



**AFRICAID**

**Our Impact:  
Kisa Project  
2020**

# About AfricAid

AfricAid works to improve the standing of women in society through robust, locally-led mentorship initiatives that cultivate confidence, improve academic and health outcomes, and promote socially-responsible leadership skills. In close partnership with our sister organization, GLAMI (Girls Livelihood and Mentorship Initiative), we support mentorship opportunities that help secondary school girls in Tanzania complete their education, develop into confident leaders, and transform their own lives and their communities. The result is resilient, proactive, and socially responsible girls who secure better jobs, raise healthier families, and increase the standing of women in society.

## Introduction

Dear Friend,

Thank you for joining AfricAid in celebrating another year of impact. This report delves into the achievements made by our Kisa Scholars in the graduating class of 2020, and Alumnae surveyed in late 2019. From January until mid-March, the Kisa Project operated normally, with Mentors delivering weekly two-hour classes to Scholars at 25 Partner Schools. Kisa Scholars worked through units focused on “Innovative Vision” and “Leadership in the Making” during the first few months of the year. Guest speakers visited a number of Kisa Partner Schools to speak to Year 2 Scholars about university life and career exploration.

The global landscape shifted significantly this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The team pivoted quickly to continue serving Scholars during the crisis (read more about how Mentors utilized technology to support Scholars during quarantine [here](#)). Unfortunately, we were only able to collect data from a limited number of graduating Scholars before schools closed; these data are presented in this report. Despite this limitation, we are so excited about all that the class of 2020 has accomplished, especially the leadership that they are providing to their communities during this time of crisis.

Another exciting development this year was the establishment of Girls Livelihood and Mentorship Initiative (GLAMI), an independent non-governmental organization in Tanzania that formerly operated as AfricAid Tanzania. GLAMI is led by Tanzanian women and focuses on designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the Kisa Project and [Binti Shupavu](#). AfricAid continues, as we have for years, to work to raise funds and awareness for this important work.

With gratitude,



Jessica Love  
Executive Director

## Findings

1,909 Scholars participated in the Kisa Project during the 2019-2020 school year, and 971 Year 2 Scholars graduated. The Kisa Project equipped Scholars with the resilience and leadership to cope during a global pandemic and create positive change in their communities.

Of the 6,500+ Scholars in the Kisa Project and Binti Shupavu, GLAMI has only recorded 32 cases of Scholars dropping out of school due to the pandemic. To put it another way: 99% of our Scholars returned to their education. We attribute this remarkable feat to the the swift action we took to quickly adjust our programming and build on the deep connections between Scholars and their Mentors immediately after schools closed. Read on for more about our impact.



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

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

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

The following pages explore each of these outcomes in depth, demonstrating how the presence of confident, educated girls in Tanzanian communities results in broader changes in how society views girls and women. This year, we also saw how these empowered girls were able to support their communities through the COVID-19 crisis.



PROBLEM

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



ACTIVITIES

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



OUTPUTS

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



OUTCOMES

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



IMPACT

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



# Kisa Alumnae are confident leaders

*"I have become a leader to myself! I know what I need and how to react to situations, how to live with people that are surrounding me and I have been able to pay attention to thing/issues happening in my community." -- Goodness, Kisa Graduate Class of 2020*

