Our Vision

We imagine a world where girls are healthy, educated, and in control of their own destiny – free from violence, disease, and limitations based on gender.

Our Mission

WISER works with girls to transcend poverty, HIV/AIDS, and gender-based violence. We do this by creating environments that empower young women to drive change in their communities.
Letter from our Founding Principal

On behalf of WISER students and staff, I wish to thank you very sincerely for the role each one of you played to bring WISER to this stage. Through our robust programs which make us the envy of many, we are proud of the transformative achievements we have accomplished in the lives of our girls and in our organization moving forward. It is because of your invaluable support that our girls are thriving.

As we come to the end of this year, I am cognizant of the fact that it is a huge commitment and sacrifice on your part. It is because of the effective and efficient role played by our partners that WISER girls can pursue their aspirations in life. This unmatched success is realized because you are there for these girls. This means a lot to them and the organization as well.

In Muhuru Bay, WISER commands a huge space in the life of the community. This is because most households have had their daughters secure a space to have a four year-scholarship for secondary education. This notwithstanding, the programs at WISER are a catalyst to make our girls outstanding among other students. They can navigate the challenges they experience with ease.

I urge you to continue supporting WISER because this is critical to the growth and success of these girls now and in the years to come.

Dorcas A. Oyugi
Founding Principal
WISER
Letter from WISER’s First Alumni Teacher

I came back to be a teacher at WISER because one of the objectives of WISER is to empower girls to overcome barriers that threaten their education, which matches my greatest passion - to bring awareness to my community about the importance of girls’ education.

As a young woman, WISER has impacted my life by allowing me to learn vital virtues such as love, honestly, resilience, and hard work, just to mention a few. These are the major pillars that keep one going and are guiding factors in one’s life. Therefore, I always encourage the WISER girls to embrace these pillars as they are important for their peaceful existence in society beyond Muhuru Bay.

As an alumnus of WISER who has been through the same system and has faced the same experiences as the students, I encourage them to get excited about their passions.

As a young graduate who is just beginning my profession as a teacher, WISER is an ideal environment to get my start. It allows me to learn from, share experiences with, and work alongside competent, selfless, and determined teachers who do all they can to help change the lives of the girls and make learning enjoyable. The experience is just amazing!

Everline Achieng
WISER Class of 2013
"Education is power, and WISER is the place that empowers girls.

When you're talking about the number of girls at WISER who are changing industries all over the country, then you are talking about girls who will change Muhuru and girls who will, indeed, change Kenya."

- Principal, Winjo Secondary School, Muhuru Bay
2019 WISER Graduation Remarks
Celebrating the Class of 2019

The Class of 2019 is certainly unforgettable - and not just because they celebrated their graduation ceremony mere weeks before the COVID-19 pandemic put Kenya and the rest of the world in lockdown. These young women have continued WISER’s tradition of excellence in academics, and inspired younger classes of students with their determination and leadership.

Like each of the WISER classes before them, all students passed the KCSE, the Kenyan National Exam that determines students’ qualification for college and university programs. Over half of the class earned scores that automatically qualified them for competitive, government-sponsored scholarships in their next academic steps, as compared to 18% of youth across Kenya.

Graduation was celebrated in March of 2020 with joyful singing, dancing, and speeches, surrounded by the community of people who had raised these exceptional young women. As the Class of 2019 enters our flourishing alumni work, we celebrate the fact that they are not an anomaly; their success is part of a long tradition of excellence at WISER.

“We did this together, didn’t we?”

Principal Dorcas Oyugi, 2019 Graduation Remarks
In 2019, two WISER alumni traveled from Muhuru Bay to represent WISER’s promise: that, if a community invests in the health and education of girls, they will transform their community - and their world - for the better.

**Floviance Akoth**, (WISER ℅ 2013 and Moi University ℅ 2018) joined entrepreneurs and activists of color from across the globe at the Titan Generator during the South by Southwest (SXSW) festival in Austin, Texas.

As a recent university graduate now working for the Nairobi-based social enterprise Kipato Unbranded, Floviance fit right in in this group of change-makers.

“IT was inspiring to see so many powerful women among [the invitees]. I saw young entrepreneurs, people who had created something themselves at a young age and I thought ‘I need to do something like that.’”

**Mercy Adhiambo**, (WISER ℅ 2014 and Pwani University ℅ 2019) had the opportunity to represent WISER at the first in-person convening of the Girls Opportunity Alliance, a network of organizations around the world committed to girls’ education and empowerment, at the Obama Foundation Summit in Chicago, Illinois.

Each attendee had a shared purpose in making sure women and girls are educated, healthy, and well, and Mercy was able to offer her unique perspective: “I talked about how I was raised up with a single mother who was facing challenges...and this motivated me to change the story about my family.”

And when it came time for her to join a conversation with Michelle Obama about girls’ education, Mercy told Michelle about how WISER taught her to find her strength and her voice.

