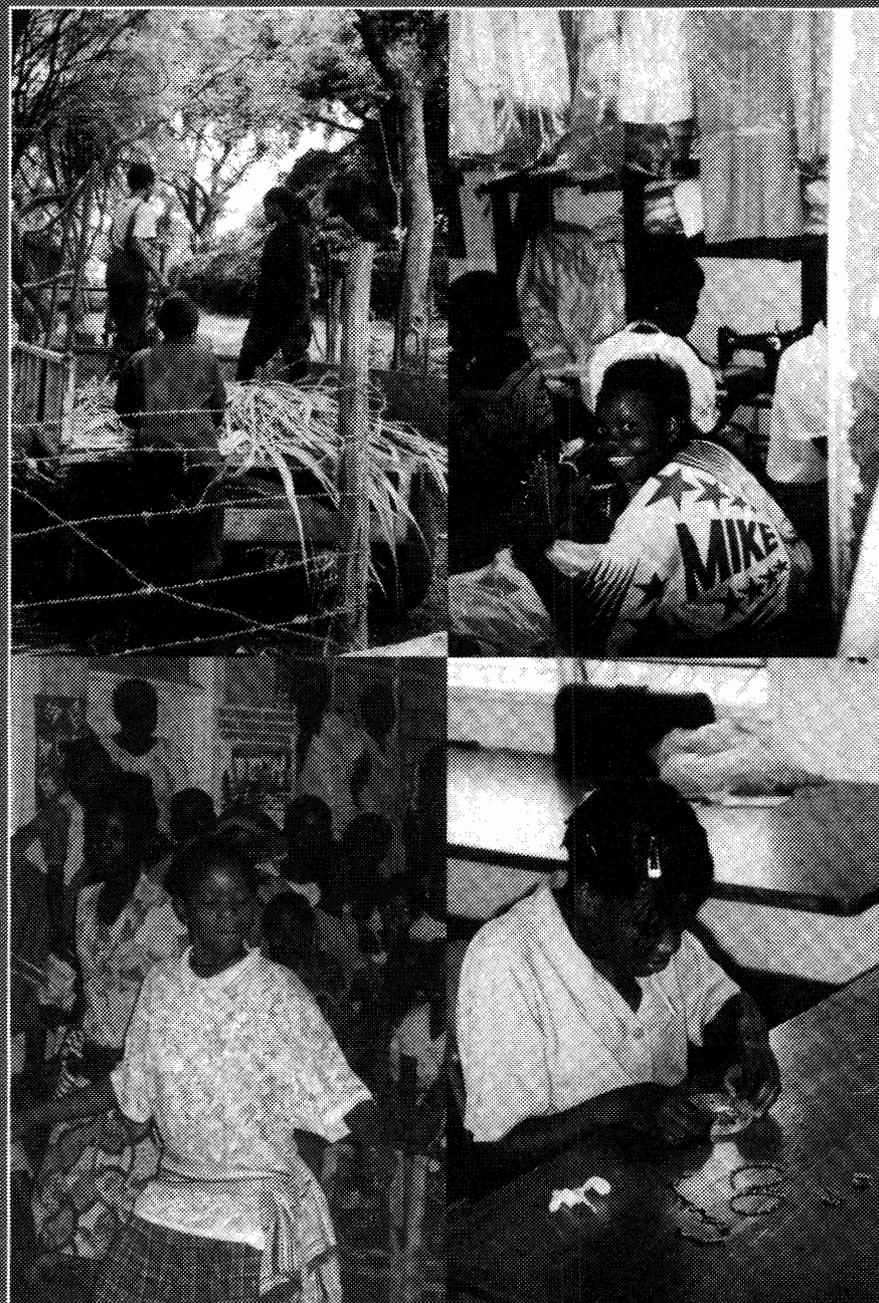


SKILLS TRAINING AND BEYOND

EXPANDING LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADOLESCENT
GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN KENYA



ARJMAND BANU KHAN AND ANN LEONARD

Introduction by Jennefer Sebstad

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Foreword

In Kenya, as in other developing countries, the changing economic, social and health climate makes adolescence an especially challenging time for young people in general, and for young women in particular. The Population Council's Regional Office for East and Southern Africa has spent the better part of the last decade researching ways to transform adolescence into a secure and happy pathway to adulthood. In light of the economic stress experienced by many families and the often unequal consequences this has for daughters (who are more likely to leave school than their brothers when money for school fees falls short), finding innovative ways for girls to safely earn wages is a priority for the Council in Kenya. The 1998 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) indicated that 21% of unmarried girls age 15-19 in Nairobi reported having ever traded sex for goods or money, suggesting that in the absence of viable alternatives for real earning, survival sex—and all of its incumbent dangers, including HIV infection—becomes a reality for adolescent girls. The Council has therefore focused attention on fostering safe, productive livelihoods opportunities for adolescent girls as a key part of improving their adolescence overall.

In this spirit, we are pleased to present these case studies of four Kenyan programs that offer livelihoods opportunities to adolescent girls. IMANI, Limuru Girls Centre, Shanzu, and Sinaga each take a different approach to reaching adolescent girls, and some target particularly, vulnerable sub-populations, yet they are similar in that they strive to equip adolescent girls with marketable skills and economic literacy. Including girls in programs that foster safe, productive livelihoods is a relatively new field. Yet such efforts recognize not only the greater need for attention to this age group—particularly to the majority who have left school—but also to improving their access to income and savings. Though in no way perfect, each program documented reflects the efforts of dedicated and often brave individuals who are committed to fulfilling this need. It is, indeed, an urgent one, and we hope that these four examples provide food for thought for those who are interested in designing their own innovative program for helping adolescent girls—wherever they are in the world—make a safe transition to their adult years.

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Nairobi, November 2002

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Introduction

Adolescence is a critical phase of life between childhood and adulthood when young people prepare for the productive and reproductive roles they will assume as adults. It is a time when major decisions are made regarding education, work, marriage, and childbearing. These decisions are influenced by individual and family circumstances and conditioned by the social and economic environment. The relative economic status of a household, an individual's status within the household, gender roles, social norms, economic opportunities, and legal frameworks of decision making all converge to shape the structure of opportunity for adolescents.¹

Although definitions of adolescence vary, the term generally refers to the period between the onset of puberty and culture-specific definitions of maturity or adulthood.² Using an age-based definition of 15-24 years, the age group targeted by most of the programs highlighted in this publication, 1999 census data from Kenya indicate that there are an estimated six and a quarter million individuals in this age group, or 20 percent of the total population (Government of Kenya 2001).

Girls' Work in Kenya

Most Kenyan girls and boys enter the labor force as adolescents. By the time they reach the age of 15-19, more than 90 percent of rural girls and one-third of urban girls are working or actively looking for work (Table 1). In rural areas, adolescent girls perform domestic chores, tend crops and livestock, and fetch water and fuel wood. They often begin such work when they are very young. In addition to being an important source of labor on family and non-family farms, many rural adolescent girls also engage in petty trading. In urban settings, many girls enter the work force through employment in domestic service, casual labor, or as unpaid workers in family businesses. Others are self-employed as fruit

and vegetable sellers, hairdressers, tailors, or in other informal-sector activities. Much of their work is characterized by low remuneration, long hours, limited mobility, and unequal power relationships that put them at risk of coercion or exploitation.

Table 1: Labor force participation rates in Kenya, girls and boys ages 8-24 years

	8-14 years	15-19 years	20-24 years
Urban (1986)			
Females	n/a	31.8	53.7
Males	n/a	19.6	73.7
Rural (1988)			
Females	82.6	91.5	94.8
Males	78.1	83.1	89.5

Note: The urban labor force participation rate is calculated as the proportion of the total population in each age/gender group who were economically active (i.e., working or looking for work) during a one-week reference period. This national sample survey collected data from a sample of 3,593 individuals in 1,644 urban households. The rural labor force participation rate is calculated as the number of economically active persons as a proportion of the total population in each age/gender group. Economically active persons includes those working one hour or more last week in an economic activity (e.g., on a farm, as an employee, in a non-farm family business, gathering firewood, or fetching water) or as the head of a family farm or looking for work in the past year. This national sample survey collected data from a sample of 44,731 individuals in 8,102 rural households in the first round and 41,689 individuals in 7,870 rural households in the second.

Source: Government of Kenya et al. 1988, 1991.

Most adolescent girls in Kenya work because of economic need, not by choice. Chronic economic crisis in recent years has resulted in unprecedented increases in poverty. In many cases, adolescents' cash earnings are essential for family survival, especially in extremely poor households. Although much of the work that adolescent girls perform is unpaid, especially domestic labor and other work for relatives, recent data from the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey show the prevalence and importance

¹For a more complete discussion of adolescent livelihood issues in Africa, see Sharif 1999.

²The terms "youth," "adolescents," and "young people" are defined variously. WHO refers to people between the ages of 10 and 19 as adolescents and the larger age group 10 to 24 as young people. In this document the three terms are used interchangeably.

of cash earnings for young women: 71 percent of 15-19-year-olds and 80 percent of 20-24-year-olds who work earn cash for at least some of the work that they do (Table 2) (National Council for Population and Development et al. 1999).

Girls' cash earnings are integral to individual and household well-being, and a surprising number of girls have an important say in how their earnings are used. DHS data show that 60 percent of 15-19-year-olds and 59 percent of 20-24-year-olds who

Work and the Transition to Adulthood

The timing (in terms of age) and point of entry (in terms of the type of work) into the labor force can play an important role in a safe transition to adulthood. The effects of labor force participation may be adverse, for example, if participation forces adolescents to drop out of school, if it interferes with their studies and lowers their academic achievement,

Table 2. Do adolescent girls get paid in cash? Percent distribution of currently employed Kenyan girls 15-24 years old, by employer and form of earnings, 1998

Employer	Age group			
	15-19 years (n=413)		20-24 years (n=763)	
	Earns cash	Does not earn cash	Earns cash	Does not earn cash
Self-employed	28.2	7.0	44.6	12.8
Employed by relative	6.9	20.2	6.5	6.0
Employed by non-relative	35.5	2.2	28.9	0.7
All employers	70.6	29.4	80.0	20.0

Source: Adapted from National Council for Population and Development et al. 1999, Table 2.14.

work for cash have sole control over decisions about the use of their own income (Table 3). Economic participation and the ability to earn and control income are important dimensions of empowerment for adolescents.

or if it impedes other aspects of their social development. These negative consequences are particularly significant for adolescents younger than 15 years. Some adolescent girls and young women are exploited at work, especially domestic workers or those who do work that may endanger their health. Of particular concern is the large number of

Table 3. Do adolescent girls control their earnings? Percent distribution of Kenyan girls by decision on use of earnings and age group, 1998

Person who decides how earnings are used	Age group	
	15-19 years (n=291)	20-24 years (n=612)
	Self only	60.1
Jointly with husband/partner	8.0	21.7
Jointly with someone else	7.0	1.9
Husband/partner	11.0	15.7
Someone else	13.9	2.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Adapted from National Council for Population and Development et al. 1999, Table 2.16.

adolescent girls in Kenya who, out of desperate economic need and lack of alternatives, earn money through commercial sex work.

Notwithstanding these potential risks, the opportunity to work and earn money in appropriate activities can have potential economic benefits for adolescent girls and young women, especially for those older than 15 years. By increasing girls' capacity to contribute to their families' incomes and by reducing their economic dependence on others, participation in paid work can increase girls' economic self-reliance and independence. Having control over their income and expenditures may enable girls to develop money-management skills and to accumulate savings, an important resource for expanding their economic and social options. Adolescent girls' participation in paid work may also enhance their understanding of how the marketplace operates. When girls are provided with an expanded view of options for generating future income, they can shape their long-term economic objectives more intelligently. The experience of earning money may encourage them to think ahead and plan for the future.

Under the right circumstances, the opportunity to work and earn money also may have potential social benefits. It may encourage healthier social relationships by reducing girls' dependence on their parents, guardians, boyfriends, or husbands. It may promote stronger and more rewarding relationships with peers and supportive friendships between girls. It may encourage mentoring relationships on the job with colleagues who can serve as role models. By exposing a girl to the world beyond her household and immediate community, a job may promote her active interest and involvement in community life, increase her awareness of wider social issues, and help her to develop positive attitudes regarding gender roles. Finally, the work experience may positively influence her decisions regarding the timing of marriage, childbearing, and the number of children she wants to have.

For many adolescent girls from poor families, not having a means of livelihood may increase their vulnerability to many risks: unplanned pregnancy

and childbirth, early marriage, high rates of sexual violence, and HIV/AIDS. The opportunity to earn and control income through safe and appropriate livelihood opportunities is critically important for adolescent girls and young women in helping them manage the many risks they face, increase their economic independence, and expand their current and future life options. Among the most common problems cited by adolescent girls and young women are family economic pressures and lack of opportunities to earn income. As a group they have a high demand for skills, resources, and knowledge to earn income. The ability to do so can play a critical role in reducing their vulnerability to risks and expanding their life options.

Girls' Limited Work Opportunities

The pressure to work because of increasing poverty and the pressing economic needs of families, combined with growing competition for fewer jobs, channels girls with limited skills and experience into a narrow range of low-level, low-status work. Gender biases in the labor force further limit the range of income-earning opportunities for Kenyan women in general and for younger women in particular.

An indicator of the disadvantaged position of girls in the labor force is their concentration in part-time, seasonal, or occasional work. DHS data from 1998 show that 47 percent of 15-19-year-olds and 38 percent of 20-24-year-olds are doing these kinds of work (Table 4). The same data show that, overall, over two-thirds of 15-19-year-old girls who work are in agriculture (42 percent) or domestic service (32 percent) (Table 5). Among the most disadvantaged are girls who work but do not get paid in cash. This includes 29 percent of 15-19-year-old girls and 20 percent of 20-24-year-olds (Table 2). The longer-term consequence of entering the labor force in low-level jobs is suggested by opposite trends in urban unemployment rates for boys compared with girls as they mature. As they move from the 15-19- to the 20-24-year age group, urban unemployment rates drop for boys (from 63 percent to 34 percent) while they increase for girls (from 40 percent to 45 percent) (Table 6).

Table 4. Do adolescent girls have regular employment? Percent distribution of currently employed Kenyan women ages 15-49, by type of work, 1998

Type of work	Age group						
	15-19 years (n=414)	20-24 years (n=763)	25-29 years (n=836)	30-34 years (n=656)	35-39 years (n=672)	40-44 years (n=440)	45-49 years (n=311)
Full-time (5+ days per week all year)	53	62	68	69	70	73	68
Part-time (<5 days per week all year)	11	9	9	8	8	7	7
Seasonal	24	19	17	17	17	17	21
Occasional	12	10	6	6	5	3	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Adapted from National Council for Population and Development et al. 1999, Table 2.13.

Table 5. What type of work do adolescent girls do? Occupational distribution of currently employed Kenyan girls ages 15-24 in agricultural and non-agricultural activities, 1998

Occupation	15-19 years (n=413)	20-24 years (n=763)
Agricultural activities	42.0	44.5
Own land	9.7	21.2
Family land	27.9	15.1
Rented land	0.9	1.7
Other's land	3.5	6.5
Non-agricultural activities	57.9	55.4
Professional, technical, managerial	0.6	12.2
Sales/services	17.8	25.2
Skilled manual	4.8	5.0
Unskilled manual	2.6	1.5
Household and domestic	32.1	11.5
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Adapted from National Council for Population and Development et al. 1999, Table 2.15.

The relative disadvantage of girls compared to boys in the rural labor force is reflected in their longer hours of work, especially in domestic chores and other unpaid work. According to the 1988/89 Rural Labour Force Survey 15-19-year-old girls work almost twice as many hours per week as boys in ten activities-31 hours for girls compared to 18 hours for boys (Government of Kenya et al. 1991). They work eight times as many hours as boys in domestic chores; seven times as many hours as boys in cutting firewood; and six times as many hours as boys in fetching water. Boys work two and a half times as many hours as girls in tending livestock. They also work one and a half times as many hours as girls in

paid employment, and this gap widens with age (Table 7). Because rural adolescent girls and young women have few opportunities to earn cash, much of their work is invisible and undervalued-a pattern that remains with women throughout their lives. Girls start out on a narrow track and more often than not get stuck on it.

The lack of good livelihood skills for girls in Kenya not only narrows their options and limits their productive capacity, it also reduces their mobility once they enter the labor force. This further confines them to a narrow range of subsectors, types of work, and occupations.

Table 6. Urban unemployment rates for Kenyan females and males 15-24 years, 1986

	15-19 years	20-24 years	15-64 years
Females	39.6	45.0	24.1
Males	63.1	34.0	11.7

Source: Government of Kenya et al. 1988.

Today in Kenya more than one-third of working girls ages 15-19 generate income through self-employment in informal-sector activities. For this group, access to working capital, start-up capital, business premises, tools, equipment, skills, and knowledge to run their businesses is critical. The large number of women who enter informal-sector employment in their early 20s (well over half of all working women ages 20-24 are self-employed) clearly indicates the importance of self-employment and improving young women's access to productive skills and resources (Table 8).

Strategies for Expanding Livelihood Opportunities for Adolescent Girls

Skills, resources, and opportunities are critical components of any livelihood strategy. Skill training is especially important for improving livelihood opportunities for adolescent girls. To be useful,

however, the skills that girls learn must be linked to real opportunities to generate income. In addition to skills, adolescent girls also need access to financial resources, productive assets, and social capital to be in a position to take advantage of economic opportunities.³ Self esteem, assertiveness, social skills, and basic human rights-all of which affect the capacity of individuals to pursue their economic goals-are also necessary. Finally, expanding opportunities for adolescent girls must be conceived within a policy framework that considers the overall problems of poverty and unemployment, promotes poverty reducing economic growth, (or economic growth that benefits the poor) and subscribes strongly to gender equity.

In developing livelihood program options, several domains of action can be considered:

- Building skills (e.g., basic literacy and numeracy training; financial literacy [financial planning, budgeting, and money management]; and vocational, technical, business, entrepreneurial, management, and job-search skills);
- Improving access to resources (e.g., financial resources such as credit and savings; physical resources such as access to land, space to work or sell, tools, equipment, technology, and other productive assets; human resources such

Table 7. How much time do rural girls and boys spend working? Average hours worked per week by rural Kenyan adolescent females and males ages 8-24 in ten activities, 1988

Type of work	8-14 years		15-19 years		20-24 years	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
All types of work	18.70	14.30	31.30	17.90	49.50	28.80
Domestic chores	6.30	1.70	11.30	1.40	18.70	1.60
Fetching water	3.30	1.20	4.70	0.70	5.40	0.50
Fetching/cutting firewood	2.70	0.70	3.70	0.50	4.40	0.30
Unpaid non-family farm labor	0.10	.01	0.20	0.30	0.50	0.50
Managing crops	3.60	3.50	7.10	6.30	11.00	10.20
Tending livestock	2.00	6.40	2.10	5.80	3.50	5.10
Marketing	0.40	0.30	1.00	0.50	2.10	1.10
Performing cooperative work	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.80	0.10	0.10
Working for wages	0.10	0.20	1.00	1.40	2.60	7.20
Self-employed non-farm labor	0.00	0.20	0.30	0.90	1.30	2.30

Source: Government of Kenya et al. 1991.

