

## **Daughters United: A Model for Girls' Leadership, Empowerment, and Reproductive Health Advocacy Through Safe Spaces and Cascading Leadership in Kibera, Kenya**

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Putting the Sustainable Development Goals into practice is an immense effort that must take into account the impact that can be made by women in the world's most impoverished places, paying close attention to their ability to make local change. Carolina for Kibera (CFK) is an organization that closely represents these ideals, working as a non-profit near Nairobi, Kenya in one of the world's biggest low-income urban settlements. During the summer of 2016 I will be conducting the fieldwork practicum component of my Master of Sustainable Development Practice degree with CFK to support their Daughters United program, which provides safe spaces for adolescent girls to learn about women's rights, reproductive health, and leadership. Conference participants who view my poster presentation will have a better understanding of the role that women play in creating sustainable local change.

Daughters United hosts workshops on numerous topics in neighborhoods across Kibera, a settlement riddled by gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS, and poverty. My investigation focuses on Carolina for Kibera's "cascading leadership" model, which encourages local leaders to be in charge of projects in their communities and to see themselves as agents of positive social change. I will be monitoring existing workshops taught through the program as well as creating and teaching new modules that aim to better inform the participants inspire them to be leaders, and ultimately stimulate sustainable development throughout Kibera. My work will also incorporate participatory research methods such as ethnographic observation field notes and pre- and post-test evaluation of girls participating in the programs to determine short-term impacts of the program on girls' perceived leadership capabilities.

I hypothesize that by combining skill development training and education with safe spaces and mentorship opportunities, the Daughters United program will have success in their goal areas measurable in the short term. My poster presentation will focus on the preliminary finding that I will have presented to Carolina for Kibera in order to better inform their program structure and operations.

I hope to highlight how the on-the-ground knowledge acquired through my fieldwork in Kibera will help contribute to techniques used by non-governmental organizations and non-profits to achieve socially inclusive development. This knowledge will inform development practitioners about the effectiveness of the safe space and cascading leadership model promoted by Carolina for Kibera specifically among adolescent girls. Based on my observations I believe that knowledge can be taken and used to better incorporate women into the development process in their own communities, therefore putting the Sustainable Development Goals into practice.