



THE BIG

CWORD

#TupepeeToHighschool



PublicPathways





CHANGE

Change is inevitable, this statement, heard so many times whenever a big decision is faced is true but that fact does not necessarily make the change easy, especially when this idea is presented to a child going to high school. At fourteen or fifteen years of age and for some being as young as twelve or thirteen, students find this to be one of the most stressful times in their lives.

The sudden decision to move to a new level of life, engulfed in fear, with new expectations from all directions, the unfolding adolescence stage with all its scary changes and feelings and a strange new look on every adult's face informing them that they need to be brave and is no longer held with the same regard as they initially were while in primary school usually forces teenagers into shock. This becomes a recipe for confusion and fear which when not handled correctly, results in terrible coping mechanisms in the teens to adapt to the change.





#TupepeeToHighSchool

Pathways Policy Institute (PPI), a policy, and accountability think tank, strongly believes that we as a society are indebted to our children and should help them become the very best versions of themselves and also equip them with all the information they need to make informed decisions about their futures, identified a gap in information dissemination especially when students are moving from one stage of life to the next. Our sister organization Drawing Dreams Initiative and with support from The Safaricom Foundation, and UNFPA helped us hold the 1st edition of the Tupepee to High school Mentorship program. This is a program that aims at preparing students transitioning from primary school to high school by equipping them with information that will ensure their transition to high school is smooth.

The first edition took place on 15th, 16th, and 17th July 2021, at Ndaragua Kahudha Ward, Kagondo High School in Wakong'o Ward, and Kwa Maina Ghetto in Maina Ward in Laikipia West Sub County. In attendance were High School teachers, Primary School teachers, Community representatives, Children's office representatives, young men and women from different professions, young mothers, and Campus students who were ready to speak to the students about their inevitable transition to High school.



From the very beginning, it was evident that the students were very eager to go to high school but were also very scared of the idea. The sessions started by introductions of all those in attendance followed by ice breaker songs and games to make the students feel more at ease, The students were then asked to briefly talk about what they felt were their biggest challenges and fears they have as students transitioning to high school:-

- Expectations to be extraordinary from their parents, the fear of getting bullied,
- High school relationships,
- Peer pressure around engaging in sex,
- Drug abuse

were some of the issues the students raised. The students were then put into groups with different facilitators assigned to them.

In these groups, different facilitators, with great patience took the students through the topics they had raised, they explained that the biggest issue observed was fear, once the students overcome this fear of the unknown, the rest would fall into place. They only needed to master the courage to take the first step in their four-year high school journey, which was to get to form 1. They were asked to concentrate on academics first and not worry too much about the relationships and that everything would happen exactly when it was meant to all that was required of them was to make good choices. With this in mind, they were reminded that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy; high School is known to provide opportunities, nurture talents, and enable self-realization. Therefore it was important for the boys and girls to acknowledge the platforms that present these opportunities eg. drama clubs, different sports, journalism clubs among others.

Teachers were also called upon to ensure the providence of the safest environments for the students, ensuring no-bullying would be witnessed in the schools





As the engagement was winding up the boys and girls were talked to about how to set goals and work towards achieving them and how to manage their menstrual health and hygiene once they got to high school. This was done through a demonstration session whereby the students got a chance to see how different sanitary products are used and how they should be disposed. Many of the students were in awe on seeing a menstrual cup for the first time. Their eyes widened and their mouths fell open at its sight as they enthusiastically asked to touch it. The boys were encouraged to be their sisters' keepers while in high school since menstruation is a normal process that cannot be ignored.

The boys openly expressed their gratitude for being involved in the menstrual health conversation and vowed alongside the girls to work very hard in high school and ensure they passed their exams and joined the university and colleges. This promise was fueled by Pathways Policy institute notifying them that it was now expected of them to one day in future to also mentor other students who will be transitioning from primary to high school, At the end of the interactions, over 250 girls were gifted with 3 packets of sanitary pads and all the students went home ready to face high school head-on.