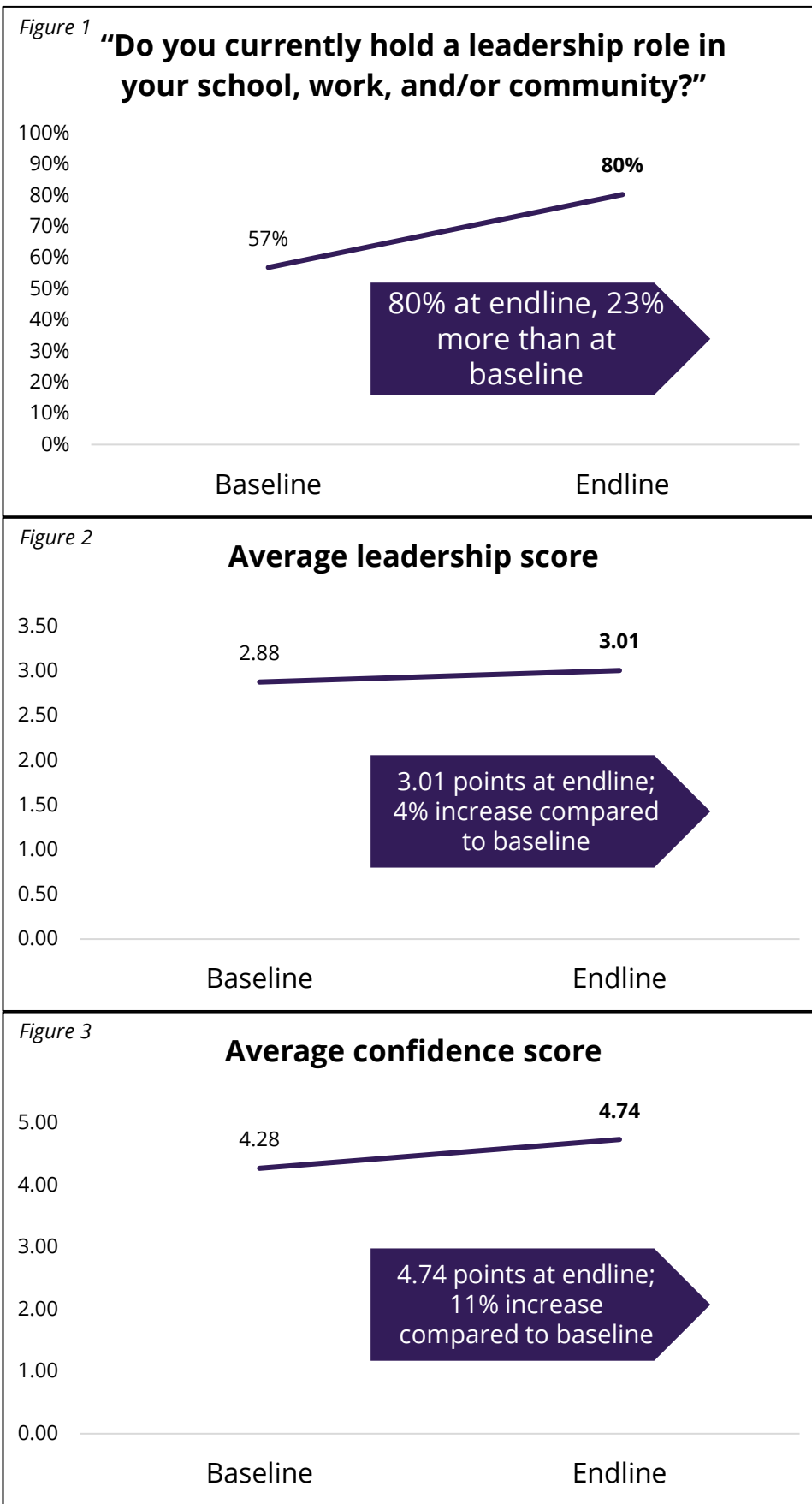
## Leadership

Throughout their experience in Kisa, Scholars learn leadership skills and gain opportunities to practice leadership both within the program and on their own initiative. At the end of the program, 80% of Scholars report that they are in a leadership role (figure 1). To validate this finding, we asked what kind of leadership role they have. 47% reported being a leader in an official capacity, such as student government, while 25% reported being a leader in an unofficial capacity, such as setting an example for younger siblings. And, as shown below, Kisa graduates report seeking out leadership opportunities more often after the program than they did at the beginning.

