] the knowledge, I have been able to save many girls from pregnancy and still have a new experience." This comment really spoke to why we run this program; we hope to equip women with the tools to empower other women. In 2018, the teachers learned about HIV/AIDS, menstrual hygiene, entrepreneurship, confidence, cooperation, creativity, peer pressure, and

family building. With regards to menstruation, a comment was made regarding its challenges and how to overcome them which made me reflect on what specific challenges these could be in the eyes of a teacher? From the previous year's learning, teachers said that they were able to prevent HIV transmission and educate others on this topic. They also overcame personal menstrual challenges and helped those of their students through education, increasing their income, forming better family structures, and improving self-esteem, self-awareness, innovation, and coordination. These improvements are hugely impactful not only in the lives of these teachers, but in the lives of their families, schools, communities, and nation. These teachers helped the students who attended last year's program to form girls' clubs through which they could educate others. They shared the information they had learned with female students, their daughters, and fellow colleagues in the community. All returning teachers who filled out a form indicated that they had noticed a change in their students who had participated in the program the previous year. Not only this, but they themselves found that they had changed. One teacher stated that she is "so open when educating students on HIV and MP." This is an important point to draw attention to since menstruation can often be a taboo topic, so to have the teachers feeling comfortable to speak openly about it with their students is an important advancement. To conclude the survey, returning teachers were asked to share what they hoped to learn this year. One stated that she hoped to learn about how to eradicate poverty, and another said, "I would like to learn how to distribute [manage] a wide range of social issues and to create an environment around me to solve problems." We hoped our program could provide the launching point these teachers needed to make big changes in their communities and beyond.

Mid-Program Survey – Students

On Day 4 of the program, students received the Mid-Program Survey. The questions asked on this survey included,

> *What are the most useful things you have learned so far? Why? What are the least useful things you have learned so far? Why? What feedback about the program have your parents given you? What feedback about the program have your siblings given you? Do you have a sister? Would she/they be interested in this program? Do you have a brother? Has he/have they participated in a leadership program? Do you think males would benefit as much as females from a leadership program?*

The results of the second question, "What are the least useful thing you have learned so far?" were not included because the girls interpreted the word 'least' incorrectly and replied to question two as if it were a repetition of question one. The Mid-Program Survey was especially designed to respond to research question four, "What are the lessons or implications for the development and design of empowerment and support programs for girls?" In reviewing their responses, I was also provided information on research questions one and two, how secondary school girls in Singida, Tanzania experience education and the barriers faced by them, when asking the question about inclusion or exclusion of males from leadership programs.

Program progression: *altruism, bravery, character development, confidence building, cooperation, courage, creativity, critical thinking skills, dream achievement, English language skills, entrepreneurship, faithfulness, harmony, honesty, leadership, learning from mistakes, love, mental and physical strength, patience, peace, promises, respect, self-worth, sister oath, studying hard, trustworthy*

"What are the most useful things you have learned so far? Why?" The keywords that appeared most frequently in their responses to this question, with their count included in brackets included, 'dreams' (29), 'confidence' (23), 'strong' (13), 'cooperation' (8), 'respect' (7), 'oath' (5), 'promise' (4), 'faithful' (3), 'English' (3), 'love' (3), 'self-worth'(3), and 'study hard' (3). Panya indicated, "I learned how we can make promises in order to achieve our dreams." As one of her dreams, Martha shared, "I learned how to start my business and yesterday I learned how to play, to cooperate, and to promise my sister. I mean we made a sister oath." Onya clarified this oath to portend, "Girls are important because they are beautiful, strong, and they can do anything" which Grace confirmed in stating, "I have to believe [in] myself that I can do anything." Maria continued, "I learned to be confident because it gives me hope to never give up" to which Taabu added, you must "also be patient because in life; there [are] some obstacles that you [will] meet too." Suby proclaimed that "girls are very important in our societies because they will be [the] future leaders in our societies and other communities." Linzy stated that "the most important things I have learned so far are to be brave, trustworthy... and respectful [of] all people having a vision." In order to be trustworthy, Arusi thought it prudent, "to keep [the] secrets of my friends, fellows, and my relatives." Evelyne deemed it most important "to love each other [and] to live in harmony" which Winnie echoed with her wish to "maintain peace and love in my life." Elea "learned about strong women and…about self-worth" whereas Pili learned another type of strength, that which comes from "various exercises and physical stimulation. [It is important] to be a force…because first it brings happiness, confidence, and [it] increases the ability to think fast." Kirie also recognized the importance of "being strong, building my mind to remove fear, [having] confidence, helping people, and being honest." Asnathy added the imperative of, "having respect because we have to have the power to work hard and [so that] we

can reach our dreams" because as Kilinda said "every person has an ability to do something." Hannan thought to herself, "The most useful things I have learned so far are the things that I can do to make my dreams come true like studying hard, [being] creative, [and] learning from mistakes, and so on." Chiku added that she learned "to be strong, courageous, and [to] think critically because this can help me to reach my dreams." Practically, Iman saw value in getting "to know English [better] because [it] helps me speak in school" and Otesha summed it up by saying that in this program, "I study to be strong, confident, [to] love each other, [to] cooperate, and to respect [one] another. Because we my sisters all [all girls are my sisters]."

Parental support: *altruism, ask questions, be careful, be inspired, be strong, chase your dreams, collaborate with teacher and peers, concentrate on lessons, general life knowledge, goal achievement, importance of females in society, learn from others, listen carefully, participate in all activities, program's goals, recognize importance, skill development, study hard*

"What feedback about the program have your parents given you?" Suby stated that "My parents congratulated me and said [that] this program is very important because it helps many girls to be confident and [to] never give up." Hadiya said her "parents tell me to…ask questions about health" and Pili's parents encouraged her to, "learn through other people who have a general knowledge of things that we do not fully understand." The parents of Halima, "supported me to study very hard." Imani said that "they told me to listen carefully and understand those things which [are] taught in order [to] learn [with the] other girls" and as Panya's parents said, "achieve my goals." Cyian's parents encouraged her to "be strong and to participate in the activities." Josephine's parents gave her the advice to "cooperate between [collaborate with] my friends and teacher to reach my dreams." Kirie's parents "rejoiced and told me to return to be the teacher of the nation tomorrow." While Grace's parents feel that "this

program is very important," Bahati's parents approached it more cautiously, as she shared, "My parents told me to be careful with the knowledge which I attained in this program." I must say though, after reading through all the responses, the girls' use of the word 'careful' seemed to carry less of a cautious connotation as compared to how we use it in North America. In Tanzania, it seems to mean to take care of something, rather than to proceed with hesitation, for example, to take care in internalizing the knowledge gained in the program. Evelyne said that her "parents have given me the impression that I must follow all that I have been taught in this program to fulfill my dreams." Anais' and Winnie's parents felt that this program "is so good because it helps to increase knowledge about life" and "to increase skills." Taabu's "parents agree [with] this program because they know the importance of females in the society." Zawati's parents feel similar in their comments: "They like it because it makes me and my society [look] good for helping our sisters for [with] anything that they are facing." Many wrote similar responses to Wanthanee's, which was, "The feedback about the program that my parents gave me is to concentrate on what we have learned in the program." Finally, although Farha's parents "love this program, they want to know about the aim of this program." Perhaps, for future years, a letter detailing the program and its curriculum could be sent to the girls and their parents ahead of time. Overall, the parents' feedback about the program was very positive and it was great to see the tremendous support from home regarding the girls' participation in our program.

Sibling support: *academic improvements, be careful, dream achievement, English language skills, faithful, follow the teachers, listen to advice, leadership, learn from mistakes, overcome obstacles, personal improvements, reciprocal learning, recognize skill development, responsibility, self-awareness, self-confidence, self-worth, share knowledge with others, subsequent program instalments, value of women in society, wish to participate, work hard*

"What feedback about the program have your siblings given you?" Onya said, "My siblings congratulated me and [said] they need to come here. Also, they told me [to] listen [to] your advice in order to reach my dreams." Farha's siblings echoed this sentiment in saying "they also love this program, and they want to participate." Frola's siblings' reaction was "good because I am teaching them about many things that we learned." Hadiya's siblings "tell me to follow things which we learned in this program" for which Panya's siblings shared joy, "because [I] am understanding many things like love, promise, and cooperation" as well as Nbushe's advancements in "learning from our mistakes and [how] to correct my mistakes." Grace's siblings feel "this programme should be continued for another year." Cyian's siblings "tell me to work hard and be faithful on what I do" while Taabu's brother said: "that I have to be careful in order to pass [overcome] any obstacle." Bahati's siblings, "said this program is good since it teaches girls about leadership and makes them to be aware with their responsibility." Benes said her siblings "think this program will help me to describe the value of [the] female in society." Academically, Crenady's siblings encouraged her "to be careful when…talking in order to widen my English-speaking capacity," which I feel is another account of a positive use of the word 'careful.' Winnie's introspective siblings encouraged her, "to use this chance to improve my self-awareness and self-worth as well as [my] confidence." Lisha's inspiring siblings let her know that "when I apply well the things I have been taught, [this] will make me reach my destiny." At mid-program, Tuliza's siblings were already noticing her personal and academic improvements: "They told me [that] I have changed in my studies as well as in thinking in my dreams." Overall Tamu commented that, "my siblings are very happy about the program because it [has] taught me many things" and Fida's siblings encouraged her "to share these opportunities to other people who we know, or we don't know."

Sibling data: *brother participation, sister participation*

"Do you have a sister?" "Would she/they be interested in this program?" Of the 60 girls, 44 responded that they had a sister and of that group, 42 or 95.45% responded that their sisters would be interested in the program. This level of positive response I expected, however, it would be informative to find out why two of the girls thought their sisters would not be interested in participating.

"Do you have a brother?" "Has he/have they participated in a leadership program?" Fifty-four girls responded yes to having a brother, and of those 54 brothers, 11 or 20.37% had previously participated in a leadership program. This was a big surprise to me, because while conducting my literature review, I did not come across instances of leadership programs specifically targeted at boys in sub-Saharan Africa. It is worth mentioning that most (45.45%) of these boys who had participated previously in a leadership program were attending a particular secondary school so perhaps this school offers leadership training to its students.

Male leadership program: *con keywords: beneficiary of girls' education, employment inequity, empowerment needs, female thinking capacity, importance of girls, inequality, lack of collaborative skills, only girls present, positivity of women, special care, stand up for oneself, strength, surmount challenges*

pro keywords: confidence, cooperation, equality, exchange of ideas, gendered education, lack of societal development, learning styles, male leadership, power over mind, protection of women's rights, reciprocal teaching and learning, time management

"Do you think males would benefit as much as females from a leadership program?"

The girls were almost evenly split with 31 responding ‘no’ and 29 responding ‘yes.’ Here are some of the reasons given by the girls who responded no:

> Because… “this program is aimed for girls only”; “all will benefit if [girls] will get [an] education”; “women and men have different weakness in work status [employment inequity]”; “[men] are strong and highly trained”; “males do not need empowerment like females”; “they don’t need special care like girls”; “many females have many challenges so [this program ensures] they can know the way to avoid those challenges”; “males believe that females do not have the power to stand [up for] themselves”; “females are the big [important] human in the world”; “because males have no cooperation in the way [that] females have”; “males are not like females…females have a higher thinking capacity than males”; “women are stronger than men and have a lot of positivity and positive ideas” and “males are not equal to girls.”

On the contrary, here are some of the answers given by the girls who responded yes:

> Because…“it makes equality between male and female”; “if males are educated about females they can cooperate in everything so that [as] to get something”; “they can teach us or learn many things”; “we should educate them about how we learn”; “they share ideas with us and they [can] get some profit from us”; “also they would learn how to protect, [and] to live with girls”; “they can protect the rights of women”; “females haven’t [the] ability [to] develop in society”; “[when] males have the leadership, [this] is [a] good thing”; “because they have confidence and cooperation”; “because they manage many things in a of lot time. And men, they use more power than mind. This means that women, they use [more] mind than power so they [can] do something well”; “they learn from us and they should [be] educated from us.”

It appeared that the girls were as split on their opinion of inviting boys to participate in our program as the facilitators. We agreed that the girls needed this special attention given their current situation in the world's academic realm but also thought that reciprocal learning between boys and girls would be beneficial in the long run. Perhaps after a few years of running the program and establishing a baseline of empowered girls in the community, we would begin to invite boys to the program to strengthen the collaborative relationship between both sexes.

Mid-Program Survey – Teachers

On Day 4 of the program, the teachers were also given a Mid-Program Evaluation, which consisted of the following questions:

> *What are the most useful things you have learned so far? What are the least useful things you have learned so far? What positive feedback about the program have your female students given you? What negative feedback about the program have your female students given you? What barriers do female students and community women present to girls' education? What barriers do male students and community men present in girls accessing education? What can you do as a teacher to help girls overcome these barriers in education?*

These questions were designed to respond to research question four, "What are the lessons or implications for the development and design of empowerment and support programs for girls?" Due to the fact that this program was designed for female students, with no direct program training provided for the teachers, I thought it important to get their feedback so that we could improve not only the girls' portion of the program but also, begin to design the teachers' training for future program delivery. The last questions of this survey were integral to responding to

research questions one and two, “What are the barriers faced by high school girls in Singida, Tanzania?” and “How do secondary school girls in Singida, Tanzania experience education?”. By understanding how they as teachers help girls overcome these barriers, we could begin to identify strengths and weaknesses there within and contribute data to research question four, “What are the lessons or implications for the development and design of empowerment and support programs for girls?”