³For a discussion of the limitations of skills training approaches, see Bennell 1999.

Table 8. Who employs adolescent girls? Percent distribution of currently employed girls ages 15-24 in Kenya by employer, 1998

Employer	Age group	
	15-19 years	20-24 years
Self-employed	35.2	57.4
Employed by a relative	27.1	12.5
Employed by a non-relative	37.7	29.6
Missing	0.1	0.6
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Adapted from National Council for Population and Development et al. 1999, Table 2.14.

as good health and the ability to work; and social resources including social networks, reciprocal social relationships, and relationships of trust); and

- Structuring opportunities (e.g., identifying livelihood opportunities in emerging or growth sectors of the economy; offering training to take advantage of these opportunities; facilitating needs and addressing bottlenecks in the production and marketing chain within particular subsectors or economic activities; promoting a supportive policy environment for subsectors that employ or could employ large numbers of young women; and forging supportive institutional links, such as links between market research, micro-finance, and vocational training institutions).

Clearly individual programs cannot cover every domain. In fact, overly integrated programs often have a poor track record in terms of outreach, performance, and effectiveness. The framework above is intended to suggest a way of considering the range of needs of a particular group of adolescent girls, to help formulate various program options, to set priorities, and to select manageable interventions that make sense in a particular context.

Policy and Program Responses to Youth Unemployment in Kenya

The problem of youth unemployment has long been recognized at the policy level in Kenya. With the

publication in 1972 of a seminal report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) on employment in Kenya, the government became one of the first in Africa to acknowledge the limited capacity of the formal sector to generate employment and the importance of the informal sector as a source of income, especially for women and young people (ILO 1972). Since then, the problem of youth unemployment has remained at the center of Kenya's policy agenda. However, with rapid population and labor force growth and chronic economic crises, addressing the problem of unemployment of the young continues to be an uphill battle.

Government policies addressing the problem of youth unemployment in Kenya are wide ranging but the main emphasis has been on building skills through education and training. For example, in 1984, the government of Kenya introduced the 8-4-4 system of education encompassing eight years of basic education, four years of secondary schooling, and four years of university study. The new system is intended to prepare students for jobs in both the formal and informal sectors.

Two key government policy documents emphasize the role of the informal sector in creating employment, especially for women and youth. In 1986, a paper on economic management for renewed growth outlined several strategies designed to promote the informal sector and emphasized the role of secondary technical and vocational schools in training workers and entrepreneurs for the informal sector (Republic of Kenya 1986). In 1992, a paper on small enterprise and *jua kali* (informal sector) development noted the role of educational establishments in promoting a more dynamic enterprise culture and recommended that the government introduce entrepreneurship education in its degree and diploma programs (Republic of Kenya 1992).

The problem of adolescent and youth unemployment has gained the attention of several international development organizations working in Kenya. Many programs are at a formative stage. The Canadian International Development Research Centre recently carried out a multi-country program in Africa, including Kenya, to promote entrepreneurship and business skills training for adolescents. UNICEF is focusing on the problem

of underage and unsafe child labor and the related problem of limited income opportunities for older women, which has the effect of pushing children into the work force at an early age. ILO addresses child labor issues through its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). It balances the longer-term goal of eliminating child labor with shorter-term efforts to reduce the exploitation and improve the working conditions of children who work. ILO is also concerned about youth unemployment issues and recently has launched a new Africa-wide initiative, Jobs for Africa-Poverty-Reducing Employment Strategies for Africa (JFA-PRESA), in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme. In Kenya, JFA-PRESA aims to reduce poverty and unemployment for youth and other priority groups through advocacy and investment-led, labor-intensive strategies. Also in response to the problem of youth unemployment, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), in collaboration with Kenya's Ministry of Science and Technology, is implementing a vocational training project that seeks to improve technical training in Kenya in order to better meet the needs of the labor market. While adolescent girls and young women are within the targeted age group, most of these programs do not focus explicitly on them.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Kenya are involved in a wide range of livelihood programs, many of which involve financial and business development services for the informal sector. However, they reach few, if any, 16-24-year-old girls and young women. One reason is that many of these programs target people who are already engaged in an economic activity rather than those who are entering the work force for the first time. Managers cite other reasons for excluding this age group from their programs, including (1) adolescents are at a transitional and unstable point in their lives, especially girls, who may marry and move away; (2) they have limited skills, experience, and options for productive investments; (3) they do not have full control over decisions that affect the direction of their lives; and (4) they cannot enter into a legal contract until they are 18 years old.

One innovative NGO program that extends credit and savings to older adolescent girls and young

women challenges this "conventional wisdom." The Tap and Reposition Youth (TRY) savings and credit project begun in 1998 targets out-of-school girls ages 16-24 who are not employed in the formal sector and live in lower-income and slum areas of Nairobi. Initiated by the K-Rep Development Agency (KDA), the objective of the project is to explore the effect of credit and savings programs in strengthening the work roles and livelihood opportunities for adolescent girls, as well as to test the feasibility and viability of extending credit and savings services to this age group. The Population Council's interest in developing new approaches to support the livelihood needs of adolescent girls, combined with KDA's interest in innovation and exploration of new markets, led to this experiment. The pilot phase is still under way so it is too early to draw conclusions, but initial results suggest that it is a promising strategy for this target group.

Documentation of Livelihood Programs for Adolescent Girls

Beginning in 1996, as part of its new reproductive health program for adolescents, the Population Council's regional office in East and Southern Africa undertook a survey of youth-serving organizations in Kenya with the aim of gaining an understanding of the areas in which they work and how they function. Believing that skills development, economic opportunities, social competence, and civic participation contribute to the ability of adolescent girls and boys to make choices about their sexual and reproductive lives, the survey looked at a range of entry points for adolescents, including, but not limited to, the health sector. The researchers sought to identify programs that were reaching socially marginalized and economically disadvantaged adolescent girls. As a result, the inventory captured groups engaged in formal and non-formal education, economic and livelihood skills building, and the promotion of sports and public leadership.

Despite strong interest on the part of both parents and adolescents in preparing for and finding jobs, the inventory found very few organizations that offered adolescents-particularly girls-livelihood skills. Using snowball techniques, these few organizations

identified other groups doing work on livelihoods. Through this process, Population Council staff generated a list of potential programs that represented a variety of approaches for expanding livelihood opportunities. Staff arranged site visits with the various organizations and conducted discussions with program staff to get a clear picture of their activities.

Through this process, four adolescent livelihood programs were selected for documentation to highlight their objectives, approaches, and activities. The purpose of the documentation was to take a snapshot of what has been accomplished, the challenges that remain, and possible future steps. The four programs illustrate a range of approaches, from a small self-help, volunteer-centered initiative that works with disabled girls, to an advocacy-oriented training and education program for domestic household workers, to more traditional vocational training and social service approaches. They involve adolescent girls and young women in different circumstances, urban and rural, agricultural and non-agricultural, literate and illiterate. The case studies are intended to provide readers with examples of training, counseling, apprenticeship, credit, job placement, and other livelihood interventions involving adolescent girls. One aim is to provide information useful to policymakers and programmers who wish to improve and diversify livelihood options for poor young women as they make the transition to adulthood. A related aim is to encourage practitioner and donor debate about evaluating and improving such programs in the context of NGO vulnerability to funding cuts and staff turnover, Kenya's economic crisis, and the desperate circumstances and multiple needs of young people.

The four organizations were approached to determine their interest in collaborating with the Population Council in this initiative. The authors recognize that these descriptions do not amount to program evaluations. In many cases, these snapshots are the first efforts to describe the process and content of programs that are working with adolescent girls. All of the programs described are at crucial learning stages. They are small in scale, yet reflect a range of efforts on the ground to develop adolescent girls' economic potential.

The four programs are:

- **IMANI (Incentives from Marianists to Assist the Needy to Become Independent):** Single mothers, in addition to girls and young women, participate in a nongovernmental, vocational skills training and family-life education program in Nairobi that enables them to take advantage of arranged job attachments within the informal sector as well as access to credit to start micro-enterprises.
- **The Limuru Girls' Centre:** Young women from all provinces of Kenya, despite socially and economically disadvantaged circumstances, engage in a residential vocational training program and gain practical skills in business, leadership, agriculture, and garment making.
- **The Shanzu Transitional Workshop for Disabled Girls:** Disabled adolescent girls participate in vocational training within a residential program (affiliated with the Kenya Girl Guides Association) that prepares them to lead productive and independent lives within their communities.
- **The Sinaga Women and Child Labour Resource Centre:** This Nairobi-based program offers rights education and literacy and skills training to young girls employed as domestic workers and advocates on their behalf within the wider community.

The case studies that follow describe how these organizations began; how they select participants; and how they work with gatekeepers, parents, and others in the community to gain legitimacy. They also discuss the relevance of strategies to expand economic opportunities over time (in most cases, program strategies have evolved). They highlight the real-life experiences and views of managers, staff, and the participating adolescent girls as they work together. At many points, the case studies reveal the complexity of the social, economic, and organizational challenges programs face. While this introduction provides a larger, "macro-level" picture of some of these issues, the case studies provide insights on the "micro-level" experience.

Learning from the Experience of Adolescent Livelihood Programs in Kenya

All the programs described have recognized the need to address the disproportionately disadvantaged situation of young girls in Kenya and have responded by providing training and services. All also face critical programming challenges given the shifting realities of the Kenyan economy and the growing AIDS crisis.⁴ Challenges include limited outreach in terms of the numbers of young girls programs can reach; the issue of financial and institutional sustainability, continuity of leadership; and the need to effectively link participants to income and employment opportunities beyond the programs.

While these challenges are common to livelihood programs for all age and gender groups, they are compounded for economically disadvantaged adolescent girls. Adolescents have fewer assets (e.g., savings, productive assets, skills, social networks, and life experience) on which to draw compared to older people. Because of their age and gender, girls are minimally involved in the decisions surrounding their education, work and marital situations. In some cases, families pressured by poverty send their daughters into undesirable living situations (such as the domestic workers in Sinaga), where they are vulnerable to unsafe and sometimes coercive sexual relations.

The four programs described here are among the few youth-serving organizations in Kenya that have focused their efforts on expanding livelihood opportunities for adolescent girls. They were selected because they respond in interesting or innovative ways to one or more critical challenges related to adolescent livelihoods. All of the programs target vulnerable groups of adolescent girls. The Sinaga program targets urban adolescent girls working outside the home as domestics. Given the large number of adolescent girls who enter the work force through domestic service, replicating these efforts has potential for affecting large numbers of girls. The Limuru Girls' Centre recruits young women from economically disadvantaged households in each of

Kenya's eight provinces. Through the years it has retained some emphasis on agriculture due to the importance of agriculture to Kenya's economy, but it also includes a broader curriculum. The program currently trains young women to work in the growing flower-export industry. The Shanzu Transitional Workshop, the smallest program, is the only skills-training program in Kenya that works exclusively with physically disabled adolescent girls. Finally, IMANI reaches girls from extremely poor urban households, many of whom are single mothers.

Skills training is a key component of all the programs. All founded their programs to some extent on building skills for women in traditional areas (e.g., sewing and garment making) and in some cases have begun to move into non-traditional areas as well (e.g., export-oriented floriculture and book binding). Most of these organizations provide specific supports to link their graduates to employment opportunities when they graduate. On-the-job training and job attachments (apprenticeships) offered by Limuru Girls' Centre, Shanzu, and IMANI groom students for both formal and informal wage employment. Business skills training, entrepreneurship development, and credit facilities equip students to move into self-employment within the informal sector.

To address specific issues facing adolescents, the programs provide a variety of social support activities. Sinaga organizes literacy training, drama, and creative arts activities to build self-confidence and reduce the social isolation of domestic workers. Limuru Girls' Centre provides leadership training and a wide range of extracurricular activities to build girls' self-esteem, confidence, and physical strength. Shanzu increases the mobility and exposure of young disabled women by involving them actively in Girl Guide activities and linking them with local hotels to market their products. IMANI organizes weekly social support groups where adolescent girls discuss problems, share feelings, and develop friendships. In times of crisis, the organizations and their staff provide a critical safety net for extremely vulnerable

⁴According to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), in Kisumu (Western Kenya) HIV prevalence rates were 33.3 percent for 19-year-old girls and 8.6 percent for 19-year-old boys (UNAIDS 2000).

girls who have no other social back-up support system. Of the four organizations, Sinaga has been the most active in advocacy work through campaigns to raise awareness in the wider community of the legal and human rights of domestic workers.

Designing vocational training programs for a world in which the supply of workers is expanding much more rapidly than demand (particularly among the young) has been a significant challenge. All four organizations have made at least some use of research to assess the quality of the training they offer and to assess the match between the skills they are offering and the job market. All of them try to follow up on the experiences of their graduates once they enter the working world.

All four programs contribute to positive changes in the lives of the girls and young women who participate, however, their outreach is limited. Their experiences highlight the challenge of designing cost-effective livelihood strategies that can affect significant numbers of adolescent girls. Limuru Girls' Centre and Shanzu, for example, have profound effects on the lives of participants. However, they are intensive, multi-year, residential programs that involve relatively few girls and require subsidized funding. While the programs could be expanded, they are limited by high costs per student and lack of donor funds. All have attempted to reduce costs and increase revenues (e.g., by introducing fees,

selling products, and trying other fundraising techniques), however, all continue to require substantial amounts of external funding. Two mainstream livelihood approaches have evolved to address issues of scale and cost-effectiveness: sectoral programs, which focus on a particular enterprise or employment sector involving large numbers of women or other disadvantaged groups and promote changes that have impacts beyond the project level; and micro-finance programs. One strategy for achieving scale is to "make space" for adolescents within these two approaches. Sinaga's program for domestic workers (particularly the advocacy and community awareness-raising activities) and K-Rep's savings and credit program for adolescent girls are examples of adolescent livelihood programs attempting to do this in Kenya.

The four programs are working in a difficult and challenging environment. Their experiences provide a basis for considering ways to strengthen the design and implementation of existing initiatives. In addition, they provide a reason to sharpen debate about strategies for promoting adolescent livelihoods that are flexible, innovative, adequately resourced, and effective. Developing livelihood skills and opportunities increasingly will become central to all adolescent program and policy work, including that that seeks to improve girls' reproductive health and defend their rights.

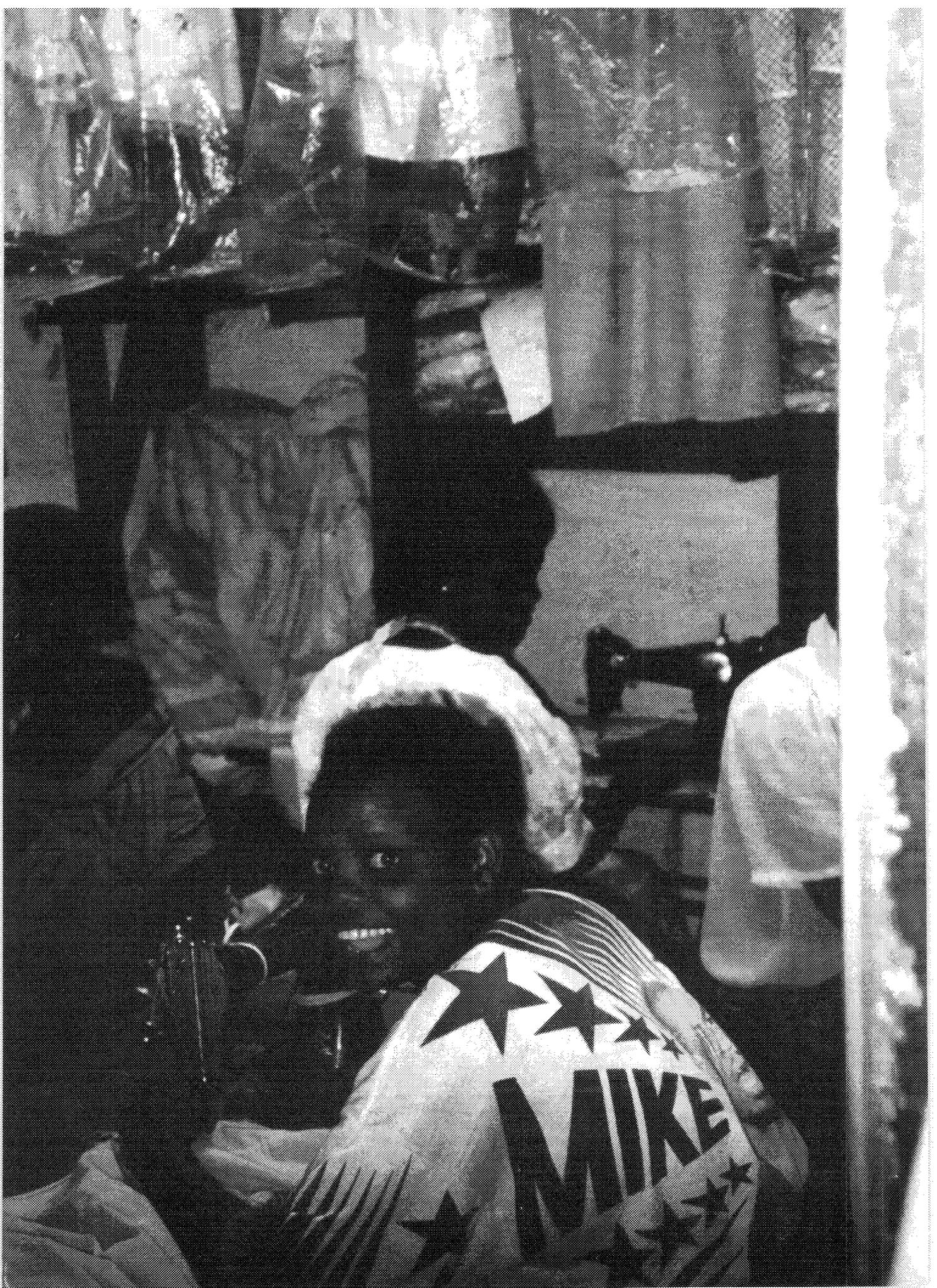
Features of four livelihood programs for adolescent girls and young women in Kenya

Organization (year started)	Objective	Target group	Type of skills training	Support to link graduates to employment	Other activities	Current participants	Estimated cost per participant per year	Other distinctive features
IMANI (1986)	To increase self-reliance of people in need through skills training, social support, and business training	Vulnerable adolescent girls and young women ages 16-30 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garment making • Machine knitting • Book binding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit • Business skills training • Job brokerage • Market research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life skills training • Childcare • Family support groups • Individual counseling • Nursery school 	157 (Maria House) 106 (Family Life Group)	KSh15,000 (\$214)* (Maria House) KSh27,000 (\$386) (Chaminade Training Centre)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multifaceted support to link trainees to employment • Faith-based organization
Limuru Girls' Center (1980)	To prepare young women to become self-reliant and active contributors to the Kenyan economy	Economically disadvantaged young women ages 18-25 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture • Floriculture • Livestock • Beekeeping • Aquaculture • Orchard • Poultry • Tree nursery • Garment making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business training • On-the-job training • Referral to local businesses and training institutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor training • Leadership training • Health and life skills training • Community service • Recreational outings • Working farm 	48	KSh25,000 (\$357)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-year residential program: • Recruits students from all provinces of Kenya • Trains girls for mid-level management positions in agri-business sector
Sinaga Women and Child Labor Resource Centre (1993)	To eliminate child labour and promote child rights	Female domestic workers ages 8-16 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailoring • Cooking • Typing • Home management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market research on alternative employment • Awareness-raising of employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy training • Rights education • Group life skills and counseling • Dramatic arts • Feeding program • Crisis intervention • Community awareness-raising 	216	KSh3,800 (US\$54)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sectoral approach • Rights-based approach • Advocacy
Shanzu Transitional Workshop for Disabled Girls (1992)	To prepare disabled girls for an independent and productive life	Physically disabled and hearing-impaired young women, literate up to primary-school level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garment making • Jewelry making • Leatherwork • Knitting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-the-job training through production workshop • Marketing experience • Referral to local credit program • Retain graduates as day workers and boarders at Shanzu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life skills training • Leadership and outdoors training • Kitchen gardening • Money management training • Independent living 	20	KSh30,000 (\$429)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-year residential program • Only program focused exclusively on physically disabled adolescent girls and young women

*The exchange rate used in this document is US\$1 = KSh70, which reflects the approximate exchange rate at the time data collection started (January 2000)

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IMANI'S Livelihood Training and Support Program for Young Women

I am weaker than they are because I couldn't live so close to the edge of existence. It's amazing-they live with great hope in their hearts.