Michelle replied, “You can look me in the eye. And you can talk so strongly. You are a leader. you have confidence in you.”
More students than ever!

Before WISER’s campus opened, only 40 girls total were enrolled in secondary schools in Muhuru Bay. Now, WISER is able to educate more than five times that in a single year.

As of 2019, the WISER Girls’ Secondary School is now able to house, educate, and support 210 girls - a 75% increase since our founding - with everything they need to be healthy, safe, and reaching their fullest potential. We’ve also maintained the same student teacher ratio, hands-on learning, and individualized attention WISER prides itself on.

Despite WISER’s population being the largest in our history - we aren’t done growing yet. In 2020, WISER will complete our four-year expansion of our school population and welcome 240 girls as full-time boarding students.
In 2019, WISER became the first East African school to pilot a new program with our partner We Share Solar. This effort taught both WISER students and local educators how to build, install, and maintain solar energy sources.

We Share Solar collaborated with WISEe Kenya – Women in Sustainable Energy and Entrepreneurship – and leveraged WISER as a community hub to offer this unprecedented hands-on STEM learning opportunity and expand access to solar electricity across Muhuru Bay.

This partnership is just another opportunity WISER has seized to invest in the entire community for improved infrastructure, academic outcomes, and recognition of girls’ potential.
Our Impact
WISER is more than just a school . . .

. . . it is a holistic intervention to provide the access, opportunity, and resources necessary to disrupt cycles of poverty and inequity.

From the moment we first open our gates, WISER has continually deepened its impact for students and alumni based on their own self-identified needs, as well as expanded its reach into the surrounding village of Muhuru Bay with its students leading the way.

WISER has achieved transformative increases in graduation and college attendance, dramatically reduced early pregnancies and HIV risk, and perhaps most importantly of all, developed girls’ agency and resilience to forge bold new paths for their lives.
WISER’s “whole girl” approach to wellness recognizes that mental, physical, emotional, and sexual well-being are integrally linked and foundational to both individual and community success.

WISER provides measures to prevent against typhoid and malaria, screening and counseling for HIV/AIDS, comprehensive healthcare access and coverage, and empowering sexual and reproductive health programs.

What’s more, WISER girls are then trained to provide that same sexual and reproductive health education to thousands of their peers across the community.

WISER girls are not only healthy, they are champions of their own community’s well-being.
Since 2010

- 15,000+ people have access to clean water
- 100% students access preventive care for HIV, malaria, and typhoid
- < 3% pregnancies among students vs. 19% in high-risk counties like Migori
- 3,800 youth accessing WISER girl-led SRH education
Every Girl Supported

WISER provides each and every one of its students with everything they need to succeed at school.

And that means everything . . .

. . . from school supplies and menstrual hygiene products, to uniforms and three meals a day, all under a safe roof with caring adult mentors and educators.

This support not only allows students to focus on their education, but allows them to blossom as individuals - dreaming of big futures as doctors and tech experts, cultivating agency and resilience, developing innovative solutions to common community challenges, falling in love with sports and the arts . . . and being carefree kids!

“I was sponsored from form 1 to form 4. There was not any moment that I was sent home, for fees, for anything, and that means that I was in school every moment, which helped me excel in my studies.”

Esther, class of 2019
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<tr>
<th>Since</th>
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<tr>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>Nutritious meals served</td>
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<td>10,000</td>
<td>Reusable pads and menstrual cups distributed</td>
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<td>90,000</td>
<td>School days saved by managing menstruation</td>
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<td>35,000</td>
<td>Hours of psychosocial support provided</td>
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Every Girl Educated

With common barriers like poverty, food insecurity, healthcare access, and psychosocial well-being mitigated, WISER unlocks girls’ potential through:

Exceptional academic instruction by local educators.

Enrichments in STEM, the arts, and athletics.

Peer-to-peer and mentor led psychosocial support.

WISER students are achieving transformative rates of graduation, college enrollment, STEM engagement, and academic performance - even outperforming the boys.

“I am feeling really motivated and inspired for further studies, as I can see the fruit of education is too sweet, despite the fact that education is not too easy. So I’m looking forward to further studies so I can have the next graduation!”

- Debra, Class of 2019
Since 2010:

- 406 Students have enrolled at WISER
- 100% WISER girls have graduated vs. 9% in Migori County
- 55% WISER girls have qualified for full government college scholarships vs. 18% across Kenya
- 25% Students have won local and regional academic competitions
Partners, Finances, and Operations
Partner School Highlight: Dwight School, NYC

Two Schools, Intertwined

For students who have attended the Dwight School in New York City for most of their lives, WISER is a household name. As one of our partner high schools, Dwight has been bringing student service-learners to WISER each summer for over a decade.

“I first heard of WISER when I was in elementary school, probably around 1st or even 2nd grade,” says rising junior Maya Singh. So when she arrived at WISER in 2019, it was understandably overwhelming. “All I could think of was how surreal it was to actually set foot on the WISER campus after seeing it in videos for so many years prior.”