Program progression: *benefits of physical exercise, collaboration, confidence, empowerment, girls’ success, goal and dream achievement, hard work pays off, overcoming fears, self-awareness, teamwork, women empowering women*

“What are the most useful things you have learned so far?” As an educator, I found it interesting to read their responses to the first question and compare them to the girls’ opinions of the most useful lessons from the program thus far. Neema discovered that “cooperation brings about better performance (noted in the games); everything is possible if you work hard and never give up; how girls can be successful just like any other people.” It appeared that Neema was learning through observation, which was important since we did not have programming specifically geared towards the teachers at this point. From the games, Perucy also internalized the importance of teamwork, “I have learned to work as a team because I have observed the game facilitation shown to the students; as a single person you can do nothing.” Mary “learned the importance of body exercise because it makes…thinking capacity to be high,” which Editha rationalized by saying, “because exercise allows the body to be physically and mentally active.” In referring to what I assume is her students, Alice claimed, “they fear the mind and the ability to do various things” so it is important to empower these girls to push past fear and to “help the female student to feel confident, self-aware, [and] to achieve her goals, because it is so important

as a female teacher to help female students succeed" as Glory put it. Irene thought that the "most useful thing that I have learned so far is cooperation because through cooperation people can achieve their goals." Finally, Editha learned, "how different girl students try to achieve their dreams" a key concept that appeared many times in the students' comments. It was good to see the enmeshing of their thinking and learning.

Program modifications: *exercise, menstruation, none*

"What are the least useful things you have learned so far?" Neema indicated that she "had noted none of them. All of them are very important in their [own] respect." Glory did think that "exercise and menstruation" were the least useful topics "because these things are understood and done regularly." It is important to note that although some teachers may think that these topics are repetitive, many girls made mention of these topics as being most useful, so there appears to be a disconnect in thinking. Perhaps the teachers assume that their students know and understand these topics, when in reality, the information is not readily available to them, or easily understood, especially by the girls. It was also noted during data analysis that the same miscommunication occurred in this question as for the girls; answers that mirrored the first question were produced, referring to the most useful things learned thus far instead of least.

Student feedback: *positive keywords: acceptance of others, altruism, collaboration, confidence, goal attainment, life change, regular availability of program, self-awareness, self-reliance, skill development, study hard*

negative keywords: infrequent training opportunity, short training time

"What positive feedback about the program have your female students given you?" "What negative feedback about the program have your female students given you?" Neema

stated, “they so much like the program. They [said] that it has brought many changes in their life because they have got a lot of life skills.” Glory indicated: “they have learned to be more confident, and to study hard to achieve their goals, and to help each other out.” Mary said: “they learned how to live with different people” to which, Alice added, “they have been encouraged to study hard and collaborate in the field to become more successful.” Jackline feels that her “students are self-aware and self-reliant and have decided to go and train the students in the community” to “share what they had learned” as mentioned by Perucy. As a final thought, Editha suggested that, “the program should be available on a regular basis to get girls to reach their goals.” When asked about what negative feedback they had received from students, the only comments offered were that “the training time is short” and “should be extended to continue to address other concerns.” Mary’s students suggested “conducting the program twice in a year.”

Female barriers: *abductions, disunity, early pregnancy, educational hindrance, interpersonal conflict, irresponsible child rearing, lack of basic needs, lack of confidence, lack of cooperation, lack of open communication, lack of school supplies, low income families, tension*

“What barriers do female students and community women present to girls’ education?” The barriers that female students and community women present to girls’ education begin when “women don’t openly educate their girl children on life skills. Some of them are irresponsible in child caring.” In general, Glory suggested that there are “tensions, disunity, and lack of cooperation” amongst females. Mary expressed concern that “they are not getting cooperation…because they don’t like each other; [there is a] lack of confidence to those girls.” Editha went on to say, “students do not receive education and work for it (a shame). The result [is a] damaged model [and] early pregnancy.” Perucy blamed it on the “family’s low income which causes female students to fail to meet their basic needs.” Alice thought of the “lack of

cooperation, frustrated attempts, abductions, and the ability to provide them with valuable information such as notebooks and books, also clothing."

Male barriers: *child pornography, gangs, irresponsible fathers, low opinion of female education, media, poor environment, poverty, pregnancy, religion, seduction, social customs and traditions, unprotected sex*

"What barriers do male students and community men present in girls accessing education?" The barriers that male students and community men present in girls accessing education were somewhat different. Neema said: "they cheat female students and give them pregnancy [get them pregnant]. Some community men (fathers) are irresponsible to their families. So, girls do not get school requirements." A situation in which they are irresponsible was purported by Perucy: "Some men run away from their families and cause difficulties in girls accessing education." Glory suggested that men "seduce girls to give them a pregnancy [get them pregnant] thus frustrating their dreams, to discredit girls because they do not 'deserve education.'" Editha proposed that girls "enter into cravings of the flesh, which leads to self-indulgence, resulting in pregnancy." Jackline numbered off many barriers including, "child pornography, unprotected sex, gangs, poverty, the environment they live in, customs and traditions, religion, media etc." The barriers presented by both males and females to girls' education are numerous and changes need to begin in the community.

Surmount barriers: *acknowledgement of their importance, appreciation of both sexes, counselling, encouragement, financial support for basic needs, goal achievement, love, nurture esteem needs, parental involvement, sex education, strength, talk openly, teach life skills, value*

"What can you do as a teacher to help girls overcome these barriers in education?"

Glory stated that she "talks to them regularly to remind them of their value, their importance, to encourage them that they can do everything and [to] also love them deeply." All humans need to feel like they belong and are loved so it is good to see that these teachers make this a priority, especially for their female students. Mary shows her students that she cares through her actions: "I can sit and talk friendly to them and give them counselling about love affairs. Also, I will tell them how a strong woman should be and advise them to be strong women." On the topic of love affairs, Neema says that she "educates and guides them to escape pregnancy. [It is important] to call parents and educate them on how to help their children overcome these barriers." Just as it is in Canada, it is important to have a network of support around these students facilitated through regular communication between parents and teachers. Janeth seeks to fulfill their esteem needs by "teaching them how to properly nurture a healthy self-esteem and fight to achieve their goals." Euodia wishes to fill their basic needs in "teaching them life skills [and] giving them support when they can't afford some needs." From Irene's comment, it appears that some students value a male teacher's word over that of a female teacher: "I will advise girls to listen [to] all people who educate them without showing admiration of a certain sex, especially for male only. Because there are some women who can teach good things to their life and they can [help them] achieve [in] their life." It is therefore interesting to note that, not only do girls have barriers in education, but their female teachers also experience similar barriers. This draws attention to the need to have specific professional development for teachers at these leadership and empowerment programs to further develop their skills and knowledge.

Post-Program Survey – Students

On graduation day, prior to beginning the celebrations, the girls were given their final survey of the week, the Post-Program Survey. Questions asked included the following:

> *What is the most important thing you learned from this program? How will you use what you learned from this program in the future? How will this program help you to overcome any struggles you have in accessing education? What are your plans after secondary school? How will this program help you to achieve those goals? What recommendations do you have for improving the program? Things to add or remove?"*

These surveys were designed to respond to all four-research questions: (1) What are the barriers faced by high school girls in Singida, Tanzania? (2) How do secondary school girls in Singida, Tanzania experience education? (3) What is the impact of a week-long leadership and empowerment program on girls' self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy? (4) What are the lessons or implications for the development and design of empowerment and support programs for girls?

Program significance: *belief in oneself, collaboration and cooperation, confidence, courage, dental hygiene, dreams, empowerment, first aid, girls in society, goal attainment, healthy relationships, helpful, honesty, hope, human health, importance in society, love, menstruation and menstrual hygiene, physical health, pregnancy, puberty, respect, self-awareness, self-preservation, sister oath, study hard, tolerance*

"What is the most important thing you learned from this program?" The keywords that appeared most often in their response to the first question, with the count in brackets, included: 'confidence' (21), 'first aid' (17), 'dreams' (12), 'cooperate' (8), 'physical health' (8), 'sister oath' (5), 'believe in myself' (4), 'helpful' (4), 'human health' (4), 'menstruation' (4), 'pregnancy' (4), 'study hard' (4), 'caring for my body' (3), 'girls in society' (3), 'goals' (3),

‘honest’ (3), and ‘love’ (3). I was surprised by the overwhelmingly positive response to first aid! Some might argue that it appeared most often in the girls responses due to the recency effect, the tendency to remember best the most recently presented information, but it may also be because it was so novel to these girls; they likely have never learned about first aid/CPR before. Here are some of the comments the girls had to offer:

> “The most important thing I learned from this program is the things that I can do in order to make my dreams come true such as study hard, [be] hopeful, [be] helpful, [be] tolerant and so on.” “This program made me learn how to have self-confidence, awareness, and [to] believe [in] myself that I can do anything great.” “The most important thing I learned in this program is how to give different sick or injured people first aid.” “In this program, I learned about puberty” …and “I learned about personal hygiene during menstruation.” “The most important thing I learned from this program is to know many things which can help [me] to fulfill my dreams and to know that I am [an] important girl in society.” “I have learned how…with collaboration, [I] can help my fellow girls and the community as a whole.” “Girls, we are important, because we are beautiful, strong, and together we can do anything.” “The most important things which I learned from this program are to make good relationships with others and [have] good cooperation, physical health, pregnancy, [and] dental hygiene.” “The most important thing I have learned from this program is the way of caring [for] my body and the ways to reach my goals.” “What I have learned from this program is to be respectful to all those around me including teachers and students, to be honest, to be involved with others, [to have] courage” and “to love each other.” “The most [important] thing I learned from this program is to know my value as a girl and know how to protect myself as a girl.”

It is evident that a great deal of learning and growth had taken place during the week's programming. In comparing the keywords from the Mid-Program Survey to the Post-Program Survey, the following words appeared in both analyses: 'confidence,' 'dreams,' 'cooperation,' 'sister oath,' 'study hard,' and 'love.' From this analysis, I would purport that our program gave the girls confidence to go after their dreams and study hard. Our sister oath emphasized for them the importance of cooperating with each other through love and respect.

Prospective impact: *confidence, control emotions, cooperation, dream attainment, educate others, first aid, help those facing challenges, hope, importance in the community and society, love, manage mood, menstrual cycle, pregnancy, protection, respect, self-worth, setting goals, sister oath, solving problems, study hard, teamwork*

"How will you use what you learned from this program in the future?" Suby said that "I can use the things which I learned from this program to educate other girls from school, in society, and in other communities" looking "to the future which can also help another generation to overcome any challenge which may face them" as purported by Dafina. Bahati would like to "teach my sisters" to "become an important girl in society and [to] become [a] good example in our community" as quoted by Glady. Kirie hopes to "educate my other relatives who are facing challenges" "in order to move them from dark[ness] to light, and how they can be a leader" as inspired by Dalila. Taabu specified that she would like to "educate other girls about the sister oath and menstruation cycle." Hadiya quoted part of the sister oath in saying, "It can help me to know that I can do anything, and I can protect others and myself" "from those that are not good for my health" Panya clarified. Sophy would like to "educate other people to learn about [having] confidence [in] yourself, respect, love, and hope to get our dreams [to come] true." Evelyne indicated that she would "use what I have learned to provide first aid to school pupils

and people in the home." Halima indicated: "I will use it in the future to study hard in my lessons in order to achieve my dreams." Crenady will employ the program lessons "in solving my different problems and in my personal life processes" such as how "to control and manage my emotions and mood" as Winnie specified. Cyian noted: "From this program, in my future, I will make sure all people know their self-worth and [encourage] having teamwork because teamwork makes cooperation." Jeudeth added to this in maintaining, "In the future, I will use this program to teach other young girls to be… comfortable and to create their goals very well." Anitha alluded to using the training, "when a brother or a racist has a problem" and Tuliza said, "I will use [the knowledge] on how pregnancy occurs when I will be in my marriage after [the] end of my studies." Evidently there are many ways in which the girls will apply the lessons learned at this program to their life and the lives of others.

Developing agency: *assertive, astute, fearless, goal setting, help those who struggle, love, new knowledge acquisition, patience, perseverance, practice, respect, strong, tolerant*

"How will this program help you to overcome any struggles you have in accessing education?" Martha suggested: "It will help me in my education because there are some things you teach us which our teacher doesn't." Bahati stated, "This program will help me to overcome any struggles I have accessing education by being patient and to never give up since this program teaches me to be patient." Anitha connected this thought by stating, "In this great program, we were taught about [the art of] practicing, and often practice goes hand in hand with education. Education without practice cannot succeed." Onya affirmed, "This program helps me [to] overcome obstacles like doing mistakes because this program educates us to be assertive, to know why we want, and… [to take the] necessary steps to achieve it." Josephine confirmed, "Yes, this program [will] help [me] to overcome any struggles [I have] in accessing education

because I learned about [the] method of studying hard to reach my dreams." Pili said, "It will help because it makes me feel confident, [to] be strong and fearless" and "we learn things that build us up… [to] deal with adversity" as Asnathy put it. Panya asserted: "no one will make me [feel] under him [beneath him] or her because I have individual skills." Suby affirmed that "this program helps me…to be tolerant…respectful…[and] to love each other" as well as "serving the people who are struggling" as stated by Linzy.

Future plans: *advanced level courses (Forms V and VI), aviation training, build social supports, computer science studies, educate others on HIV and pregnancy, English language studies, entrepreneurship, first aid education, motherhood, pass the national exam (Form IV), medical school, nursing college, post-graduate studies, post-secondary education, study abroad, teacher's college, university, workforce, work with children*

"What are your plans after secondary school?" "How will this program help you to achieve those goals?" A couple girls wish to go straight into the workforce such as Sayuni who said, "My plans after secondary [school] is [to] find employment for just finding money for just me." Otesha has family in mind: "My plan is to be a good mother and I need to [have] a good business because of [for] my family." Some girls mentioned that they simply wished to pass the Form Four national examination, such as Datiya: "My plan after secondary school is to do small activities at home while I wait for the examination answer. If I will pass I will thank the gods and if I will fail I will continue to do small activities that can help me in my life." Out of sixty girls, nineteen (31.67%) affirmed that they wished to continue with advanced level courses, also known as form five and six: "My plans after secondary school is to go to the advanced level and this program will help me to study hard and hence [will help] me to achieve my goals."