*-Marianna Immanuele
(former program coordinator, Maria House)*

The name IMANI stands for Incentive from the Marianists to Assist the Needy to Become Independent, but the word also means "faith" in Kiswahili. Founded in 1986 and operated by the Catholic Marianist Brothers, IMANI offers courses to older adolescent girls and young women in dressmaking and knitting at a facility now known as Maria House.

IMANI began in response to requests for skills-training opportunities from a group of young, unmarried, impoverished pregnant women who had started meeting regularly under the auspices of the Marianists. They often felt alone and abandoned; weekly meetings provided them with a sense of camaraderie and a forum where they could discuss their hopes and fears. When asked what specific changes could most make a difference in their lives, their response was: "Jobs! Employment! We want to work!"

Adding components one by one to the weekly meetings, in response to the needs of its students, IMANI ultimately created a vocational training program. A family-life education component was soon added. In 1997 a business skills-training component was added. A coeducational community training center, Chaminade Training Centre (CTC), was established in 1988. Next, the Job Creation Program (JCP) was set up to help the graduates of both Maria House and CTC find apprenticeships during training and jobs upon graduation. Program activities include supporting the growth of local small enterprises that could potentially provide job opportunities, as well as helping establish those seeking to become self-employed.

Most of the funds to support the program come from church-related sources in the United States and Europe. IMANI employs about 60 staff members, all of whom are paid, plus an occasional volunteer.

The Young Women of Maria House

Maria House is located in Eastleigh, a low income, peri-urban neighborhood. However, the young women who participate come from all over eastern

A brief history of IMANI

The Catholic Marianist religious order has been active in Kenya for more than 30 years. Initially its primary role was teaching, but by the late 1970s, the Marianists were looking for new apostolic work and focused their attention on the Kinyago slum area in Nairobi.

An American novice, Peter Daino, worked to improve the skills and market opportunities of members of the local community. In 1982, he helped start up a banana-fiber basket-weaving business. The business did not do well and was discontinued, but it offered valuable lessons for pursuing the self-help strategy. Daino enlisted another Marianist brother, Tim Philipps, and together they began to direct activities in Kinyago. Early activities

included the formation of a scouting group and the establishment of a nursery school.

The Marianists' efforts were temporarily interrupted in 1984 to assist with famine relief. Once the famine abated, the brothers resumed their outreach activities, and set up their headquarters in the garage of the Maria Joanes House in late 1985. The following year, they were given the use of the entire building, which they christened Maria House. Brother Tim took over as director of IMANI and held the post for ten years. He was succeeded by Brother Bill Schlosser, whose previous experience includes implementing Marianist programs in Malawi.

Nairobi and sometimes beyond. Local family incomes are about KSh 2,800 (\$40) per month and housing is inadequate. Many area residents live in shelters constructed of plastic and cardboard; others live in houses made of mud. The most fortunate live in stone houses, but all dwellings are overcrowded and sanitary conditions are poor. Most families are engaged in a constant struggle for food, clothing, housing, school fees, and medical expenses.

Approximately 1,000 young women come to Maria House every year. Because Maria House does not want to appear to encourage single motherhood by serving only pregnant women, its skills-training courses are available to any deserving woman between the ages of 16 and 30 who has dropped out of school between Standard 6 and Form 2. Generally Maria House does not take girls who have a higher level of education or good grades because more options are available to them. However, girls who have been out of school for more than a year and come from very poor families may be allowed to enter. Many are walk-ins, girls who are in crisis and are seeking help. They receive counseling, and financial support is extended in an emergency. Subsequently, IMANI tries to find a place for these young women within one of its programs, or refers them to other organizations offering relevant services. IMANI maintains strong ties with a large number of institutions, both church-based and secular.

The Maria House Program

The Maria House program is composed of two different tracks: the first focuses on skills training for young women in need; the second engages pregnant young women in weekly Family Life Group (FLG) meetings, where they receive individual counseling, medical and material support when they give birth, and if they choose, skills training. All participants benefit from childcare and nursery school services that are offered onsite.

Skills Training

Programs range from one year of skills training in tailoring, knitting, and bookbinding to six-month courses in hairdressing, and three-month courses in making beads and other decorative items from recycled glass. These shorter courses have been added to accommodate women unable to devote a full year to training. Girls who become pregnant while enrolled in the skills-training program are allowed to continue up until their sixth month of pregnancy, when they are temporarily transferred to the weekly Family Life Group.

Those who have not attended school are offered adult literacy courses that can be taken simultaneously with the skills training. Many students take courses up to and pass a national examination equivalent of Form 4.

Training is offered on a half-day schedule (morning or afternoon) in order to meet the needs of women who already are involved in some type of income-earning activity. The weekly schedule for the skills-training program includes 11 hours of instruction in the trade of their choice, two hours of business skills, one hour of self-awareness training, and one-half hour of gospel sharing⁵ at the start of each session. A member of the Job Creation Program teaches a basic business course to all students each week.

At the end of the course, the students take examinations, the results of which are included on their skills-training certificates. Starting this year, the term for the one-year classes was revised to begin in January and run through the end of October. Formerly, classes ended in December, but the Job Creation Program determined that November, the period before Christmas, was an optimal time to place new graduates.

Quite a few Maria House students are employed as domestic workers and therefore must negotiate with their employers for time off to attend the

⁵Because IMANI is a Catholic organization, spiritual training and gospel sharing is central to the program, but the content is nondenominational in nature. Christians must attend the gospel-sharing sessions, but they are optional for other faiths. Everyone is welcome to attend, and several Muslim students currently do so. As Maria House is well known in the community, Catholics actually make up less than half of the participants and are not given any priority in the program.

courses.⁶ Sometimes IMANI has to reason with the employers about keeping these girls in the program—friction may occur as a result of the claims on girls’ time, although employers usually are cooperative. In fact, some employers even refer their domestics to Maria House. In the event that an employer is not cooperative, staff members try to secure other employment for the girl.

Students who participate in vocational training are charged KSh50 (less than \$1) a month. In special circumstances, IMANI occasionally accepts a student who can afford to pay a bit more in order to raise income.

Students in the dressmaking class take the government trade test in tailoring. There is no comparable test for knitting or bookbinding, and

are allowed to continue training for three additional months in order to perfect their skills. Students can only take one skills-training course free of charge; if they want to take a second course, they must pay for it.

Life-Skills Training and Individual Counseling

Life-skills training is a core component in the skills-training classes. Lessons are one hour per week and include counseling and seminars on topics such as HIV/AIDS and sexuality. Expectant mothers take life-skills lessons more tailored to their needs. Maria House has also established a library that contains information on fertility, reproductive health, and other relevant topics.

Content of courses at Maria House

The course in machine knitting covers:

- Parts of basic knitting machine and accessories;
- Use of patterns;
- Introduction to machine threading and knitting;
- Initial knitting of simple sweaters; and
- Use of specialized machines.

The dressmaking course covers:

- Sewing machines: type of equipment, operation of various parts, and maintenance;
- Use of overlock machines;
- Different stitches and how they are used;

- Pressing and care of ironing equipment;
- Planning, cutting and preparing a garment for fitting; and
- Use of various types of patterns, symbols and terminology.

The bookbinding course covers:

- Various machines used for binding and how they operate;
- Various types of stitches used in binding;
- Hand binding and book finishing;
- Lettering and numbering;
- Collection (gathering pages together in the correct order); and
- Knocking (evening out pages before binding).

although there is a recognized examination in hairdressing, it is too costly for most students to take. Maria House brings in professionals to assess the girls’ competence. Girls in the bookbinding and hairdressing classes are also sent out on attachment (as apprentices) to gain practical experience. All receive a certificate of completion once they successfully pass their course. Those who do not pass

Sister Clemencia acts as a liaison between teachers and social workers, helping instructors identify girls who appear to be having problems such as continuous absences, and engaging the social workers to give girls extra support if needed. She also helps IMANI’s Job Creation Program develop community support groups.

⁶Maria House does not keep track of the number of participants in the skills-training program who are also working as domestics. However, recently collected data on 500 girls working as domestics in IMANI’s catchment area are being analyzed.

Mary Wanjau is one of IMANI's two social workers. One of her primary roles is to interview potential students and visit their homes to assess their circumstances. Instructors also refer girls to her if they appear to be having problems. Whenever a girl stops attending classes, Maria House dispatches its field worker, Peter Wainaina, who follows up with her in the community. The social workers then take over to try to help the student continue.

In one instance, an orphaned young woman was living with her aunt. The girl had enrolled in a skills-



training class but suddenly stopped attending. A staff member visited her home and found that she was pregnant and her aunt wanted to send her away. The social worker explained that many girls come to Maria House with similar challenges and encouraged the girl to return.

According to Wanjau, staff members “are not just teaching the girls, but we are learning a lot from them as well.” Her teaching style favors “sharing” with the girls rather than “instructing” them. Lessons are intended to foster the self-confidence girls need to manage their lives, such as being able to say no to unwanted advances from men. Wanjau is amazed how quickly the girls change within a few months. “When they come they are shy and will hardly talk or even look up,” she says. “Later they are open and willing to express their opinions.”

If it is suspected that a student has a sexually transmitted infection, she is sent to a dispensary and Maria House pays the cost. One recent example of this type of support involved a young girl who was very sick and was sent for treatment. The girl was advised that her boyfriend must also be treated, but he refused. The social worker contacted the girl's mother. She learned that the boyfriend had beaten the girl on several occasions; eventually, with support from Maria House, the girl was able to end the relationship.

Special Support for Pregnant Girls and Young Mothers

Anne Gakuru, the coordinator of Maria House, estimates that approximately 250-300 pregnant women come to Maria House every year. Upon arrival, each young woman is welcomed and invited to join the Family Life Group—a group of her peers in similar circumstances who meet weekly. Young women who participate in the group are encouraged to see themselves not as victims of circumstance but as resourceful young women. “Move forward” is their motto. Education is the means through which girls are encouraged to discover their own potential and change their situations. Group interaction is

important for forging a base of support that is often missing in these girls' lives.

The FLG program consists of 12 sessions, but participants can enter at any point. When the group grows to 30 members, it is split up to encourage participation. Each meeting lasts for two hours and is facilitated by a trained counselor. Participants are reimbursed for their bus fare. Topics include pregnancy, childbirth, nutrition, personal hygiene, childhood diseases, immunization, breastfeeding, and infant care. The young women also learn about self-awareness and personal relationships as well as AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, drug abuse, and alcoholism. Some form of group activity (e.g., sewing or knitting) is offered following each class.

To encourage FLG participants to deliver in a hospital, IMANI has devised a system whereby the girls raise KSh500 (\$7) toward hospital fees and the program pays the balance. (Initially IMANI sent girls to Pumwani Hospital for delivery, but while the price was reasonable, the quality of care was poor. IMANI then negotiated with a private hospital that offered excellent care but could not keep costs at an affordable level. Currently a fixed fee is being negotiated with nearby mission hospitals.) As Gakuru laments, "Getting medical care is relatively inexpensive, but getting good-quality maternity care at an affordable price is really quite difficult."

If a girl attends 12 or more FLG sessions, she receives a set of baby-care items valued at about KSh700 (\$10). If a girl wishes to put her child up for adoption, IMANI works with the Child Welfare Society to arrange the placement. In instances where a young woman is not in a position to immediately care for her child, foster care can be arranged.

After giving birth, young women are encouraged to return for monthly support meetings. These sessions include components of baby care such as monitoring infant growth and identifying health conditions requiring professional attention. Mothers of babies with special needs receive additional counseling and advice and are provided with supplementary food and milk. IMANI's social workers realized that these mothers' groups were

helpful, so they have since initiated seven other support groups in different residential areas. Participants in any Maria House program can join a group in their home area.

Skills Training and Income Generation

In addition to providing a supportive environment for new and young mothers, the FLG groups also operate merry-go-round savings schemes⁷ and occasionally develop small-scale businesses. Training is available in knitting, sewing, and candle-making, and the groups are taught how to market their products.

Maria House staff have found that offering training to individual women already in groups is a much more successful approach than trying to start an income-generating project from scratch. This type of outreach training appears to be suitable to women with several children who are unable to spend time away from home to participate in a formal skills-training program.

Approximately one third of the young mothers in the FLGs eventually join one of the skills-training programs. To encourage participation, the monthly enrollment fee is waived for these women. However, mothers cannot start skills training until their infants are nine months old. At that point, infants should be fully immunized and can join the program's childcare center.

Childcare for Mothers-in-Training

Approximately 30 percent of the young women participating in the Maria House training programs are mothers. Therefore, childcare has been offered for children nine months and older since the programs began. When Maria House staff became aware that some older children often had to be left at home in the slums—literally in the streets in many cases—because their mothers could not afford care for them, they sought to expand their childcare facility. In 1999 IMANI was able to acquire a neighboring building for a nursery school to accommodate children up to seven years old.

⁷In a merry-go-round saving scheme, each member invests a fixed amount according to a certain schedule (weekly or monthly) and then members take turns receiving the full amount contributed.



After the young women in the Maria House training programs, IMANI graduates have priority for both childcare and nursery school. Any remaining spaces (generally less than 10 percent of the total number of spaces available) are offered to working mothers from the neighborhood. The childcare facilities currently accommodate 30 youngsters in daycare and 70 in nursery school. Childcare services are free of charge; a fee of KSh100 (about \$1) is charged for nursery school, but if a woman cannot pay, the fee is waived.

The hours of the facilities attempt to accommodate mothers' working schedules. All-day childcare, for example, is particularly helpful to girls in domestic service, because their children cannot accompany them to work. For graduates who are just beginning to enter the work force and do not immediately earn enough to afford childcare, the Maria House service is vital to their ability to make

the transition from skills training to paid employment.

Continuity and Sustained Participation

A large number of graduates visit frequently to let the staff know how they are doing. Some return and talk to the students about their experiences, thus serving as role models for the trainees. In 1997 Maria House held a ceremony, attended by more than 500 graduates, to mark its tenth anniversary. Graduates may return at any time for counseling, and some do so when they encounter problems. Staff try to keep track of graduates through the Job Creation Program, but they do lose touch with some. Domestic workers, in particular, tend to change jobs frequently and often move out of the area and thus lose contact with the staff.

One of IMANI's greatest challenges has been its inability to reduce the dropout rate in the skills-training program. Currently only 65 percent of students successfully complete the program. Part of the difficulty is attracting and maintaining qualified staff who are willing to accept the low salaries IMANI can pay. However, most who teach at Maria House tend to stay on because of their commitment to the work.

IMANI estimates that the cost of supporting participants through the Maria House skills-training program is approximately KSh15,000 (\$214) per student. Upon graduation, IMANI estimates, these young women will earn between KSh2,500-3,000 (\$36-43) per month when they begin working.

Chaminade Training Center

The Chaminade Training Center was established in 1988 in a neighboring, low-income area of Mukuru. CTC and Maria House differ in several ways. CTC provides skills training to individuals of both sexes whereas Maria House works only with women. CTC is a much more community-based institution and while it does not seek to specifically address the needs of young women in crisis, it offers the same FLG program for young, pregnant women. CTC's policy regarding students who become pregnant is the same as that in Maria House: The girl is allowed to continue her training but is asked to go home when

she is six months pregnant. She may return once her baby is nine months old.

CTC provides a full-time curriculum. Eight courses are currently available—carpentry, electrical installation, catering, tailoring, dressmaking, knitting, hairdressing, and metalwork. A fee of KSh100 (\$1) per term includes lunch and course materials. CTC is also able to offer extracurricular activities such as games, debates, and traditional songs and dances.

Currently the ratio of boys to girls at CTC is about two to one. Generally enrollment in CTC courses has followed traditional gender patterns. However, a break in tradition did occur recently when male students asked to enroll in the catering course that, up until then, was offered only to girls.

Experience of Dorcas, a graduate of CTC

A graduate of the CTC catering class, Dorcas is single and lives with her married sister. She works at Vespa, a small restaurant in Nairobi, and was hired when the owner approached the CTC industrial liaison officer seeking students to work in her new business. Dorcas works six days a week, 6:30 a.m.-7:00 p.m. She is responsible for making mandazis and chapatis (a fried pastry similar to doughnuts and flatbread). She also serves as cashier, waitress, and, at times, cleaner.

She describes her experience at CTC as wonderful. "At no time will you find teachers just sitting in the staff room doing nothing." She

Program to provide support to students and graduates of both the Maria House and CTC programs. In addition, JCP tries to assist small enterprises within the communities so that they might be able to offer work to both apprentices and graduates of the IMANI skills-training programs. Women constitute about 90 percent of those who benefit from JCP.

