



Progress Report: October 2023

Improved Livelihoods for Women, and Educational and Health Outcomes for Adolescent Boys and Girls through the Light Up the Future Project



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

UNFPA expresses deepest appreciation to the Panasonic Corporation for the funding and partnership to deliver the project dubbed "Improved Livelihoods for Women, and Educational and Health Outcomes for Adolescent Boys and Girls through the Light Up the Future" in Samburu and West Pokot counties. Through this project, 2,045 solar lanterns have been distributed to women, girls and boys in remote areas that have no access to electricity. The project has contributed immensely to catalyzing improved livelihoods for women and stimulated improved participation and performance in education for adolescent girls and boys whose aggregate impact is reduced risks and vulnerability to FGM and child marriage.

We appreciate our partners, the Kenya Red Cross Society, Ushanga Kenya and World Vision for their meticulous initiatives that ensured the solar lanterns donated by the Panasonic Corporation are distributed to the most needy and vulnerable women, girls and boys in remote rural locations. We are also grateful to the partners for monitoring the project effectively.

Our partnership with the county governments is pivotal in ensuring that this project is expanded and sustained. We therefore urge the Samburu and West Pokot county governments to ensure more community members have access to solar lanterns by allocating resources to procure enough supplies. We are confident that the light the future project will yield immense economic and social dividends for the residents of the two counties and trigger a major rippled effect across Kenya.



PROJECT BASIC INFORMATION

1.1	Country	Republic of Kenya		
1.2	Title	Improved Livelihoods for Women, and Educational and Health Outcomes for Adolescent Boys and Girls through the Light Up the Future Project		
1.3	Location(s)	West Pokot and Samburu Counties		
1.4	Duration	From: October 2022 To: October 2023		
1.5	Budget (total)	In Kind Donation of 2045 solar lanterns		
1.6	Goal	Improved health and well-being of adolescent girls through reducing the risk of FGM and child marriage in Samburu and West Pokot counties by 2024.		
1.7	Outputs	Output 1. Improved access to quality, equitable and inclusive education for adolescent girls and boys in Samburu and West Pokot counties. Output 2. Increased production and marketing of quality beads by women in Samburu and West Pokot counties.		
1.8	Beneficiary	500 women and 1,545 adolescent boys and girls.		
1.9	Arrangement	The project is managed by the UNFPA Kenya Country Office in partnership with Ushanga Kenya, the Kenya Red Cross Society, and World Vision Kenya.		
1.10	Name of UNFPA Representative	Anders Thomsen (Mr.)		
	Signature			
	Date			

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This progress report presents a summary of findings of an assessment undertaken to monitor the progress achieved in implementation of the "Improved Livelihoods for Women, and Educational and Health Outcomes for Adolescent Boys and Girls through the Light Up the Future" project in Samburu and West Pokot counties. The project is an initiative of the Panasonic Corporation in partnership with UNFPA and the county governments of Samburu and West Pokot. The project entailed distribution of solar lanterns developed and donated by the Panasonic Corporation to women in the bead making business, and school going adolescent girls and boys in the two counties. A total of 500 solar lanterns were distributed to women while solar lanterns were distributed to adolescent girls and boys through schools. The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), World Vision, and Ushanga Kenya who are UNFPA's implementing partners in Kenya undertook the implementation of the project.

The overall objective of the assessment was to establish the main achievements in implementation of the project, challenges, lessons learnt and best practices. The assessment, which was undertaken by UNFPA and the KRCS used qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. A total of 174 beneficiaries participated in the project assessment exercise.