Eight participants, including Winnie as quoted below, expressed their desire to pursue a University education: “My plans after secondary school are to join University and this program helps to increase my confidence that I can do anything and achieve it.” Chiku discussed her ambitions for post-graduate work: “The thing I plan [to do] after secondary school is to continue my studies, if possible, to reach [my] PhD. This program helps me to achieve my goals because now I’m confident and I believe [in] myself; I can do anything I want.” Imani declared a desire to study abroad: “I plan to study about [for the] ACT [a standardized test used for college admissions in the United States] and continue with my study to [studies in] other levels.” The low number of girls hoping to pursue higher education was surprising to me based on the high importance Tanzanians place on education and the hopes the girls conveyed through the completion of the dream tree referenced earlier in this study. Are they unaware that to reach some of their dreams, they will need to attend university? Or do they have doubt in their abilities to pursue higher education? Maybe it is the language surrounding these pathways that was lost in translation. For example, Vocational Education and Training (VET) leads to a skilled occupation whereas graduates of Technical Education and Training (TET) assume roles that require higher levels of skills, knowledge, and understanding such as technicians and professionals. TET is part of higher education obtained in a non-university institution and although different from VET, together they provide what is known as Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). University education is a major part of higher education and commences after senior secondary and the attainment of appropriate levels in the ACSEE (President's Office Planning Commission, 2011). The girls may aspire to proceed in one of these pathways but did not communicate this preference in a way that was interpreted properly and would require follow up.

Other girls spoke about their future career aspirations. Daisy seeks technical knowledge: "After secondary school I want to study English language and computer science." Theddy has the intention "to study courses of teaching…because if you want to do anything you should be active, respectful, as well as faithful." A couple girls hope to one day get their wings such as Zawati who declared, "I want to study in order to be a pilot. And this program it helps me to remember that I am strong, and I can help myself either by [seeking good] advice or anything [else]." Four girls affirmed their desire to pursue business, such as Wanthanee: "After secondary school, my future plan is to be a businesswoman so this program will help me to think critically and be kind to my fellows." Kilinda's aspirations appear to have been influenced by the program: "My plan is to be[come] a nurse because yesterday we have learned about first aid." Five girls indicated their desire to become a doctor, as declared by Crenady: "My plans after finishing my secondary education is to go [onto] advanced knowledge (form V and VI), [and then to] university in which I will study the treatment profession (doctor). [This program] will help me in gaining the confidence and being faster in working as you [the facilitators] do."

A couple girls indicated their desire to continue educating others, such as Martha, "My plan is to go to University. [This program] will help me to know and educate people, especially girls, away from HIV and pregnancy." Cyian expressed a desire to work with children, "My plans after secondary school [are] I want to build children to have confidence. This program helps me to achieve my goals because up [to] now I know how to [take] care [of] myself and [now] I have more knowledge." Nbushe hopes to continue using the teachings of the program: "My plan after secondary school is to teach all people how to do first aid [for] any people who have got any problems." Glady wishes to build social supports into society: "My plan after

secondary school is to create many things that can help me to live well in our society through using many things I got from this program."

As mentioned in my Research Design, this study sought to examine whether an independent variable, "the week-long leadership and empowerment program", could influence the central phenomenon, "girls' educational experiences in Tanzania", which had become the dependent variable. Anais summed it up by stating that her post-secondary plans are, "to proceed with my education. This program helped me to achieve my goals because we were taught that we should be confident and patient." Tuliza confirmed this sentiment in stating, "I have planned to continue with further education. This program will help me to achieve my goals because it has taught me the things which will enable [me] to achieve [my] goals which includes respect, hope, as well [as] studying hard." It appears the program has empowered these girls to continue in their educational pursuits, proving that our program had an impact on their educational experience.

Growth planning: *allow returning participants, annual/biannual/triannual program, anti-discrimination training, assessment and evaluation, economic improvement education, entrepreneurship training, expansion of program locations, female circumcision awareness, healthy relationship attainment, HIV education, inclusion of all girls regardless of distance or funds, inclusion of science teachers and tools, increased program duration, more facilitators, peer pressure prevention, poverty reduction education, practical training, school visits, self-efficacy training (bravery, confidence, independence, strength), setting goals, sponsorship*

"What recommendations do you have for improving the program? Things to add or remove?" Five students stated that, "the program should be every year", Farha and Bahati suggested twice per year, and Anitha proposed: "the training time should be three times a year." Crenady insisted, "I want you to increase the program time in order for us to gain a lot of

knowledge" and "so that you can learn to read [improve our literacy skills]" as desired by Clara. The wish for a longer program run time was echoed by seven girls and Bahati even stated, "I would also like this program to be conducted at least for two weeks." Anais and Taabu's recommendation was "to add more teachers", which I interpreted to mean more program facilitators. Hannan specified, "the things to add is teachers of science, especially biology" to which Dalila suggested, "adding instruments of sciences subjects." The promotion of science and technology education as well as the development of innovation capabilities are critical in bolstering Tanzania's competitiveness on the global market, as discussed in the goals and targets of Vision 2025. We did include two STEM activities in our program, but it appears that infusing more into the program would help to encourage girls in a direction where they might not otherwise be encouraged to go, and support the continued growth of Tanzania's economy, an improvement which will in time further support our girls.

As far as curriculum, Cyian "recommends more things that will help us to increase [our] knowledge and to remove all that ignorance people [have] in this country." Lisha suggested adding "education about the ways of improving our economic levels [and] reducing poverty among us." Dafina continued, "The thing to add is this: you may help us to know how we can be independent to [in] our society." This presents a complex topic, but one that with much research and preparation could be developed for subsequent years. Another important topic purported by Nbushe was, "to add more education like to teach people in [about] the process of women discrimination and circumcision." Martha requested that we "give education about [the] source of HIV" and Kalere wished to learn "how to decrease love affairs" or "how to prevent themselves on [protect oneself from] poor groups and bad behaviours" as put by Wanthanee. These topics were explored on Day 4 of the Program at the learning stations "Prostitution and

Sexually Transmitted Infections" and "Healthy Relationships." We did not allocate more time to this because the 2018 facilitating group explored these topics in detail however, it appears several important topics may need to be revisited each year in detail. Another topic covered at length by the 2018 group, but requested again for next year, as suggested by Halima, is that of entrepreneurship. According to Tanzania's Development Vision 2025, Tanzania's human capital development has not been adequate to meet the growing development challenges of Tanzania and to facilitate the search for solutions to the development problems they face. Education has not been geared towards integrating individuals into the local and international competitive markets, or towards innovatively engaging Tanzanians in entrepreneurship and self-employment activities (UNESCO, 2015). Our leadership and empowerment program provides a prime learning opportunity for girls to begin to learn about entrepreneurship so that they can eventually compete in all markets.

One of the concerns Dr. Beckford and I shared in our post-program debriefing was that of program topic repetition and how best to avoid repetitive delivery of information to returning student and teacher participants. It is clear however from this feedback that repetition of topics is not only an issue but is something requested by the girls. Frola recommended that we "continue to learn [teach] other things that help girls to be confident and to be strong," "to educate girls to be brave" as put by Rasheda, and "to teach about achieving goals" as repeated by Elea. Kilinda suggested that we "add more practicals" so, perhaps giving the girls more time to practice the new concepts would be beneficial. Riziki added to this in suggesting that the girls "should have [to do a] presentation of different things that we do, e.g. [an] exercise or quiz that we are given by our teachers." It appears that they wish to take more of an active role in the program delivery and consolidation of learning.

As far as how participants are selected, Martha requested that, “teachers do not remove students who participated in last [year’s] program.” Perhaps she wished to return as a participant next year and hoped to not have this opportunity taken from her. Panya boldly suggested, “that for those who come to the program, you have to help them and sponsor them.” Grace suggested that we “visit the schools in order for them to [get to] know you.” I am sure Grace was pleased when the facilitators visited the schools in the weeks following the program to deliver textbooks and meet with the student body. Several students expressed a wish to include girls living further from the city centre such as Hadiya who stated, “I think you can add the way of teaching and you can teach other girls from [the] village.” Onya thought of those girls in her community who would never have the chance to be selected for participation because they do not have the necessary funds to be a student. She requested that we try “to help girls whose parents don’t have the ability to take them to school. I advise you to take them to your private school. Thank you.” There must be a way to reach out to those girls who are not part of the school system but would benefit greatly from inclusion in a leadership and empowerment program. Kirie added to this in saying, “My recommendations are to continue to help the challenged girls and to visit different places.” Suby commented, “I advise you to continue to help girls in our societies and communities and also to educate us. This helps us to reach our dreams [in] our life.” Editha concluded by stating, “I thank you and I advise you [to] never give up [and] to come again [to] Tanzania.” We will be back; of that she can be sure.

Post-Program Survey – Teachers

When the teachers were requested to complete their Post-Program Evaluation, they were asked similar questions as the girls:

What is the most important thing you learned from this program? Will you use parts of this program in your classroom? If yes, how? What role do schoolteachers, administrators, and personnel play in girls' unequal access to education? How will this program help you overcome any struggles you have in helping girls access education? What recommendations do you have for improving the program? Things to add? Things to remove? Any further comments?

The teachers' surveys were designed to respond to all four-research questions: "What are the barriers faced by high school girls in Singida, Tanzania?" "How do secondary school girls in Singida, Tanzania experience education?" "What is the impact of a week-long leadership and empowerment program on girls' self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy?" and "What are the lessons or implications for the development and design of empowerment and support programs for girls?"

Program significance: *confidence, cooperation, creativity, developing healthy relationships, first aid, infectious health, oral health, perseverance, physical and mental health exercises, problem solving, respect, self-awareness, self-esteem, student-centered teaching, study hard*

"What is the most important thing you learned from this program?" Neema learned "various active teaching/learning methods, self-confidence and awareness, cooperation, and [to] never give up." She also enjoyed the "lessons such as oral and dental hygiene, first aid, healthy relationships etc." Editha acquired knowledge on "infectious health and how exercises can strengthen the body and mind." Euodia "learned how a girl student can overcome certain problems, [by] studying hard, being confident, never giving up, respecting teachers etc." Janeth recognized the importance of "making relationships with others" such as her students, and Glory "learned how to build a girl's self-esteem and creativity." Tanzania's Development Vision 2025

seeks to establish a strong competitive economy through creativity, innovativeness, and a high level of quality skills. When its citizens develop these aptitudes, they will be better equipped to respond to development challenges and to adapt to the changing market and technological conditions in the regional and global economy (UNESCO, 2015). Our program provides an excellent opportunity for participating girls and their teachers to develop these in-demand skills.

Pedagogical impact: *action-oriented approach, awareness, brain breaks, collaboration, concrete examples, confidence, first aid, goal setting, group work, healthy relationships, menstruation, self-love, self-worth, teaching aids, team teaching, teamwork, visuals*

"Will you use parts of this program in your classroom? If yes, how?" All ten teachers stated that they would use parts of this program in their classroom. One topic stood out to Alice in particular, that of "first aid. It is clear that when students are working together to provide first aid, it will be easier to help their peers in the community who are particularly vulnerable." Neema listed the specific program topics she would teach in her classroom: "building and encouraging healthy relationships, teaching the class (girls) about MP and all about [the] other topics I've learned; teaching my students about self-confidence, awareness, and other things to help them to reach their goals." Glory continued this focus on improving students' self-efficacy and agency: "I will teach students to be confident, to love themselves, to value themselves, [and] to collaborate in a variety of ways to achieve their goals." With a focus on goal acquisition, Jackline will teach her students "by focusing on all the things we have been trained to do to [help them] reach their goals so that their goals are finally realized. We know we have the best [girls and] we can do anything." From observing the delivery of our program, Mary realized the importance of incorporating visuals, concrete examples, and brain breaks: "Yes, I [will] use parts of this program in my class. I [will] continue to use pictures to teach the pupils and give them

actual examples in the community as well as body exercises after a couple of minutes and [then] continue with the [learning] interval." Editha will employ "team teaching [and] teaching aids [which] help students understand [through] teaching by action." Irene said, "I will use teamwork and group discussion methods because I have realized that the students have something in their minds" to which Perucy specified, "I will use groups to teach my students." As she observed our facilitators working together to deliver the program, Perucy noted the "teamwork spirit in teaching. I will cooperate with other teachers to improve teaching – 'together we can.'" It is wonderful to see that not only have the girls internalized what we have taught here, but their teachers will use it to impact further generations of students who come through their classroom.

Barriers or benefits: *build capacity, encourage girls in leadership, encourage girls in STEM subjects, equitable education, females in sports, feminine hygiene, financial support, gender identity, guidance and counselling, inclusion of girls, inspire, literacy, provide growth opportunities, reward system, rights and responsibilities, social support*

"What role do schoolteachers, administrators, and personnel play in girls' unequal access to education?" The teachers misinterpreted this question to be a positive one and responded by saying what role they play in helping girls access education. Neema explained that, "they play a big role nowadays. There are some financial and social supports they give to them e.g. the student who gets an emergency MP at school is given a pad. There are others who are given school requirements by NGOs." Editha mandated that it is their responsibility "to convince girls in leadership, to inspire girls to study science subjects, [and] to educate them that women can do all things like men." Jackline referred to International Women's Day, March 8, in saying that their importance lies in "giving them a gender identity [so that they] know their rights and responsibilities." Alice thought to "incorporate gender into a variety of activities while studying

for outdoor classes such as hygiene and sports." Irene suggested that teachers, administrators, and personnel support students, "by encouraging girls through giving gifts when [they have] done well and allowing girls to participate in different programs which include girl students." Glory suggested "involving girls in every activity in and out of school without discrimination, cherishing them, giving them equal rights, and building capacity." On the topic of capacity building, Mary added that "they do not hesitate to elevate females by persuading them to read so that they can free themselves later and avoid abuse by their husbands." Perucy stated that it was their responsibility "to provide guidance and counselling on different aspects (education) and to allow them to attend various programs like GLP [Girls' Leadership Program] where they get knowledge." Most importantly, Euodia summarized their role as "educating girl students on the importance of education" which is what we were trying to accomplish through our program.