These encouraging results unfortunately do not entirely negate the challenges that young women in Tanzania face as they seek to become leaders. At the end of Kisa, Scholars were slightly *less* likely than at baseline to say that they wanted to be seen as leaders by their peers. It is possible that, as they get older, Scholars are more influenced by traditional adult women's subservient roles, even as they gain leadership experience. On an index of several metrics of leadership, we do see improvement from baseline to endline (figure 2).

## Confidence

There is even more substantial improvement in Kisa Scholars' confidence from baseline to endline (figure 3). Scholars improved on all metrics of confidence: seeing themselves as confident, public speaking ability, and sharing their ideas and opinions – all activities and traits that are often actively discouraged in girls.



## Leadership in the time of COVID

*"I thought this to be the time that my community needed more leaders than ever before...people that could be there and remind them that they are not alone and that there is a way, through all these hardships that we can thrive and get through as a community, day by day." -- Gladys, Kisa Alumna Class of 2017*

### Self-Leadership

Kisa teaches Scholars that they must become leaders of themselves and their own lives as an essential step to becoming leaders of their communities. Scholars stepped up when schools closed, managing to continue their studies while facing new distractions and pressures to contribute at home. When they are at home, girls bear the burden of many household tasks such as cleaning and cooking. At the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, there was concern that Scholars would become indispensable to their families. They reported to their Mentors that they spend a great deal of time caring for their homes and younger siblings. In addition, in Tanzania the family of the bride receives a dowry upon marriage, so early marriages were a significant concern as Scholars' families faced unprecedented economic hardship. Despite these many challenges, data collected two months after schools reopened showed that **99% of GLAMI's Scholars returned to their education** (across both Kisa and Binti Shupavu). Kisa Scholars reported that frequent contact with their Mentors during school closure and the leadership and resilience they had learned in Kisa kept them on track with their studies and determined to continue their education.



### Community Leadership

Despite their many burdens at home, Kisa Scholars did not think only of themselves during this crisis. Several Scholars and Alumnae started up projects to help their communities through the pandemic. Gladys Kimario, an Alumna from the Class of 2017, shared her pandemic leadership story:

*"During the Coronavirus pandemic, I was able to go around to different villages in my community and advocate for safety by providing necessary information to people about how they can prevent themselves from catching the virus. I wrote letters to village leadership asking permission first, and then I made brochures and distributed them to most community members who could read and write. Since some are not literate, I made extra time to go from home to home and talk to people about how they feel about the situation and how they can continue to be safe. While doing all this, I made sure that I and the few people I brought with me to make this happen also observed our health and took all the measures necessary to avoid spreading or contracting the virus."*

Read more about Gladys and other Kisa Alumnae taking on leadership in crisis [here](#).