JCP is currently made up of five components: (1) entrepreneurship training; (2) access to credit to create new businesses or expand existing enterprises; (3) advice and follow-up for graduates; (4) research in market trends and employment opportunities; and (5) jobs brokerage for IMANI graduates of both the Maria House and CTC programs.

suggested that CTC should reconsider the timing of the apprenticeship program. Currently, students gain practical experience halfway through their course of study. She thinks that practical training should be scheduled toward the end of the coursework because students have less enthusiasm for continuing their classes once they get a taste of working in the outside world.

Dorcas plans to start her own pastry-making business as soon as she has saved enough money. She would prefer to be self-employed, because in her line of work, the pay is low and the hours long.

Presently three male students are enrolled in a class of 21. Shortly thereafter another three boys asked to take the tailoring course that, until 2000, was open only to girls.

The Job Creation Program

IMANI's experience in running its programs revealed that for graduates to make a successful transition into the working world, they would need additional support. First, it started a small loans program, but results were disappointing: Only 20 percent of recipients in 1987 were repaying their loans. Realizing that simply providing credit was not enough, IMANI developed the Job Creation

Business Skills Training

Four to five one-week business courses are offered each year for about 20-25 participants per course. Topics of study include entrepreneurship, marketing, finance, and business organization. The courses are taught by JCP staff with the participation of various resource people, and by the end of the course participants should be able to: (1) clearly identify their business problems; (2) understand and apply the characteristics of an entrepreneur; (3) improve the marketing of their products; (4) be able to cost and keep their own business records; and (5) understand the role of organization in business and how to apply it. IMANI also offers special business



skills courses for semiliterate clients that are attended by about 80 people each year.

Some students emerge from the seminars ready to apply for loans, whereas others realize that they need to make some business changes before they are ready to expand. Participants often express surprise about how little they knew about their own businesses.

Because many IMANI graduates eventually become self-employed, a basic business knowledge course introduces them to the activities involved in starting and running small enterprises. Topics covered include self-reliance, wage employment, self-employment, starting a business, marketing, business organization, business finance, planning, and the entrepreneur and the bank.

Access to Credit

JCP business advisors present their clients' business plans before a loan committee. If the loan is approved, the client is asked to provide two guarantors living within Nairobi. Both guarantors must be women—even if the person requesting the loan is a man—and they must be employed (copies of their employment identification cards are kept on file). Experience has shown that men are quick to sign as guarantors but slow to come forward when a client defaults on a loan. Most of IMANI's loans are

made to women, and a number of them ask that the loans be kept secret from their husbands.

Those who receive loans must attend the one-week business course to learn accounting and record keeping. Because JCP's priority is job creation, loans are generally restricted to production-oriented enterprises. IMANI also loans to clients who are not graduates as part of an effort to facilitate small enterprise expansions, ideally to help these enterprises grow to a point where they can hire IMANI graduates and other non-IMANI people in need, either as apprentices or employees.

Eunice Onyango, the JCP coordinator, notes that the characteristics of loan clients have changed over the time that the program has been in operation. Initially, clients were mostly women between 40 and 45 years old who had been in business for some time. Now clients are mostly younger women, averaging about 30 years of age. Few women younger than age 20 go into business for themselves. The youngest woman whose business has been supported by JCP was 22 years old. The educational background of loan clients has changed along with their age. Among the older group, many were semi-literate women with only a little primary education. Current clients tend to have completed primary school at least, and many are high school graduates.

Clients bring their repayments to IMANI beginning one month from the date of disbursement.

Experience of Rhoda, an IMANI loan client

Rhoda is an IMANI loan client who works in Uhuru market. She produces children's clothes and school uniforms and currently employs four young women, one an IMANI graduate. To date, she has employed eight IMANI graduates. Rhoda says that while few employers are willing to take on inexperienced

girls and train them, she enjoys working with them, and feels like she is giving something back to the community. She also counsels her employees on personal matters, encouraging them to choose their partners carefully. According to her, to be successful in business one must have patience and perseverance.

They can pay earlier than the established date if they wish to take advantage of periods when they have more cash. Payments are accepted only in cash because working through banks proved cumbersome and some checks bounced.

Not surprisingly, IMANI's experience is the same as credit programs worldwide: Women pay off their loans more regularly and completely than do men. JCP's loan-repayment rates from 1995-1998 are shown below:

Loan repayment rates

	1995	1996	1997	1998
Repayment rate	85%	79%	78%	82%

Loan recovery is influenced by a number of factors, including the state of the local economy; therefore the repayment rate tends to fluctuate between 78 and 85 percent.

Creating Employment Opportunities

An important component of JCP is assisting in the creation of more positions for its student attachment program as well as for graduates. In addition to using the loans program, an industrial liaison officer is employed to seek out job opportunities in local factories. JCP loan coordinators also work with new and existing clients to help them establish and fill temporary and full-time employment opportunities.

Jobs found or created for IMANI graduates, CTC and Maria House, 1995-98

	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total number of jobs	148	160	184	247

Advice and Follow-Up for Graduates

Even after IMANI graduates have been placed in jobs, JCP has encountered problems keeping them there, as most graduates take jobs in the informal sector, which is characterized by low remuneration and lack of job security. Many graduates have stopped working largely because they were unable to cope with the regularity and discipline of the workplace. Also, they earned very little due to their lack of experience. To help ease this situation, IMANI initiated the Work Experience Program that now supplements graduates' salaries during their first three months of work: KSh800 (\$11) for the first month, KSh600 (\$9) for the second, and KSh400 (\$6) for the third. Since this system has been in place, dropouts have been rare-unless a graduate leaves a job for better employment. Supplement amounts are reviewed periodically so they can be adjusted for the local rate of inflation; they primarily cover the costs of transportation to and from work.

The Importance of Keeping Up with the Job Market

One important lesson learned is that programs must keep up with the trends found in the marketplace in order to remain effective. For example, a survey was made of the machines used for commercial dressmaking. Initially, students in class worked exclusively on domestic machines whereas most employment opportunities required that workers be able to use industrial machines. Similar machines were obtained for the trainees. Changes in program content have also been made. The masonry course at CTC was discontinued and a joinery course added because joinery had become a much more marketable

skill. In the dressmaking course, a combination of dressmaking and other skills, such as tying and dying and embroidery, now offer graduates better employment opportunities.

Occasionally, IMANI is able to support a graduate's participation in an exhibition of items outside of Kenya. In exchange for this support, the graduate carries samples made by other graduates and brings back orders. Currently, the program is seeking to establish links with an export firm that would market products in Europe.

Looking Ahead Toward Greater Self-Sufficiency

Finding the money necessary to both continue and expand its programs is an ongoing challenge for IMANI. Staff members are very involved in the debate concerning the future of the organization and the direction of greater self-sustainability while maintaining a focus on the urban poor.

Introducing its own income-generating activities is one move toward greater self-sufficiency. For example, a pilot production unit is under consideration, where IMANI graduates would be able to use the facilities for a small fee, thus helping them become self-employed. Despite space limitations, IMANI has recently established a glass bead-making workshop at Maria House that will increase the program's skills-training options. A new staff member with international marketing expertise will help with the sale of these items. A printing press was recently donated to the program that could be used to provide printing services for local clients.



Another possibility being discussed is initiating a commercial training program. Fees paid by students will be used to subsidize the philanthropic training programs. Ideally, the commercial program would be lodged in a separate facility-space to erect such a facility is available at CTC.

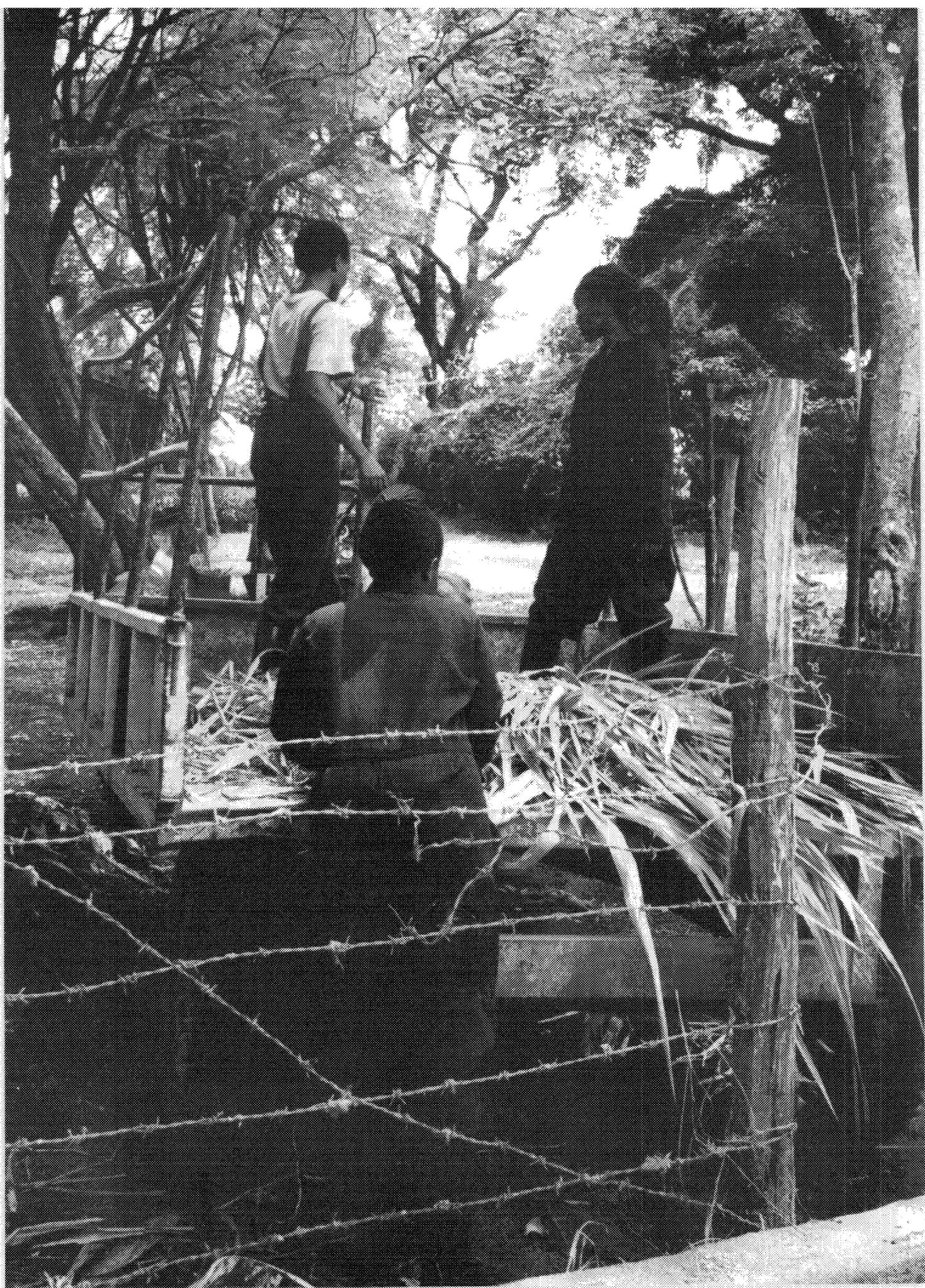
Conclusion

IMANI's programs have been able to support girls and young women in crisis as well as expand the livelihood options of those who participate in their skills-training programs. At Maria House, 1,574 girls entered the skills-training program between 1987 and 2000, and 1,069 graduated. More than 3,500 pregnant girls and young women have participated in the Family Life Groups. Many of these young women continue to benefit through the various components offered by the Job Creation Program as well as through participation in mothers' and community support groups.

IMANI is open to-and, in fact, looks for-new ideas and better ways of meeting the needs of its target groups. It is a responsive, innovative organization. Girls and young women could not participate in training because they lacked care for their children, thus daycare and nursery school were provided. Some women could not devote a year to a training course, so IMANI introduced shorter courses. For women who cannot get to Maria House, skills training is provided to them through groups in their community.

Primary among the program's accomplishments, according to Gakuru, has been the provision of assistance to young, pregnant women in crisis. Young women have been able to turn their lives around by raising their self-confidence and self-esteem and increasing their capacity to care for themselves and their families.

Today, across all of its programs, IMANI continues to emphasize the goal of self-reliance-emotionally, spiritually, and materially. The core components remain skills training, job placement, and social support, with the latter being an integral part of the overall program. Brother Tim, IMANI's former director, refers to these as a "web of elements that support each other" and that foster participants' abilities to use the skills and opportunities offered to them to improve their lives.



Limuru Girls' Centre

*What is Life?
It is a battle-Fight it!
It is a challenge-Meet it!
It is a journey-Take it!
It is a duty-Honor it!
It is a dream-Realize it!
It is love-Embrace it!
It is struggle-Conquer it!
It is a promise-Keep it!
It is sorrow-Accept it!
Life is sweet-Live it!*

-Grace Mwangi (LGC student, 1995)

The Limuru Girls' Centre (LGC) was established in 1980 in Kiambu, a fertile farming area about 20 kilometers (12 miles) from downtown Nairobi. It offers residential training in agriculture and garment making to girls from marginalized or poor communities in each of Kenya's eight provinces and emphasizes training its students for higher-paying management positions in each industry.

Although agriculture is the most prevalent source of employment for Kenyan women of all ages, the number employed in managerial positions and in export-oriented agribusiness has remained small. LGC's program prepares young women to fill such niches, especially in the rapidly expanding floriculture industry in Kenya. Similarly, garment making is another traditional source of employment for women. While many programs offer training in sewing and tailoring, LGC's training is comprehensive and focuses on providing training for management or teaching positions in the garment industry. LGC's training also emphasizes business skills and attempts to foster leadership capabilities and self-esteem in its students.

The center's courses in general agriculture and garment making run for two years (divided into seven terms) and are offered free of charge. LGC's 48 students are split equally between the two programs. For now, students are required to bring only a T-shirt and personal items such as toiletries. However, as the trend in NGO management is to

A brief history of the Limuru Girls' Centre and its leadership

The Limuru Girls' Centre was founded in 1980 when Duncan Gray, a Scottish farmer, decided that he could no longer make a living as a farmer. He contacted Bob Mein, a Kenyan citizen, and offered to give him his farm on the condition that Gray and his wife could continue living on the property. At the time, Mein was actively involved with the Limuru Boys' Centre (since renamed the Limuru Youth Agricultural Centre), a project affiliated with the Kenya Young Men's Christian Association.

Mein decided to establish an agricultural training program for girls on the property, as few, if any, such training opportunities existed for girls at that time. He approached the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) with his idea, and they agreed to provide KSh 9 million (\$128,571) to build the girls' facility. Initially, LGC was modeled on the boys' program. However, in 1990 NORAD carried out an assessment for funding purposes. The report recommended

that LGC add another training program—garment making—and increase the number of girls accepted for training. Based on the evaluation, NORAD planned to provide LGC with KSh 9 million more over five years to support the new curriculum. Unfortunately, a break occurred in diplomatic relations between Kenya and Norway and NORAD left the country before the second award was processed. At the same time, the center's principal also resigned to take another job, leaving LGC in a difficult position. Mein stepped in to serve as principal from 1991 to 1996.

Lucy Gitonga became LGC's principal in 1996. That same year, Mein and Gitonga began working together to put the center back on track financially. Through their work, a more diverse donor base was created, which included support from Danish Church Aid and overseas Rotary Clubs.



introduce cost-sharing schemes to increase participants' levels of commitment to a particular project, LGC will ask its next cohort of students to provide their own bedding and possibly their own uniforms.

The Admission Process

LGC students are recruited at the provincial level with the help of probation officers from the Ministry of Culture and Social Services. LGC also works with NGOs around the country to locate potential students, as many such organizations in Kenya support secondary education for girls in need. LGC sends out letters each year asking the recipients to identify potential candidates and send completed applications to the center. Three students are selected from each of the eight provinces (guaranteeing an ethnically diverse student population) for a total of 24 new students each year.

Initially, the center accepted girls who left school after completing their primary education, but now it accepts only those students who have completed secondary school. Because secondary school graduates tend to be older, they will have more opportunities for employment at the middle-management level. Their level of education also seems to help them grasp the course material.

The selection criteria for students are as follows: Girls must be unmarried and between the ages of 18 and 25 years. They must be from a disadvantaged family background (as determined by the area probation officer). They must have received at least a D+ in the math and English components of the national exams (the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education) and at least a C- over an average of seven

subjects. These are the minimum academic standards for post-secondary education set by the Kenyan government. Students with an overall average of C+ or above are eligible for a broader range of educational opportunities, including college and university programs, and as such are usually advised to explore those options first.

In the early years of its existence, LGC staff interviewed potential students in each of the provinces, but this was expensive. Now, potential students are required to come to the center for interviews and are reimbursed for their transportation. This provides students and their guardians with an opportunity to see the facility and get a first-hand understanding of the program. The interviews are thorough—each girl must meet with the principal, the recruiting officer, and at least one instructor. Parents are not required to accompany their daughters for the interview, but if a girl is accepted, her parents or guardian must sign a letter of acceptance.

Program Management and Staffing

LGC has five senior staff, four other instructors, and 13 field staff. Policy is decided by a board of trustees chaired by Manu Chandaria, a prominent Kenyan businessman who takes an active interest in the school. Other board members include Eddah Gachukia, the founder of the Forum for African Women Educationalists and a former Population Council trustee, Bob Mein, LGC's founder; and Lucy Gitonga. The day-to-day operations are the responsibility of the center's manager.

Lucy Gitonga, the current principal and manager, came to LGC initially as a volunteer member of the NORAD evaluation team in 1990. She has also taught at the center. After NORAD left Kenya, her role at LGC expanded and she became principal in 1996. She is assisted by Ruth Kironji, who has taught at LGC for over eight years. Kironji was promoted to the position of vice-principal after pursuing studies at the Kenya Technical Training College. Her main responsibilities are student recruitment, curriculum development, teaching, administration, and seeking out appropriate attachments (apprenticeships) for students.

Life at LGC

Training at LGC is intended to provide an experiential and practical foundation in all areas of the curriculum. About 40 percent of the instruction takes place in a classroom setting. The remainder is undertaken in workshops for the garment-making students and on the farm for the agricultural students.

Typical schedule of a day at the center

Time	Activity
6:00 a.m.	Wake up and morning tea
6:30-7:30 a.m.	Morning duties: ^a Girls are divided into four groups, which rotate every two weeks. Group 1 cleans the dormitories and classrooms and serves meals. Group 2 cleans the compounds and machinery. Group 3 milks and feeds the farm animals. Group 4 is responsible for <i>shamba</i> (farming) work.
7:30-8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.	Classes
4:00-5:00 p.m.	Evening duties/sports

^aOn Saturdays, all of the girls participate in the income-generating aspects (weeding the commercially grown flowers, pruning beans for sale) of the farm from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Sundays are free days for the students.

The girls live in dormitories at the school and share chores to maintain the center. They receive a small amount of spending money per term-KSh200 (\$3). There have been discussions at LGC about allowing girls to earn a larger allowance. Occasionally some of the more senior students get permission to do seasonal work at local farms for cash.