Agency and advocacy: *academic support, building potential, confidence building, cooperation, counselling and guidance, dream fulfillment, empowerment, encouragement, goal attainment, helping others, learn from mistakes, problem solving skills, protect rights, sister oath, solve educational and social problems, sound pedagogical strategies, student-centered teaching, study hard, support system, work hard*

"How will this program help you overcome any struggles you have in helping girls access education?" Irene made reference to our sister oath in stating, "This program helped me by giving [me] ways to do teaching and helping to encourage students, especially girls, by using the following words, 'I'm strong, I'm beautiful, and I can do anything.'" Perucy used the oath for her own encouragement: "Because I am strong, beautiful, and I can do anything, I have gained great ENCOURAGEMENT that when I face any difficulties I will be able to solve it." Janeth echoed these sentiments in affirming that, "it helps me to be confident in my word. Also, to help

my students in their studies and make sure that they can use what they learned to help other students in order to reach their dreams." Neema reflected that, "It'll help me to be more open in counselling and guiding them as well as encouraging them." Editha confirmed that, "graduates, including those who have been exposed to a great deal, will be a good go-to for making sure all girls can reach their potential." Glory continued: "It will help me because I have learned a variety of ways to empower girls to reach their goals and to solve various educational and social problems." Euodia will use the teachings of the program in "educating girl students to be confident, work hard, protect their rights, cooperate, study hard, and learn from mistakes." Alice spoke specifically to our student-centered teaching strategies when reflecting upon the program: "It will help us especially when we do exercises (games) that equip a student to be a teacher, and they also have the ability to feel confident and provide cooperation in the classroom." Although the teachers were not given explicit professional development, they were able to pick up key learning points from their active participation in, and observation of, the girls' program.

Program adjustments: *biannual program, book on problem solving, continuous timeline, extended training, inclusion of more students, increased education on first aid, child marriage and pregnancy, male and female teacher professional development, regular program scheduling*

"What recommendations do you have for improving the program? Things to add? Things to remove?" Mary suggested that the program be run "at least twice a year. We must give them more training to avoid negative influences if life is difficult at home and not emphasizing the importance of education for them." Editha recommended the "the number of students should increase, [with the program] taking place regularly" because as Jackline put it, "I have seen a very big deal [emphasis] on this program." Euodia would like "the program to be continuous" and the training "extended" as suggested by Alice. Euodia would also like to see us

"prepare a book which explains the ways a girl can overcome problems." We did prepare books and pamphlets that discussed menstrual hygiene, but I agree with Euodia that we could distribute reading materials for all topics covered during our program. Perhaps we could prepare an empowerment guide for girls focused on self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy. Irene seeks further training in first aid: "We need enough time for educating us [on] how to give first aid [to] different victim examples [e.g.] the person who [is] burnt and others." She would also like to see "education on the effects of early marriage and early pregnancy." We did include this topic on Day 4 of the rotating stations however, perhaps more time spent on this important topic would be beneficial. Finally, Neema suggested that, "there should be a special program for all teachers since some of us lack these skills and only one [teacher] from [each] school gets this knowledge. Even male teachers have to be given this knowledge because they also deal with girls." I completely agree with her and hope that future program delivery will include a specific training component for teachers' professional development. Neema also alluded to the inclusion of men in the program, which has been a discussion point and one that will be considered for the future.

"Any further comments?" Neema said, "The program is so good. Thank you very much. Please, never stop it." Glory added, "It's a great program that I liked so much. I wish it were always there for more students." Irene shared, "My students have enjoyed the program and this program should continue." Finally, Alice shared, "As a result of this program, I have witnessed here my older pupils are able to express themselves well and have a lot of fun trying to read more to fulfill their dreams." The program was a great success for teachers and students.

After-Program Survey – Students

One week after the program concluded, the girls were brought back together for a follow-up meeting and were given the final survey. On this After-Program Survey, the girls were asked the following questions to provide data for all four-research questions:

> *What have you done in your school to share the knowledge that you learned from the program? What activities would you like to do in the future? In your school? In your community? What resources and support do you need in order to continue your development and share your knowledge with other girls? How are other girls at your school reacting to your selection/participation in the program? How have you changed since you participated in the program? What changes have you noticed in your teachers that participated in the program? If given the chance, will you participate again next year? Why or why not?*

Impact and advocacy: *care, collaboration, confidence, dental health, dream attainment, establish girls' clubs, first aid, help struggling students, love, menstrual hygiene, puberty, sister oath, songs, teaching girls in the school and community, teaching relatives*

"What have you done in your school to share the knowledge that you learned from the program?" In response to the first survey question, 96.67% of girls included one of the following keywords in their answer: 'teach,' 'taught,' 'teaching,' 'share,' 'shared,' 'educate,' 'educated,' 'educating,' 'education,' 'explain,' 'explained,' 'tell,' 'talk,' 'learned,' 'introduced,' and 'give them knowledge.' From this data, I can see that almost every single girl who participated in the program shared their knowledge with other girls in their family, school, and community afterwards. Dalila confirmed this observation: "I will use the knowledge that I learned from the program by teaching my fellow girls, not only girls in our school but also in our community" to which Clara added, "and my other relatives." Some girls shared specific topics

from the program such as Martha, who said: “I introduced dental health because many people don’t know about how to provide their teeth health [take care of their teeth].” Zawati indicated, “I was teaching others how to care [for] themselves for example how to give injured persons first aid and to be clean for yourself [menstrual hygiene].” Shamya taught “girls during their period what’s something they have to do and songs [to sing] if they have stress.” Taabu’s mandate is “to educate other girls about the things that I learned about: puberty and [the] sister oath” to which Theddy added, “I teach other girls to be strong, to be beautiful, and [that they] can do anything.” Evelyne shared, “I have collaborated with other girls in school and have taught them that I have learned that girls should be confident, love each other, and…provide care.” Josephine indicated, “I teach my friend or my fellow and/or other students about important things we want to [you should do to] reach your dreams” and as Hannan put it “I told them the things that can make their future come true.” Dafina is reaching out to girls that are struggling: “In my school, I shared the knowledge I had learned to advise those girls who give up in their studies” and Wanthanee is “educating them on how to encounter obstacles.” Nine girls also indicated that they had established a girls’ club/group such as Nbushe who said, “In our school we started our new club called Utemini Girls’ Power Club in order to teach other girls.” Benes added, “Every week at least for one day I teach them what you taught us.” It is evident that these girls take their role as leaders in the community very seriously.

Goal setting: *advisor, aptitudes, confidence, decision making, develop leadership and empowerment programs, doctor, dream attainment, educate out-of-school children, female health, first aid, geotechnical engineer, girls’ clubs, girls’ importance, healthy relationships, help struggling girls (impoverished, orphaned), inspire, improve academic quality, leader,*

lawyer, physical health, pilot, poverty reduction, pregnancy, protection, provide medical services, saviour, school bus driver, social status, tutoring

"What activities would you like to do in the future? In your school? In your community?" Just over half (53.33%) of the girls indicated a desire to educate those in their school and community. The keywords that appeared most often in the girls' responses included 'teach' and 'educate,' for instance, Rasheda who declared the "activities that I would like to do in the future in my school, and in the community, is to teach [that] girls can do anything and are important to our life and in the community." Martha said, "I would like to teach girls about their health and to teach them [how] to protect [themselves against] pregnancy." Nbushe added "I like to protect and teach other girls when [they] get problems like disturbance of boys." Crenady offered, "The activities which I would like to do are providing medical services in my school as well as in my community" while Nuru specified that she would like to "provide first aid when a problem arises." Chiku affirmed, "The activities [that] I [would] like to do in my future is to make sure that all people who were living in poor life [poverty]…live in [a] better life" to which Theddy added "in my community I would like to help those [who are] orphaned."

Ten girls mentioned that they would like to organize a girls' club/group. Pili stated, "I would like to start a student club at school and in the community around us because it will help us in the future." Anais confirmed, "I want to be a leader of girls in my school to build the confidence of girls." Datiya added, "I would like to be a peer educator at my school [and] in my community." Onya affirmed, "In my school I [would] like [to] improve the quality of academics and in my community I [would] like [to] educate children who don't have [an] education." Glady similarly declared, "I will help the girls who are not able to continue with their education and those who have no [do not have a] good life." To do so, Jeudeth and Bahati would like to

develop programs similar to ours: “I would like to make such a program like this in order to give other student girls, and others in my community this knowledge.” Lisha added, “I will use the knowledge I’ve got in the program to help other young and old women [learn] about their position in society.” Cyian echoed these sentiments in stating, “I [would] like to be a big advisor and saviour to other girls in order to make their futures come true.” Dafina also said, “What I would like to do in the future is inspire other girls to be better…so they can reach their dreams.” Dalila explained how she will do this, “My activities that I would like to do in [the] future [are], if I see someone having problems and he/she comes to tell me, I will find the solution and will help my family.”

Others discussed their future career aspirations. Three girls, including Panya, expressed a desire to practice medicine: “I would like to be a doctor in my future.” She continued, “In my school I would like to help my fellow students in various decisions. In my community I would like to help all girls who live in a difficult situation.” Hadiya “would like to be a lawyer in order to defend human rights in my country.” Imani “would like to be an engineer of minerals in order to eliminate poverty.” Anitha indicated, “I would love to be a pilot, and at school I would like to help my classmates with physical problems, especially girls.” Hannan said, “The activity I [would] like to do in the future in my school is I am going to buy a school bus.” Wanthanee concluded by saying “In the future, I want to encourage people that they can do anything, and they should put their fear aside.”

Resources and support: *academic resources, acceptance, advice, books on various topics (building confidence, female development, physical health), conducive environment for studying, cooperation (parents, peers, teachers), corporate sponsorship, feminine hygiene products, girls’ leadership and empowerment program, inclusion of rural girls, love, money, moral support,*

political support, program materials, scholarships, school supplies (exercise books, notebooks, pencils, pens), scientific tools (microscope), sponsor, teaching aids, technology (computer, laptop projector), transportation, trust

"What resources and support do you need in order to continue your development and share your knowledge with other girls?" Money was a topic of concern for thirteen girls for different reasons such as Panya who indicated a need for "advice and [a] sponsor that would help me with other fellow students." For schooling, Anitha shared, "I need money to be able to continue my education so I can fulfill my dreams." For attendance and supplies, Evelyne shared, "I need money to meet my school needs and to not miss school, and also study materials [such] as books." On the topic of the girls' leadership and empowerment program, Grace stated that "the support that I need is money [which] could help the program to continue." Speaking to program materials and transport, Bahati implored, "The resources which I want, and support, are teaching aids, so that it will be easy [for] my fellow girls to understand the lessons when I teach them. Also, I want the support of money [for] transport because I want to go very far and everywhere to spread this knowledge." To this goal Kanika added, "Money will enable me to reach out to the other girls living in rural areas and other areas so that they can get this education themselves." The Economic Update of 2012 produced by the World Bank stressed that Tanzania's strong economic growth continues, "to elude rural households which constitute approximately two thirds of the total population and 80 percent of the poor…who continue to survive in appalling conditions. Facilitating the inclusion of rural households into the country's growth process should be at the core of the policy debate in Tanzania" (Morisset, 2012). Perhaps, it should be at the core of facilitating our program as well.

Technology was a need identified by five girls, including Crenady who indicated, “I need advice, cooperation, as well as money [for] studying practically (by using [a] laptop projector).” Hannan added, “The support that I need in order to continue my development and share my knowledge with other girls is [a] computer. Twenty-three (38.33%) of the girls mentioned that they would like books “for studying for my development and [the] development of other girls” as put by Halima. Hadiya would like “many books about life, how to build confidence, and knowledge about physical health.” Sayuni indicated, “I need more education if [I am to] study other girls to know [what it would be like to] live in their life. But also, I need full books for just us girls.” Two, two, one, and six girls requested exercise books, notebooks, pencils, and pens, respectively. Onya seeks “to have [a] good environment to study good classes…and tools needed for scientific experiments like [a] microscope and so on.” Anais and Winnie both referred to a need for the purple box which “contains pads in a school for the use of girls.” The Purple Box is a charitable organization, founded by humanitarian activist Naureen Gamdust, that supplies underprivileged girls in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania with free pads every month. It is great to hear of other initiatives that seek to support girls in their physical and emotional needs. Future iterations of our program should partner with charitable initiatives in Tanzania whose explicit aim is to support girls.

In fact, support in various forms was something our girls sought out. Imani feels she needs more “support from the teachers” because as Cyian put it “if he/she gives me support, I will do [accomplish] a lot of things.” Tuliza thought of us facilitators when she said, “The resources which I need are support and materials from Dr. Clinton’s [Beckford] team.” Rasheda indicated, “The resources and support that I need in order to continue my development and knowledge [transfer] to other girls: I need cooperation to [with] my parents, teachers, and to

[with] my friends and all girls; we need big cooperation." Glory would like to see "cooperation from our leader and those who have [the] ability to support that [girls' leadership and empowerment] program." Lisha stated, "The big thing I want [is] support from companies and associations because I want to do the same thing as your team." Jeudeth would like to see "more cooperation, moral help, and materials [money] from different foreigners in order to support me." Josephine stated, "First, I need cooperation with my fellow girls to agree [on] important things in education and different materials for example [a] Diary of [the] Club [curriculum]." In general, Chiku said, "The resources and support which I need to continue my development is good advice, support, and cooperation from different people and capital [money]." Simply put, Nuru identified her needs as "love, trust, cooperation, and acceptance."

Program impressions: *asking questions, admiration, congratulations, cooperation, happy, motivation, positive, proud, reciprocal teaching and learning, recognize the importance of the program, sharing of ideas, sister oath, supportive, wish to participate*

"How are other girls at your school reacting to your selection/participation in the program?" All girls responded positively, for most "because they wanted me to be educated so that I could come and teach them" as phrased by Naseem. Taabu indicated "our teacher told them about this program and now they know the importance of this program." Martha said, "they congratulated me" to which Wanthanee added, "the other girls in my school are proud of me to be among the chosen ones and they are happy about the education." Crenady continued, "They reacted well and seem to admire the knowledge which you gave us." Winnie remarked "They feel happy and tell me [to] use this chance properly and make goals in order to maintain our position" because "this program motivates girls to study, and [realize] how to get our dreams" as stated by Sophy. Bahati shared, "When I explained to other girls in my school about the

program, they really felt happy and they also admired [wished] to participate in the program. They appreciated my selection to the program because I taught them what I have learned in the program." Onya added, "They are able to listen [to] me carefully at the time [when] I share ideas with them" and "by supporting me when educating them about the program" as put by Lisha. Suby stated, "They have cooperation with me, and they need to know how they are very important in [the] communities."

