
Context Matters

— RESEARCH GRANTS —

2019 Grant Recipients

Research title: Empowering Adolescent Girls Through Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

Principle Investigator: Prof. Elinami Swai, PhD. with Open University of Tanzania
Programme in Shinyanga Tanzania

Research location: Shinyanga, Tanzania

Research dates: February 15, 2020 – October 31, 2020

Professor Swai is an Associate Professor and Coordinator of SADC Centre of Specialization in Teacher Education at the Open University of Tanzania. She is also the National Coordinator for Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in Tanzania. She has a focus on Multimedia Research Methodologies in Social Sciences and action research. She holds a Doctor of Adult Education with minor in Gender Studies, Pennsylvania State University; a Master of Arts in Education, with specialty in Curriculum and Instructions, University of Dar-es-Salaam; and Bachelor of Arts with Education (BAEd.), with Honours, University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.

Summary: The central aim of this pilot project is to universalize age appropriate context-based Sexual and Reproductive Health Education in Tanzania. This project will pilot the establishment of a community literacy centre and youth club that includes community members and youth who will critically assess the social norms, structures and institutions that work against adolescent girls' development as well as social interactions and relations that are oppressive and exploitative. There will be 15 participants including teenage mothers, education officials, primary school teachers, health service providers, and opinion leaders.

This research project is grounded in Participatory Action Research. The researchers will work closely with community members to document perceptions of the incidences of teenage pregnancies, gender based violence, social structures that produce violence and strategies to change the situation. Youth, parents, and community members will be trained to develop media such as drama, photographs and audio-video materials, photo-voice, stories, poems, photographs, to express their views on what they consider to be gender violence and patterns rooted in social norms and social power in school.

This research will be guided by the following questions:

1. What are the social, cultural and structures that produce gender violence?
2. What are the processes involved in setting up a community centre and youth club?
3. How do adolescents understand and talk about, and negotiate violence?
4. What are the processes involved in developing community based SRHR education?

The results of this research project will contribute to the body of evidence on what works to end teenage pregnancies and empower adolescent girls. The views of the community members and youth in the course of learning and research will provide input into the development of age appropriate Comprehensive Sexuality Education.