LGC closes for vacation over Christmas, Easter, and during most of August, unless girls are already participating in the work attachment program. Most girls go home over the holidays; however, if they want to remain at the center to gain work experience, LGC is supportive. Staff members believe working fosters a sense of responsibility and independence, qualities LGC tries to encourage in its students.



The Vocational Skills-Training Program

Agricultural Training

The agricultural training program teaches a wide variety of skills so that students are qualified for mid-level management positions in agriculture. The program includes instruction in animal husbandry, crop management, agricultural engineering, farm management, home economics, and technical drawing (for the purpose of building farm structures).

Experiential learning is emphasized, and currently students can gain practical experience in:

- Beekeeping (honey is produced and sold to support the center);
- Aquaculture (three fishponds produce tilapia and catfish; girls learn pond management and maintenance as well as harvesting);
- Orchard work (mangoes, avocados, passion fruit, pawpaws, apples, plums, oranges, and tree tomatoes are grown in the orchard);
- Raising poultry (day-old chicks are raised for eggs for the school kitchen);
- Raising dairy cattle (dairy cows are reared, and girls learn the exacting standards of the dairy sector; the milk produced is used at the center; five new “in-calf” heifers donated by the British High Commission bring LGC’s herd up to 10 cows);

- Breeding rabbits (rabbits are bred and raised at the center and sold commercially);
- Raising goats (goats are bred for meat);
- Tree nursery work (LGC propagates both indigenous and exotic trees, including a rare species of the silver birch); and
- Floriculture (growing flowers for export is both a skills-development area and a source of significant income for the center).

Training in Garment Making

The garment-making component prepares young women to get jobs above and beyond the level of machine operator in the textile industry or to become resourceful entrepreneurs. Topics covered in the garment-making course include:

- Pattern drafting and grading (taking measurements to produce patterns and producing additional sizes from the original);
- Art and design;
- Design and sketching;
- Production techniques;
- Garment cutting;
- Material science (the process of manufacturing fibers, yarns, and fabrics as well as the different properties of a particular fabric); and
- Garment making.

Recently, students have attended fashion shows such as the annual international Smirnoff Fashion Awards as a way of expanding their awareness of the possibilities for work in their field.



Despite the competitive job market, most LGC graduates manage to find employment as machine operators (initially), supervisors, quality controllers, designers, and pattern cutters in textile factories. Others start their own businesses, and many have been successful in creating niches within the field. Employers not only prefer LGC graduates over other applicants but often seek them out, asking the center to provide referrals. LGC instructor Steven Njoroge believes one reason companies want to hire LGC graduates is because “discipline is very high at the center, and the girls come out with a high sense of responsibility and a positive approach to work.”

Upon completing their course of study, all students sit for the Craft III Certificate from the Kenya National Examination Council. (Attaining a Craft III Certificate is a higher achievement than passing the government trade tests; it is ranked just

Experience of Mercy, a garment-making student

Mercy is 22 years old and in her final year of the garment-making program. She lives in Nairobi with her mother. Mercy’s father died before she completed primary school, and, although her uncle has helped them, the family has found it difficult to make ends meet.

Mercy learned about the center from a family friend who brought her the application forms. Her mother advised her to study garment making so that she might become self-employed, although Mercy initially preferred another course of study.

Mercy enjoys the extracurricular activities

at LGC and, in particular, the leadership training she attended with Outward Bound. “That experience,” she says, “taught me to rise above my level. I never thought I could do some things, but I realized they were all possible. We women are taken to be weak, but in the course we had male participants as well, and I could do what they could.”

She has found the entrepreneurial training useful. Immediately after her exams, she plans to obtain a job in a garment factory, save up enough money to buy her own sewing machine, and start her own business.

below a graduate diploma.) The girls do very well in these exams and, to date, there has not been a failure.

Currently the only diplomas offered in agriculture are those awarded by private universities. In an attempt to change this, the center was asked by the Ministry of Education to develop a sample general agriculture diploma syllabus. A draft has been submitted to the ministry for review. LGC has since obtained the required number of computers to offer diploma courses as soon as the syllabus is approved.

Life and Leadership Skills Training

LGC believes that it is necessary to offer girls, particularly those from poorer backgrounds, more than just skills training. Social and professional activities are designed to build girls' self-confidence, initiative, and interpersonal and communication skills.

All LGC students participate in Outward Bound, the international outdoor training program that specializes in fostering self-reliance and intuition in its students. Outward Bound training demands determination and self-discipline. Courses last from 10 to 17 days and girls must sleep outside, learn to ration their food, and construct their own shelters. Goals of the training are to learn to work together, share resources equitably and solve problems. Through this process they are able to identify their own strengths and weaknesses. According to Gitonga, LGC girls have received exemplary reports from Outward Bound instructors.

In addition to learning about group dynamics, all students must hold leadership positions to build their self-confidence and train them to be responsible leaders. Students also get opportunities to address the public and improve their presentation skills. For example, many have made presentations to various rotary clubs on behalf of the center, while others have participated in community projects such as the Kenya Freedom from Hunger Walk. Currently, LGC students are working at Stars for Jesus, a home for rehabilitated street boys that provides training and counseling on a voluntary basis with extremely promising results. On a fairly regular basis, groups of students are entrusted to plan and carry out small projects on the LGC grounds including the farm.

Learning Good Business Practices

In Kenya, formal work opportunities are often limited, even for skilled, trained workers. LGC, therefore, wants its students to have fundamental business knowledge so that they have the skills they need to become entrepreneurs, if necessary. At the end of their training, all students prepare business plans as part of their final examinations. Specific topics covered include:

- Business and self-employment (definition and the role in the economy);
- Business ideas, enterprise opportunities, and selecting a suitable market;
- Enterprise awareness (legal aspects, government strategies, tendering, sources of financing);
- Characteristics of successful entrepreneurs, traits of innovative and creative people, motivation;
- Business management, finance, record keeping, accounts, public relations and marketing;
- Business competence, coping with change, competition, time management; and
- Business plans.

On-the-Job Experience

In addition to the in-house training, all LGC students benefit from a three-month job attachment, a period of intensive practical training they receive by working on a farm or at a garment-making factory. The center follows the students' progress closely, visits the workplace, and discusses each girl's progress with her immediate supervisors. During their attachments, students receive a small living and transportation allowance as well as a small rent allowance of about KSh10,000 (approximately \$143).

Most students find the attachments extremely helpful. Mercy (whose experience was described on page 30) was sent to Mombasa for her attachment and did so well that the factory proprietor offered her a full-time job. She declined the immediate offer because she wanted to complete her course of training. The experience was particularly significant



for her because, for the first time in her life, she lived fully independently-she found her own accommodations, bought and cooked her own food, and learned to budget her allowance.

A number of LGC's graduates are employed at local rose farms and have been able to convince their managers to accept LGC students on attachment. As a result, each year current students have a chance to work side by side with alumni.

Entering the Job Market

Some LGC graduates choose to return to their home areas upon graduation. Graduates of the agriculture program often find jobs in the floriculture industry. A recent assessment of the 21 most recent graduates of the agriculture course revealed that 12 were managing farms or supervising large sections within farms, two were teaching, two were running their own income-generating poultry projects, and one had recently lost her job. No information was available on the remaining four.

Flowers are the fastest-growing agricultural export in Kenya, and LGC is located in the heart of the flower-growing area. Not surprisingly, a majority of LGC's agricultural graduates (about 40 percent) find

work in this business. On most of the farms, new employees begin working as casual labor at a wage of KSh100 (about \$1) per day and then work their way up. Graduates who have found this sort of work rarely leave because it is possible to build a good reputation and negotiate for better jobs by moving from one farm to another. Promotions come regularly, and some employers offer other benefits, including housing, depending on the size of the farm and the length of time it has been in operation. At the management level, the wage ceiling is hard to penetrate. Assistant production managers earn about KSh15,000 (\$214) per month, but workers who do not have degrees must have a lot of experience in order to be considered for positions at this level. A few LGC graduates are employed in senior-level management positions that can pay as much as KSh20,000 (\$286) per month. The majority, however, work as greenhouse managers or quality-control managers with a starting salary of around KSh7,000 (\$100) per month, which increases slowly to a maximum of KSh10,000 (\$143) per month, in some cases with benefits included.

Of the 20 graduates of the garment-making program who were followed up, seven were teaching in schools and polytechnics, three were running their own businesses, one was employed in a hotel boutique, one was working in a family hardware business, one was acquiring further training in clothing technology at Kenya Polytechnic, three were unemployed, and four did not respond.



LGC graduates encounter the usual challenges involved in finding jobs, but their training gives them an edge. Those who graduate from the garment-making course have faced a tight job market as the textile industry in Kenya declined during the late 1990s. In response, the center encourages garment-making graduates to become self-employed. Increasingly, LGC invites representatives from local micro-finance programs to talk with students about their services and the potential business opportunities available in the informal sector. Students rarely have sufficient capital to start an enterprise of their own, so acquiring knowledge about loan availability is useful for them. Some students pursue this route; others end up working in a field unrelated to their years of training.

Agriculture and garment-making graduates are also eligible for teaching posts with starting salaries of around KSh3,000 (\$43) per month, the amount varying greatly by location (urban jobs pay more than rural ones) and the type of courses they will teach. Today, much of the technical instruction available in Kenya is provided at rural polytechnics that employ teachers on a contract or part-time basis, which makes comparisons of opportunities in terms of remuneration and type of work difficult. Positions in secondary schools are more secure and pay better. A few graduates have found work with skills-training programs offered by a variety of nongovernmental or community-based organizations with salaries

based more on what the organization is able to pay than on the services being rendered.

Gitonga would like to invite LGC graduates who are between jobs to return to the center whenever there is bed space available. In this way, graduates could work on the farm, earn some money, and be available to take new positions locally whenever they become vacant. Currently, however, she often cannot reach distant graduates before local jobs are filled.

LGC is not able to keep up with all of its graduates, but Gitonga notes that "more and more of them write every year," providing LGC with updates on what they are doing.

Challenges

One challenge that the center faces is keeping all of its students in the program for the full two years. Pregnancy, marriage, family problems, lack of interest, or occasionally an opportunity to study elsewhere are all reasons why some LGC students have left the center before completing their full course of study. Among the 28 who entered in 1998, five left. Of the 30 girls who joined the program in 2000, only one has dropped out so far. LGC makes every effort to encourage the few students who do become pregnant to remain in the training program for as long as possible. LGC accommodates these students' special needs by shifting the time of exams and required attachment periods. LGC also

Where are they now? LGC graduates in the work force

Josephine Waithanji, a 1990 graduate, has become a pharmacist's assistant and is now working in downtown Nairobi.

Sporamary has had so many orders for her dressmaking boutique in the Eastleigh section of Nairobi that she is about to open a second workshop.

Miriam Atieno, who was sponsored for further studies in Denmark, is now supporting her extended family through her job as a clerk in a well-established dairy concern.

Lily Maluki, who graduated as the top student in 1988, was offered a job based on her speech at the LGC graduation ceremony. She became the manager of a large tea estate and has attended conferences abroad as a

representative of Kenyan tea growers. Now she is the manager of a floriculture concern that has been started by the same group of companies.

Purity Njeru is now managing a 153-acre, multi-crop farm with a large labor force not far from her home area of Embu.

Nareku Jonathan has been promoted at Kilifi Plantations. She reports that she has been able to support one of her sisters on a garment-making course and has also paid to have iron roofing put on her mother's home.

Beatrice Njenga, who graduated in 1997, was sponsored for further training by a local development agency and now manages the agricultural projects of this organization.

encourages the young women to return and complete the program once their children are born.

There are no medical services onsite. Girls are taken to see a doctor in Kiambu or are sent to the local facility of the Catholic Medical Missionaries. The center usually picks up the cost. Reproductive health topics are covered informally as part of the life skills training. In addition, LGC offers regular presentations from groups like Marie Stopes and the Ministry of Health.

Looking Ahead: The Future

Long-term financial stability and sustainability are key areas of concern for LGC's board of trustees. Currently, the majority of the budget is still financed externally, but plans are in place for LGC to earn more income and, one day, perhaps become self-sufficient. Flower growing is one important source of income. As a by-product of its training program, LGC grows tuberoses for export. In 2000, LGC earned KSh675,000 (\$9,643) on the sale of tuberoses. Expenses, however, were KSh578,000 (\$8,257), yielding only a small profit for the school. A new water pump is now in place, and yields are increasing. LGC's kitchen garden supplies increasing amounts of food to the school. Future plans include production of cattle feed. LGC also has contracts with the East Africa Seed Company to grow French bean for seed.

Renting the educational facilities for short-term events is another way to raise income. The forest area is rented for recreational and environmental activities, including outdoor leadership programs. The hostels are rented when students are away, and the income is reinvested to refurbish the facilities. One of Gitonga's goals is to build an endowment fund that will help support the training programs in the future.

The center has been able to increase the number of students it enrolls. A new dormitory, recently opened by Kenya's minister for education, allows for a 50 percent increase in enrollment with a negligible increase in operating expenses, thereby reducing per capita costs. This facility can be used for short-term training courses that will run in tandem with the center's regular program. Shorter training courses will teach skills such as literacy, home-based care for AIDS patients, beekeeping, and entrepreneurship.

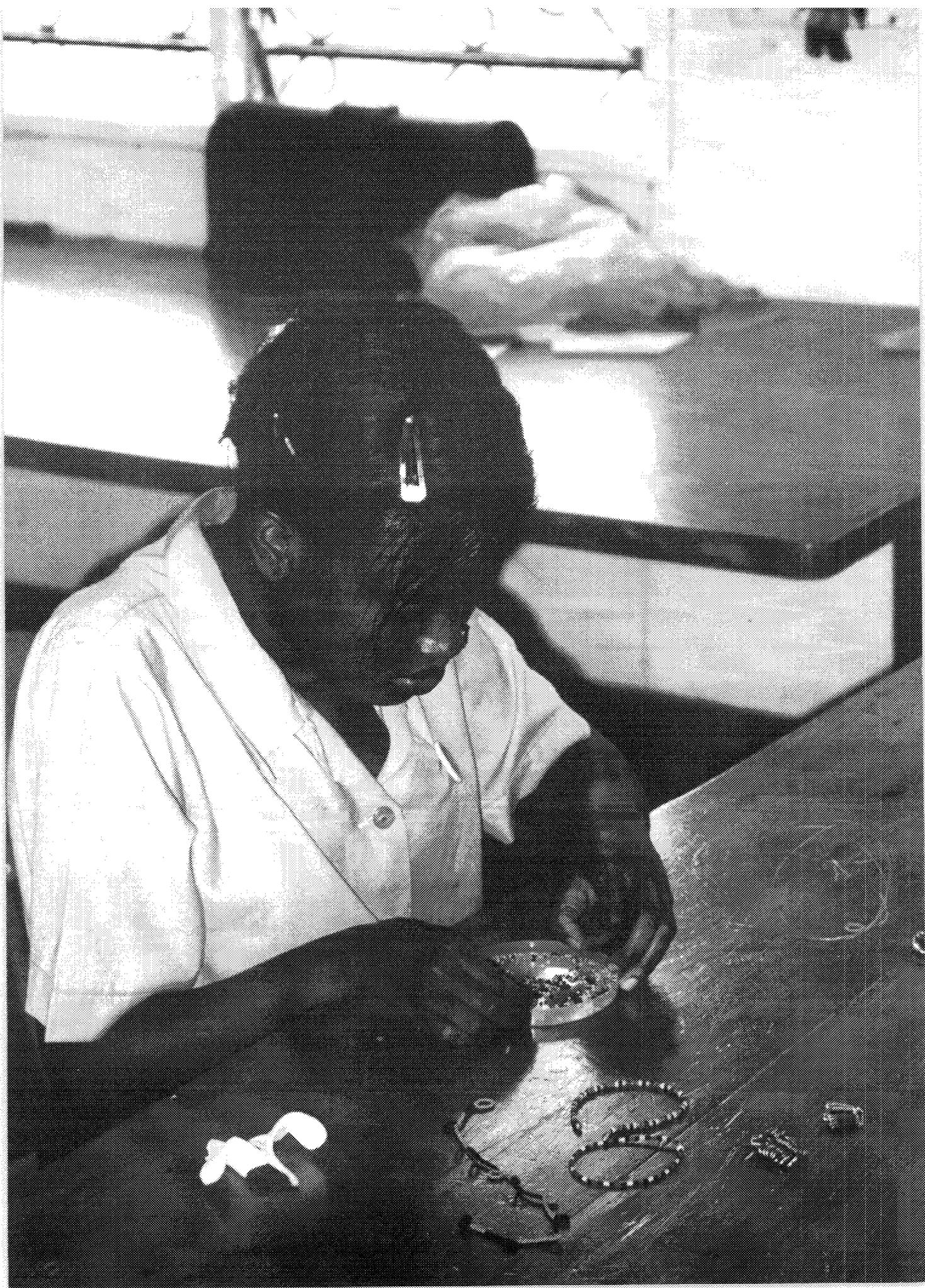
Conclusion

Since its inception, more than 300 young women have obtained an education at LGC. Many have been successful finding employment based on the skills they have gained, and a considerable number have acquired well-paying management-level jobs in Kenya's flower-export industry. Moreover, they have been exposed to a wide variety of activities that develop self-esteem and sound leadership skills. As Lucy Gitonga explains:

The center continues toward greater self-reliance, which is rewarding and has encouraged us to fine-tune our own business skills without compromising the quality of our most important job—that of training marginalized young women to be independent young women. It is important that we continually fix our eyes on our long-term goals—that we train and that we can train without constantly having to appeal for financial help.

The long-term value of the LGC opportunity to young women is expressed succinctly in the December 2000 issue of the LGC newsletter.

This [2000] has been a year when we have, with very little notice, suffered extreme drought and starvation, power and water rationing, further downturns in the economy, and AIDS was finally declared a national disaster. It has been a year marked by increasingly vocal calls to cancel Third World debt. Kenya can no longer afford to educate large tracts of her population. Poverty and illiteracy are becoming increasingly female here. Despite all this, we can see that young women can be effective vehicles for development and change . . . We hear more about our students setting up and maintaining small businesses despite the economic problems. Many are delaying marriage and childbirth and making responsible choices in regard to their reproductive health. Others have created awareness and established lobbying and self-help groups within their communities against female genital mutilation, early marriage, and other issues that impact negatively on the lives of women around the country . . .