Chiku shared that "the other girls reacted to my selection to this program by asking me different questions about the program" like "how we are taught in this program and what to do to achieve their goals" as quoted by Tamu. Anais said that "I tell them about [the] girls' slogan [sister oath] and nowadays they believe [that] they are strong, they [are] beautiful, and they can do anything." Lilian indicated that "other girls in my school reacted to my selection by teaching others what I teach them" because as Nbushe put it, "many girls in our school have the cooperation and relationship with me, and [wish to] help others in the school." Dafina continued, "They feel happy because now I'm the one who [is] going to help them [through] different/various things." Pili added that "they are involved with my vision because they prefer the lessons we learn and aspire to [be] participants in this program" to which Grace added, "they desire to get this education as the way us, we got this education." Hopefully, we can involve many more girls in this program in the future.

Self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy: *assertive, believe in oneself, careful, courageous, confident, cooperative with others, develop healthy relationships, dream attainment, enhanced thinking ability, helpful, honest, importance of girls in the community, improved physical and mental health (dental health, exercise, menstrual hygiene, self-control, stress management),*

increased knowledge, love, overcome obstacles, patience, perseverance, reciprocal learning, respectful, study hard, self-awareness, self-worth, setting goals, societal importance

"How have you changed since you participated in the program?" This question was of particular importance to my study; as it would provide a direct response to research question three, "What is the impact of a week-long leadership and empowerment program on girls' self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy?" From their comments, the girls seem to have experienced improved self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy as well as enhanced physical and mental health.

As referenced earlier in the study, self-efficacy is one's perceived ability to deal with a task or situation. The following comments showcase improved self-efficacy:

> Since I participated in the program: "I [do] not fear like last time." "My courage has increased and now I can do what I wasn't able to do." "I have changed, I am not ashamed, I am confident, I know and [I] understand." "I expanded my knowledge and my ability of thinking." "I changed because this program helped me to [believe that] I have the power to do anything." "I changed…because this program taught me to be confident and to study hard in order to reach my dreams."

The following statements indicate improved agency, one's actual ability to deal with a task or situation:

> I have changed: "I learned how to form good relationships and to be assertive. To know what I want and why and be able to take [the] necessary steps to achieve it." "By understanding my value in society and being aware [of it] to achieve my goals." "I am able to be patient when things become an obstacle in order to achieve [my goals]. To

other girls about to overcome any obstacle, [be patient] in order to achieve your goals." "Now I know the things that I can do to make my dreams come true."

Key features of advocacy include: independence from services, empowerment, providing people who access support with a voice, supporting people who access support to achieve active citizenship, challenging inequality, promoting social justice, and supporting people who access support to challenge inequity and unfairness (Boylan and Dalrymple, 2011). The following quotes demonstrate increased advocacy by the girls:

I have changed: "Since I participated in the program, I have been brave, honest, and helpful [to] others around me." "To be careful, respectful, confident, and [I consider what] I can do to help others." "I know myself and I can help my fellow sisters when times are tough." "My behaviour and my reactions towards my friends." "Now I cooperate with other students and I learn through them." "Nowadays I advise other students in my school how to have cooperation and [to] never give up on what they do." "I study hard and I have respect [for] my teacher and [we] love each [other]." "I know how girls are important in a community." "Now I feel confident for all people [to] help each other cooperate to help each other." "Helping each other to do anything." "To be confident and be careful in order to help my dream come true and [develop] relationships with others, and respect others." "I know to respect my friends and fellows."

The girls also pointed to improved physical health:

I have changed: "In this program I got some knowledge [of] ways [to] help me for improved physical health." "I [think] about my health, especially dental health and menstrual hygiene management." "In different parts of the body to be a strong body and

> have developed a habit of exercise and caring for the health of the body." "I know the basics of keeping the body physically healthy. Also, how the girl is supposed to live"

Improved mental health was a topic discussed by some:

> "Since I participated in the program, my thinking capacity was developed like to manage my stress." "I have changed with [my] confidence [and] being open to anything that disturbs me." "I have changed a lot because now I know [how] to control myself in different matters and how to keep my health." "I have changed in my life processes and also I have enlarged my knowledge." "After this program I am strong. I can do anything that faces me."

To summarize, Bahati said, "I have changed a lot since [the program], in my daily life up to my studies. For real, the program changed me a lot."

Teacher development: *absence of corporal punishment, advisor, caring, confident, cooperative, encouraging, expanded knowledge, focus on achievement, friendly, helpful, improved style of teaching and learning, love, open menstrual education, polite language, protective, respectful, sister oath, supportive*

"What changes have you noticed in your teachers that participated in the program?" The keywords that appeared most often, and the number of times those words appeared in the students' responses are as follows: 'help' (13), 'helpful' (2), 'cooperation' (8), 'cooperate' (2), 'cooperated' (1), 'teach' (5), 'teaching' (4), 'educate' (1), 'educating' (2), 'educated' (3), 'advice' (7), 'advisor' (1), 'advise' (1), 'support' (2), 'love' (10), 'relationship' (3), and 'friendship' (1). Crenady explained, "The changes are that now our teachers have increased [their] cooperation and friendship" "with other teachers and students in general" as

quoted by Otesha. Suby continued, “Since this program, teachers that participated in this program, they love each other, and teach other girls in school” “to be respectful and to love each other” as explained by Lilian. Halima indicated, “I see [that] they expanded their knowledge.” Chiku explained, “The changes I have noticed from my teachers who participated in this program is their teaching or learning style.” Pili continued, “They have been taught and have also been able to use the skills to teach us in various subjects.” Martha added “there are many [changes]; some of them [are that] they [are] starting to teach us and give us more information about menstruation” and “different knowledge [on] how to achieve their [our] goals” as discussed by Daisy. Datiya affirmed, “My teachers have been pushing us to become hard-working students [in order] to realize our dreams.” Tamu confirmed, “They told us we are beautiful, and we can do anything in everyday life.”

Hannan continued, “Now teachers use good language to teach us. Also, if someone has a problem they help without any interference.” Taabu indicated, “My teacher, she is a good advisor to other girls about overcoming any obstacle in order to achieve our goals.” Panya shared that “they help us in different situations by giving us advice” “about life and subjects” as clarified by Hadiya, “and support us in various situations” as quoted by Imani. Grace said, “the changes that I observed from my teacher [are that] she already started to help the girl students” “when they have any problems” as put by Kirie, and “to help at times when they become tough” as quoted by Onya. Lisha shared that, “Now if a student went wrong [makes a mistake], the teachers [will] not use corporal punishment, they [will] use polite language on [for] correcting them.” Dalila, a student from another school, shared this same observation, “First teachers don’t use punishment like sticks to educate girls, but they use good ways [so that] anyone who has problems, they [can] go and tell the teachers.” This is a huge improvement in classroom

management strategies which seems to be having a positive impact on student receptivity and behaviour. Benes confirmed, “The changes from my teachers [that] I noticed is they have been able to protect girls.” Zawati added to this by saying, “There are many changes for now they care about us and other girl students and they help us [with the] problems that face us.” Tuliza noticed, “My teacher has changed in teaching. She became polite and confident in front of people.” In fact, as Iman explained, “They have educated other teachers and educated the students, namely the community at large.” Wanthanee added, “My teacher that participated in the program has also changed and nowadays she helps us in educating others.” There seems to have been a great deal of teaching and learning that has and is occurring because of the girls’ program.

Empowerment and motivation: *advice, collaboration between schools, community and societal importance, confidence, development, dreams, educate and help others, educational resources, fun, future goals, happy, honesty, hope, lessons not taught in school, life skills, love, perseverance, problem solving, respect, rights and responsibilities, self-awareness, self-improvement, surmounting struggles*

“If given the chance, will you participate again next year? Why or why not?” All girls responded yes, except for five girls who are all in form four, their final year of high school. One of these girls, Kanika, explained “No, because this is my last year at school. But I really want to be involved again in a year because it has taught me so many things about a girl and I have found many good things to teach my community around me.” It would be an excellent opportunity to be able to bring these graduating girls back to help in facilitating future programs, perhaps as keynote speakers. For those participants that responded yes to participating again, here are their reasons why:

“Please, please choose me again because I learned many things from this program.” “I enjoyed the program and [had] fun for a variety of courses.” “In the program…I studied many things which I’m not taught in our school.” “I like how we learned, and I got a [lot of] knowledge about life.” “I think that [I will be] able to gain more knowledge and skills [in future programs].” “I got and acquired many lessons that can help me to reach my dreams. Also, I liked sharing ideas with my fellow girls from other schools.” “It built me to be confident and to…help each other.” “I know it will highly improve myself and other girls in the society through me.” “I [would] like to know more so that I can educate others.” “I know how I am very important in society because it gave us many ideas [which] are very important. Also, girls were very happy, and me [myself] I was very happy.” “I want to learn another thing that…can help me in my future and my society.” “This program helped me to know my rights and position in my community or country.” “I learned many things at this program…I know how I am very important in communities. Also…you gave us many things which are very important [and] other girls were very happy because you give us important books.” “This program is the cause of development of girls in many schools, so I am proud of this.” “This program taught me to be a confident, hopeful, respectful, and honest person; in short, a good girl.” “I want to be a good girl for overcoming different struggles.” “I got knowledge from this program about myself.” “It gives girls [the] ability to solve problems in life.” “Programs like these have good advice [such] as not to give up, to love, collaborate, and [to] have better future goals.” “We learned the most important and positive things in our lives.” “This program taught me a lot and changed my life in a wide range/large amount.” “This program helped to change [the] altitude of my life.”

It is evident that with a 100% wish to participate once again, for those able to, this program had a major impact on these girls' lives.

After-Program Survey – Teachers

Teachers were also given an after-program survey which asked similar questions that were asked of the girls. Their answers would help me to answer my four research questions, from the perspective of a teacher: "What are the barriers faced by high school girls in Singida, Tanzania?" "How do secondary school girls in Singida, Tanzania experience education?" "What is the impact of a week-long leadership and empowerment program on girls' self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy?" and "What are the lessons or implications for the development and design of empowerment and support programs for girls?" The survey questions were as follows:

> *What have you done in your school to share the knowledge that you learned from the program? What activities would you like to do in the future? In your school? In your community? What resources and support do you need in order to continue your development and share your knowledge with other girls and women? How are female teachers at your school reacting to your selection/participation in the program? How has the program helped the girls that participated in the program at your school? How has the program helped you as a woman? If given the chance, will you participate again next year? Why or why not?*

Impact and advocacy: *engaged in team teaching and learning, expanded lesson delivery (building confidence, collaborative skills, health management, study skills), facilitated student directed teaching and learning, shared teaching methodologies with other educators, supported girls' clubs*

"What have you done in your school to share the knowledge that you learned from the program?" Neema shared, "I've led the students involved in the program to pass the skills onto their fellow students (girls). They also initiated the [girls'] clubs though [they are] not so strong." Hopefully, the girls and their teachers found that the after-program gathering with program facilitators helped to generate ideas through brainstorming sessions, which would later serve to strengthen their clubs. Mary indicated, "I have…shared the teaching methodologies which were used in [this] program" to which Editha added, "[and] taught the students and my fellow teachers on how to learn and teach as a team." Glory continued, "I have shared the knowledge with other teachers so that we can help our female students by developing confidence in them, to be aware of their health, etc." Irene "explained to both teachers and students [the need] to encourage girl students to study hard and [let them know that] they are able, and they can." This reminded me of the power of positive thinking and the strength of the phrase "not yet" rather than "not" when developing skills. Alice added, "In [the] girls' group, I was trying to emphasize… the benefits of cooperation in their learning process and how to study hard."

Goal setting: *educate female members of the community (confidence, dream achievement, first aid, goal setting, overcoming obstacles, perseverance, strength), establish/strengthen already existing girls' clubs, inform women of their importance in the community, teach parents how to care for their daughters, help students to be self-motivated and helpful members of society*

"What activities would you like to do in the future? In your school? In your community?" Most teachers expressed a desire similar to Glory who stated that she would like "to start girls' clubs in school for girls [to] share their plans and different life experiences, and in my community I will educate all females around me using the knowledge I got here." Editha also wants "to ensure that there is a club which involves all girls so that I can teach them how to

achieve their dreams, to ensure the women in the community have self-confidence, [and] teachers to turn to." Like her colleagues, Perucy said, "I would like to form [a] girls' club in my school. In my community I would like to help female parents and guardians [learn] how to care [for] their daughters so as to be confident and attain their dreams." Irene echoed this wish "to create permanent clubs of girl students for discussing challenges and solutions to their problems towards achieving their goals." With one already formed at her school, Alice would like "to strengthen the established group and [help] the students to be self-motivated and helpful [in the] community in providing first aid for various victims." Neema continued, "I would like to educate girls and women on their positions in the community (they are very important). Also, on how girls can overcome obstacles in their educational journey." Euodia shared, "I [would] like to mobilize the girls in my school and community to be strong and never give up." These teachers are a force to reckon with and will continue, without a doubt, the positive changes and progress begun at this girls' leadership and empowerment program, in their schools and communities.

Resources and support: *basic teaching supplies (mailer cards, marker pens, notebooks, paper, pens), books (goal achievement, hygiene management, leadership and empowerment programs, female specific challenges and solutions), cooperation among staff, administration, and community members, feminine hygiene products, money for purchasing teaching and learning materials, teacher training, technology needs (computer, internet data)*

"What resources and support do you need in order to continue your development and share your knowledge with other girls and women?" Most teachers shared a need for funds to purchase basic teaching supplies, such as Neema who would like "teaching materials like a computer, notebooks, pens, mailer cards, marker pens, etc. I think I could [benefit from] having some materials to motivate my learners too." Jackline seeks "teaching and learning

materials, for example pads, [and] cooperation among staff, administration, and community [members].” Glory admitted that in order to “be able to share with others, I will need money for stationary materials like pens, papers, [and] internet data for downloading more materials to help add [to] my knowledge on different things.” Alice would like “some books and journals concerning this program [and] money for buying teaching and learning materials.” Editha is interested in “books concerned with hygiene, [and] how to achieve their goals” while Irene would like, “books that deal with explaining girls’ challenges and solutions.” Irene continued, “Also, we need expertise in order to continue educating girl students” to which Mary added, “I would like to get cooperation from other teachers in helping the girl children.” This is where our program is potentially most effective: enabling community leaders, such as these female teachers, to carry out their roles as child advocates, especially those of girls. For subsequent years, in addition to providing teachers with professional development, we should distribute teaching and learning supplies, as well as providing basic needs for the girls, as we did this time.

