

Fema Club Members

Most Significant Change Stories:

Secondary school students from Form I to Form VI





Stories of Change from Fema Club Members 2015-2023

© 2024 Femina Hip

These stories were collected between 2015 and 2023. They have been translated from Swahili into English with some grammar corrections. Some names have been changed to protect the privacy of the students. All students signed consent forms granting permission for their stories to be shared. However, express written permission from Femina Hip is required to reproduce any of these stories or any photographs in any other format or document.

Contact Femina Hip:

Box 2065 Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Phone: 022 2700 742

email: info@feminahip.or.tz

www.feminahip.or.tz

[Watch Stories of Change on Femina Hip's YouTube Channel](#)

Find more videos on the Femina Hip website www.feminahip.or.tz



Weston F. Katiti: Student from Lukundo Secondary School (Dodoma Region)

My name is Weston Frank Katiti (16), a Form three student at Lukundo Secondary School. I joined the Fema Club in 2019 when I was in Form one. After my parents separated my young sister and I were forced to stay with our father.

One day my young sister got her first period. She was afraid to inform our father. She told me because we were close, and she wanted some advice. I had learned about menstrual hygiene from the Fema magazine and during some Fema Club activities and so I was able to tell her what I knew. We managed to buy some sanitary pad, and I explained to her how to use them. I also gave her some school pocket money so she can buy what she needs. I feel that I can protect my sister and help her to stay in school because she is able to attend all her weekly classes, and not miss any due to menstruation.

Caris Renatus Burma: Student from Malangali Secondary School (Iringa Region)

The Fema Club has helped me to build an independent life. I started attending a boarding school when I was very young. When I started secondary school, I joined the Fema Club. The Fema Club taught me leadership and entrepreneurship skills. Through different Fema Club activities I learned that I could do something on my own to create a source of income for my future.

At first, I asked my friend to start a tree farm because it is a common farming activity in our area. My friend accepted but later he changed his mind, so we couldn't proceed with our agreed plan. I never stopped wanting to implement my dream. I started to save my pocket money so that I could have the capital to start the business.

When I managed to save some money, I asked my parents for help because I believed that business was a good idea. My parents wanted me to focus on my studies and not do business. But to me starting a business was a big deal, I wanted to accomplish



my dream. I was aware that challenges were there. Eventually, I was able to get one hectare on my own and I started to plant trees.

Later on, my parents understood my vision and saw that I knew what I was doing. After good results they started to support my farming activities and now I have two hectares of trees. Additionally, I buy clothes from Dar es Salaam and sell them to students in school.

Winfrida David: Student from Lukundo Secondary School (Dodoma Region)

My name is Winfrida David Ngalawa (17), a Form three student at Lukundo Secondary School in Dodoma. I joined the Fema Club when I was in Form one. Now I am in Form three and I share knowledge on gender-based violence with my community. It's the knowledge I received from the Fema Club.

My mother and I moved from the place where we used to live with my grandmother and rented a house at Chang'ombe in Dodoma. In our new place we met with a grandmother who was abusing her grandchildren by mutilating them (female genital mutilation, FGM). That old woman was completely ignorant of the effects of FGM.

A grandchild of that old woman told me of the severe pains she was in and that she was bleeding a lot after being mutilated. This hurt me a lot. I decided to share with my mother what that girl told me and convinced my mother that we must go and see that grandmother to educate and warn her on those FGM acts because she planned to mutilate other girls who were staying with her.

I shared FGM knowledge with my mother and its impact. My mother went and shared the same knowledge with that grandmother and added that it was against the law. That old woman promised to stop mutilating girls because she did not know that it was illegal and had bad effects on girls. I was sad to see that FGM is also practiced in urban areas, not only in villages as I initially thought. I have realized that FGM knowledge is important in urban areas too. I will continue to share knowledge on FGM which I got through reading Fema magazine.



Geoffrey Makomelo: Student from Zuzu Secondary School (Dodoma Region)

I joined a Fema Club in 2014 when I was in form one. I wanted to join the Fema Club because I could see it was a nice place to grow and learn. From what I learned in the Fema Club, I was able to contest for the position of Fema Club chairman. It was a stiff competition as I was contesting with my brother from form three. My brother won and I was elected to be his assistant.

When I was in form two, I contested again and I won, becoming the chairman of the Fema Club in our school. From my leadership I learned many things such as self-awareness and entrepreneurship. I was also going through puberty, but because I was more aware of the biological transformations happening to my body, I was able to understand better and I wasn't so worried. I also learned some control techniques from Fema magazine.

Through the Fema Club I also learned to explore business opportunities and use some basic business skills. I now have my small home garden which generates enough vegetables that I can sell some in the market. Additionally, the Fema Club has helped me to know the importance of having focus on where I want to go in the future.

Ismael Makowa: Student from Tumbi Secondary School (Pwani Region)

I became a Fema Club member after realizing that a Fema Club is a safe space for me and my health. I come from a poor family and from that experience I ended up hanging out with a bad group. My peer group used to drink alcohol and smoke marijuana and cigarettes, and I learned how to do all those things from them.

I never told anyone that I used those dangerous things, especially as I am a student. But with time I became addicted, I started to become weak because of the excessive use of drugs. My family started to see changes in me. When they asked me about my situation, I used to say I was sick. I used the same approach in school as well. I never accepted advice from anyone whether from home or from school.