The findings of the assessment showed that the project has been successfully implemented and has potential to transform the wellbeing of women, girls and boys in Samburu and West Pokot counties. The assessment established that women in the beading business and school going adolescents in Samburu and West Pokot counties are reaping enormous benefits after receiving the solar lanterns. The benefits include improved income levels, better participation and performance in school for the adolescents, and strengthened social protection. The assessment also established that the demand for the solar lanterns is outstrips the supply. The main challenges encountered in implementation of the project are humanitarian access to the rural locations and the disruptive effect of the political calendar in Kenya. Despite these challenges, the project has enhanced the brand visibility of the Panasonic Corporation in Kenya, strengthened the safety and well-being of women and girls, and contributed to improved access to information and services in rural places that lack access to electricity. UNFPA recommends continued implementation of similar projects in Kenya through partnership with the private sector and county governments.

1.PROJECT OVERVIEW

Poverty is one of the root causes of female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage. Families that suffer from low economic status may decide to marry off their girls to receive bride-price such as money and livestock. This in turn leads to girls giving up on their education for marriage. Rampant child marriage and FGM in West Pokot and Samburu counties account for the low education indices and high levels of poverty in comparison to other parts of the country. Limited access to electricity and other amenities also contributes to poor educational and livelihood outcomes, resulting in the vicious circle of poverty.

FGM is a procedure that involves partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons¹. It can lead to immediate health risks, as well as a variety of long-term complications affecting women's physical, mental and sexual health, and their general well-being throughout the life-course. In Kenya, the national prevalence of FGM is at 15 per cent according to the Kenya Demographic Health Survey 2022.² In 2011, Kenya enacted the Prohibition Against Female Genital Mutilation Act, and developed the National Policy for the Eradication of Female Genital Mutilation in 2019. However, despite the legal and policy frameworks, FGM is still practiced in different parts of the country and threatens the health and lives of women and girls.

UNFPA, as the UN Sexual and Reproductive Health agency, is mandated to prevent and respond to the harmful practice. The current initiatives in Kenya are undertaken at the national level and in 22 counties where the prevalence of FGM is high, among them Samburu and West Pokot counties (86 percent in Samburu and 74 percent in West Pokot).³ FGM is practised as a rite of passage from girlhood to womanhood, and a prerequisite for marriage. FGM therefore facilitates child marriage since girls are considered as an asset that can contribute to the wealth of the family. Almost 1 in 4 Kenyan girls are married before the age of 18 years. The KDHS 2014 report also showed that the prevalence of child marriage (marriage before age of 18) is 50 percent in Samburu and 30.4 percent in West Pokot communities compared to 23 % nationally according to the 2014 KDHS.

Residents of Samburu and West Pokot counties are predominantly pastoralist communities whose main income sources are livestock and handcraft (beading, basketry, weaving, and woodcarving) by female family members. Harsh climatic conditions, underdeveloped social and physical infrastructure, and proneness to resource-based conflict have constrained development in West Pokot and Samburu counties with women and girls being the most affected. According to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), the Gross County Product⁴ (GCP) of Samburu County is the 4th lowest in Kenya at KES 44,147 and West Pokot is the 2nd lowest in the country at KES 38,021, compared to the national average of KES 96,779⁵. The development situation in Samburu and West Pokot counties is presented in Table 1 below.

¹ World Health Organization, website on FGM

² Kenya National Bureas of Statistics (KNBS), 2022, Kenya Demographic and Health Survey Report, Nairobi: KNBS, 2022.

³ Ibid.

⁴ An indicator that describes size of county economy.

⁵ KNBS (2019) GROSS COUNTY PRODUCT Report 2019

Table 1: Samburu and West Pokot Counties Fact Sheet							
Development Dimension	West Pokot	Samburu	National	Data Source			
Population Size	Male: 307,013	Male: 156,774	Male: 23,548,056	KNBS, 2019			
	Female: 314,213	Female: 153, 546	Female: 24,014,716				
	Intersex: 15	Intersex: 7	Intersex 1,524				
	Total: 621,241	Total: 310,327	Total: 47,564,296				
Gross County Product	38,021	44,147	96,779	KNBS, 2019			
(KES)							
Development Index	14%	15%	44%	NGEC, 2016			
Health Index	42%	41%	67%	NGEC, 2016			
Education Index	47%	47%	61%	NGEC, 2016			
Gender Equality Index	35%	34%	38%	NGEC, 2016			
Prevalence of FGM	74%	86%	21%	KDHS2014			
Prevalence of Child	30.4%	50%	23%	KDHS 2014			
marriage							
Access to electricity	3%	5.8%	9%	KNBS 2019			