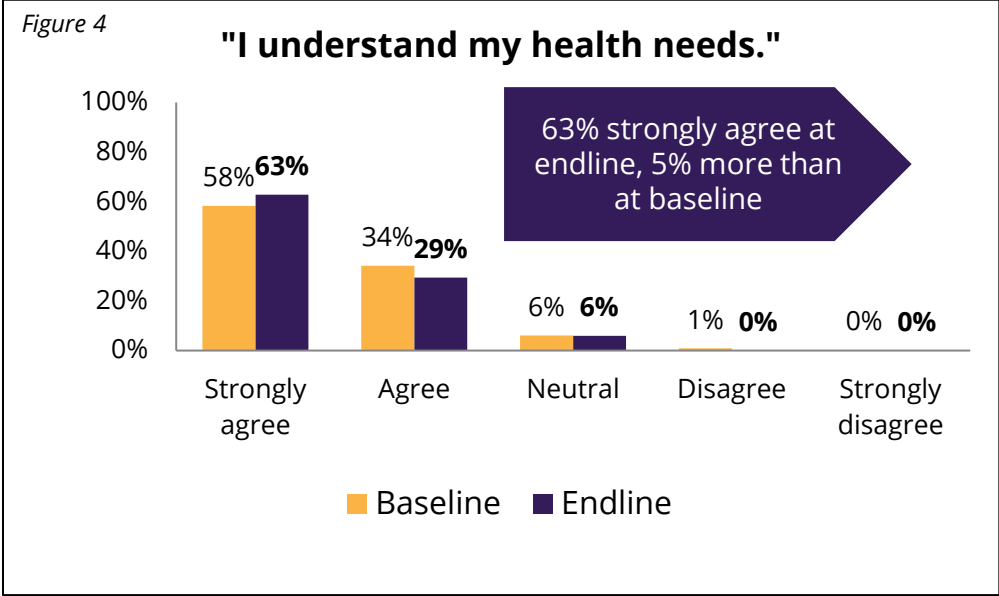


# Kisa Alumnae are mentally and physically resilient

*"My father abandoned me which led me to being raised by a single parent who was sick. This made me to start a business of selling calabash so as I can be able to raise money." – Fatma, Kisa Graduate Class of 2020*

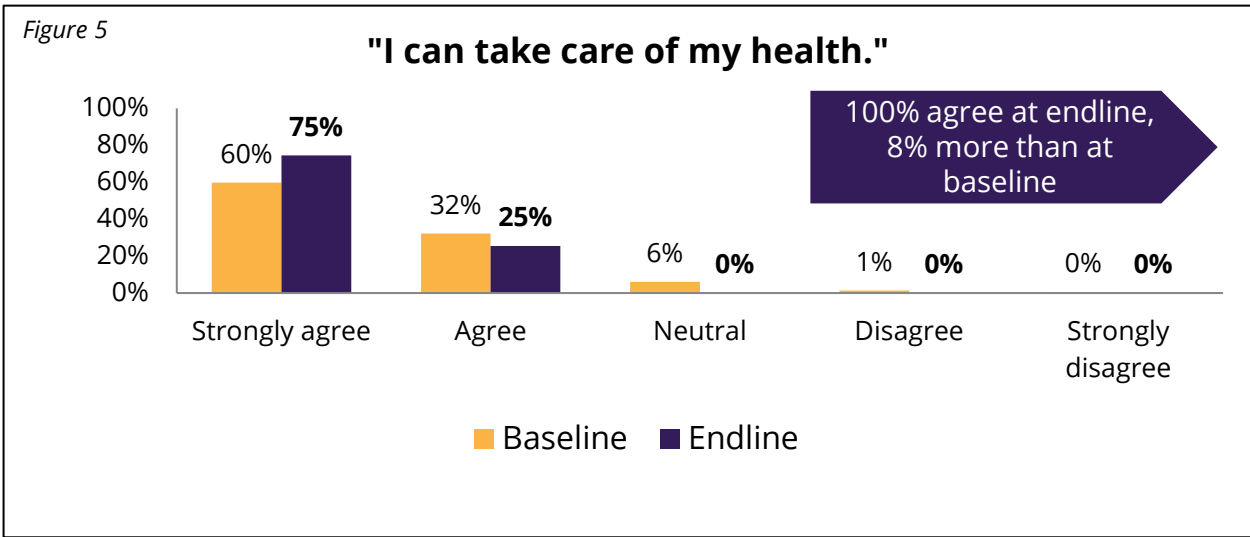
Kisa Scholars face enormous challenges as they pursue their education and development as community leaders. When asked about challenges that they have overcome, Kisa graduates mention serious issues including:

- Sexual assault
- Struggles to pay school fees
- Death of one or both parents
- Serious illness and injury (of themselves and/or close family members)
- Academic challenges
- Family breakup
- Peer pressure
- Lack of parental support



Kisa aims to build Scholars' mental resilience – the ability to see challenges as learning opportunities and come back stronger from setbacks – and their physical resilience – their ability to manage their health in order to ensure wellness. Mental resilience is measured using the Resilience Competencies Scale, a quantitative tool developed by psychologist Dr. Robert Henley to measure resilience in youth. Kisa Scholars in this cohort had lower resilience scores at endline than at baseline. The small sample we were able to collect data from prior to the disruption of COVID likely influenced these results. However, AfricAid and GLAMI are committed to learning from these data and ensuring that Kisa Scholars develop resilience along with confidence, leadership skills and community service values.