The Fema Club mentor established a good friendship with me. I found myself trusting him and followed what he was telling me to do. He is a very friendly man and I never hesitated to talk to him. He gave me good advice including to join the Fema Club and to avoid bad groups. I accepted his advice because I knew that I was in safe hands. I have now recovered from the bad situation I was in. I have stopped using marijuana, smoking cigarettes, and drinking alcohol because of the Fema Club and our mentor.

Winfrida Maginga: Student from Buyuni Secondary School (Dar es Salaam Region)

My name is Winfrida Maginga (16), a Form three student at Buyuni Secondary School in Dar es Salaam. I joined the Fema Club in January 2019. We were gathered for a morning parade when one of the Fema Club leaders announced that those who would like to join this club should register their names after the parade. As soon as we were dispersed, I went to register my name, since I wanted to become a doctor. At first, I thought the Fema Club was all about sexual health education. We were taught by Fema leaders what Fema was and what they do. Mr. Lwambano, the mentor also taught us about entrepreneurship and volunteerism. I was very happy when I found out that there is more to being in a Fema Club than I thought.

Before joining the Fema Club I was a bit shy, I could not stand in front of a group of people and convey any message. I remember when it was my turn to deliver a morning speech, I would hide. But after I joined, I saw how people could speak with confidence. I asked myself: *if they can, why can't I?*

Moreover, I never had a chance to learn how the menstrual cycle works. When I got my first period, I was quite scared to tell anyone, not even my mother. I once heard neighbours and friends talking about how they use sanitary pads, but I had no idea what they were or how to use them. I began using a piece of cloth, but I did not know the right way to put them on. I would wash them and hide them under my bed, sometimes I would wear them when they were still a bit wet.

Then one day we were in a Fema Club discussion and a boy stood up and started explaining about the menstrual cycle, he explained it very well. I was surprised--



where did he get all this information? I learned how to use sanitary pads and pieces of cloth. I also gained more confidence and I remember telling my mother about my periods and asking her to buy me pads, she was amazed. I told her how I learned about the menstrual cycle, and she was happy. She reads the magazine now and then; her favourite pages are the cover and back cover stories. Through this, I now talk to my younger ones, neighbours, and fellow students. I tell them that they should not hide their periods, it is a normal thing. I do not want them to go through what I did. Thanks to the Fema Club, I am now self-aware, and I can stand for myself.

Elizabeth Steven: Student from Mtumba Secondary School (Dodoma Region)

My name is Elizabeth Steven (17), a Form four student at Mtumba Secondary School. I joined Fema Club in 2019. After some time in the club, I was selected to be the secretary.

In the past, I did not like going to school every day. Most of the time I went to school because my parents forced me and spanked me sometimes if I refused. When I was beaten at home, that is when I went to school. I remember attending Fema Club sessions and discussions. There was a Fema Club mentor who was teaching us the importance of education. She explained why girls should complete their education, what happens when students drop out of school, and what consequences students face when we do not graduate. After this Fema Club session, I went home and reflected a lot. I thought of the difficult life my parents have and that my children will also face a lot of challenges if I drop out of school.

That is when I decided to attend all Fema Club sessions and became a friend with the mentor. She advised me to be a responsible student and work hard in my studies. I asked what I needed to do to stay in school and complete my studies. The reason that I did not like school was because it meant staying with my father. He was very strict, and he beat us a lot. So, I thought it would be better to stay in town with my aunt and study there, rather than stay at home with my father. Through attending Fema Club sessions I learned to love school and performed well in my studies. Before I joined the Fema Club I used to get division three or four, even division zero in my



exams. After joining the Fema Club, my academic performance has changed, now I can score division one or two.

The Fema Club has really empowered me with skills to help me reduce my stressful thoughts from home. Recently, my mother brought me here to this school, and now I live with the second master's family because my father was beating me a lot and insulting me. When I told him that was not right to beat me, he said that I was arrogant, he accused my mother of hiding my evil deeds. Even with my improved academic performance, my father said, "Right now you are doing well, but you are still just a woman."

Despite this, I have realized who I am and what my responsibilities are as a child and as a student. I like reading Fema magazine as it has really transformed me. I prefer to read people's stories, like students who went through challenges but became successful academically.

Bakari Hiza Rashidi: Student from Mnyuzi Secondary School (Tanga Region)

I joined the Fema Club in Form one. I involve myself with club activities such as discussion of topics, team activities, leadership, assisting in cleaning health facilities, and planting trees.

I heard about the opportunity for our Fema Club to attend this Youth Conference in Dar es Salaam through our club teacher and mentor. He is always supportive of the club's initiatives including attending club events at neighboring schools. Our club mentor educates us and insist on discipline and dedication to the things we do.

Before joining a Fema Club, I was involved with the wrong crowd and got into a lot of trouble. I used to harass and even bully girls at my school. I was frequently called in for disciplinary action. Since joining a Fema Club, I have stopped all those bad habits. I have become focused and more organised, and I no longer associate with troublemakers. I have become an advocate for good behavior in my Fema Club. I counsel and advise students against skipping school, associating with bad crowds, and using drugs.



A significant change I see in my life is that I have developed a volunteering spirit and through this I have become a leader in the club to the point where people see it and comment that I have changed a lot.

Cecilia Mbagi: Student from Kashaulili Secondary School (Katavi Region)

During Form one, my grades were good, and I held first to third position in my class. Unfortunately, in July of that year my mother fell critically ill and was hospitalized. I was living with other relatives at home. My grandmother had to assist my mother at the hospital, and so I was left to do all the housework. The relatives started harassing me and complaining about my mother's illness.