Program impressions: *congratulatory, excited, positive, want to help facilitate girls’ clubs, wish to learn the teachings of the program*

“How are female teachers at your school reacting to your selection/participation in the program?” All teachers shared positive experiences such as Editha who exclaimed, “they congratulated me for the selection and knowledge which I implemented to them.” Neema shared that “the reaction is positive because they know that I’m responsible to girls since I’m a school matron.” A school matron is known in Kiswahili as *mwalimu mlezi wa wasichana* – meaning, the teacher in charge of girls. School matrons have a major influence in the education of Tanzanian girls as they are responsible for creating safe educational environments for girls and do so by assuming a nurturing role (Otieno, 2016). Glory shared that “they are so excited and want to hear

more of what I have learned here during the program and they are ready to help me in conducting [the] girls' clubs." Euodia said that "the female teachers like the things the teachers [were] taught when I told them, and they [would] like to join this program." Perhaps, future years should involve more than one teacher per school, and as mentioned earlier, even include a male teacher.

Student development: *aware, collaborative, confident, facilitators of girls' clubs, female ambassadors, goal oriented, happy, persevere, strong, studious, supportive*

"How has the program helped the girls that participated in the program at your school?" Almost all responses included the word 'confident', such as Glory who stated that "they are now more confident, they are aware of what is happening around them, [and] they have become ambassadors for other girls in school and in their community." Mary added, "The program helped the girls to be confident, to work hard in studying, to stop giving up…, to live in peace happily, and to have cooperation with each other [while] supporting each other." Alice stated, "First the students were able to influence other girls to join the group and teach them [what] they are supposed to do to achieve their goals" because as Irene declared, "they are able to explain [their topic] in front of the masses." Jackline agreed and shared that "they are confident, strong, and they promised that they will work hard in order to reach their dreams." It is clear that the teachers believed that personal growth on behalf of their students had occurred.

Personal development: *enhanced creativity, first aid techniques, hard worker, helpful to others, hopeful, increased confidence, persevere and overcome challenges, recognize the importance of women in society, self-expression without shame, sister oath, strong, transparent and open communication*

"How has the program helped you as a woman?" Glory shared, "It has helped me a lot as I now know how to help girls in school, in my community, and my children as well. I'm now more transparent when talking to girls" to which Neema added, "I can now speak openly to my female children, fellow women, and other girls on many things." Editha continued, "The program helped me to know that educating a woman is like imparting the knowledge to the whole community because, a woman can do anything." Personally, Perucy shared, "I [have] come to understand that even women are strong and can do everything, so I will be able to overcome a lot of challenges." Jackline echoed this sentiment in quoting our sister oath, "As a woman, I'm strong, I'm beautiful, and I can do anything." Alice shared her newfound motivation "to be creative, to improve techniques on providing first aid to various victims, and having confidence on self-expression without shame." Janeth stated, "I can work confidence [building] in[to] all my activities for my female students." Irene exclaimed that the "program helped me to be confident and…hopeful in my life, and [to] never ever give up when the times are tough." Euodia declared, "Myself, I will be strong, hopeful, and work hard in my society." I look forward to seeing the great work these women will do for their community and society in the years to come.

Empowerment and motivation: *benefit the school, community, and nation, dream fulfillment, enhanced teaching and learning strategies, improved student teacher relationships, increased knowledge (healthy relationships, menstruation, pregnancy), lifelong learning, self-awareness, share learning with other teachers, sister oath, skill development*

"If given the chance, will you participate again next year? Why or why not?" All teachers responded to this question with a resounding yes! Neema expressed her steadfast belief in lifelong learning: "Education has no end. I think I shall get more skills for my community and

[for] me. Please don't leave me out next year. Please and please, I [would] so much like this chance." Editha echoed this thought, "Everyday, human beings need to learn, therefore through participating, I can improve my knowledge and have self-awareness in the world's changes." Glory affirmed, "Yes, I will participate again next year because it is such a good program. I have learned many things and enjoyed [it] a lot." Jackline continued, "Yes, in order to have more knowledge for the benefit of [the] school, community, and nation. In general, I learned many things like [the] menstrual period, pregnancy, healthy relationships, and [I have] already shared [this] with my fellow teachers." Mary exclaimed, "I was so excited for real as I was so happy when I was telling other teachers what we learned here." Irene stated, "Yes, I will participate again next year because the program is very good. I have learned many things in my life and how to teach students by using examples in [the] real environment. From the 1st day of the program, I have got something to share with my students, especially girls, the words 'strong, beautiful, and they can do anything.' This [sister oath] increases [their] awareness in studying and also nowadays [I] am very close to my students as the way [strategy] to improve my teaching and learning activities." Alice shared this feeling, "Yes, it influenced me to be closer to my students. All the time they need me and [I] work with them when they are exercising." Janeth concluded, "I got new knowledge also; I learned how to help my female students to reach their dreams." Hopefully, we helped the teachers to fulfill their dreams too.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

This study was guided by four qualitative research questions, each of which will be referenced in the discussion points below. To achieve the objectives of the Education Sector Development Plans (ESDP) in Tanzania for the years 2016/17 to 2020/21, six priority programmes will be implemented including: (1) Access and equity in basic and secondary education; (2) Quality of basic and secondary education; (3) Adult and non-formal education; (4) Technical and vocational education and training; (5) Higher Education and (6) System Structure, Governance, and Management (MoEST, 2017). Within each programme, are sub-programmes, objectives, and indicators, which are included to assess the achievement of each objective. Similar strategies to achieve objectives are grouped into components with their own set of indicators, and it is to those strategies that I will refer throughout the structuring of my suggestions for our program. In this way, our program's approach aligns with the vision, policy, and strategic objectives of the Tanzanian education sector as identified in the latest ESDP.

The participants' responses to the surveys shone the spotlight on the barriers girls face in education, the first of which being illiteracy. The prevalence of illiteracy amongst girls presents a major barrier to girls' advancement in the education system of countries around the world. Recently, Hanemann (2019) explored female illiteracy in Mexico, Jain and Singh (2017) in India, Hammoud (2016) in the Arab world, and Tryndyuk (2013) in Nepal. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2030) have as Goal 4, a focus on education, with a mandate that by 2030, "all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy" (MoEST, 2017, p. 52). Although there has been a rapid expansion of the education sector in Tanzania, challenges continue to plague this sector including poor literacy and numeracy skills, poor pass rates in the national examinations, and

poor livelihood and life-long learning skills among graduates. At present, Tanzania has a significant number of out-of-school children and youngsters who are illiterate. Since the former ESDP was introduced, various education initiatives have been instituted to combat this including the Literacy and Numeracy Education Support (LANES) program which is aimed at improving the acquisition of reading, writing, and numeracy skills among children (MoEST, 2017). The new ESDP plans to pilot as part of Strategy 7 of Component 1 – Reducing Drop-Out, with a Focus on Preventative Measures of Sub Programme 1.D, "family learning programmes that develop literacy and numeracy skills of both parents and children" (MoEST, 2017, p. 83). Our program could develop literacy tools that could be used at home with our participants and their parents. Coupled with at-home support, the institution of Universal Basic Education of 12 years should see literacy and numeracy levels improve in Tanzania. At the heart of the Development Vision 2025 is the goal of eradication of illiteracy and for those outside of the formal education sector, adult and non-formal education exists to ensure basic and functional literacy for all. The adult literacy rate in Tanzania is low (77.9% in 2012) with fewer women (73.1%) literate than men (83.2%) (MoEST, 2017). Adults who live in rural (29%) locations are almost 4 times more likely to be illiterate when compared to those living in urban (8%) areas (MoEST, 2017). This is another reason why it is important for us to include more girls from rural Singida schools in the next installment of our program. To be educated while young significantly affects individual income later in life as illiterate adults face employability issues and illiterate parents tend to have lower educational expectations and aspirations for themselves and their children, thus continuing the cycle of illiteracy (MoEST, 2017). The main adult education program in Tanzania is the Integrated Community-Based Adult Education (ICBAE) which modelled its literacy initiative *Yes I Can* off a Cuban-designed *Yo Sí Puedo* which delivers lessons using TV and videos.

Perhaps future girls' leadership and empowerment programs could develop a literacy program that would be delivered online, dependent upon the quality of internet access in Tanzania. In this way, the program could be easily modified and updated, even while the team is not in Tanzania. The current ESDP has plans to develop a Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Framework (LaNAF) which would guide the development, implementation, and reporting of literacy and numeracy. We could access this data to develop our online program so that it responds to the specific needs of our participants as the LaNAF plans to provide literacy achievement data in an internationally comparable manner. Looking at recent publications, it appears that very few programs have been developed using e-learning tools in Tanzania. Our program could build on the future development of e-learning tools as set out in the ESDP, Strategy 2, Component 2 – Teaching and Learning Materials, of Sub Programme 3.B. After all, our program's vision aligns with the hopeful impact of the ESDP; that of "improved literacy, life skills, and lifelong learning for better livelihoods of children, youth, and adults in Tanzania" (MoEST, 2017, p. 73).

Another recurrent theme amongst our girls and their teachers was the lack of scholarly resources to be successful in their endeavours as well as simple materials to fulfill their basic needs. The first ESDP was developed in 1997 and later provided input into the 2005 National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP), which was considered in the Tanzania Development Vision 2025, formulated in 1999. To facilitate the educational goals of Vision 2025, the National Five Year Development Plan (NFYDP) II has as one of its objectives to "accelerate broad-based and inclusive economic growth that reduces poverty substantially and allows shared benefits among the majority of the people through increased productive capacities and job creation especially for the youth and disadvantaged groups" (MoEST, 2017, p. 11). Three types of inequality present themselves most often in education, that of gender, geography,

and exclusion due to disability, special education needs, refugee status, and extreme poverty. Tanzania experiences high poverty levels with more than two thirds of its population living below the international poverty line (MoEST, 2017). With the recurrent themes of sponsorship and need for money presenting themselves throughout the participants' responses on the surveys, the underlying issue of poverty in Tanzania was brought to the forefront. As Tanzania's Five Year Development Plan (FYDP) put it, although "the poor have increased their access to publicly provided social services such as education and health…the challenge ahead is to ensure that the economy continues to register impressive growth and to make sure that such growth is also pro-poor, either inherently or through growth and re-distribution" (President's Office Planning Commission, 2011). These girls have far-reaching goals and deeply held aspirations. They have the will to go forward in pursuing their dreams but lack the means to do so. This disconnect causes some to seek alternative ways to push forward such as falling into prostitution as a way to earn money and henceforth succumbing to the temptation of men. Due to this economic imperative, many will not go on to further education and some parents will encourage early marriage to ensure financial stability for their daughters. This only serves to discourage any further education thus halting the progression of these once hopeful girls. In some cases, the cycle can only be broken with financial interventions, as highlighted in the ESDP, Strategy 2 of Component 3 – Support for Most Vulnerable Children, of Sub-Programme 1.C wherein existing cash-transfer systems will be strengthened to "provide students from very poor families and disabled children with in-kind subsidies for education." Our program could dedicate fundraising efforts to scholarships to reward those girls who show special aptitudes in their educational endeavours. Not only would this provide the necessary financial assistance to those who merit it most, but it could also serve as a motivating factor for all participants who see these girls

recognized and know that they too would be rewarded if they worked hard to achieve their goals. In a 2013 study by Wydick, Glewwe, and Rutledge, international child sponsorship was found to have a statistically significant and positive effect on child educational outcomes in all six countries surveyed including Bolivia, Guatemala, Kenya, Uganda, India, and the Philippines. Sponsorship during childhood increased the probability of secondary school completion by 12–18 percentage points over a baseline of 44.5% and increased years of completed schooling by 1.03–1.45 years. Sponsorship also increased adult white-collar employment by 6.5 percentage points over an 18.5% baseline, as well as the probability of being a leader in the community.

It is estimated that there are 9.14 million sponsored children in the world today who benefit from improved access to school uniforms, tuition, and nutritious meals (Wydick et al., 2013). However, for those children who continue to live in poverty, the deleterious effects of this lived reality begin as early as the very first stages of schooling, when some students enter the school system at a late age, if at all. This is due to some poorer parents being less aware of the importance of registering children in school as they may have missed the opportunity to attend themselves. Late entry is problematic because it may lead to higher rates of dropout, repetition, and non-completion of school in the future (UNESCO, 2015). The 2011-2012 Household Budget Survey collected reasons for children not attending school. “School is useless/uninteresting” (35% primary, 16% lower secondary) and “completed school” (28% primary, 46% lower secondary) were the two more popular reasons provided (MoEST, 2017). Interestingly, poverty and early marriage were not among the most prevalent answers. The response “completed school” revealed a misconception held by both children and parents that a few years of primary school constituted an adequate amount of education. If not seeking to pull their girls out of school early, some parents may wish to delay their girls’ admission into school because poor

families tend to live further from schools, causing concern for parents regarding the safety of their daughters walking to school. As mentioned in Strategy 3 of Component 5 – Household Contributions to Education of Sub Programme 1.B, Local Government Authorities will "identify disadvantaged pupils and cover any outstanding cost of learning materials, and work with communities to provide porridge and lunches for those in greatest need, as well as other indirect costs of schooling (e.g. sanitary pads, uniforms, exercise books, transport costs)" (MoEST, 2017, p.80). This is why it was so important for our program to provide our participants with a nutritious meal each evening as well as their care packages on Day 4. In referencing Component 5 – Household Contributions to Education, of Sub Programme 1.B, the hopeful outcome is that the main education costs of households will be reduced by half for all pupils, and even more for those from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds (MoEST, 2017). Through improvements in the provision of education, poverty can be reduced, and it is through the provision of our program that we hope to contribute to girls' enhanced capabilities to succeed.