Due to the limited access to infrastructure including electricity, people in the counties have limited opportunities for education, economic and livelihood activities, thereby experiencing low income and participation in education, which sustain continuation of traditional harmful practices for women and girls, such as FGM and child marriage. This is the cycle of poverty that they need to get out from and embrace transformative change.

Access to electricity is 5.8% in Samburu and 3% in West Pokot due to poor terrain and their vastness. Due to the limited availability of lighting, children cannot study adequately at night. Solar lanterns can provide a solution to protect girls against the risk of FGM and child marriage. The solar lanterns can support them to have adequate light for reading at night, which will result in improved retention and performance within the school system without also damaging their eyesight, reducing the risk of respiratory infections and the risk of fire which can be caused by the kerosene lamps. The activity aimed at strengthening awareness raising on ending FGM and child marriage among the target community that UNFPA has been working on in the ongoing UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM. The community, including teachers, village and religious leaders can be sensitized on the importance of education for both boys and girls, and abandoning harmful cultural practices. The solar lanterns can be utilized in community gatherings and dialogues led by the leaders to further discuss the matters on FGM and child marriage in the evening or early in the morning. Promoting education for both boys and girls by enabling them to study at home after the sunset can result in an increase of study hours, better academic performance, women's participation in socio economic activities and decision making, leading to enhancement of gender equality in the communities. Education provides an opportunity for boys and girls to challenge negative and persistent social and gender norms.

Another outcome that can be achieved through distribution of solar lanterns is income generation by women in the bead-making business. In the Samburu and West Pokot pastoralist communities, handcrafts such as bead making is a crucial source of family income. Women engage in beads production from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. when sunshine is available. The solar lanterns will support women to integrate the production of beads into their social hours in the evening. Currently, on average, women earn \$3-\$50 per bead sale (depending on the specific bead product) and US\$ 200 to US\$300 per month⁶.

In Kenya, primary education, which takes 8 years (starting at the age of six years) is partially free and compulsory. However, parents have to contribute to the cost of schooling, including reading materials, construction of school facilities, hiring teachers and uniform for the pupils. Secondary education (4 years), on the other hand, costs between US\$ 400 to US\$ 500 per child per year, including transportation, boarding, school lunch and events. Considering the average number of children per family in Samburu and West Pokot is 3 to 4, and other expenses that the family needs to manage, the current income from bead making is not sufficient to fully support family needs. The provision of solar lanterns can help to increase women's productivity and enable the family to meet the cost of education for their children, which will stop them from forcing girls to undergo FGM and child marriage for bride price, and reduce the economic burden on the family.

The UNFPA Kenya in partnership with Ushanga⁷ are currently implementing a Johari Beads Initiative which was co-launched with the Government of Kenya to economically empower women through making beads. The challenges of women in the bead making industry include access to markets to sell their products nationally and internationally. UNFPA in partnership with the Ministry of Sports, Culture and Heritage supports the women in the design, production and market access for the beads. Accordingly, UNFPA conducted a market scoping study in 2020 and developed a business model for the bead making initiative. It is therefore expected that the solar lanterns will strengthen the initiative for women's economic empowerment and poverty reduction in the community in the mid- to long-term, therefore protection from bodily and psychosocial violations associated with FGM and child marriage, among others.

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⁶ Interviews from the Ushanga Initiative

⁷ The Ushanga Initiative under the Ministry of sports, culture and Heritage seeks to transform the traditional ornamental bead making by women among the MAA speaking communities into a viable enterprise.