In Form two, I started getting bad grades. I would cry every time I thought of my mother's bad health. I was so worried and was even fainting frequently from the fear. At Fema Club meetings, our club mentor saw that I was depressed and in an anxious state and called me for counseling. I told him my worries and he gave me courage to persevere. Our mentor and the Fema Club members have been a great help in counseling and supporting me through this situation. My grades have improved again, and I now hold fourth position, up from fifteenth.

Through Fema magazine I have learnt so many things about myself. By reading articles that directly concern me as a girl, Fema has truly helped improve my academic performance but also taught me about farming, gardening, and volunteering. The Anti Cos section of the magazine and peoples' testimonials give me the motivation to move on in my life and perform well in my studies.



Dominic Shayo: Student from Binza Secondary School (Simiyu Region)

I joined a Fema Club through friends. I am very involved with the peer training we do in the club on menstruation, early pregnancy, and entrepreneurship. These are some of the topics I like to share and discuss with my fellow students at school.

I have seen many changes in my life since joining a Fema Club. Before joining, I had low self-esteem. I have long been mocked and harassed by fellow students for having a feminine sounding voice.

I began reading Fema magazine when I joined the Fema Club in my school. Of interest were the topics where I learned about gender rights. I learned that men and women are equal. I related my condition to that of a woman who was being discriminated against in the past but is now in a better condition. I am hopeful that my situation will also change.

Being in a Fema Club has boosted my confidence. I love singing and I can now express myself in public through song and dance, and I am not afraid of harassment. Also, in the past I would only socialize with girls as boys would discriminate and harass me; however, after being in a Fema Club I have made male friends too.

A significant change from Fema Club membership has been self-awareness and confidence. Harassment from boys no longer brings me down. I continue to make friends with them and some of them now show me support.

Happiness Emmanuel: Student from Nyalikungu Secondary School (Simiyu Region)

I joined a Fema Club in 2015. Every Friday, we would discuss various issues covered in the magazine. Fema Club has empowered me a lot in my economic endeavors.

In October 2017, I started making washable menstrual pads. I learned this from our Fema Club mentor when I was in Form six. We used clean white cloth, soft towels, and buttons to produce pads by sewing them together with needle and thread.



The pads we made were mostly for demonstration, but once we are back in school, we plan to make enough so we can sell to students and anyone who will be interested in buying them.

As a member of a Fema Club, I have received training on how to avoid early pregnancy and the dangers of engaging in sex at an early age. This training has greatly influenced me not to engage in sex at an early age. I share this knowledge with my peers. Membership in the Fema Club has boosted my confidence and my freedom to speak out.

Julius Chrispine: Student at Minaki Secondary School (Pwani Region)

I joined a Fema Club in 2016 while in Form five. I met Fema Club leaders who were looking to register new club members. I was interested and joined as I was aware of Femina Hip's activities. I had been reading Fema magazine when I was a student at Mwanza Secondary School, and I followed Fema through social media. I commend Femina Hip for nurturing student confidence and talents, I take every opportunity to develop my talents and leadership skills. I am now the secretary of the club and I motivate other students to join our Fema Club.

Before joining the Fema Club, I did not know much about sex or sexual health. I had a girlfriend at 18 while I waited for my Form four results. We had not had sex yet, but I was under pressure from my friends to convince her to have sex with me. Luckily, time passed without us seeing each other and then school placements came out--I went to Minaki Secondary School while my girlfriend went to Tabora Girls High School.

As a member of the Fema Club I continued reading Fema magazines and learned more about the challenges of having relationships at a young age, and the benefits of delaying relationships and concentrating on academics. Youth would ask questions in articles about relationships and that is where I got my answers. I also learned about how a girl's body changes during menstruation, how to understand a sexual partner's feelings, and how not being selfish in a relationship. I realized that I am still a student and must concentrate on studies--relationships will come after I am finished school.



Many of my fellow students keep on insisting that I should find another girlfriend. I also think about finding another girl to have sex with, as it is what we boys think of and often discuss. But through the Fema Club and the questions and answers page of Anti Cos, I learned that it was not proper to be a playboy. I started applying what I learned from the stories.

After reading stories in Fema magazine on relationships and sexual health, my perceptions of them have changed. Before getting into a relationship with my girlfriend I was performing well in school, later as my thoughts were always on my girlfriend and my school performance suffered. That's why I decided to brake off the relationship and let go of sexual thoughts. I put more effort in my studies now and my grades have improved again. I still talk with my ex-girlfriend during the holidays, but only as friends. I have chosen studies over a girlfriend.

Joan: Student (Simiyu Region) *(name changed for confidentiality)*

My name is Joan, I am 18 years old. I am the only child of my parents, though they separated before I was born. In 2003, I started to live with my father and grandmother. I completed my primary education in 2014 and I was selected to join Form one in 2015. But my father wanted me to get married so that he could receive 17 cows as a bride price, but my uncle advised I was too young, and he should wait.

When I was in Form two both my grandmother and my father wanted me to get married; this time my father introduced me to a second man. They agreed on the marriage without involving me. My father tried to force me to talk to the man through his phone, but when I refused, he caned me heavily and would no longer speak to me.

When I was entering Form two, my father refused to give me pocket money to buy stationary. I told my Fema Club mentor about the situation, and she assisted me. My father told the man to bring me gifts, I don't know what kind of gifts because I never took them. In April 2018, he sent gifts again; I did not take them. My grandmother became angry because that man was rich. Again, I reported the case to my Fema Club mentor. My mentor took me to the Ward Education Officer (WEO), who



communicated with my two uncles via phone. They said they knew nothing and that they did not support my father's decision, but they were hiding the truth.