Subsequent themes highlighted in the findings pointed to sexual and reproductive health issues. Many girls brought forward the issues of sugar daddy syndrome and unplanned pregnancy. Some suggested that their peers engaged in sexual activities because of a natural craving for intercourse post-puberty while the majority saw it as resulting from a lack of power. Those who could not meet their basic needs due to impoverished parents sometimes exchanged sexual favours with older partners for money or other material things. These findings were corroborated across several studies from sub-Saharan Africa wherein the exchange of sex for money or gifts is widely reported, drawing largely from women's poverty and economic dependence on men (Balmer at al., 1997; Dunkle et al., 2004; Hunter, 2002). Strategy 4 of Component 4 – Support for Most Vulnerable Students, of Sub Programme 1.B states the plan to

"design and implement a 'communication for development' strategy to promote the engagement of boys, men, and women champions in the education system and in rural communities to protect girls from early marriage and unintended pregnancies" (MoEST, 2017, p. 79). Childhood marriage is an issue that robs girls of their education around the world. The factors that contribute to, and the consequences that come from child marriage have been researched widely (Jain & Kurz, 2007; Klugman et al., 2014; Malhotra et al., 2011; Santhya et al., 2006; Vogelstein 2013). Social and cultural norms influence the age at which a girl is expected to marry as do socio-economic status, education levels, and community context. In some situations, parents may assess the costs and benefits of marriage and decide to marry their daughters early if they are seen as an economic burden that could be relived though marriage (Parsons et al., 2015). The short-term economic motivation behind parental choice does not serve the long-term interests of girls. In fact, child marriage has been shown to be one of the reasons why some girls do not make the transition from primary to secondary school (MoEST, 2017). It is hoped that through our program, we can help prevent girls from this early end to an otherwise fruitful education by discouraging girls from engaging in prostitution and educating the community on the negative impacts of childhood marriage. We could seek to model our program after the Dageno Girls Centre in Karatu, Tanzania, a secondary residential school for highly vulnerable girls such as teenage mothers, girls with HIV, and those in early marriages. Like our program, this centre provides a girls focused education with a problem and project-based approach, changing the education style in Tanzania from rote learning to problem solving, including STEM activities.

Participants also noted the role of menstruation as affecting their mental health because it causes a lot of stress for girls. Most girls do not have access to feminine hygiene products and many schools lack the toilets and appropriate facilities that girls require for their own personal

safety. Girls may be afraid to voice their concerns to teachers or do not feel free to explain their ideas for menstrual hygiene care solutions. These girls may feel disempowered because they lack access to adolescent friendly educational reference material on menstrual hygiene. The reason I say this is because it was difficult to find age appropriate, culturally relevant teaching and learning materials on the topic of menstruation in Kiswahili, directed towards Tanzanian girls. I did find one resource entitled Growth and Changes, produced by MEES (Moral Ethics and Environmental Education Committee of the Ministry of Education, Zanzibar), a publication from Femina HIP, UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNICEF, which provided effective puberty guidance for girls in Kiswahili. The other menstrual hygiene management education materials I used during Day 4 of the program derived from Ghana Education Service, although there were also materials for Eritrea, Zambia, and Nigeria. For future years, it would be ideal to use teaching materials made for and by Tanzanians so that the girls can see themselves in the learning. As was proclaimed by the girls, female students should be directly involved in offering suggestions and making decisions on how best to serve girls during their menstrual cycle while at school, such as detailing what needs must be addressed in developing female-only latrines. Strategy 5 of Component 3 – School Environment of Sub-Programme 1.B mandates that "all male and female children in school are able to access sanitary toilet facilities (including segregated, girl-friendly facilities) and all schools have drinking water on their premises accessible by all staff and students" (MoEST, 2017, p. 79). Furthermore, as directed by the priorities, objectives, and strategies of the ESDP, the school environment must have infrastructure that is safe, inclusive, and child friendly. Our program could help girls lobby for these rights at their schools to ensure that school attendance is not affected by menstruation or any other female health concerns.

Another major concern for girls is sexual violence in the form of harassment and rape by boys on the way to and from school as well as from male teachers in school. In 2001, the Human Rights Watch published the report *Scared at School: Sexual violence against girls in South African schools*. This report shared widespread forms of gender violence, sexual coercion, and harassment of South African girls by both teachers and boys (Prinsloo, 2006). Accounts were made of male teachers and boys that would kiss girls and "fondle their breasts, raise their skirts, and try to touch them under their skirts" (Human Rights Watch, 2001, p.53). Sixteen years later, Coleman's (2017) account detailed her students' similar experiences with sexual harassment from teachers and cases of rape in West Africa. In the same year, in East Africa, The Action on Disability and Development peer report described serious acts of sexual exploitation and abuse of girls living with disabilities (MoEST, 2017). What can girls do in such terrible situations? We must consider the "combination of gender inequalities, social and economic depression, violence, HIV, rape and cultural norms, in order to understand what it will take to intervene effectively to enhance girls' ability to navigate the social worlds that constrict their lives" (Bhana, 2012, p.357). A rights-based approach to education would serve to better foster gender equality and ensure that daily practice of knowledge, values, and skills are fundamentally gender-friendly (Bhana, 2012). Strategy 8 of Component 1 – Reducing Drop-out with a Focus on Preventative Measures of Sub Programme 1.D in the ESDP seeks to do just that by "strengthen[ing] sexual and reproductive health knowledge, gender sensitivity, and life skills with counselling services in non-formal education targeting out of school adolescent boys and girls" (MoEST, 2017, p. 83). We also sought to strengthen this knowledge by including the stations Pregnancy, Love, and Relationships, as well as Poverty, Prostitution, and Sexually Transmitted Infections on Day 4 of the Program. By breaking the girls into small rotating groups, we could have frank, personal

discussions with the girls on these sensitive, yet essential topics because knowledge is power. To continue this learning in the schools, we must ensure that teachers are properly trained to teach these concepts so, just like in Strategy 4 of Component 3 – Teacher Support and In-Service Training of Section 2, we should seek to "develop, disseminate, and utilise training and support packages to enhance teaching proficiency in priority areas (including STEM, gender issues and life-skills-based sexual and reproductive health) in line with the Education and Training Policy and the national development plan" (MoEST, 2017, p. 88). To avoid duplicating those efforts already in place to train teachers as set out by the current ESDP, we should consult these support packages to develop the teacher professional development portion of our program for future years. According to the new ESDP, Tanzania has plans to acquire new textbooks to reflect updated curricula including correct knowledge of environmental and gender/sexuality/HIV issues. Our program is also working hard to bring new textbooks to Tanzania through fundraising efforts. It would be ideal for us to focus on acquiring textbooks which can assist teachers in providing "global citizenship and life skills education, including on environmental and conservation issues and on gender, sexuality and HIV prevention" (MoEST, 2017, p. 86) as included in Strategy 6 of Component 1 – Curricula of Programme 2. In this way, the learning environment of girls can be protected and supported. Besides being prey of sexual advances, girls are also bullied by male classmates and by those who think that girls have no value in sharing ideas, as expressed by some of our participants. To combat this, schools should "strengthen guidance, counselling, and child protection services in school to protect boys and girls from sexual abuse, harassment, and bullying" as included in Strategy 1 of Component 3 – School Environment of Sub Programme 1.B, (MoEST, 2017, p. 78). Through these interventions, schools can ensure a safer learning environment for girls, and for all students.

Another theme was that of peer influence as peers had negative influences that caused girls to drop out of school. Primary school retention has gradually declined from a reported 100% in 2009 to 85% in 2013 to just 56% in 2016 (MoEST, 2017). Between 2009 and 2016, dropout rose by almost a third at primary to an average annual rate of 6.4%. Should this trend continue, it is estimated that just 65% of children in primary today would finish the primary cycle (MoEST, 2017). Specific to girls, survival rates of girls progressing through to the end of standard seven in primary schools declined 3% in one year, from 72 per cent in 2011 to 69 per cent in 2012 (President's Office Planning Commission, 2011). One strategy for improvement listed in the latest ESDP includes "special consideration for children from marginalized groups, children with disabilities and girls, to make the learning atmosphere more appealing, reducing non-attendance and dropout" (MoEST, 2017, p. 61). To educate out of school children, Tanzania instituted several types of Non-formal Education: Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET), Radio Instruction to Strengthen Education (RISE) and ICBAE. ICBAE, as mentioned above, caters to youth and adults aged 19+ while COBET is aimed at out of school children aged 9-18 years. RISE used MP3 and Radio technologies to provide basic education to youth living too far from a school, or following a lifestyle characterized as nomadic, pastoralist, or fishing, however the RISE project ended in 2011. Fortunately, out of those 183 RISE learning centres, 11 have transformed into primary schools. COBET enrolment steadily declined from 2005 to 2013, increasing slightly between 2014 and 2016 before decreasing again in 2017. Even more dramatic decreases can be seen in the ICBAE program enrollment with an average annual decline of 23% (MoEST, 2017). It is evident that the sector of non-formal schooling in Tanzania needs a boost and our program could help to fill the gaps for those students who are still out of school, either by inviting them to participate in our program or by creating mentorship opportunities where

girls who participated in our program go out into the community to reach out to students out of school, as many requested. In this way, we help to bridge the effects of negative peer influences by providing positive peer role models to students in situations of need. These students will then have someone to turn to instead of turning to prostitution of other temptations from boys, away from being the independent, successful women they could become.

Often mentioned was the lack of direction and support from parents causing girls to lose sight of their goals. For some, the absence of parents entirely, presents a major barrier in their lives. The level of orphanhood in Tanzania has remained stable, yet deeply troubling, over the past five years with over 1.6 million children aged 0 to 17 having lost one or both of their parents (PHC, 2012). For those with parents, girls' education must be valued above their short-term economic contribution to their families (e.g. livestock herding) or domestic contributions such as chore completion. Campaigns must be carried out to overcome socio-cultural demands and barriers to full access and participation as stated in the strategies for Access, Participation, and Equity in the ESDP (MoEST, 2017). Although parents serve as major stakeholders in Tanzania's education system, Tanzania does not have a national parent association where parents could air their concerns regarding the poor, marginalized, and excluded populations (MoEST, 2017). In this way, there is no direct connection between national policy decision makers and the parents, or more importantly their children, the students. Our program can serve as that direct link between stakeholders, such as parents, and the government, by advocating on behalf of their needs, especially regarding girls. The information collected in this study serves to inform the government on the struggles that girls face in accessing and maintaining a quality education. The government is accountable to the people of Tanzania and is obligated to ensure that every citizen has equal rights to quality education, as set out in their constitution. A high degree of

accountability must be maintained between the Government and its citizens. This relationship can be nurtured through partnership and dialogue, as facilitated by our program. Additionally, our program should seek to develop a parenting and community education strategy similar to Strategy 5 of Component 5 – Household Contributions to Education in Sub Programme 1.B, which seeks to "develop a…strategy to inform and educate parents on ways to open communication with their sons and daughters on sexual and reproductive health issues, prevention of early pregnancies and promotion of equal treatment of boys and girls towards improved completion and performance" (MoEST, 2017, p. 80). By reaching out to parents, we can ensure that the learning that takes place during the one week of our program does not stop with us but rather extends through the family and community. This is the sign of a successful program; once the program ends, the impact continues. In a 2006 study by O'Bryan et al., it was shown that school-based activities may provide contexts for effectively and creatively involving African American parents in schools. Although our girls suggested that their parents and siblings were very supportive of their participation in our program, I believe that our program will have more long lasting effects in the community if we invite parents to participate in one or several of our program days. For those that cannot attend, our program facilitators could develop program materials that can be sent home with participants, which serve to inform parents on ways to begin conversations on, or improve already existing communication with their daughters on topics such as sexual and reproductive health as well as gender equality. In this way, our program's contributions will help move Tanzania towards the targeted result of Strategy 5: increased student retention and improved completion rates with parental engagement.

Another concern raised by several girls was that of insufficiently trained teachers and mentors, especially in the areas of female health, disease transmission, and the STEM subjects.

According to a World Bank Service Delivery Indicators Survey conducted in 2012, only 42% of teachers fully understood their teaching subject matter, with ranges from 75% in maths to 11% in languages. Furthermore, the content that teachers are using is not always aligned with the curriculum which itself has been piecemealed together by various uncoordinated partner agencies with weak linkages to each other. To add to this, there exists a lack of textbooks and a serious shortage of both pre-primary and primary teachers, as well as math and science teachers in secondary schools (MoEST, 2017). Despite substantive efforts on behalf of the Minister of Education and Vocational Training to upgrade the skills of its teaching force, available statistics demonstrated that in 2013, there were numerous teachers teaching primary school without even the requisite basic qualifications (President's Office Planning Commission, 2011). Later, in 2016, it was shown that only 4029 public school teachers had a Pre-Primary certificate, causing schools to have to use teachers not specially trained in early childhood development to educate children in their most formative years. The government of Tanzania has conceived a plan, financed by the Global Partnership for Education, to train one teacher per school to teach Pre-Primary for an estimated total of 16,109 teachers (MoEST, 2017). Regions with a high level of economic development can provide more opportunities for teacher's professional development, however in regions such as Singida, programs for advanced training may not yet, or ever exist. It is therefore imperative for our program to provide professional development to all participating teachers.