1.1. Project Goals

GOAL

Improved health and well-being of adolescent girls through reducing the risk of FGM and child marriage in Samburu and West Pokot counties by 2024.

- Output 1. Improved access to quality, equitable and inclusive education for adolescent girls and boys in Samburu and West Pokot counties.
- 1-1. Distribute 1,500 solar lanterns to 1,500 households with adolescent boys and girls.
- 1-2. Sensitize 10,000 (6,000 females and 4,000 males) community members on the elimination of FGM and child marriage⁸
- Output 2. Increased production and marketing of quality beads by women in Samburu and West Pokot counties.
- 2-1. Distribute 500 solar lanterns to women in the beads production business.
- 2-2. Support women's beads production and marketing through the Johari Beads Initiative.9

⁸ This activity will be implemented through UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Eliminating FGM.

⁹ This activity will be implemented through UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Eliminating FGM.



2. PROJECT BENEFICIARY DATA

The solar lanterns were distributed to the following beneficiaries in Samburu and West Pokot counties:





Women with disabilities in bead business



723 adolescent boys and 771 adolescent girls



32 adolescent boys with disabilities and 19 adolescent girls with disabilities

UNFPA in partnership with the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), Ushanga Kenya and World Vision Kenya, distributed solar lanterns to 468 women in the beads business (175 in Samburu and 293 in West Pokot) and 32 women with disabilities (25 in Samburu and 7 in West Pokot).

The project also distributed the solar lanterns to 723 adolescent boys (250 in Samburu and 473 West Pokot) and 771 adolescent girls (244 in Samburu and 527 in West Pokot). In addition, 51 adolescents with disabilities including 32 boys (2 in Samburu and 30 in West Pokot) and 19 girls (4 in Samburu and 15 in West Pokot) also benefitted from the distribution. Therefore, a total of 2,045 (102%) solar lanterns were distributed to women and adolescent boys and girls in accordance with the criteria agreed upon by all key stakeholders.



3.PROJECT PROGRESS MONITORING FINDINGS

3.1 Introduction

A monitoring survey was conducted between June-October 2023 in Samburu and West Pokot counties targeting 26 women in the bead making business (10 in Samburu and 16 in West Pokot) as well as 148 (50 in Samburu and 98 in West Pokot) who received solar lanterns. This section presents the results of the survey.

3.2. Output 1: Improved access to quality, equitable and inclusive education for adolescent girls and boys in Samburu and West Pokot counties.

of school going children in target households who reported increased study hours at least by 2 hours.

Based on the survey, 54% of adolescent girls and 30% of boys increased their study hours at 2 hours, while 30% of adolescent girls and 37% of adolescent boys reported having increased study hours by 1 hour followed by 11% girls and 17% boys who had increase study hours by 30 minutes, and 2% girls and 14% boys who had recorded a more than 3 hours increase in their study time. While the girls attributed the increase in study hours to studying after completion of household chores, the boys indicated that they were able to study longer with their friends.

2,872

of community members (1,311 girls; 1,101 boys, 339 women and 121 men) were sensitized on prevention and response to FGM and child marriage.

The survey showed 92% of respondents indicated that they had received awareness on elimination of FGM and child marriage upon receiving the lanterns. The respondents reported that they had disseminated the information received to other community members, which is catalyzing the growth of anti-FGM movements.

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times of night or early morning dialogue/learning sessions within households on the health effects of FGM and child marriage in the target community using the solar lantern light.

A total of 30% of respondents answered that they have had conducted night or early morning sessions on FGM and child marriage while 19% of the responders have already conducted 3 times session in their community as champions of end FGM. This progress demonstrates the growing shift among community members and their readiness to push back against the FGM practice.

88%

of boys and girls who reported that declarations to end FGM and child marriage by target communities was done after receiving

Based on the survey findings, formal and informal end FGM and child marriage declarations made in at least 54 villages and communities after distribution of solar lanterns. Beneficiaries say the solar lantern distribution project with the Panasonic Corporation had precipitated discussion forums in the community.