In May 2018 as I was preparing for my mock exams, my father was in the process of receiving the bride price again. I informed my mentor and asked my uncles why they were gathering; they lied to me saying that they were holding a clan meeting. I heard my father saying he would not give me pocket money and he would not speak to me. I had worked as a farm laborer to get money to meet my needs including buying a torch for studying at night. I thank God I got division one, the highest score possible, in the Form four national exam. Today I don't live at home, my father doesn't talk to me, and he fled his home after being summoned by the Region Education Officer.

I have been reading Fema magazine, for example the issue on gender-based violence. I was inspired to make that kind of decision by girls from Mara who escaped from female genital mutilation. My attitude has changed especially after reading Fema magazine. I am now confident to defend my rights and I like defending other women's rights just like my mentor.

Loveness Mwaiswelo: Student at Ndobu Secondary School (Mbeya Region)

I joined a Fema Club in 2016 while in Form two. With motivation from teachers, I registered as a member of the club and soon became the chairperson. Fema magazine has motivated me to study hard and concentrate in school. This led to good grades in my Form two exam where I got a 1.9 GPA. I was first in my class.

Being in a Fema Club has also helped shape me into a confident girl. I was especially touched by girls in Fema magazine expressing their dream of becoming doctors. I have also read magazine issues discussing topics such as how to build self-confidence and how to say no to sexual advances from men.

I also like to read articles on entrepreneurship in Fema magazine. At a time when I and my family were facing financial difficulty, I often skipped meals while in school because I didn't have money. With help from my mother, who makes clothes, and knowledge on entrepreneurship from Fema magazine, I started making skirts during

the weekend for sale to students at my school. I started off by making my own skirt. Students at school liked it and asked me to make skirts for them as well. I make and sell the skirts at 5,000 shillings each. During the last holiday in December, I sold 45 skirts. All of this is a result of the Fema Club where we were taught to earn income through entrepreneurship and not be deceived by men. Our club mentors taught us that students might end up pregnant when they engage in sexual activity for the sake of money. I decided that I would learn tailoring and how to make clothes from my mother and make my own income.

A significant change in my life from Fema Club membership is that it has motivated me to continue with studies in pursuing my dream of becoming a doctor like those testimonials in Fema magazine.





Bakari Hiza Rashidi: Student from Mnyuzi Secondary School (Tanga Region)

I joined the Fema Club in Form one. I involve myself with club activities such as discussion of topics, team activities, leadership, and practical things like assisting in cleaning health facilities and planting trees.

I heard about the opportunity for our Fema Club to attend the Youth Conference in Dar es Salaam through our club teacher and mentor who is always supportive of the club's initiatives including attending club events at neighboring schools. Our teacher mentor educates us and insist on discipline and dedication to the things we do.

Before joining a Fema Club, I was involved with the wrong crowd and got into a lot of trouble. I used to harass and even bully girls at my school. I was frequently called in for disciplinary action.

Since joining a Fema Club, I have stopped all those bad habits. I have become focused and more organized, and I no longer associate with troublemakers. I have become an advocate for good behavior in my Fema Club. I counsel and advise students against skipping school, associating with bad crowds, and using drugs.

A significant change I see in my life is that I have developed a volunteering spirit and through this I have become a leader in the club to the point where people see it and comment that I have changed a lot.

Lightness Michael: Student from Msalato Secondary School (Dodoma Region)

My name is Lightness Michael (16), I am a Form four student at Msalato Secondary School in Dodoma. I am the chairperson for the Fema Club here. I joined the club in 2018 as a Form one student.

I got my first period in grade 7, it was a "visiting day" (*parents visit their children at boarding school*), and my mother was the one who saw the blood on my skirt, I was unaware. She bought some pads and taught me how to put them on. That was around July, after that first period, it went on hiatus. When I went back home after completing grade 7, my mother asked me about my periods. I told her that I didn't



have any period ever since. She was very worried that I got pregnant. She started rebuking me, "what did you do?" she asked me. I didn't understand what she was saying.

In January 2018 as she was escorting me to school, I got my period in the car. She asked me again, "what have you done?" She didn't seem to trust me at all. Even after remaining here at school, I got periods in my first two months, then it paused again. I told her after going home on leave, she asked me the same question. I know my mother is short-tempered, so I found a phone and called my grandmother. My grandmother is an ex-nurse. I told her about the condition, and she replied, "maybe it's because you are changing environments." I told my mother, but she was very skeptical. One time, she took me for a pregnancy test. During the long break in June, I got my period, but I wasn't getting it after returning to school or I would get it for only one or two days.

As the condition persisted, my relationship with my mother worsened. She would insult me saying that I was a prostitute and she threaten to stop paying my school fees. Because I started growing, some boys were after me. My mother realized that. I have some male friends, and my mother concluded that I was having affairs with them, considering that I am very charming and friendly/social.

As a result of reading Fema magazine, I got the idea of making ice lollies (ice pops) when I was home, as I was waiting for my form two national exams results. I got that freedom to do so because my mother travelled to take care of her sick sibling. I would sell one ice lolly for 100 Tsh. I was selling them with assistance from my uncle who is also a form four student. He is freer than me because he is a boy, he can go out easily. I saved my money up to 170,000 Tsh. My mother returned and found the money, I was in trouble. She believed that I was sleeping with men to get the money. She took all of it. The Form two results came out and I scored division one. When I came back home for an emergency break due to a Coronavirus outbreak, it was more challenging. That was because everyone was home, including university students in our neighbourhood. One day, I was outside our house, a boy passed by and gave me a hi. Mother started to accuse me of bringing 'men' to her house. She beat me. She even pulled a knife on me.