Shanzu Transitional Workshop for Disabled Girls: A Special Project of the Kenya Girl Guides Association

*Blessed is the day I was born, I thank the
almighty God that I was born.
Opportunity but not sympathy is what we desire.
Mum, dad, relatives and friends, please, please
accept me the way I am.
Opportunity but not sympathy is what we desire.
Your child I am a girl too. Yes a girl I am, maybe
the opposite to your wishes.
Opportunity but not sympathy is what we desire.
God gives according to his wishes. Girls and boys
are born human beings.
Opportunity but not sympathy is what we desire.
The faster you accept me the better. Love me,
accept me, and give me the best that any other
child deserves. I'll appreciate and love you.
Opportunity but not sympathy is what we desire.
Thank you, Kenya Girl Guides Association. You
have indeed demonstrated to us that you
keep and obey the guide's law and promise. Yes I
remember particularly the one that says
a guide's duty is to be useful and to help other
people at all times.
We can also make it with your help.*

*-The Shanzu Poem
(translated from Kiswahili)*

Established near Mombasa in 1992, the Shanzu Transitional Workshop equips young, disabled women with the skills to lead productive and independent lives within their communities. A special project of the Kenya Girl Guides Association (KGGA), this residential program provides training in vocational skills and production processes. Participants learn tailoring, leatherwork and jewelry making. They are also taught techniques of basic agriculture, and each participant is allocated a small plot of land to use as a kitchen garden. While in the program, disabled girls become self-sufficient by learning ways to earn a living and doing their own shopping, cooking, cleaning, and washing. They are

paid a small, monthly allowance and earn a share of the profit when their work is sold, providing them with experience in how to manage money and budget for their needs.

Young, Female, and Disabled

Based on 1989 census estimates, there are 302,058 disabled people in Kenya out of a total population of 21.4 million (Republic of Kenya 1997).⁸ Of these, 135,966 are female, with 56,708 falling within the 15-24-year age bracket.

Without supportive efforts, girls with disabilities are often isolated, lack family support, are vulnerable, and, with few opportunities to work, are likely to become the poorest of the poor. Kenyan cultural beliefs and practices often foster social stigma and isolation for disabled girls. Disability is thought to be a bad omen or a form of punishment for evils previously committed. As a result, children and adults with disabilities are often hidden from sight, and disabled women have difficulty finding husbands or partners. Some families of disabled children place them in institutions where they are subsequently abandoned. Many disabled individuals-girls in particular-do not even have a minimum level of schooling. Although the literacy rate is 75 percent for the general population, it is only 54 percent for people with disabilities (Republic of Kenya 1997).

In the health arena as well, disabled women face discrimination. The government offers little in the way of rehabilitative care, and private care is also scarce-insurance companies classify women with disabilities as a high-risk group, and as such they are effectively denied personal insurance coverage or are charged excessively high premiums.

To date, efforts by the government and NGOs to address the special needs of disabled people in Kenya have been limited in both scope and effectiveness. To cope with the hundreds of

⁸Information on disabled people was collected during the 1989 census but never fully analyzed. For that reason, questions on disability were not included in the latest (1999) Kenyan census.

thousands of disabled, the government of Kenya, under the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of the Ministry of Culture and Social Services, operates 12 rural rehabilitation centers and one urban industrial rehabilitation center that offer training to the physically disabled. Similarly, NGOs operate 19 mostly coeducational training centers. Three offer programs specifically for visually or hearing-impaired girls and two provide services to people with mental disabilities. The Shanzu Transitional Workshop for Disabled Girls in Mombasa is the only vocational training center for physically disabled or handicapped girls.

How Shanzu Works

Girls are recruited for the Shanzu program from all over the country through the Department of Social Services and the Ministry of Education. Initially Shanzu staff interviewed candidates in their home areas, but this process proved to be too costly. Potential students are now invited to come to Mombasa to interview and are reimbursed for transportation costs. A parent or guardian must accompany them so that their families are fully aware

of the rules, regulations, and living conditions at Shanzu.

To apply, girls must be either physically disabled or hearing-impaired, come from a needy family, have schooling up to Standard 7 or 8, and be able to function independently. They also must demonstrate an ability to sew. The primary education requirement is designed to encourage parents to keep their disabled daughters in school through the primary grades. Though broadly labeled for disabled girls, the workshop lacks the capacity to enroll girls with certain conditions. The school is currently unable to accept girls that require constant care or those in need of psychiatric treatment.

Currently, Shanzu can accommodate up to 24 girls at any given time. Each year the program admits an average of seven new girls as seven other girls graduate. Enrollment is limited due to the short supply of dormitory space and instructors; four or five applicants are usually turned down each year.

At first, Shanzu's training was entirely cost-free. Some girls, however, would join and then leave after only a few weeks. In 1999, after seven years of operation, the organization began to charge a one-time, non-refundable admission fee (KSh 770,

A brief history of Shanzu Transitional Workshop

Damu Shah and Naomi Zani, both teachers, have worked together for over 25 years on behalf of young women in Kenya. Through their work with the Kenya Girl Guides Association (a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts), they initially focused on bringing together the different communities of Girl Guides—those of African, Asian, and European descent. Their emphasis shifted in the late 1970s to expanding educational opportunities for disabled girls. To garner public support and raise awareness they organized rallies, talks, and other events that demonstrated the capabilities of disabled girls. As a result of their efforts, the Port Reitz primary school (a mixed school for the physically disabled) in Mombasa expanded its curriculum to include vocational classes for disabled girls. It soon became apparent, however, that even when these girls completed primary school, they had few opportunities to continue their education

because of the expense and the very limited number of secondary schools in Kenya that can accommodate disabled students.

To fill this gap, Shah and Zani decided to start a special workshop for disabled girls. Their first workshop (begun in 1978) operated at the Port Reitz school, but proved somewhat cumbersome to finance and incorporate into the existing curriculum. Thus, they started working toward setting up a separate workshop. The Kenyan government donated three and a half acres of land in the Shanzu section of Mombasa to the Girls Guides Association in 1983, and granted the title deed in 1985. Donations of labor, funds, and materials came from various sources including Kenya's Ministry of Culture and Social Services, the World Scouts Bureau, and the local Lion's Club. Fundraising and construction took six years to complete, and in 1992 the workshop was ready to open.

approximately \$11) to help ensure that only serious candidates joined the program. In 2001 the fee structure was changed to a per-term fee because Shanzu realized that it was difficult for parents to raise the full amount at one time. Shanzu charges KSh700 (\$10) per term. With three terms per year the annual fee is KSh2,100 (\$30). Unfortunately, this arrangement has not worked either and now the management of Shanzu is considering reverting back to a one-time admission fee. In cases where girls are too poor to pay, the school works with the KGGA to find sponsors instead of subsidizing such students itself.

Girls who enter the program are required to bring a ruler, a hardcover notebook, a tape measure, a thimble, and a tracer to make patterns. Because girls do their own cooking, they must also have their own cooking and eating utensils and a kerosene cooking stove (formerly these items were provided by the program). After a girl has been at Shanzu for one month, she receives KSh500 (\$7) in pocket money each month. However, given financial constraints, Shanzu may have to discontinue this monthly stipend.

Girls train at Shanzu for a minimum of two years, but some have stayed as long as three or four years either to perfect their skills or because outside employment opportunities are lacking. In some cases girls are simply reluctant to leave, but they are encouraged to do so through a supportive process.

Special Needs of Disabled Girls

Engaging disabled, often traumatized, young women in a self-reliant community is a significant challenge. Zani observes that disabled girls are often particularly sensitive, and one has to be both strict and friendly with them. She attributes their special needs to the neglect they experience at home, as they are often considered last when family resources are shared. Shanzu teaches its students that their physical limitations do not make them less intelligent, and that they can be productive adults. Instilling this in students-and countering years of being taught the opposite-requires ongoing positive support. Shanzu's approach is to build girls' confidence and help them set personal goals and work toward realizing their potential. Shanzu teaches students that they may be disabled, but they are not unable. This message is



reinforced by the girls themselves. The residential setting fosters strong bonds among the girls. Not only do deep friendships grow, but as a group the girls come together, share their thoughts and ideas, and develop a common voice.

Creating a cohesive student body, nevertheless, requires special effort. Because some of Shanzu's participants are deaf and mute, staff and students learn sign language. All students and teachers participate in a yearly, one-week training offered by the Kenya Society for the Deaf. Although the one-week training is too little time to become fluent in sign language, staff and students practice in their daily interactions, and communication with deaf-mute students improves each day.

Students' relationships with men and their prospects for marriage are sensitive subjects. The girls often discuss their prospects for marriage with their instructor, Janet Taura. Several students say that they don't ever expect to marry because, "No one wants a physically handicapped girl. How would I keep house and care for children?" Zani says that some physically disabled women seek to get pregnant outside of marriage because they see doing so as the only way they can become mothers.

The Shanzu Program

During their stay at Shanzu, girls learn a mix of vocational skills including garment making, jewelry making, leatherwork, knitting, and basic business management skills. They also learn basic agriculture techniques, and each girl is allocated a small plot of

land for her own kitchen garden. This training is intended to provide girls with a diverse and broad set of skills.

All students at Shanzu are trained for a period of two years in dressmaking in readiness for the government's Grade 3 Examination. The certificate earned by passing this exam, similar to other government-sanctioned vocational certificates, is recognized by potential employers and is used by the Labour Department to determine salary scales for various classes of employees. Shanzu students have a high success rate in passing this exam.

The trainees go through a set syllabus in the first year during which they learn about the various parts of a machine and their functions; different types of stitches and dressmaking tools; and how to operate a sewing machine, take measurements, and make patterns. Students attend skills-training workshops Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. until noon, when

and basic accounting, and students participate in seminars organized by local business organizations.

Skills instructor Taura conducts classes in both English and sign language. While she has learned a great deal of sign language over the years, she still relies on students who are more proficient to assist her. Occasionally Shanzu is able to get a person trained in sign language from a nearby craft workshop (also for disabled persons) to teach classes.

Students acquire practical sales experience by taking turns selling their wares at local beach hotels, as well as in the shop on the Shanzu premises. For example, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, two girls take public transportation to the nearby Serena, Intercontinental, and Whitesands Hotels where they sell their products. They distribute pamphlets describing the Shanzu project, and hotel guests often visit the Shanzu workshop later to shop. Each item is labeled with the name of the student who made

National trade test syllabus for dressmaking

Candidates will be required to show by practical demonstration and in oral examination that they have a sound knowledge of all or any of the following:

Grade 3 (lowest level):

1. Use of the standard sewing machine; its care and adjustment, needles and threads.
2. Taking of measurements with tape measure and their recording in a legible manner understandable to a cutter.
3. Accurate making up of dresses of simple style in cottons and linens.
4. Basic types of cottons and linens used in the dressmaking trade.
5. Hand felling and pressing of simple garments; the amount of heat to be used with various materials.
6. Buttonhole making by hand.
7. Making standard types of pockets and sleeves.
8. Economy in the use of materials.

they break for lunch. They then continue their training from 2:00 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. During the second year of training, the schedule is more flexible and is devoted to preparing students for the end-of-year exam, providing them with practical experience, and helping slower students catch up with the others. Students also learn production processes and gain business and marketing experience through Shanzu's shop, which sells student-made items to benefit them and the workshop. Students produce items such as Bermuda shorts, caps, bags, dresses, leather pouches, pants, jackets, key rings, earrings, and necklaces, which sell well in the local tourist market. Business experts give talks to the students on sales techniques

it. When an item is sold, a portion of the profit is given to its maker.

Apart from vocational skills training, students also benefit from the regular Girl Guide training program. They are eligible to join the guides at the cadet level, and at their weekly meetings they learn skills such as camping, physical fitness, first aid, health, hygiene, leadership, and character building. Zani, the workshop administrator, is a national Girl Guide trainer and directs the Shanzu troupe. Recently HIV/AIDS awareness training has been introduced as part of a national HIV/AIDS peer education program in which KGGGA is involved. Students participate in activities organized for other

groups of Girl Guides that take place at Shanzu, such as camping and sporting events. The Lion's Club also organizes an annual sports day for the physically disabled in which Shanzu students participate. Activities sponsored by other NGOs that are open to Shanzu students include environmental awareness days and public beach clean-up exercises.

Shanzu students are taught to do their own grocery shopping, cooking, cleaning, and washing. Through doing these activities, they learn to budget and manage resources and money. Each student is given a monthly ration of beans, rice, and flour. These staples are supplemented with produce from students' gardens, in which students grow local fruits and vegetables such as pawpaws, green maize, and green vegetables. While most of the produce is consumed by students, any surplus is sold. Students are also responsible for overall maintenance of the workshop premises.

District agricultural officers from the government visit the workshop twice a month to offer guidance to students and teach them farming and food processing skills. Recently students were taught how to make jam, fresh fruit juices, and cakes, as well as how to start a tree nursery. In 1997 Shanzu students entered their rocky terrain bottle irrigation project—a system of using inverted bottles with pervious bungs⁹ in the fields during the dry seasons—in a Food and Agriculture Organization competition and won the award for the most innovative small-scale agricultural project, making Kenya the first African country to win this award.

Students have weekends and evenings free. They usually play indoor games, watch TV, or visit with their parents, who are encouraged to come as often as possible (although few actually do). Until recently, students went home only once a year, during the Christmas vacation. This policy had been instituted because on occasion girls would go home for frequent holidays, and, because they lacked bus fare, not return to the program. Shanzu revised this policy because it realized that one of the benefits of going home more than once a year is that students can "test out" home life and get a sense of what a permanent move will be like. The return fare is still



a problem among trainees who rely on their parents for transportation money. However, those who have joined the production unit earn their own money and as such are able to visit home more frequently.

Shanzu students are generally healthy and do not require ongoing specialized medical care. When they do require treatment for common ailments such as malaria, flu, or stomach problems, a local doctor treats them for free (although students must pay for their own medicine).

After they complete their second year, some students are ready to leave Shanzu. Others stay on to work in the production unit until they are able to find a job or start their own business. Staying more than two years is not encouraged, but students are nonetheless permitted to stay until they can make the transition to an independent life. It is for this reason that Shanzu has now set up a regular production unit at the workshop. Currently nine graduates are employed there as sewers; they make primarily Girl Guide uniforms and other garments popular among tourists. They are paid on a piece-rate basis and can earn up to KSh200 (\$3) per day. Shanzu will soon begin charging a modest rent to graduates who continue to reside in the compound.

At the end of their training, all graduates are given a sewing machine. Most of the machines are

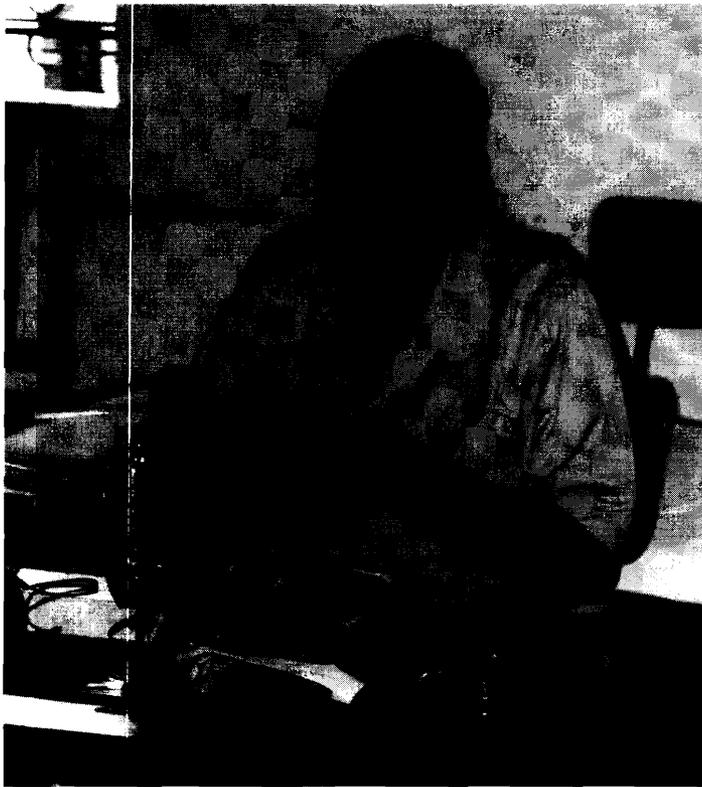
⁹A pervious bung is something that is inserted/stuffed in the mouth of a bottle with the intention of slowing down the trickle or flow of the water. The bung is made of cotton wool, soil, or any other porous material.

Pricilla's experience

Pricilla is 22 years old and comes from Kirinyaga District in Central Province. She suffers from lower limb polio. She completed her primary education in 1992 and went to high school in her home area, but she had to drop out before finishing because her parents could not afford to pay her school fees. Someone from the Bombolulu Craft Workshop (a coeducational facility for the disabled also located in Mombasa) told her about Shanzu, and she joined in October 1995. After her first year of training she passed the government trade test in garment making. Because she did not have the resources to start her own business, Pricilla worked for several years at

Shanzu as an apprentice, assisting the instructor in the production unit. Last year she got a job working as a supervisor in a garment factory on the outskirts of Mombasa.

Thinking back to her first few months at Shanzu, Pricilla recollects how much she missed her family and especially her daughter who remained behind with her parents. She often thought of leaving, but she persevered. Now she is happy that she decided to stay. She feels that she has learned many things. "I never thought I could stitch because of my weakness. But when I joined Shanzu, I learned to cope with life." Pricilla regularly sends home a portion of her earnings to support her family.



donated—for instance, in 1998 the International Women's Organization of Belgium sent Shanzu 11 machines. (Unfortunately, the machines were stuck in transit in Uganda for almost a year!)

Program Management and Staffing

One of the major management challenges Shanzu faces is geographic isolation. The workshop is located

about 20 kilometers from central Mombasa, and all supplies must be brought to the school. Currently the only means of transportation is Shah's personal car. Moreover, Shanzu has no telephone; all contact with the outside is via Shah's home phone, which is 18 kilometers away.

Although Shanzu is a project of the KGGA, it does not receive financial support from the organization and must conduct its own fundraising. KGGA provides moral support, however, and is proud to show off the workshop by sending frequent visitors. Shanzu's management committee includes KGGA staff from both national headquarters and the Coast Province, along with representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Social Services Department, the Association for the Physically Disabled of Kenya, and local service organizations.

Currently Shanzu has four paid staff members, including a full-time instructor, a watchman, a groundskeeper, and a manager of the garment and craft production unit. The manager, a young woman, was recently hired to reduce the workload on existing staff. She is disabled and has strong secretarial, jewelry-making, and computer skills. Zani works as a volunteer on a full-time basis at Shanzu, and receives a small monthly stipend for food, transportation, and accommodation. Shah devotes much of her energy to fundraising and finding support for the program.

Shanzu has found that supplementing its staff with volunteers has its ups and downs. One volunteer

from Voluntary Service Overseas, who has good technical skills, was helpful in keeping the accounts, but in another case, there was conflict over how the program should be managed. One volunteer stayed several years as an instructor and was a valuable asset. A young man living in Mombasa used to help with the accounts on a part-time basis; however, when he

sports events where they speak, sing, and present their work.

Unfortunately, Shanzu has been less successful in encouraging employers to give jobs to their girls. While they rarely come out and say so, employers, in fact, discriminate against the disabled.