Other measures of resilience are more positive. As noted above, 99% of GLAMI Scholars returned to schools when they reopened in June. While the situation on the ground continues to evolve as of the writing of this report, it indicates that Scholars overcame: additional costs for the unexpected travel home and back to school; pressure from parents to remain at home and continue supporting their families as they had been doing during the school closure; pressure from parents and other community members to get married; pressure from young men to engage in unsafe sex (as federal policy has prohibited girls who become pregnant from returning to school); and myriad challenges to keeping up with their schoolwork while at home. Regarding physical resilience, Scholars at endline showed improvement over Scholars at baseline in understanding their health needs and being able to take care of their own health (figures 4 and 5).



# Kisa Alumnae go on to university and/or gainful employment

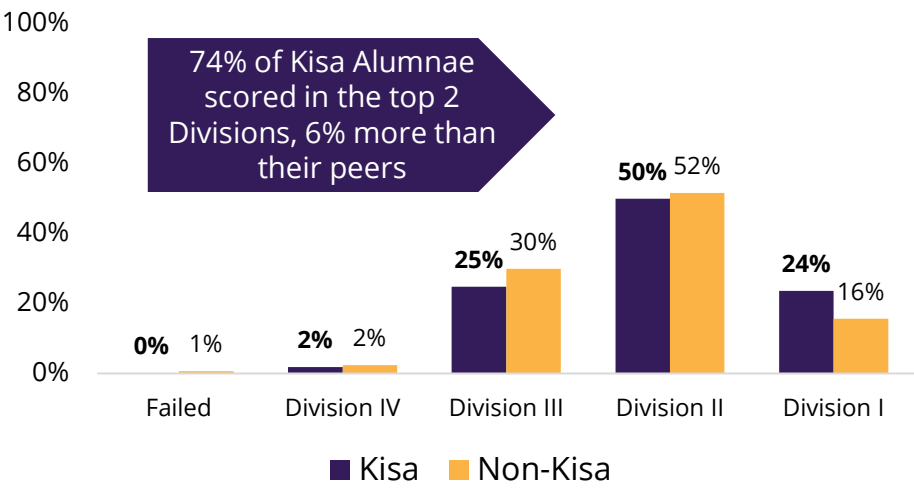
*“Lessons learned [in Kisa] made me push on with life confidently and face challenges and still conquer whatever I wish to achieve in my studies regardless of different challenges faced as a woman in university.” -- Sabrina, Kisa Alumna Class of 2017*

## Exam results

An essential indicator of a student’s future in Tanzania is their score on the final exam of secondary school, which determines what type of higher education, if any, that student is eligible for. Kisa Scholars slightly outperformed their non-Scholar peers – girls who attend the same schools but do not participate in Kisa – in terms of passing this exam. **Kisa Scholars are significantly more likely to score better on the exam**, meaning that they are more likely to access university rather than technical school or other less advanced tertiary education options.