Stories of Change from Fema Club Members 2015-2023

Fema Club and magazine have helped to restore my relationship with my mother. She started to trust me; the magazine has got us closer. I took copies of the magazine home, and my mother decided to go through them to see what was inside. She eventually changed her attitude towards me. Fema magazine has also increased my confidence, I am now capable of facing my mother. Last year, I brought a copy of Fema magazine home during holidays, which was about menstrual cycles. I intentionally put it in my mother's bedroom, she saw it and reacted harshly. She claimed that I wasn't paying attention to my studies just so that I could read 'the stupidity' in the magazine. I did not know how I got the confidence, but I started explaining to her about the magazine. I told her I got it from a club at school. We learn a lot in the club including entrepreneurship. I urged her to go through it and that she would easily understand it due to the simplicity of the language used. She started reading it right away, and I saw her reading the article about menstruation.

When the mistrust started to decrease, I could talk to her about menstruation. She also started listening to me, about what I wanted to do after form four, waiting for the results. She allowed me to tell her what was on my mind. I told her that I would like to take a three-month computer course, and she agreed.



Latifa: Student *(name changed for confidentiality)*

I joined Fema Club in 2017, when I was in Form two. At Fema Club, I learned knowledge and skills that are important both at school and at home. In Fema Club discussions, for example, I realized that entrepreneurship and self-employment is possible. I am now engaging in entrepreneurship activities with my mother. When I am at school my mother cooks fish and when I get home, I sell them. I use the money I earn to buy school materials and to support my mother and my cousin and younger sibling.

Most of all, Fema Club has taught me to be confident and speak up for myself. For example, I had to attend a parents' meeting at school in place of my parents. Before, it would have been challenging for me to participate because everyone there was my elder. But my experience at Fema Club gave me the confidence to stand and talk before an audience. The parents' meeting was a discussion about ways of improving primary school performance. I was able to freely express my opinions, which included advice to primary school students to form discussion groups (like Fema Club) and to start having morning speeches for all students to present what they have learned or talk about their own personal interests. Like me, this would give all students the chance to gain confidence speaking in front of a crowd. Additionally, Fema Club has equipped me with the skills to take care of myself and my personal hygiene, especially during menstruation.



Amina: Student (Dar es Salaam Region) *(name changed for confidentiality)*

When I was in primary school, I was living with my grandmother. After completing primary school, my parents took me to live with them and my siblings at Temeke. My sister and brother didn't proceed with school, and I can say they compromised their lives. Our father was blaming it all on our mother. Sometimes when they had quarrels, they involved us--my father even insulted us. I was not used to seeing people argue and I didn't like it at all. I was not able to focus on my studies when they were arguing, everything just evaporated.

During exams, I was sitting empty-headed. In the last term of Form three my mother left home, leaving me and my younger sister with my father. One brother and sister were already gone. We started to live as father wanted. I was going to school, and I was not allowed to go anywhere after returning from school. Sometimes, he would leave in the morning and come back home drunk in the evening.

In school, at first, I was not interested in joining the Fema Club. However, the mentor advised me to join the club. The club teaches things like entrepreneurship and that was what attracted me most because I like business.

Before I joined the Fema Club, I was so stressed because of the family problems, and I had no one to talk to and counsel me. I became short-tempered. I started having a sexual relationship with a classmate. The Fema Club mentor called us, together with my mother, and we were told to stop the relationship as we were still students. We didn't listen and she noticed, so she called me again. I told her it was because I had no one around close to me, that is why I had decided to have a partner so that I could share what I was going through and get some consolation. But the club mentor told me that that was not a positive solution, and that I should not engage in sexual relationships while schooling.

Before my mock exam, I gave up the boyfriend because I saw he was causing me problems. I got closer to the club mentor, and she was advising me on how to do business. She requested permission from the head of school for me to sell snacks called 'vikokoto' at school. She was taking some of them to sell to other teachers and



she was giving some to other students to sell during break time. Every Friday she was giving me all the money. My results from the Form Four mock exams were not good - I scored division four. Before national exams, we did pre-national exams and I got division two. I scored the same in the national exams. Now, I am in advanced level secondary school, but my old school still invites me back to talk about my experiences in some Fema Club events. The most significant change I got after engaging in a Fema Club is self-awareness.





Kuruthum Maziku: Student at Mpunze Secondary School (Shinyanga Region)

I started involving myself with the Fema Club soon after joining the Femina DREAMS project. At the time I was in Form one. I have learned so many things about keeping myself safe and how to improve my academic performance. I come from a poor family, and there was man who wanted to provide for my needs, including paying bills for meals when I was in school, in exchange for sex. Through the Fema Club and Femina's DREAMS project, I realized how to deal with men of that type.

Then I thought of doing business and I started looking for start-up capital. I asked my parents, but they were not able to support me. I went to my fellow students, who were not able to support me either. I then went to our club mentor. She wanted to know what I wanted the money for. I explained to her that I was going to make mandazi. She lent me 5,000 Tsh. She encouraged me and offered me a space in her office for keeping the mandazi during class sessions. During break time I would go to her office to pick up the mandazi to sell them to students.