Profile of Shanzu's skills instructor

Janet Taura has been the skills instructor at Shanzu since 1992. She received her training at Tototo Home Industries' vocational training center in Mombasa. Her training and early employment (also at Tototo) prepared her to be a tailoring instructor, and she has picked up other skills at Shanzu including jewelry making, leatherwork, and sign language. Her responsibilities include teaching, running the production unit, and overseeing the sale of Shanzu products.

As Taura is not disabled, one of her earliest challenges was learning how to work with girls who are physically challenged. She draws

upon the experience of her disabled sister. "Prior to joining Shanzu," Taura recalls, "I thought my sister was the only one suffering from a disability. Now I realize that there are many other girls with similar situations. Now I feel free with the girls; I take them as my sisters." The girls frequently come to her for advice.

Taura lives on the grounds of the school with her young daughter. She likes this arrangement because it is pleasant, safe, and helps her to save money. She hopes the workshop will soon be able to hire a second teacher to assist her.

left, Shah and Zani had to take an accounting course to fill the void. Currently Shanzu depends on a Girl Guide leader who visits Nairobi each month to sell the school's products at shops popular with tourists and expatriates. Local Girl Guides occasionally come to Shanzu to help clean, weed, and cut the grass. While volunteers can ease the workload, they cannot fulfill the workshop's continuing needs for additional permanent staff, in particular a designer with expertise in crafts/garment production, a second instructor, and a marketing officer.

Advocating on Behalf of Disabled Girls

Because Shanzu emerged from efforts by Shah and Zani to raise awareness about the needs and potential abilities of disabled girls, a primary goal continues to be making parents and communities aware of the difficult situations many of these girls find themselves in, and helping them realize that disabled girls can be independent—they only need the opportunity to be so. Toward this end, Shanzu girls participate in various public events such as the annual Agricultural Society of Kenya shows, trade exhibitions, and youth

Support for the Program

The cost per student of the Shanzu program is approximately KSh30,000 (\$429) per year. Thus, the average cost for the full training period (2.5 years on average) is approximately KSh75,000 (\$1,071) per student. Most of Shanzu's support comes from local donors and individual contributions. On occasion this funding has been complemented by contributions from international aid agencies. The International Labour Organization initially contributed seven sewing machines, three tables, and three months' worth of stipends for students. In 1998 Shanzu received KSh200,000 (\$2,857) from the Canadian Embassy to buy materials for the workshop. Recently a visitor from the United States Embassy pledged \$6,000 to Shanzu to build a new kitchen. However, because this sum is not enough to fund the whole project, Shah intends to approach her local contacts to make up the difference in cash or in kind.

Over the years, Shanzu has had to be imaginative in its fundraising. At its first fundraising event, the founders challenged the guests by saying that the

workshop would never take off in Mombasa because support and enthusiasm from the local community were lacking. A 60-year-old member of the Lion's Club stood up and offered to walk 60 kilometers to raise KSh600,000 (\$8,571) for Shanzu, which he did. Since then, Shanzu's fundraising has included charity walks, film shows, children's parties on the beach, and the sale of raffle tickets to raise funds.

The small amount of profit earned from the sale of items produced by the workshop (less the amount paid to the girl who produced the item) contributes to Shanzu's operating capital. Shanzu realizes that it will not increase its profits unless it is able to fill large orders of certain products (e.g., Girl Guide uniforms) on a regular basis. To do so will require additional seamstresses working in the production unit. The school is therefore considering providing training to other Girl Guides from the Mombasa area who will then be able to work with Shanzu students and graduates on an as-needed basis.

Access to Credit

The job market in Kenya makes it difficult for Shanzu graduates to find paid work. Many, therefore, would like to start their own businesses, yet very few have access to money or credit. A new program is addressing this problem. Faida (Kiswahili for "profit") is the economic program of the Association for the Physically Disabled of Kenya Coast Branch. It helps disabled people set up small-scale businesses by providing them with individual loans, repayable on a weekly basis. Faida also provides both existing and potential clients with basic business skills training every three months that covers such topics as preparation of business plans, budgeting, feasibility studies, and marketing. Faida also offers applicants who qualify for loans free business counseling and advice by qualified business counselors to ensure that their businesses become profitable. An incentive system encourages clients to work hard by, for example, giving an award for best entrepreneur. Winners receive both certificates and cash. Unfortunately, at this time Faida is able to support only those clients who operate businesses located in Mombasa.



To be eligible for a Faida loan, an applicant must meet the following criteria:

- Be disabled or the parent (mother) of a disabled child;
- Come from a socioeconomically disadvantaged family;
- Submit a viable business plan; and
- Have one loan guarantor who is currently employed.

A recent addition to the criteria above is that clients must be willing to save on a regular basis. Faida has learned from experience that clients who are poor savers find it difficult to expand their businesses. Initially, Faida bought cash boxes for its clients to encourage them to save voluntarily, but too often clients were tempted to use their savings to meet daily needs. Faida then developed a new policy whereby clients are required to save a minimum of KSh100 (about \$1) per week, beginning a month after they take out their loans. The goal is not only to encourage clients to save for personal emergencies and economic opportunities,

but also to help them build up assets that can serve as collateral for second loans. For those who do not have their own bank accounts, Faida's credit officers collect the money and deposit it in the association's account. Each client is given a notebook in which to record loan repayments and savings, and all clients have access to their savings on demand.

Initial Faida loans range from KSh1,000-10,000 (\$14-143), and clients are charged a 1 percent rate of interest. Second loans can be larger, in the range of KSh20,000 (\$286). Currently, Faida has 112 clients, six of whom trained at Shanzu. "Faida likes our graduates," says Shah, "because they find them more knowledgeable compared to other clients and more trustworthy." Faida staff members often visit Shanzu to talk to students about the program and encourage them to explore their credit options when they graduate.

The Graduates

Over the years Shanzu has had few dropouts, which staff attribute to the requirement that potential students, together with their parents, visit Shanzu prior to joining so that they can get a first-hand sense

of the program. In recent years, only three students have dropped out. One girl became pregnant, and Shanzu's policy is that pregnant students must leave school until they deliver their babies. They can return after they give birth provided they have someone to look after their child. In this case, the girl has not yet returned. Another young woman dropped out to go into business with a friend, while a third was asked to leave because of disrespectful behavior.

Thirty girls have graduated from Shanzu since it was founded in 1992. Of these, 26 have started their own businesses, others have found paying jobs as supervisors and production workers in shoe and garment factories, and still others have become school instructors. Most now live independently and are helping support their parents and siblings with the money they earn. Another four graduates remain at Shanzu, where they work in the production unit.

Zani feels a great sense of fulfillment when she thinks about young women like Constance (whose experience is described in the box above). "She has struggled to make life a success, to make her parents realize that she is indeed useful. She has had a baby and is able to care for the baby very well . . ." Another

Where are they now? Shanzu graduates in the work force

Josephine teaches at a local polytechnic, where she instructs 60 girls using only three sewing machines. She often visits Shanzu to gather new ideas and to ask for advice about fundraising. Recently, she held a *harambee* (i.e. pulling resources together) to raise funds to buy more sewing machines for the polytechnic.

One of Shanzu's deaf graduates, Rehema, started a tailoring business at home and is doing well. She recently visited Shanzu with her father and gave a big party for the students and staff to say thank you.

When she left Shanzu, Valentine found a job stitching shoes at the Umoja Rubber Factory. She likes factory work because, "I'm feeling free. There are many people. I am not lonely." With her earnings, she is able to send money home to pay her younger brother's school fees.

Mwanahamisi Rashid is 24 years old. After graduation she found a job working for a tailor who also gave her a room to live in. Two years

later she started her own tailoring business but earnings were insufficient. She applied for a job at the Umoja Shoe Factory where she now works. She earns extra money by tailoring in her spare time. Mwanahamisi says she appreciates that the program made her self-sufficient: "Nobody is helping us, we are doing things ourselves."

After finishing her course, Constance returned to her home in Taita Taveta District to start a tailoring business. The business didn't do well so, despite the objections of her father, she moved back to Mombasa and found a job at the Kenya Shirt Company. Constance decided to leave this job after a week because walking long distances to work every day tired her and she could not afford to use a *matatu* (local van). She got a loan from Faida and now runs a small kiosk at Bombolulu selling fruits and vegetables, cooked food, and crocheted tablecloths. She is married to a policeman and lives with him and their one-year-old son.

moment of joy for Zani was when one of the graduates managed to sponsor another disabled girl to participate in the program. This girl has now graduated and is working in the production unit.

The Future

Continuity and sustainability are major concerns for Shanzu. Currently, the workshop can accommodate only 24 girls, but increased enrollment would help the school move toward greater self-sufficiency. Toward this end, Shanzu has plans to admit day students who are not disabled who will study and work alongside the disabled girls. Everyone will be charged KSh700 (\$10) per term.

Shanzu is moving ahead with plans to expand its production unit and will soon introduce computer training using two machines recently donated by the Peace Corps. Expansion plans also include building a hostel for future employees (including some Shanzu graduates) of the expanded production unit.

There are concerns about future leadership of Shanzu, because both of Shanzu's founders are beyond retirement age and therefore cannot continue to provide their current level of voluntary leadership indefinitely. They have therefore requested that KGGA approach the Kenya Teachers Service Commission to request that a Girl Guide teacher be sent to Shanzu to ultimately assume leadership of most of the project's operation. Given their dedication to the program, however, both Shah and Zani are likely to continue their affiliation with Shanzu even after such a transition is complete. Shanzu is also seeking to establish closer links with KGGA headquarters. Zani thinks that closer ties to KGGA headquarters will give Shanzu greater visibility and result in increased support from donors.

Conclusion

Although it is confronted by continuing challenges-most related to limited human and financial

resources-there is great a sense of pride and accomplishment at Shanzu. According to Zani, when a girl first comes to the program, she is often needy, physically unfit,¹⁰ frustrated and lacking both in confidence and a sense of direction. When she leaves, she is a different person-healthier, more self-confident, and independent. Recently, when Shanzu sent three students to an event for handicapped young people, their students were seen as exceptional because of their spirit of independence. Shanzu's approach of offering tolerance, patience, and sympathy in a firm manner and with a focused plan has paid off. As Mwanahamisi a current student from Kwale, puts it, "I didn't think that I could do it, but now I feel happy . . . we are doing things ourselves."

Lessons learned

In looking back at what they have learned since the workshop opened in 1992, Zani says that if they had a chance to begin again Shanzu would not go into craft production, which was begun with the tourist sector in mind. When tourism fell off in the late 1990s, Shanzu began to have difficulties.

If I started all over again, I would take the "earning approach." Instead of training girls and then sending them out, I would give them an opportunity to learn on the job and earn income. Already we are noticing a difference between the girls who are working in the production unit and those who are in training. The working girls are more relaxed and creative and do not waste time; the training group are more stiff and uncomfortable. Watching girls working and earning is motivating for the trainees who also want to be in their shoes.

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¹⁰Girls are unfit mainly because they are not able to exercise (disabled girls in Kenya are usually hidden away because of stigma and cultural beliefs, and, as a result, they rarely get to go outside to exercise their limbs). Some girls are weak because they come from very poor families who lack sufficient food for the entire family.



Sinaga Women and Child Labour Resource Centre

Many girls at Sinaga Women and Child Labour Resource Centre are learning that they are as important as any boy. By learning some basic skills, the girls at Sinaga are beginning to see a way out of the monotonous, demeaning, and grueling work of a domestic. They are beginning to believe that although they have had a late start, at least there is a start.

-N. Change (Sinaga Newsletter no. 9)

The Sinaga Women and Child Labour Resource Centre was founded in 1993. Its mission is to provide assistance to women who are escaping abusive relationships and those who have had trouble with the law. In 1995, the center began to specifically address the problems of girls employed as domestic workers as part of the International Labour Organization's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO/IPEC). Today, Sinaga is one of eleven ILO/IPEC programs in Kenya, but it is the only one that works exclusively with girls employed as domestic workers, which is considered by ILO/IPEC to be among the worst forms of child labor. Sinaga's experience clearly illustrates the challenges of developing a program to improve and expand economic options for a very vulnerable group of adolescents in the context of increasing poverty and economic decline.

Sinaga's vision is of a society free of child labor where every girl-child enjoys her basic human rights. It works to increase public awareness of the plight of girls employed as domestic workers in Kenya, thereby including an activist component in its work. To date, the organization has focused on developing the capacity of its headquarters in Nairobi's Kariobangi area, and it plans to expand its activities to other parts of the country. Sinaga rents space on the second floor of a commercial building that serves as both the program's offices and classrooms. Its ten staff members include four teachers, one administrative assistant, one program coordinator, a field officer, and three support staff.

Sinaga's activities focus on the following:

- Raising awareness of child labor in Kenya, specifically the situation of girls employed as domestic workers;

- Offering skills development and basic education to girls ages 8-16 working as domestics;
- Providing counseling services for students; and
- Carrying out research on key issues affecting child domestic workers.

An Overview of the Situation of Girls Working as Domestics in Kenya

Although no accurate or reliable figures on child labor are available for Kenya, ILO estimates that about 3 million children ages 6-14 are out of school and working (ILO/IPEC Kenya 2001). The employment of children is common in Kenya, particularly in the areas of agriculture, fishing, quarrying and mining, street hawking, tourism, and domestic work.

Domestic work is the predominant form of child labor in Kenya today and a key source of employment for adolescent girls (Onyango and Bader-Jaffer 1995). Data from the 1998 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey show that 32 percent of currently employed girls ages 15-19 are household or domestic workers. Younger girls (ages 6-15) tend to work in low-income households while older girls (ages 15 and above) often work in middle-income neighborhoods. Many young girls, in need of basic food, shelter, and clothing, are brought into urban homes of extended family members to work in kind rather than for cash.

Poor people-whether they live in rural areas or urban slums-frequently deploy their children for wage labor as a means of supplementing family income or reducing the number of mouths to feed. This fate is more likely to befall girls, whose education is usually considered less important than that of boys and who therefore are more likely to leave school early.

Families who have decided that one or more of their children must enter the labor force sometimes migrate to a place where they can find work. Alternatively, they may send one or more of their children (usually girls) to an urban area with the hope that they will send money back home. At the same

time girls are “pulled” into domestic work by the demand for cheap and flexible labor and an extensive kinship network. This puts urban relatives in a position to “help out” their rural relatives by taking in young girls or brokering employment for them in other households. Often parents release their children based on promises that they will be sent to school—an opportunity their parents cannot provide at home. Few young domestic workers, however, are given the opportunity to continue their education.

What families may not realize is that their daughters’ work situations are often difficult. Domestic work is hard, and work environments are not always safe: Beatings, psychological abuse, withheld wages, exhaustion caused by long hours, and, sometimes, sexual abuse can all occur. Girls often are not fed well, and they have little or no time to socialize. In addition, time off from work is infrequent at best.

A typical day in the life of a housegirl

Time	Activity
6:00 a.m.	Prepare baths and breakfast for the family
7:00 a.m.	Take children to school
8:00 a.m.	Clean dishes, wash clothes, clean house, prepare food
12:00 noon	Pick up, feed, and drop off school-going children
2:00 p.m.	Put small children to bed and iron clothes
4:00 p.m.	Prepare and serve tea and dinner
8:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m.	Clean up, eat, and sleep

Learning About Young Domestic Workers

To a significant extent, Sinaga has relied on research and evaluation to help design and modify its program. Most of the information cited here comes from a 1997 study of their students and students’ employers. The majority of girls came from large, poor, farming families, had eight or more siblings, and had dropped out of school because they were not able to pay school fees. Seventy-one percent of employers stated that their connection with the girls, whether they were related to them or not, was through friends or relatives. Twenty percent of the students indicated that initially they had intended

to go to school but ended by working as maids. About 90 percent of the girls said they had never done any other kind of paid work; most who had done other work had sold vegetables.

Of interest is the contrast between the responses of the girls and their employers with regard to the types of housework the girls are expected to perform. Seventy-eight percent of employers indicated that the girls are primarily responsible for babysitting, while only 12 percent indicated that the girls regularly do the laundry. On the other hand, 56 percent of the girls reported they are responsible for doing the laundry most of the time, and only 22 percent indicated that they are regularly involved in babysitting.

The Entry Process

In order to make contact with girls working as domestics, Sinaga staff members meet local chiefs, religious leaders, and members of women’s organizations, churches, and youth groups to create awareness of (1) the problems of domestic child labor and (2) the program offered at Sinaga. The community is encouraged to identify girls working as domestics and bring them to Sinaga. As the program’s benefits have become well-known, employers, family members, and church and social workers have begun to bring girls to Sinaga. Sometimes, the center will take in a young girl who is not working as a domestic but is out of school and engaging in petty trading (usually selling vegetables) on behalf of a parent or guardian. Sinaga believes that the situation of these girls very closely resembles that of young domestic workers.

All potential students must provide information on themselves and their working situations. After successfully completing three interviews to determine their eligibility for the program, the girls are visited at home by staff members who verify the girls’ situations and, if necessary, negotiate with employers for their participation. This step is necessary because many applicants do not actually meet the program’s criteria: Older girls often report that they are younger in order to acquire skills training, and some families see Sinaga as a cost-free alternative to regular schooling and try to get their girls enrolled.

Sinaga's staff

Sinaga is governed by a board of directors made up of eight individuals who take an active role in the day-to-day operation of the center. One of its founding members, Justice Mary Ang'awa, contributes her considerable legal expertise. The program is run by the program coordinator, Margaret Racho, who focuses on improving the project's administrative functions and formalizing the curriculum.

Sinaga's teaching and support staff have remained relatively stable. Perez Ang'awa, another founding member, formerly taught the literacy class and now works as a counselor

and continues to serve on the board. Damaris Ekirapa, the cooking instructor, previously worked at a private commercial college where she taught courses in hotel management. Monicah Gichuiru teaches the dressmaking course.

Rahab Kung'u is Sinaga's field officer. Kung'u started at Sinaga as a typing instructor and was promoted to assistant field officer and instructor. She handles recruitment for the center, interviewing the girls, checking their backgrounds, and helping them choose their courses.

Each year, Sinaga's field officer Rahab Kung'u organizes a pre-training orientation meeting for the young women joining the program. During the meeting the girls decide, with help from staff members, the combination of literacy and skills training they want to pursue. The meeting is designed to make the girls feel comfortable so they can express themselves honestly and openly and discuss their expectations. The most recent group of new students expressed the following hopes and expectations:

I hope to learn to read and write, to learn to make clothes, to be taught so that I can be independent, to gain more knowledge, to be given food, to have teachers who care about the welfare of their students, to be able to look for a good job after excelling, to dress well and lead a comfortable life, and to learn how to operate a computer.

