

# Spotlight

EVIDENCE FOR POLICY AND ACTION

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In October 2017, IHI researchers applied an action-based dissemination of research findings model at Kerezia – a rural community in Geita Region, Tanzania.

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A finding from the Children in Mining (CIM) study that children running into the mining area were at risk of gender based violence and HIV infections, was well received and found to be a concern by the community.

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In response to the research finding, lack of school was listed as priority issue because it forced adolescents into mining.

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One year down the road, after the dissemination workshop, the Kerezia community is building a new primary school.

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The CIM study was among the USAID funded Kizazi Kipya projects implemented by a consortium led by Pact-Tanzania.



How action-based  
dissemination  
can influence  
change at the  
grassroots

## KEREZIA STORY:

### THE POWER OF ACTION-BASED DISSEMINATION

Ms. Tausi Simba is happy. She is full of smile and optimism about the future of her children's education. Ms. Simba, a mother of two school-going daughters at Kerezia rural community in Buntubiri Village, Bukombe District, Geita Region, has every reason to be happy and full of that big smile!

You know why? Very soon – the issue of her daughters trekking long distances to a neighboring settlement with fear of deviating to the mining areas will be history, thanks to a new school project at Kerezia which has just taken off.

"I'm so happy for my two daughters because once is ready, I will transfer them to a new primary school at our settlement. The school is currently under construction," says Ms. Simba in an interview held recently at Kerezia. "Everyone at Kerezia is happy and would like to see this school open and start enrolling children soon," she stresses.



## New school project is living evidence

Ms. Simba is very much concerned about the risks her daughters - Margaret and Mwamvua - face to follow their studies at Buntubiri - the only nearby primary school in the area. Depending on the location of a particular house at Kerezia, the school is three to seven kilometers away - the distance Margaret, Mwamvua and other pupils trek to and from school to access their right to education.

This very new school under construction is a clear testimony of how community engagement informed by evidence can influence change at the grassroots. The project is a tangible output of an action-based dissemination for the Children In Mining (CIM) study done by Ifakara Health Institute (IHI) and partners at this Bukombe rural settlement over a year ago.

"During the (dissemination) meeting, they (scientists) told us to identify our top priorities. We had three priorities ranked as top: school, water, and road. We are happy to tell you that we have already taken steps to address one of our priorities. Through contributions, members of our community are now constructing a new primary school here at our settlement," informs Kerezia Chairman Kurulinda Teyeka.

According to Teyeka, each member of Kerezia contributed TZS5,000 for the first phase of the project whose target is putting up three rooms - two classrooms and an office for teachers. Small miners operating in the settlement located some ten kilometers from Ushiroambo - the Bukombe District headquarters - also contribute to the project, coordinator of mining activities at Kerezia, Mr. Peter Joseph, reports.

Mr. Joseph acknowledges that people engaged in mining in the area and their partners coming to collect sand with gold concentrates have been cooperative in supporting school

construction efforts. "We've agreed on a reasonable fee (depending on the level of engagement and amount of sand collected) payable by each one of them for supporting Kerezia development, including construction of the new primary school," he informs.

### Small contributions matter

Ms. Sofia Kabika, who chairs a 10-men committee, charged with overseeing construction of the school, reports walls of two classrooms and the office for teachers have already been erected. "The next step from here is roofing. We're optimistic that, with this commitment and the support from our partners in the development of Kerezia, the future is bright," she adds.

Ms. Kabika reports that the new school is being built on a seven-acre land bought by members of the Kerezia community through contributions and donations. "Our plan is building a total of nine classrooms - seven for the normal grades, one for aged children who couldn't join primary school on time due to various reasons, and one for the kindergartens," she explains.

Buntubiri Village Executive Officer (VEO) Mr. Yusto Mabuga says plans are underway to sensitize parents with primary school-going children to also contribute for desks. "We're going to use local technicians in making the desks. Three parents will contribute to make a single desk for their children," notes the VEO.

### Background

Last year, IHI Senior Social Scientist Dr. Sally Mtenga led a team which disseminated results emerging from the formative study for Children In the Mining (CIM) under the USAID funded Kizazi Kipya project led by Pact-Tanzania. The project aims to improve access to social-economic and health services for children living

in the mining areas in Bukombe, Songwe and Chunya districts. The study was conducted by Dr. Emmy Metta and Dr. Eveline Geubbels.

Using the action-based dissemination model, Dr. Mtenga in collaboration with Dr. Metta, Ramadhan Abdul (both from IHI) and Songo Kaliber (from Pact) provided members of the Kerezia community an opportunity to reflect on the findings and develop a plan of action to address the social-economic problems that face children living in the mining areas. The villagers were guided to prioritize key challenges facing children living in the mining areas as informed by the formative study.

This is what an excited village leader reported to Dr. Mtenga during her visit to the settlement a year after the dissemination: "We remember you as our trainer during the seminar you organized for us last year. You told us to prepare our priorities that will address the problem of children not going to school but rushing to the mining areas because some of the schools here are very far away. We had three priorities (water, road, and school).

We are happy to tell you that one of our priorities has been implemented and through the efforts of community members, we have constructed a foundation for the primary school here in our village [.....] I was really wondering how I could see you and inform you about this progress. I once asked Yasinta (CMO) how I could reach you [....]"

The Kerezia story is a tangible exhibit that scientists need to go beyond the traditional methods of sharing research findings and apply action-based dissemination where possible to influence change at the grass roots. Seeing our research contributing to the well-being of the community is a big story to both IHI and Pact.#