Although the business had challenges, I was careful with time management, and I tried to make sure that my business did not affect my studies. At one point I was about to give up and I went to my mentor, but she advised me not to give up, and instead she told me how to improve my product. With her advice I managed to make 20,000 Tsh and I returned the 5,000 Tsh to my club mentor. Later, when I saw that the business was too challenging, I decided to stop selling mandazi and buy and sell chickens instead. My plan is that when I have enough capital, I will buy goats and mix them with my family goats.

I also used 8,000 Tsh to start another less challenging business of selling lollipops. In this business, I generate 2,000 Tsh of profit every day. Right now, I have 30,000 Tsh generated from selling the lollipops. The result of this business is that I have managed to avoid men who use their money to persuade girls to have sex with them. Also, I have improved my class performance from having Ds to division two in my Form two national exam results. Also, I have confidence in myself so that I can now ask questions in the class, something which I never did before. Moreover, I can afford my school needs – I can buy exercise books and pens.



Student in Form Four: (Mbeya Region) *(name not used for confidentiality)*

After my parents separated, I had to take care of my younger sister alone. I was also desperate to compete with my peer group, who were wearing new clothes and buying nice things.

To earn money, I started having sex with men and most of them did not use a condom. My customers were police officers, teachers, bankers, and doctors. I used to earn fifty to sixty thousand shillings for sex, except when a customer was a student-teacher. Teachers on placement only gave me ten thousand shillings because they had little money. To avoid getting pregnant, I used a local remedy for contraception. I drank a jug of ashes mixed with water after I had unprotected sex. To appeal to my customers, I applied Kambewa (salt) to my vagina so it would contract and appear as if I had not had sex recently.

After joining the Fema Club, I changed my behavior. I am no longer having unsafe sex. I realized having unsafe sex was not good for my health or wellbeing. The Fema Club mentor advised us to avoid dangerous behaviors, like unprotected sex, and taught us safe ways of generating income without endangering our lives. Support from the club motivated me to stop using a phone at school, because that was tempting me to go back to my old behavior. Now, I stay at school and concentrate on my reading. This year, the Fema Club gave me the confidence to go for two HIV tests. I was lucky. I am HIV negative.

I have decided to concentrate and study hard for my form four exams, so that I can get my Certificate of Secondary Education.



Antonia Mathias: Student at Kishimba Secondary School (Shinyanga Region)

I started involving myself with the Fema Club in 2017 after joining the Femina DREAMS project. Through the Fema Club I have learned so many things including techniques to avoid temptation and to have confidence in myself. Our Fema Club mentor advised us to save from the pocket money which we get from our parents. I took the advice and saved a little money until I managed to have 5,000 Tsh. After this, I went to our tenant who owns a shop to ask him for support and collaboration to sell mandazi at his shop. He agreed and I started cooking and selling mandazi. I make sure that my business does not affect my home and school timetable.

I generate 4,000 Tsh as profit; I save 3,000 Tsh and take 1,000 Tsh for my own needs like buying menstrual pads and scholastic materials. Eventually, I accumulated 50,000 Tsh through my savings and I decided to send the money to my brother who is living in Kigoma so he could buy goats for me. He bought two goats, later I added another two. My goats have reproduced and have now increased in number. Although I am engaging in the business of raising goats, this has not stopped me in my first business of selling mandazi.

Now I have a bank account at DTB Bank where I save my money, instead of keeping it at home. Up to now I have 60,000 Tsh in my bank account and I now plan to grow rice and engage in agriculture. I will get capital by selling my goats and taking savings from my bank account. I will do this business when I am waiting for my Form four exam results, because the exams will be finished in November. This is during the rainy season when people begin planting rice. My parents know about the bank account and are very supportive.



Elias Clement Rwegerera: Fema Club Alumni (Mwanza Region)

In 2012, I joined Fema Club after starting Form one in Bwiru Secondary School. Eventually, I became one of the Fema Club leaders.

Fema Club has shaped me into a young man; it gave me leadership skills and life skills. As a club leader, I collaborated with two other Fema Clubs to establish a network of Fema Clubs in the Mwanza region – “The Mwanza Fema Clubs Federation”.

Starting this network has shaped my belief that I can be successful in anything. Even after completing my Certificate of Secondary Education, I was still active in the network. I then joined Advanced Certificate studies at Pugu High School in Dar es Salaam, where I became a Fema Club member again. There, I met other vibrant club members, and we instigated a Dar es Salaam Fema Club Federation with the support of the president of Dar es Salaam University Students Organization. I then moved back to Mwanza to complete Form six.



Stories of Change from Fema Club Members 2015-2023

Inspired by Femina's work and the way Femina conducts its activities, I started a group of Fema alumni with my friends; we named it Youth Power Initiative. We organized various social and charitable activities, such as visiting orphanages and peer education initiatives. We formed social media platforms like WhatsApp groups and Instagram pages to simplify communication amongst ourselves and others. In July 2018, we registered with the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children as a non-governmental organization. Now, Youth Power Initiative is a youth-led, membership-based initiative with about 50 members who are students from 8 universities in Tanzania, as well as students from universities in Kenya, India, USA, and China. With Femina as a role model, Youth Power Initiative's areas of focus are economic empowerment, sexual and reproductive health, volunteering, self-awareness, and culture. Femina has contributed to 98 percent of my progress!



