

Project Name: Vusha Girls Employability Program

Organization(s): The African Centre for Women Information and Communications Technology (ACWICT)

Dates of Implementation: 2016 – 2019

Country: Kenya

Partner(s): County Governments of Nairobi and Kisumu; Vocational Training Institutions; Employers in Private and Public Sector

Funder(s): US Department of State, Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator through JSI Research and Training Institute

Website: <https://acwict.org/vusha/>

Project description: The Vusha Girls Employability program is a demand-driven workforce development program that seeks to improve employability prospects and income generating capacities of high potential but disadvantaged young women and decrease their vulnerability to and risk of HIV infection. The main components of the program include rapid labor market assessments to determine skills gaps in the labor market; recruitment of young women to participate in the program; delivery of three-month training comprising three mandatory units in (digital literacy, life skills, entrepreneurship skills) and one vocational skill /trade of their choice, using a market driven skill-based curriculum that combines theory and practice; a robust job placement system that ensures that young women trained are placed into jobs and internship opportunities within three months of completing training; linking young women seeking entrepreneurship pathways to sources of start-up capital. The trade/vocational skills trades are selected from the 21 selective units developed for the program.

Target Population: High potential but disadvantaged young women, aged 19-24 years from Kisumu and Nairobi counties in Kenya.

Results to-Date and/or Target Results:

This program has a curriculum covering 21 trades/vocational skills and is delivered through government accredited VTIs; 1,195 young women enrolled and trained; 84% secured employment earning between Kshs. 15,000/US\$150 and 30,000/US\$300 Per month.

The program plans to scale up from the two counties initially covered by the program to four more HIV high burden counties. The four counties include Siaya, Homabay, Migori and Busia; The program also plans to expand and reach (including those who have not attained high school qualifications; digitize the program's training curriculum and develop an e-learning platform for delivery.

Interesting Features & Innovations:

- The **Multi-pronged approach** enhances both skills and confidence of young women.
- The **demand-driven** employability skill building program starts with employer consultation in both form of roundtable and one-on-one meetings to identify skill sets and hiring needs required by employers, and trainings offered to beneficiaries will be designed and delivered accordingly.
- **3-month training duration** - explicitly **shorter** than traditional two-year programs – ensures high retention and completion rates.
- Training delivered through **government accredited VTIs** secured through partnerships with county governments.
- Intentionally integrated **HIV prevention education** and reproductive health services; sensitization to gender discrimination and sexual harassment; and linkages to social and legal redress.