

Feb 8th, 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Giving a Voice to the Voiceless and Women's Education in Kenya

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Wasike, Lyndah, "Giving a Voice to the Voiceless and Women's Education in Kenya" (2019). *Africana Studies Student Research Conference*. 1.

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GIVING A VOICE TO THE VOICELESS AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Social stratification in any given capitalistic society leaves the poor voiceless. Moreover, children from well-off families attend prestigious schools, they are more informed and have resources to make meaningful life decisions. On the other hand, their poor counterparts attend low-cost schools and as if that is not enough, lots of problems claim a share of their lives. How can we make a safe, learning environment for teenage girls from humble families? Meekers, Gage, & Zhan (1995) cites that in many cases, adolescents are insufficiently or incorrectly informed about their changing sexuality, and about the consequences and responsibilities associated with sexual activity.

Given an African context like Kenya, where sexuality is labelled a taboo subject in public domain discussions (Boler at al.2003), lack of sex education jeopardizes the lives of girls. As result, most families or schools in rural Kenya may not avail any useful sexual information to teenagers. Consequently, for many girls, adolescence is a period of high risk of child marriage and pregnancy rather than one of safe transitions to healthy and productive adult roles (Nguyen&Wodon.,2015). As a growing concern, teenage pregnancy among poor schoolgirls in rural Kenya has sparked debates and numerous suggestions on the need to avail information to help young people to make important decisions about their sexuality (e.g. see Ahlberg,1994; Boler at al.2003; Njue et al., 2011; and Gary Knaul & Susan Rich, 1992;).A logical piece to begin with, is to exhaustively identify and challenge the outdated cultural norms that impair the effort to promote women's education in Kenya . Thus, this paper will analyze in detail, factors that retard the future of the vulnerable populations in rural Kenya as well as highlight the plans of the speaker, to mitigate the situation after her masters' studies abroad. In conclusion, Kourany,

Sterba and Tong (1992) cite that in any just society, the structure and practices of families must afford women the same opportunities as men to develop their capacities, to participate in political power, to influence social choices and to be economically as well as physically fit. (p.315).

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