Figure 6

## Exam performance



PHOTO

## Alumnae activities

We are working on efforts to reach and survey a greater percentage of our alumnae and hope to be able to report on university enrollment and employment statistics next year. However, one exciting finding from our 2019 survey is that **Kisa Alumnae are starting their own businesses while still studying at university**. Businesses founded and led by Kisa Alumnae include:

- Creating and selling handcrafts
- Manufacturing and selling government-subsidized liquid soap to support handwashing during COVID
- Juice bar
- Online clothing shop
- Food stand
- Beauty salon
- Freelance graphic design
- Restaurant

PHOTO

# Kisa Alumnae engage in community development

*"In my community there is problem of school dropout due to early pregnancy. I used skills and knowledge to educate girls on how to protect themselves against early pregnancy and plan for the future so as to reach their dreams as they wish."* – Neema, Kisa Graduate Class of 2020

A high percentage of Kisa Scholars are already actively working to improve their communities when they join the Project (figure 7), which is not surprising – we seek out girls with leadership potential and a passion for community development. Yet Scholars are able to improve even in this area; by the end of the program virtually all Kisa graduates report that they are working to improve their communities. Their methods include:

- Advising girls in the community (or youth in general)
- Collaborating with others to solve community problems
- Taking leadership roles in the community
- Providing education to community members
- Leading community development projects

Kisa Scholars specifically focus on improving the status of girls and women. 94% of Scholars report that they have been starting conversations about gender in their home communities (figure 8); on average they report having discussed gender issues with 18 people.

Many Kisa Scholars were able to complete their 2 Day Challenge projects, the capstone of the Kisa curriculum, in early March before the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, projects included sharing health information they learned at the Health Symposium with girls at schools that do not yet have the Kisa Project and renovating their school bathrooms to make them cleaner and healthier for themselves and future students. Graduate Leah, who was able to complete her schooling after providing this quote, spoke about protecting her family and community from COVID: "I live in a rural area where people believe they can't get the disease. I am helping my community members understand instructions given by doctors. I am also responsible for watching over my young brothers so that they do not stray away from home as they play. I know that I will go back to school when the time is right and that I will accomplish the dreams I have."

Figure 7 "Are you actively working to improve your community?"

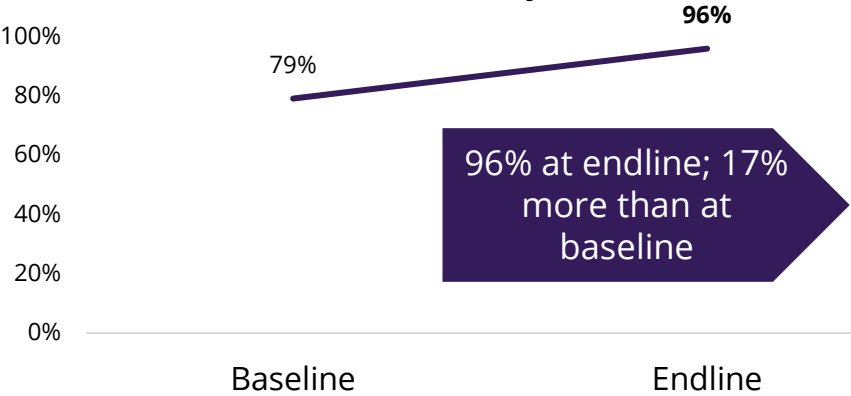
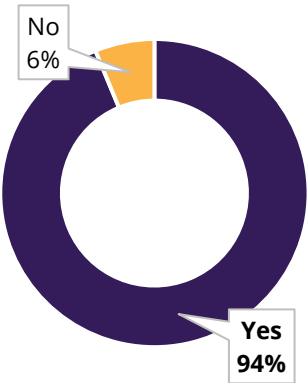


Figure 8 "Have you talked to people in your home community about gender issues since joining Kisa?"



*“After I talked to people about gender issues most of them agreed with me and took their children to school instead of taking them to husbands while they are not mature. I thank God because most of them changed their notions of saying ‘to educate a girl is to educate a wife of someone’.” – Huda, Kisa Graduate Class of 2020*