3.3 Output 2: Increased production and marketing of quality beads by women in Samburu and West Pokot counties

100%

Respondents confirmed that the increased bead making output after receiving solar lanterns.

The survey conducted by UNFPA showed that women, on average increased their productivity from 62 to 87 per month. Notably, there are women who had collectively doubled their productivity. For example, a woman increased beads production from 60 beads per months to 120 beads per month. The lanterns benefitted individual women and their peers in the bead making business hence catalyzing an economic ripple effect.

100%

Respondents indicated increased income from the bead making business after they started suing solar lanterns to produce more beads at night.

On average, women increased their monthly income from KES 9,045 (US\$62) to KES 13,909 (US\$ 95). Some women doubled their income; for example, a woman in Samburu County increased her income from KES 10,000 (US\$ 69) to KES 20,000 (US\$ 138)). The expansion in income has enabled the women to address multiple household needs especially the cost of education for their children.

100%

Respondents confirmed having received training on the bead making business.

Ushanga Kenya trained women involved in the bead making business on production/design, marketing and branding as well as entrepreneurship. The respondents interviewed attributed the emerging growth and expansion in their businesses to the training provided and the skills that they had gained.





Enhanced safety of girls

The solar lanterns enhanced study programmes that created a protective environment for adolescent girls Before receiving solar lanterns, many girls went out for community night parties where they encountered abuse and the increased risk of teenage pregnancy and HIV This risk has reduced significantly, according to teachers and community leaders, because the adolescent girls and boys stay indoors to study. The solar lanterns have therefore increased the safety and well-being of girls.

Increased access to information and services

The solar lanterns support beneficiaries, their families and neighbors to charge their mobile phone, which enables them to access information and undertake critical transactions and services, including emergency services. UNFPA and other service providers including GBV helplines such as 1195 are thus able to provide information and link communities in remote community's to services.

Reaching out to rural populations and PWDs.

UNFPA and KRCS distributed the solar lanterns to communities in remote and marginalized rural locations that face multiple challenges, including poor infrastructure. The distribution also targeted women with disabilities who face stigma and are ostracized in the community. The lanterns have therefore promoted inclusivity and reducing the disparities and inequality that rural populations face in development

Strengthening partnerships

The solar lanterns strengthened partnership and collaboration between UNFPA, the KRCS, Ushanga Kenya, county governments and the Panasonic Corporation. This has made the Panasonic Corporation known and popular in Kenya.



Political transition in Kenya

Kenya conducted presidential and general elections in 2022 that triggered leadership and governance transitions at the national and county levels. Engagement with Samburu and West Pokot county governments for distribution of the solar lanterns was therefore put on hold until after the elections when government structures and leaders were reconstituted. This was necessary in order to strengthen accountability and ownership of project by the counties.

High demand for the solar lanterns

The demand for the solar lanterns outstrips the supply available. Samburu and West Pokot counties have limited access to electricity and have vast numbers of people who experience high levels of poverty. Therefore despite selecting beneficiaries based on comprehensive criteria, including house hold poverty indices a significant number of women and students missed the solar lanterns.

Humanitarian access

West Pokot and Samburu counties are prone to humanitarian crises, including resource driven conflicts and the attendant insecurity, droughts and floods. While drought exacerbated risks of FGM and child marriage, El Nino floods have rendered some parts of the two counties inaccessible. These challenges impede the bead making business due to limited raw materials and access to markets, and disrupts school attendance.



Solar power transforming families

The solar lantern issued to Alice continues to impact on multiple facets of her family. At fourteen-years-old, Alice is still in primary school and has found the solar lantern a precious source of light. Her Lowoy Village has no access to the national power grid, making the solar lanterns donated by the Panasonic Corporation through UNFPA and the Kenya Red Cross Society, a major milestone that promises to transform her life and her family.