Aisha Ally: Student from Ludewa Secondary School (Njombe Region)

One day I attended a Fema Club session, I was so impressed and decided to join. What impressed me were the activities done by the club including volunteering, helping the needy, and visiting patients. I am now the chairperson of the club; I strive to change people who have the habits that I had. As a club, we mobilize our fellow students and talk to them about Fema related issues, so they learn from us.

To me Fema is like my agent of change, I was reckless and not disciplined, I liked to go to 'Vigodoro' (*contemporary open ceremonial vigils with loud music where people informally dance*) and go back home at midnight. Madam Amina, our club mentor talked to me about my behavior, she counselled and told me if I join the Fema Club, I will be able to change from the behavior that was making me underperform academically.

Fema has made a significant contribution because it teaches me with examples. Our mentor told me a story of a girl who had the same behaviors as me, she ended up getting pregnant. She has been citing some examples from Fema magazine. Also, when every issue comes out, she gives me a copy to read intensively It has helped me to make an informed decision of quitting the behaviors.

Currently, my performance has improved, I get time to self-study and do assignments. Before, when I came from vigodoro late at night I was going to sleep because of tiredness. In class, I was so drowsy, I couldn't pay attention. Now, I have trained myself to keep time, I have my timetable to study, I see the changes in my academic performance.



Dotto Daudi: Student (Simitu Region)

I am a Form four student at Lyusa Secondary School. My first contact with Fema was when I was in primary school, class seven. My sister was in secondary school and a Fema clubber, she would bring a copy of Fema magazine home. I was very interested. In 2017, when I was in form one, I joined the Fema Club at my school. We have been doing various activities in the school and even in the community including educating people about teen pregnancy, family planning, and children's rights. Fema has changed my life.

Through reading Fema magazine I learned about generating income using my talent and saving. I live some distance from my school. I had to walk about 17 km every day from home to where the school is located. I was normally late; hence I was missing some sessions. My parents couldn't afford a bicycle for me. I remembered to use the knowledge from Fema and my weaving talent. I started to make raffia mats/carpets and sell them for 10,000 Tsh to 30,000 Tsh a piece. After a month, I made about 170,000 Tsh which is enough to buy a bicycle. I was not working every day, only on weekends. I was getting raffia for free because they are just wild bushes, so I didn't need financial capital. I used 'kibubu' to keep my money (*Kibubu is a wooden piggybank*).

Fema has also made me confident and self-aware. It fuels me to plan and execute my plans. The Fema magazines has been significant in my life since primary school.

Ibrahim Maira Pius: Student at Tai Secondary School (Mara Region)

Immediately after joining Tai Secondary School, I joined the Fema Club. We have been doing various activities including farming. Mara is at the border of Tanzania and Kenya, and life is so hard there. The major economic activities are small scale farming and fishing. Due to the economic hardship, sometimes I had to miss school to go fishing so I could raise money to cater for my requirements. Before that, I was performing well in class, but my results started to drop. I was fishing with a hook; I could catch about 3 tilapias which I would sell for around 5,000 Ths each. That means, I could get up to 15,000 Ths at once, some days up to 30,000 Ths. That posed another



challenge. I started to be focused on making money instead of studying. Peer pressure from my friends was also playing a role, they would convince me to go to a disco after we have got some money.

After seeing that I had changed, my Fema Club mentor started to check up on me. He realized that my absenteeism was due to financial challenges, so the whole Fema Club organized to help me. Using the club's fund, they provided me with a small amount of money so that I could focus on school. I was actually about to drop out of school, but the Fema Club helped me to stay in school.

Rachel Festo: Student from Muunga Secondary School (Kilimanjaro Region)

I joined the Fema Club in 2018, and now I am the secretary for the club. My Fema driven significant change is based on menstrual issues. I got my first menses when I was in Form one. At home, I live with my father, brother and three younger brothers, I am the only girl. It was very difficult to face my father and tell him about my needs when it comes to menstruation. When I needed money, I couldn't express why I need it, so I was not able to ask him for money. Sometimes when I did, he would tell me that I had to make money for myself because life is so hard. I told my brother that I was not okay with the way father was treating me.

At the club, we started a *mandazi* (fried bread) making project. I learned how to make mandazi, I started to find my capital. On Sundays, I was selling my labor to other people's farms, and I managed to get the capital for making mandazi. I did that for about five days, I used the money I earned to buy sanitary pads.

One day, we were given the "Red Agenda" issue of the Fema magazine. I brought it home and gave it to my father to read. My brother who was a Fema Club member when he was a student helped to explain things to my father. When we were talking about menstruation using the Fema magazine, I started to gain the confidence to talk about it. Eventually, my father understood and apologized to me for his awful replies when I needed money from him. From that point, he has been taking care of me including giving me money. He has been insisting that I should not quit the Fema Club and I should be educating others.



Ndala Abel: Student from Busangi Secondary School (Shinyanga Region)

My name is Ndala Abel, a Form four student and a Fema Club member at Busangi Secondary School. I use what I have learnt to direct my life and even to teach others.

I started menstruation when I was in standard seven. I was at home and felt to go to use the washroom where I saw that it had started. I told my mother, and she was very supportive, telling me that it was normal. She taught me how to use a cloth to keep myself clean. I used to ask her for sanitary pads when I needed and, if she had money, she would buy. If she didn't have money, I would use a cloth. But when I used a cloth, I was not able to go to school and I stayed home. In our culture it's a taboo to ask your father or a male guardian for things like underwear or sanitary pads. Mum would warn me not to dare ask my father for money to buy pads because it would mean that I am not well mannered.