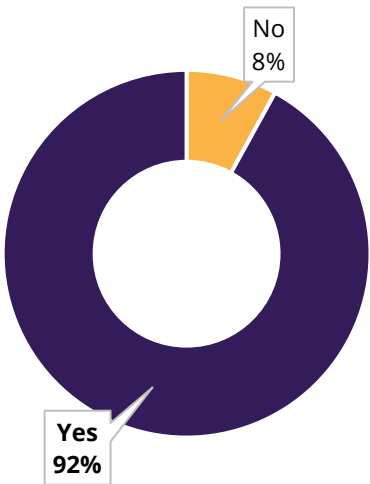
**Kisa Scholars create change**

Like empowered women everywhere, Kisa Scholars change the perceptions of women in their communities. They lead by example. In the class of 2020, **92%** of graduating Scholars said that they have seen a change in their community that they can attribute to the influence of Kisa (figure 9). The changes they noticed include:

- More girls being sent to school
- Changing beliefs about girls and gender
- Impacts of 2 Day Challenge community service activities conducted by Kisa Scholars
- More girls participating in community life
- and many others

Figure 9

**"Have you seen a change in your community due to girls participating in Kisa?"**



**Kisa communities see the change**

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

*2 Day Challenge: Teaching community members to make masks to protect against COVID-19*

A group of Kisa Scholars recognized a scarcity of personal protective equipment in their community. They decided to teach their neighbors how to protect against the virus by making their own cloth masks. The Scholars gave their tutorial via Instagram Live to adhere to social distancing recommendations and reach a wider audience.

A community member who watched the tutorial reported: “The girls saw a need in the community and used their voice to give hope to people. Many people that watched the live tutorial gained knowledge of how to design masks at home with fewer resources.”

*2 Day Challenge: Cleaning the washrooms at Samunge Correction Centre*

Community member: “Girls can be leaders because they are bright and talented. What touched me the most is the ways the girls have volunteered to clean a dirty environment to improve health conditions at the centre.”

Community member: “I used to think girls were weak and dependent on others. But after seeing how hard these girls worked, I think the way I used to think was wrong. These girls are very powerful and strong and I am very pleased with this project.”

# How Kisa creates this impact

The Kisa Project consists of three main types of support for girls: weekly Classes on topics related to leadership, confidence, and internal motivation; special events, including a biennial Career Day, Health Symposium, an assessment of and presentation on community needs, and the 2 Day Challenge capstone project; and one-on-one support from the Mentors, all of whom are university-educated Tanzanian women. It is the combination of these opportunities that leads Kisa Scholars to become empowered individuals who create positive, lasting change in their communities.

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

## Methodology

AfricAid measures each outcome through multiple quantitative and qualitative indicators. This report compares Scholars' responses on a baseline survey that they took on entry to the program in 2018 to their responses at endline in 2020. At baseline, all Kisa Scholars were asked to fill the survey; at endline, survey takers were randomly selected from each Kisa Class. The surveys are anonymous. All Scholars also take a shorter demographic survey, providing information on their family and home community. Unfortunately, we were only able to collect data from a limited number of graduating Scholars before the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools to close. Due to the large difference in sample sizes at baseline and endline, significance tests are not useful for the data in this report (except the exam results, for which we had a larger sample).

A 2019 survey of Kisa Alumnae provided another layer of understanding as to how Alumnae use the skills and knowledge gained through Kisa in later life. Due to the dispersion of Alumnae around the country, a random, anonymous sample is not possible for this survey. Instead, we strived to reach Alumnae from as many different regions and graduating classes as possible to obtain a representative sample.

Additional qualitative data were gathered using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Scholars, Alumnae, Mentors, and community members participated in the interviews. Scholars' and Alumnae's names have been changed in this Report to protect their privacy, and some quotes were lightly edited for grammar and spelling.

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## Acknowledgements

This report was created by Jess Littman of Understanding Impact, GLAMI's former Director of Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning. Maryrehema Mkumbo, GLAMI's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Coordinator, conducted all focus group discussions and interviews and conducted Alumnae surveys. The Kisa Project's mentoring team conducted baseline and endline surveys. Emily Weber, former AfricAid Communications & Development Manager, contributed content to this report