Before receiving the solar lantern, Alice suffered the frustration of incomplete homework and poor performance in school because she was unable to study beyond nightfall. The solar lantern changed her life as she can now study at night for two more hours from 8.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. Her sisters and brothers also study together with her.

The solar lantern is has equally transformed other aspects of her family. Her mother; for example, can easily do domestic chores such as cooking and cleaning at night

Alice is passionate about ending FGM. She says it robs women and girls of their human dignity and imperils their social and physical potential to lead fulfilling. "FGM is a distortion of a woman's perfect body. I will work had with my peers to achieve an FGM-free generation, "she pledges!



Alice's dream is to be a doctor. She says she use the solar lantern light to study hard and save lives in Kenya!



Dream of education success lit up!

At Tandapos Primary School in West Pokot County, solar lanterns donated by the Panasonic Corporation through UNFPA have brought hope to Anthony, a 15-year old orphan. A year ago, Antony was not attending school due to extreme destitution. Luckily, a community leader intervened and had him enrolled at Tandapos Primary School.

Though excited and enthusiastic about the promises of attaining success in education, Antony faced the challenge of living in darkness at his home that hampered studies at night. Distribution of the solar lanterns

at his school was thus a turning point in his education. As one of the selected beneficiaries, Anthony has been able to expand his study ours at night and improve tremendously in his performance.

"The solar lantern has made my life as bright as the sun itself. I am now very competitive in school and I am confident about my dreams of great success in education coming true," he says. Antony loves Mathematics and his dream is to be a Math teacher.



Antony decries FGM as a harmful practice that violates the rights of women and girls, and impairs their opportunities in life. He vows to fight the practice by working with boys and girls in his community.

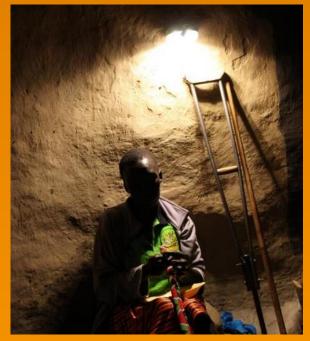


Bright future for a woman with disabilities

Nancy is a 32-year-old mother, living in Nateleng Village, West Pokot County. She has four children: a one-year-old girl, a three-year-old boy, an eight-year-old girl, and an eleven-year-old boy. Nancy is a person with disability due to a childhood burn that caused grievous harm to her right leg. She has been using crutches since then.

Nancy got married when she was 20 years-old and she is the breadwinner of her family - her husband is not employed. She has been engaging in bead making to eke out a living for herself and her family.

Through UNFPA and Ushanga Kenya, Nancy received the Panasonic solar lantern, which has improved her livelihood situation. Previously, she produced 10 beads per month. However, after Ushanga Kenya took her through marketing design and production training, and UNFPA provided solar lanterns donated by the Panasonic Corporation, her production has doubled to reach 20 pieces monthly.



As a result, her monthly income increased from KES 3,000 (US\$ 20) to KES 5,000 (US\$ 34). Nancy is optimistic that income from the bead making business will increase since the solar lantern light enables her to work longer at night. "The training provided by Ushanga Kenya and the solar lantern are a major boost for my business. I am lit up for a bright future," Nancy says, exuding visible elation.



7.RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Increase the supply of solar lanterns to women, girls and boys in West Pokot counties and other locations in Kenya that face similar development challenges.
- 2. Strengthen access to markets for women in the bead making business whose productivity has doubled as a result of having solar lanterns.
- 3. Train adolescent girls and boys on life skills that address the triple threat GBV, teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS.
- Engage with the county governments of Samburu and West Pokot to allocate resources for increased access to solar energy in rural areas.
- Integrate SRH and GBV information and services into the project to enhance the project impact.



UNFPA has collaborated with the Panasonic Corporation of Japan to end FGM in Samburu and West Pokot counties through provision of solar lanterns.





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