The next barrier noted by several girls was the long distance to school. Distance coupled with the undue punishment brought on by teachers for late arrival, leads girls to reduce their school attendance. This issue was reflected in Porter's (2011) research, which showed that distance to school plays a large role in girls' absenteeism. Filmer's (2007) research looked at school availability and school enrolment in 21 poor countries, including those of Sub-Saharan

Africa. He noted a statistically significant relationship between the increased supply of schools, and the increased enrolment of children and young adolescents, albeit on a small magnitude, largely dependent on the interaction between school quantity and quality. Tanzania has some of the largest primary schools in Africa and the longest average distances from home to school for young children (MoEST, 2017). Proposed changes to the basic education structure are expected to become enshrined into Tanzanian law after 2021, which will make one year of pre-primary and four years of lower secondary education free and compulsory. This will lead to an increase in student enrolment for which new classrooms must be constructed and new satellite schools established, both of which will improve accessibility to rural students living far from school and reduce the number of students per stream, improving the pupil-teacher ratio (MoEST, 2017). Coupled with the Fee Free Basic Education Policy, the steadily improving PSLE scores will mean more children will be eligible to transition from primary to secondary school. However, as students make this transition, more girls than boys tend to drop out of school due to an increased distance to secondary schools when compared to primary schools, schools not being girl-friendly, and a requirement for girls to be focused on domestic chores (MoEST, 2017). These concerns were echoed by our participants and even our program itself is affected by distance as we could not include all 16 schools due to their varied proximities to the KBH Hotel. Perhaps in subsequent years, we could extend our program to include more rural schools by selecting a new conference centre location, so that we can engage these rurally located girls and encourage their continued participation in school. The current ESDP does have strategies in place to review, map, expand, and implement a school/classroom building programme to meet increasing demand. Using satellite centres for primary grades and constructing more lower secondary schools will reduce girls' distance to school and the loss of girls' as they transition from primary

to secondary, thereby increasing their enrolment in secondary education. Perhaps, we could use one of these satellite centres for future program delivery. A pilot project called Secondary School Readiness Programme (SSRP) begun in 2017, focuses on preparing girls for secondary school. It is based off of the success of the first installment of the School Readiness Programme (SRP), an alternative fast-track approach to pre-school, the results of which showed pupils demonstrating school readiness competencies as good or better than those who had attended pre-primary (MoEST, 2017). It is clear that intervention programs at all stages of schooling help to improve girls' access to education, and our program is no exception.

Some girls claimed that their peers occasionally demonstrate bad behaviour, which causes negative situations to arise. Recent labour market surveys as reviewed in the FYDP II identified that although Tanzanian employees generally possess adequate educational qualifications, they either have low levels of, or lack behavioural skills, which negatively affects productivity (MoEST, 2017). Our program could help address this by educating our girls on the benefits of behavioural change at the individual and social levels as identified in the Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development Strategy for Social and Economic Development. There also exists negative socio-cultural belief systems in Tanzania which disadvantage girls in the education system. Mollel and Chong (2017) looked at the socio-cultural constraints of girl's access to education in the Mtwara District of Tanzania and found that early marriage, traditional ceremonies, social perception, and social roles hindered girls' access to education the most. Unyago, a traditional ceremony, introduces girls at an early stage of maturity to social roles and sexually related roles as women in Mtwara. The research that Mollel and Chong conducted into determining how this local rite of passage affects girls' education, contributes to the collective knowledge of inequities in girls education as did the research I conducted through this program.

The ESDP has as Component 8 the use of Operational Research for an "improved understanding of the factors that affect differentials in student enrolment, retention, and performance across gender…and resultant amendments to existing policies and strategies" (MoEST, 2017, p. 91). Strategy 1 suggests conducting a "study into factors affecting girls' performance in national examination compared to boys" (MoEST, 2017, p. 91) similar to my study into barriers affecting girls' performance in school. Strategy 2 advises conducting a "study into factors affecting drop-out, looking into variations by gender and district/region" (MoEST, 2017, p. 91). This could be accomplished by our girls working in the community with out-of-school children, through differentiated, contextually appropriate activities and surveys that we would develop with them. Strategy 3 proposes conducting a "study into factors affecting lower transition rates by girls into lower and higher secondary education and into TVET and universities" (MoEST, 2017, p. 91). As questioned earlier in the study, the number of girls seeking to study at the University level was lower than expected, so this could form the basis of future research, the results of which could be used to encourage girls as they transition into higher levels of the education system.

On Day 1 of the Program, the girls were asked why they thought only girls were invited to participate in the leadership and empowerment program. Their responses gave good insight into how girls experience education in Tanzania. Bahati spoke positively of girls' importance in society however she also alluded to girls having to play their role in society well. If this is not a role of high esteem, then having girls play it out repeatedly only serves to further indoctrinate the misogyny that exists in society today. The insistence upon gender equality in the Tanzanian school system would eventually bring about equal rights in the nation because the school classroom only serves as a microcosm of society at large. Boys and girls are not treated equally and according to Dafina, girls need special care. It was revealed that in many communities, and

hence schools, girls are discriminated against and treated badly. Panya indicated that girls may not know their rights when it comes to education and consequently find themselves in dangerous situations from which they need protection. Onya suggested that girls easily fall into temptation and cease to follow their dreams. Otesha suggested that girls face more challenges than boys such as sexual harassment and abuse at school, which makes them reluctant to learn. When girls fall behind at school, they shame themselves, so it was suggested that this program could help enhance girls' agency by building their confidence to communicate their thoughts from a position of leadership. Also, some pointed to the opportunity to improve girls' efficacy by getting the girls to recognize their abilities and skills and to see that their ideas are important. If they need a program to accomplish this, I assume that they are not being given ample opportunities to build agency and self-efficacy in school, or at home for that matter.

The girls were also asked why they had chosen to participate in the program. Most sought feelings of improved self-efficacy and agency through the frequent referencing to increased self-awareness, self-esteem, self-worth, self-control, and self-confidence. These concepts intertwined themselves into almost every response offered by the girls as is shown in the keywords under most themes in my presentation and analysis of findings, a sure sign of improvement. Self-efficacy and agency proved to be a central part our program's mission and should play a major role in all programs that seek enhanced leadership and empowerment for girls. The vision for the ESDP, in line with the Tanzania Development Vision 2025, National Five Year Development Plan (NFYDP) and the Sustainable Development Goals, is to have an "upgraded and coherently planned, managed and monitored education sector that will develop human capital in order to boost economic growth and reduce poverty." We could modify this to be the vision for our girls' leadership and empowerment program: To have a regularly upgraded and coherently planned,

managed, and monitored curriculum that will develop girls' efficacy, agency, and advocacy, while mitigating personal loss. In this way, our program would align itself with the current plans for Tanzania's education sector. One focus of the ESDP that has special meaning for our girls is the "fostering among learners of a sense of self-confidence, tolerance and high respect for all people irrespective of race, gender, geographical location and disabilities" (MoEST, 2017, p. 53). Many of our participants embodied these very traits. We could also seek to model our program after the goals of Waache Wasome (Let them Learn), an initiative to increase adolescent girls' enrolment and retention in secondary school. The project's objectives are to: 1) build the agency, knowledge, and self-esteem of girls in secondary school; 2) increase family commitment and ability to invest in girls' education; 3) foster a girl-friendly and supportive school environment; 4) increase access to youth-friendly adolescent reproductive services; and 5) provide alternative education pathways for girls who have dropped out of secondary school due to pregnancy and/or marriage (MoEST, 2017). Because our program's goals align closely with those of Waache Wasome, a partnership could serve to benefit both of our programs, and the girls enrolled within.

The topic of advocacy was also brought up through the girls' hopes to improve cooperation amongst peers, recognize the rights of young people, and learn how to embrace all people. Several girls also expressed their wish to be leaders in their community and help others through their involvement in the program so in designing future programs it would be good to include things such as pamphlets and products that the girls can use to spread knowledge long after the program has concluded. Additionally, it is important that the program caters to girls only as this was a factor mentioned by many girls in their wish for safe program participation. Another component of importance was that of maintenance of confidentiality. The girls were open and forthcoming with their most intimate life details, so it is essential that confidentiality is

ensured. Finally, the girls wished to learn about new cultures so putting a cultural spin on program details is encouraged while still respecting local customs.

Finally, the girls were asked what they hoped to learn from the program, giving further insight into how to plan for subsequent programs. Not surprisingly, the participants wanted to learn about all things 'girl': the rights of women, the environment which surrounds them, and the concerns they hold in the world. They wish to learn how to perform well in one's studies, so that one day they can lead a fulfilling career path, notably that of entrepreneurship. This was a consistent topic brought up by many girls so it would be a great disservice to future participants to not include this as a topic of learning. The girls had concerns regarding how to best contribute to and fit into their community and society at large. Bringing in community leaders as keynote speakers each day of the program would serve to strengthen this community partnership. Even better, would be to have female community leaders speak to the girls about the pathway they took to achieve success. The topics of self-efficacy and agency were once again revealed with hopes for improved self-confidence, self-awareness, goal setting, and achievement of dreams. Advocacy was another topic the girls wished to explore by sharing ideas learned at the program with other girls in their schools and community. In particular, the participants valued the novel learning of first aid which points to the need to include unfamiliar topics, as well as those which may be considered taboo such as menstruation. Critical thinking and problem solving were skills the girls wished to hone, and it was through STEM activities that we sought to accomplish this. A final comparative focus of the current ESDP includes "building a culture of cherishing human development through hard work, professionalism, entrepreneurship, creativity, innovativeness, ingenuity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills" (MoEST, 2017, p. 53). Ultimately, aligning our program's focus with that of the ESDP serves to further strengthen its validity.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

At the program's conclusion, the team returned to Canada, and Dr. Beckford and I met to discuss the merits of the program and what we thought could be improved for subsequent years. We had for our goals, the discussion of research question four, "What are the lessons or implications for the development and design of empowerment and support programs for girls?" We discussed the need for pre-planning for future groups of facilitators. To show up with all the information and resources prepared would reduce the need to plan while in Tanzania and give more time for meaningful activities to take place while "on the ground." Perhaps pre-service teachers in Dr. Beckford's university class, *Vulnerability, Marginalization and Education*, could develop resources for the program or work on website development so that others in the world trying to run a similar program could pull from, and contribute to, our resources.

In future years, we hoped to organize workshops for the teacher participants to address such things as student-centered teaching and classroom management strategies. When the facilitators and Dr. Beckford went to the schools, they saw students being punished in what we would consider as unethical ways; one boy was found kneeling outside of the classroom and a couple boys were being marched out by a teacher with a big stick. In the future, we would like to work with the municipality and educational officers to share ideas about teaching and learning. Using the Tanzanian curriculum, we would tailor resources to be distributed to schools including STEM and music activities as well as girls' leadership and empowerment programming materials. The idea of setting up sister elementary schools was brought up, where the secondary school girls would go and mentor younger girls in their community and share their accrued knowledge through this venue. Another possible exchange program is that of a cultural exchange whereby Canadian students write letters to the girls participating in the program and the girls

write back in a pen pal style fashion. This provides an opportunity for cross-cultural, reciprocal learning, one in which the participants hoped to engage.

Debriefing with the team, we thought that we should prepare a standardized exit form for all facilitators to fill out, to reflect on how things went and what could be improved for subsequent years. As far as topics covered, the team thought we should have more on strategies for turning your dreams into reality through goal setting and achievement. We reflected on how to avoid repetition of topics for future students who repeat the program, without leaving out important topics, but concluded that there is always new information to be garnered and new questions the girls want answered. In this way, we need not be worried about information duplication, but rather focus on reinforcement of important concepts. As far as the questions the girls raised during the sessions, we thought of how to better address the queries directly, for example, “How can I control my temptation for boys?” So many important questions were raised each evening when we collected the exit tickets, that we did not have time to address all their questions the following day. There were important topics that came up, such as having self-control and valuing yourself, that require a frank discussion especially at this vulnerable age.

We, as well as the girls and teachers, thought that adding more days to the program would be beneficial but recognized that we would need more funding in order to make this possible. We also thought of incorporating more social events such as taking them on a field trip but worried about the logistical issues such as how to accommodate 80 people, how to get there, and how much is would cost. We also hoped to include more students in the program so that we could reach more girls, but we recognized the desire to keep it personal. We thought of the possibility of welcoming two cohorts, 60 girls the first week and 60 more the second week, perhaps selected from the six schools excluded from our program due to their distant location.

The current location caused for potential unsafe returning conditions, but we speculated that these girls might benefit even more from our programming than the inner-city schoolgirls. We therefore considered moving our program delivery location to be closer to these village schools so as to not exclude remote girls, or maybe even have them stay over. We also considered the possibility of having boys come for one day as we thought, we cannot empower women without educating men whose attitudes must change for women to become truly empowered. We concluded that for now, we would focus on girls only, as this seemed to facilitate the greatest level of comfort and self-discovery amongst the program's participants. We decided that when we visit the schools, we would talk to the boys about respecting girls and do activities with both sexes that build trust and appreciation. We also hope to develop a poster for the program, based on our "dream tree", and distribute them to the schools, one for each girl that participated in the program, and a big one for each school. We discussed how to translate my program evaluations into program delivery improvement and identified the desire to conduct interviews with the girls, their teachers, and translators at a future date to investigate the program more deeply.

Each one of the surveys helped to explore the research questions posed at the beginning of this study: "What are the barriers faced by high school girls in Singida, Tanzania?" "How do secondary school girls in Singida, Tanzania experience education?" "What is the impact of a week-long leadership and empowerment program on girls' self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy?" and "What are the lessons or implications for the development and design of empowerment and support programs for girls?" Despite the many barriers faced by high school girls in Tanzania, it is clear that Tanzanian people hold education in high regard and consequently, girls here live a unique educational experience. It is my privilege to have had the opportunity to contribute to this experience in what has proved to be a positive, and long-lasting way. Throughout the study, the

girls and their teachers repeatedly demonstrated improved self-efficacy, agency, and advocacy, whether through responses on the surveys or actions during and following the program. The analysis of the girls' leadership and empowerment program conducted through this study can not only help to further strengthen our program, but also provide guidance for the effective development of other support programs for girls around the globe. I would like to conclude by quoting the great activist Nelson Mandela who once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Through this girls' leadership and empowerment program, we may not have changed the world, but we did change these girls' worlds, and that is powerful to me.

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VITA AUCTORIS

Brianna Jentzel was born in 1987 in Windsor, Ontario. She graduated from Walkerville Collegiate Institute in 2005 where she participated in the Windsor Centre for the Creative Arts Program. From there she went on to the University of Windsor where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts and Science in Honours Biology with Thesis and French in 2009. During this timeframe, she also studied at Université Laval and Université de Moncton. At Ontario Biology Day in 2010, she defended her Honours Thesis, "*C-Fos Protein Immunolocalization upon Alarm Cue Exposure in Danio rerio.*" She continued her studies at the University of Windsor and in 2011, she graduated with a Bachelor of Education - Intermediate/Senior Division: Subjects Science - Biology and French as a Second Language. In 2018, she obtained an additional teaching qualification in Music – Vocal, Intermediate and Senior. She is currently a candidate for the Master's degree in Education at the University of Windsor and hopes to graduate in Fall 2020.