But I had learned from Fema that this is not right, and from experience that I sometimes missed school because of lack of sanitary pads I knew I had to do something about it. So, one day on a dinner table I asked my father money to buy pads and underwear as I was about to go to a hostel and those things were important to me. The whole table went quiet. He promised to give me the money. Later that night my mother asked me where I have learnt to be so confident. I told her about Fema Club and the magazines and the teachings that we get. She was happy and said to have learnt something herself that night.

The change that I have seen in my life is to be confident and to know that we don't have to discriminate parents when asking for our needs to be met even if its underwear or sanitary pads. It's good for a girl to be confident. Thank you.



Leticia Japheti: Student from Mabonde Secondary School (Tabora Region)

My name is Leticia Japhet, a Form three student at Mabonde Secondary School in Tabora. I am a Fema Club member and I attend the *Kijana Jitambue* program, which has made me able to help my friend to return to school and continue with her education. Before joining Fema Club I was a real coward, if someone whistled for me on the way I was unable to answer or speak for myself, but now I am brave and confident, I know how to speak for myself and how to resist peer group influence.

Last year around March, I was able to help my friend to continue with secondary education. After graduating her primary education, the parents of my friend wanted to marry her off to get the dowry money. Her father experienced incidences of fainting and loosing consciousness so they wanted the money for medication. Because of that the parents did not want the girl to come to school. One day I came home from school and my aunt told me that my friend was inside waiting for me. I went in to talk to her and found her in a bad shape. She told me her sad story of how her parents want to marry her off and not to continue with schooling.

So, I gave her my skirt for school uniform and told her to wake up very early, at 5 am, the following day and wear the uniform and then come to meet me and I will give her a lift on my bicycle so we can go together to school. She came as we agreed, and we rode to school where I took her to the headmistress and explained her case. Her father was called to school and my friend continued schooling with us. I am grateful for *Kijana Jitambue* and for Fema magazine because the things I have learned have changed me and made me able to help my friend.



Lucas Michael: Student from Lolangulu Secondary School (Tabora Region)

My name is Lucas Michael, I am 17 and a Form four student at Lolangulu Secondary School in Tabora. I am a chairperson of Fema Club at our school. Fema's *Kijana Jitambue* program has helped me a lot by getting rid of the bad habit that I had, the habit of dodging classes.

When I joined this school in form one back in 2019, I became a member of a group of worthless boys called Silent Killers. We named ourselves that way because we kept our naughty behavior secret. We were dodging classes hiding outside the classrooms and spending time in the village market, shops, or parties. We avoided attending classes and taking notes so, obviously, we were doing very badly academically. Furthermore, we vowed to be untouchable by the teachers so if it happens one of us was whipped by a teacher, we planned to beat that teacher up. I thank God that those plans never came to fruition.

Kijana Jitambue has transformed me because in the beginning I didn't know what I was doing or who am I supposed to be. After joining Fema I made a self-evaluation and realized that all the naughty things I was doing are just meaningless and a waste of time. Now, I am truly changed. I have been a leader in Fema Club since November 2021 when I was in form three. I am now in good relationship with my teachers and even fellow students whom I never used to get along with. And I am now doing well academically. All these changes are because of the trainings from our teacher and through stories I have read in Fema magazines.



Mariam: Student from Mabama Secondary School (Tabora Region)

My name is Mariam Mahmud, a form two Fema Club member at Mabama Secondary School in Uyui, Tabora. I used to dodge classes a lot; even if someone was to advise me to attend a class, I would think that person is crazy. But looking back, I think one of the things that contributed to that bad habit was the attitude of my father towards my education. After my parents got separated, my father said that it was a waste for me to go to school, he would rather I remain at home and wait to be married off. So going to school was tough because I could not get things like exercise books at then at school, I would get whipped for not having the proper supplies.

One day at school, a teacher mentioned that there is Fema Club and advised that I should join. I thought to myself that maybe I should try join and get whatever good out of it. And what a change! After joining I even attend to my classes regularly. No more dodging. I remember the first time I attended the Fema Club the teacher was talking about unsafe sex. It was an interesting topic to me because I had already started having sex. I learned about sexual transmitted diseases such as gonorrhoea and syphilis and from how the teacher was talking I decided to stop having sex for now.

The greatest change in my life is to be able to stop dodging classes and concentrate on my education. This is because I was taught to be self-aware on who am I, what am I to do here at school and what are my goals for the future. Now, because I know who I am, there are no more dodging classes.



Mkabu Ramadhani: Student from Mabonde Secondary School (Ngeza Region)

My name is Mkabu Mashaka Ramadhani, I am in Form four at Mabonde Secondary School in Nzeza. I am a Fema Club member and I have attended the *Kijana Jitambue* program. I make use of what I have learnt to direct others on various things such as entrepreneurship.

I have also changed a lot because of the Fema's *Kijana Jitambue* and the stories I read from Fema magazines. I remember, for instance, when I was in form one, my aunt who stays in a neighboring village asked me to ride a bicycle with her to the hospital in Bukene. She is HIV positive, and she goes there for ARV clinic. I used to do it half-heartedly thinking that if she touches me then her sweat will infect me with HIV. Even when she offered me food or a drink, I was hesitant to accept thinking that using the same utensils that she uses puts me at risk of HIV. But now I know better. HIV is not spread through sharing a meal or through touch. At school we were taught about HIV/ AIDS but not the same way as in *Kijana Jitambue* where I was very free to ask questions and share different scenarios. So, I was able to freely help my aunt even with her farm work, from which she can now afford bus fare to the hospital.