In addition to wanting to become dressmakers, cooks, and typists, girls expressed career goals that included becoming a doctor, a driver, a beautician, and a photographer. The girls were also asked about any fears they might have as they embark on the training program. Some of the fears expressed at one orientation were:

I might get beaten by the teachers [by far the most commonly expressed fear, as corporal punishment is a common experience]. I don't know how to read and write. I don't understand English. I may have difficulty

concentrating and understanding the lessons. Will I have to stay the whole day without breaks? I may be laughed at if I ask questions. I am afraid of the other students. I am afraid of the teachers. I am afraid I could get hurt in the classrooms. I don't know if I can manage the course. I am afraid it is going to be very hard for me to learn.

The center also uses the orientation as a forum for educating parents, guardians, employers, and community members about Sinaga's activities.

The Sinaga Program

Sinaga courses begin in January and run for one year. Short holidays are given at Christmas, Easter, and mid-year. The literacy and skills-training classes are half a day (morning or afternoon) so that girls can continue to work. Sinaga does everything it can to facilitate girls' ability to participate in the program. For those whose duties include picking up young children from school, the center allows them to bring the younger children to the center for part of the afternoon. During the last course, two girls were accompanied by young children. A one-time enrollment fee of KSh200 (less than \$3) is charged to enter the program. In cases of extreme poverty, the fee is waived. Girls who come to the center also participate in other program activities, including counseling, song and drama, and outside recreation. Generally, girls must have completed Standard 6



before they can go directly into one of the skills-training course; they must have a Standard 8 education to enroll in the typing classes.

In January 2001, 200 new girls entered the program, more than double the number who entered the program in 2000. The 16 girls who had completed the literacy class in 2000 returned to take one of the skills-training courses.

Program coordinator Margaret Racho estimates that last year Sinaga spent approximately KSh3,800 (\$54) per student-not taking into account the overall cost of maintaining the center. Sinaga is able to keep costs low because most of the program's supplies (food,¹¹ sewing materials, stationery, and so forth) are donated.

Literacy and Basic Education

Early in the development of the skills-training program, Sinaga staff realized that an impediment to girls' learning new skills were their low levels of education. The center therefore began to offer literacy training to many of its students before they

enrolled in a trade course. The literacy training includes the following topics covered in three modules of increasing difficulty: mathematics, English and Kiswahili (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), language content (grammar), vocabulary, Christian religious education, Islamic religious education, and art and drawing. Girls who come to the center, regardless of their specific course of study, also receive counseling and participate in cultural programs like singing and drama.

Of the students who joined Sinaga in January 2001, 48 enrolled primarily in literacy training, although they also had the opportunity to learn simple cookery or basic hand sewing. In 2001, for the first time, there were three levels in the literacy-training program to better accommodate the abilities of the students. However, even among those in the skills-training courses who completed Standard 6, quite a few were still unable to handle all the requirements of their courses. Therefore, literacy training is also integrated into the various vocational courses.

¹¹Sinaga provides a nourishing porridge everymorning and afternoon for the girls. Ksh. 50 (less than \$1) is charged each month for this. This fee is waived if a girl cannot afford it.

Skills Training

Skills training is currently available in cooking, typing, and tailoring. Each girl takes classes in two of these skills. Sinaga has recently added a home management component to the tailoring and cooking courses, which includes childcare and housekeeping skills. It is hoped that the addition of these skills will help girls either get better jobs or negotiate for better working conditions.

The cooking course includes training in personal, food, and kitchen hygiene; kitchen safety; cooking equipment (selection, use, care); nutrition (basic elements, food sources, balanced diet, nutritional disorders); food preparation and production; menu planning; food costs; development of special diets; and food service theory (tools and equipment, methods of serving).

The typing course covers machine operation, keystrokes, and preparation and layout of various types of documents. New funding from ILO/IPEC helped Sinaga purchase computers, thereby upgrading the level of training available to girls.

The tailoring course covers tools and equipment, machine parts and stitches, classification of fibers, how to take basic body measurements, tying and dyeing, use and adaptation of patterns, machine designs, handcrafts, and garment making.

The new home management component covers hygiene; cleaning methods and agents; home safety and first aid; contagious diseases and their

prevention; childcare (childhood diseases, feeding babies); training in housekeeping; consumer education and protection; and budgeting. To improve the practical training aspects of the course, Sinaga would like to purchase a washing machine, a vacuum cleaner, a rug, and a sofa set for use in the class.

Each course is one year long and includes assessments every three months to help teachers evaluate student performance and to give the girls practice in taking tests. Previously many girls were so distressed at the thought of taking exams that they would stay away during examination periods.

Upgrading the Skills-Training Programs

In 1996, in order to understand the levels of skills that would make graduates marketable and the ability of the local economy to absorb new employees, Sinaga undertook a study of employment opportunities available within the local community (Ogwindo 1996). The survey was restricted to enterprises in the fields of tailoring, catering, and office work. Fifty-two percent of the employees surveyed stated that their most important criterion for hiring a new employee was previous work experience (i.e., practical, on-the-job experience). Level of education, in terms of years completed, was less important, although the ability to read and write was considered essential.



Abilities employers are seeking in their employees

Type of skill	Percent of employers who consider this ability essential
Costing products	89
Negotiating with customers	83
Literacy	73
Designing new products	73
Marketing products	71
Facility with new materials	71
Ability to use a calculator	35

Employment opportunities within small enterprises in the low-income sections of the city also existed for those with basic typing skills. The study recommended that Sinaga expose its students to external examinations (such as government trade tests) recognized by potential employers. The report also pointed out the necessity of making credit available for students who plan to start their own businesses.

Sinaga responded to this report by expanding the content of its courses to one year and introducing more up-to-date equipment. In response to interests expressed by its students, Sinaga is also considering the addition of courses in hairdressing and carpentry. In 2001, Sinaga received funds from ILO to start a small credit scheme to enable its graduates and their families to start their own income-generating activities.



Counseling Support and Medical Care

From the outset, Sinaga realized that in addition to the training courses, girls needed ongoing counseling. Young girls, working as domestics, not only lack education, they also lack a nurturing environment. Domestic workers are frequently subject to verbal and often physical abuse, both of which can devastate girls' emotional health and inhibit development of self-esteem. Sinaga therefore offers group counseling sessions every Wednesday. The counseling includes discussion of:

- Rights of the child;
- Violence against girls and women;
- Work ethics;
- Relationships and interpersonal skills;
- Reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted infections;
- Business skills; and
- Drug and alcohol abuse.

Workshops on other issues related to girls' lives are often held at the center and include participation by outside speakers. On occasion, girls from Sinaga are taken to visit other programs that offer non-formal education.

Although health care services are not provided directly by the center, in the event medical attention is needed, girls are taken to a nearby Catholic dispensary where free care is provided, or to a facility operated by the Missionaries of Charity. Sinaga's counselors follow up with girls who have been given medication to make certain they are taking it as directed.

Teaching Girls About Their Rights

In addition to counseling, girls learn about their rights as workers and as individuals. This subject is addressed continually by visits from representatives of local rights-based organizations. Discussion usually centers on child labor issues as stated in the United Nations International Convention on the Rights of the Child and in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Staff members teach girls the provisions of the Young Persons Employment Act of Kenya that stipulate limitations

The law in Kenya regarding child labor

Section 25 of Kenya's Employment Act, Chapter 226, prohibits the employment of a child under age 16 in any industrial undertaking unless such employment is under deed of apprenticeship or indentured "learnership." Children are also prohibited from working in dangerous occupations and are not to work between 6:30 p.m. and 6:30 a.m., except in an emergency or with special permission from the Ministry of Labour. Any person who employs a child is supposed to maintain a register noting his or her age and date of birth, the date of commencement and termination of employment, and any other particulars as required. No person under age 16 is required to work for more than six hours per day. Children are not supposed to work in bars, hotels, hostels, restaurants, and clubs where alcohol is sold. Anyone who contravenes the law on child labor is punished with a fine. If

the death of a juvenile results, the offender may be subject to a fine or imprisonment.

In 1990 Kenya ratified the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. According to the provisions of the convention, children have the right to be protected from work that threatens their health, education, or development. The convention enjoins state parties to set minimum ages for employment and to regulate working conditions. Of all types of child labor recognized by the convention, the hardest to find and to protect from exploitation is domestic employment, because children doing this work are often invisible to the outside world. Unfortunately the law in Kenya is vague regarding the situation of children working as domestics. This situation is further complicated by the fact that many housegirls work within the context of extended families.

of the hours children may work, and that they are entitled to days off and annual leave.

After spending time at Sinaga, girls frequently begin to demand better treatment from their employers. Sometimes their demands displease their employers and may lead to a girl being forced to drop out of the program. In such cases the center is sometimes able to find other jobs for the girls that will enable them to remain in the program.

When Sinaga first opened, staff set up rules and regulations based on their experiences as teachers. However, they found that involving the girls directly in establishing the boundaries of acceptable behavior was more effective. The girls have developed a code of good manners to enhance the learning atmosphere at the center and have set rules regarding tardiness, untidiness, rudeness, fighting, misbehaving in class, stealing, cheating, lying, and neglecting duties. If a girl is caught stealing, for example, she is reported and must repay the value of the theft. The first time a girl engages in a fight, she is referred for counseling. If she is in a fight three times, however, she is expelled.

The rights of domestic workers are also discussed in various meetings with parents and employers and within the community, particularly in relation to

time off and vacation periods. While not all employers respond positively to these discussions, Sinaga's continuing outreach efforts have resulted in a number of employers becoming aware that their housegirls are also children with needs similar to those of their own offspring.

Empowering the girls may also result in their making demands on Sinaga. In 1999 a group of six girls demanded more advanced subject matter in their literacy class. They wanted to continue their basic education up to Standard 8. Although Sinaga could not meet these demands, the center began to look for sponsors to support girls seeking to continue their education.

Advocating for the Rights of Domestic Workers in the Wider Community

During the second week of each month, Sinaga holds seminars for parents and employers to discuss children's rights. These meetings are the most important component of Sinaga's advocacy efforts. Participants include parents, guardians, friends, members of local organizations, and local leaders. Attendance ranges from 25 to 70 participants, averaging about 45 people, who are encouraged to



recruit new girls and sensitized to recognize signs of abuse and report such incidents.

To strengthen this important form of community outreach and allow greater continuity between meetings, members and teachers who attend regularly have formed a parent-teachers' association. Sinaga is eager to include as many parents of current students as possible to impress upon them the needs and rights of their children and, ideally, to increase their commitment to the program.

A letter from the employer of a Sinaga student suggests that the workshops are meeting Sinaga's goals:

The majority of us who have in one way or another attended workshops hosted by Sinaga Centre have come to know the rights of girl-child domestic workers. We have also learned that there are laws protecting child laborers,

*which if violated can lead to prosecution . . .
I say thanks for the good work the center is
doing for our housegirls.*

Sinaga also publishes a quarterly newsletter and regularly seeks opportunities to reach a broader audience via newspapers, radio, and television. Its success in such endeavors includes a front-page story in *Young Nation*, a supplement to *The Nation*, Kenya's leading daily newspaper, and appearances of staff and students on a variety of radio programs.

Program Support

Sinaga's support comes principally from ILO/IPEC, Oxfam/Great Britain, CARE/Kenya, UNICEF, the Childlife Trust, and Friends of Sinaga (individual contributors). UNICEF has provided not only educational materials but also equipment and supplies, including sewing machines, typewriters, fabric, and textbooks. Transform UK, through Iceberg Africa Consultants, is currently providing funds for capacity building and structural reorganization of the center. However, Sinaga's financial base remains a concern for the program.

Major Challenges

Sexual and Reproductive Health

In addition to a daunting workload, sexual harassment is a major problem for girls working as domestics. Many girls face not only verbal abuse but also physical assault, which sometimes results in pregnancy and disease. In 2000, when Sinaga began the year with 91 students, seven girls reported incidents of physical and/or sexual abuse by their employers. These situations are discovered when staff notice a distinct change in a girl's behavior. For instance, a girl may become withdrawn or start crying without apparent reason. In such cases, girls are referred for individual counseling. During weekly counseling sessions, girls are encouraged to report any such incidents. However, it may take a long time before a girl feels comfortable enough to tell a staff member what has happened. Even though she may agree to receive medical attention, she may resist efforts to intervene with her family or employer.

Sinaga does not have a formal policy for handling the physical abuse of its students. Its first priority is to get immediate medical attention for the girl, if needed. The center works with organizations such as the African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect and the Federation of Women Lawyers, which are able to intervene legally if a girl so desires.

While the problems of sexual abuse are frequently discussed at community meetings, the fact that many more women than men attend these meetings limits the impact of these discussions. Sinaga's inability to adequately protect girls in such situations remains a significant challenge for the organization.

Sinaga recognizes that girls who work-and often live-in households where they may be abused sometimes need safe shelter. In response, it has established an emergency shelter and hotline at the center. Two bunk beds have been set up at the center so that girls who are experiencing an emergency can stay at the center for a few nights.

Sinaga also operates a telephone hotline to provide immediate help when girls are in trouble. Because most girls do not have access to a phone, calls usually come from concerned members of the community. Reports of abuse are followed up in collaboration with the other support organizations mentioned above when the nature of the problem has been determined. On average, Sinaga receives about five calls per month. In addition, many girls and their employers now come in person to the center to seek assistance.

Improving Attendance and Reducing Dropouts

Sinaga's first graduation was held in December 1996. Since then, 670 girls entered the program but only 240 (36 percent) completed their training and graduated. The rest dropped out for various reasons, including change of employer, a move, migration of employer, or pregnancy. Some girls dropped out when they received an opportunity to join another training program. For example, in 2001, several girls left to take a short-term course in hairdressing. Over the years, Sinaga has been able to significantly reduce the number of dropouts primarily by implementing a more rigorous screening process for new applicants, improving the courses offered, and working more

closely with parents, employers, and the community. In 2000, 78 of the 91 girls admitted at the beginning of the year completed the course, which resulted in a dropout rate of 14 percent.

In an effort to further reduce the number of dropouts, staff members makes home visits twice a year. In addition, whenever a girl is absent for more than three days, a staff member visits the student's home to determine the reason and provide assistance if needed.

Some girls become pregnant while they are enrolled in Sinaga. In some cases pregnancy is the result of sexual abuse, and it can also occur when older girls engage in voluntary sexual relations. The center encourages a pregnant girl to continue with her classes for as long as possible and to return once her child is born. Most girls return, but sometimes a girl's employers will not take her back when she has her own child. In such cases, Sinaga tries to negotiate on the girl's behalf or find her another job. Within an extended family, it is more likely that a child will be accepted.

Life After Sinaga

Sinaga recently conducted a study of 79 graduates. Their whereabouts are tabulated below:

What Sinaga graduates are doing now

Activity	Percent (n = 79)
Performing domestic work	80%
Formally employed	6%
Self-employed	4%
Continuing formal education	1%
Taking advanced training	1%
Not working ^a	8%
Total	100%

^aReasons given for not working include recently giving birth, dissatisfaction with or loss of a recent job, and looking for a better salary.

Given the lack of employment options in the current economy and the age of the trainees, it is not surprising that many Sinaga graduates continue to be employed as domestics. In addition, almost half of the girls surveyed were still younger than 16-the legal age for employment in Kenya. Their age limits their employment options. Even though

Abdiah's experience

Abdiah is a 17-year-old Somali girl from Korogocho, a slum area of Nairobi. One of two girls who interviewed for a position in the Sinaga office upon graduation, she got the job. She says she is earning KSh4,500 (\$64) per month, compared with the KSh500 (\$7) she

earned as a housegirl. She uses her money to help her family pay rent and buy food. Sinaga sent Abdiah to a computer class, and she now knows how to use the office computer. She would like to become a computer programmer.

Sinaga would like its graduates to enter other sectors, the center cannot be perceived to be promoting child labor.

Wages and Aspirations

In areas like Kariobangi, girls working as domestics (who are not living with relatives and who are being paid in kind rather than cash) generally make a token KSh300-400 (\$4-6) per month; a few may earn KSh800 (\$11) per month. If, through exposure from the Sinaga program, these girls were to find jobs in a middle-income neighborhood in Nairobi, their monthly earnings could reach KSh1,000-1,500 (\$14-21) or even KSh2,000 (\$29), if they were to

live in their employers' houses. Sinaga estimates that girls who are able to gain employment in tailoring and catering can earn approximately KSh2,000 per month upon graduation, and local office jobs can pay up to KSh3,000 per month (\$43).

When the 79 graduates were asked about their own ambitions and aspirations, 40 percent indicated that they wanted to start their own business. Most of the remaining graduates had ambitions to continue their secondary school education or go to college; none desired to remain a domestic worker. Those who indicated that they wanted to start a business said they would use their own savings or donations from relatives, or apply for a loan. Sinaga has collaborated with K-Rep Development Agency (KDA), an experienced micro-finance research organization that offers training in business management and provides start-up loans to adolescent girls and young women as part of the joint KDA/Population Council pilot savings-and-credit program. Some graduates indicated that they would apply for a loan from KDA; 12 of the 21 graduates of the 1999 tailoring course received financial assistance from K-Rep and are now operating small businesses.

Looking Ahead: The Future

Sinaga is poised to begin expanding its efforts beyond Kariobangi with the support of ILO/IPEC. The center will be working with groups in districts in three other provinces: Kisumu (in South Nyanza Province), Mombasa (Coast Province), and Nyeri (Central Province). Sinaga plans to open a second branch in the low-income Kawangware area of Nairobi.

Financing remains an ongoing constraint to both maintaining and expanding the Sinaga program. Another obstacle is the lack of sufficient space to



provide a real rescue center and/or operate a primary school. Further, Sinaga's inability to effectively handle legal aspects of physical and sexual abuse remains of concern as well. Finally, limited job alternatives are a frustrating reality for many graduates.

Lack of donor funds remains critical and Sinaga must look for a broad-based solution to this problem. Plans are under way to raise funds to open a restaurant that would serve as a venue for on-the-job training for Sinaga students as well as a source of income. Sinaga is also looking for land to expand the informal education program to include eight years of primary-school education. To do this, the organization may consider developing a program that takes in paying students whose fees will be used to support schooling for underprivileged children.

To help Sinaga strengthen its position both managerially and financially, the organization is currently one of the NGOs participating in the Transform program funded by Oxfam/Great Britain. The objective of this program is to build institutional capacity. Money is also being made available through Transform that will allow Sinaga to hire a fundraiser and to hold fundraising events.

Conclusion

The students interviewed greatly valued their time at Sinaga, which they refer to as their "college." For many, Sinaga is more than a school; many girls consider it their support structure, their "family." Sinaga has produced several hundred graduates, some of whom have been able to find better jobs in the marketplace. It provides a place where young girls living in often precarious circumstances can feel safe, have access to counseling and support in times of crisis, improve their education, and learn about their rights. As Sinaga expands in the years to come, so too, it hopes, will the number of girls who rediscover themselves and their abilities.

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