“Returning to Dwight, I wanted the other students to have that same connection I had to WISER,” says Maria Berlfein, recent Dwight grad and former WISER Club president. “I wanted Dwight students to understand the WISER girls' value for education, and how determined and focused they are at their jobs of being students.” That’s why, as part of their yearly fundraiser, “WISER Week,” Dwight students like Maya and Maria share about WISER with their entire student body - and raise an impressive amount of funds!

“I think one major thing I've taken away [from being involved with WISER] is how to be a better citizen in my own community. My participation in the WISER Club, and especially my visit to the school, has truly opened my eyes to the world beyond my small community, and has made me much more conscientious of the world around me.”

Community is the key word here: over our eleven-year relationship, the WISER community and the Dwight community have intertwined in ways that help both of us to grow. And while our schools themselves continue to expand their horizons, Dwight and WISER students all learn what it means to belong to one another, and to change both their local and global communities for the better.
“Soccer taught me to believe in myself and be confident and surround myself with girls I love and would do anything for.”

Chelsea Burns’ life has been shaped by soccer - from traveling to compete every summer in middle and high school, to soccer opening the door for her to attend Duke University, to playing professionally in the Netherlands. Soccer also connected Chelsea to WISER, and helped WISER invest in the athletic excellence of another generation of students.

When Pete Moller, former captain for the Duke Men’s soccer team and long-time supporter of Duke athletics as well as WISER, learned that WISER girls were starting to play soccer but didn’t have the equipment, he reached out to Chelsea to ask if the team might like to get involved.

“We started by donating old gear, just bags and bags full of cleats, shorts, socks, uniforms.” From there, Chelsea found herself on a skype call with the WISER soccer team. “I loved how many questions they asked, everything from what do you do to get better at soccer to how do you balance soccer and school, to when will you come visit us?!?”

Despite Chelsea’s success, she found the experience humbling. “I don’t know what I myself can actually provide them, but I want to be a role model for how soccer can empower you.” And Chelsea assures us she’s planning to get to WISER’s campus as soon as possible!

The partnership remains strong, with Chelsea passing the baton to younger teammates, including Tess Boade, Holly Stam, and Mackenzie Pluck. As Mackenzie put it, “This is so much bigger than who we are. It’s about connecting with others. Yes, we’re here to build up our own confidence and succeed and prepare for later in life, but I think we can also make it easier for other people to succeed and prepare for later in life.”
Johnson & Johnson was one of WISER’s earliest champions, and in 2019, we celebrated 13 years of partnership by hosting a gala that raised over $25,000. Organized entirely by independent J&J employee volunteers, guests were moved to support by passionate, inspiring accounts from visiting student, Sarah, about WISER’s impact on her life.

Founded by and for women, Saalt empowers women by offering comfortable, sanitary, reusable menstrual care products. In partnership with Saalt, WISER is now able to offer every girl the option of a medical-grade silicone menstrual cup in addition to reusable pads, giving girls choice in how they care for their bodies.
## Our Most Generous WISER Champions

### Change Agents - $150,00+ Lifetime
- Anonymous
- Don Sheppard

### Mentors Society - $10,000+ in 2019
- Sarah & Michael Jannsch
- Ingeborg Srenger

### Scholars Society - $1,000 - $9,999 in 2019

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<td>Chris Fletcher &amp; Chelsea Arrington</td>
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<td>Shahrzad Zarkoob</td>
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Our Favorite 2019 Awards and Accolades

AMPLIFY

WISER joined the Board of Directors of AMPLIFY Girls, of which it is also a founding member.

OBAMA FOUNDATION SUMMIT

WISER Alumni were invited to Titan Generator at SXSW and Obama Foundation Summit.

GlobalGiving

WISER was a Top Ranked Organization on donor engagement and fundraising platform GlobalGiving.org.
WISER is committed to transparency and excellence in the stewardship of gifts to support our work. We are a partnership between the US-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit WISER International and the Kenya-based WISER NGO.

For Fiscal Year 2019, WISER International invited its first external audit of annual financial statements. We are proud to share that the WISER International financial processes were found to be consistent, clear, and equitable. While the audit was not required in the US for an organization of our size, we elected to pursue it in anticipation of growth and as a commitment to organizational health and transparency.

WISER NGO is, in accordance with Kenyan regulations, audited every year and these audits have yielded similarly strong findings.
As detailed on the following pages, WISER International in the US allocates nearly 80% of funds directly to programs. Of those program funds, 79% ($421,811) is directed to and managed by the WISER NGO in Kenya to support the WISER Secondary School, clean water and solar initiatives, and community outreach in rural Migori County. These funds are reflected as WISER International Support on the WISER NGO revenues graph. The remainder of WISER International’s program funds are used to engage partner high schools, colleges, and universities around the world in advocacy and education initiatives that raise awareness and charitable support for the WISER girls and their communities.

The WISER NGO allocates 93% of revenue to programming, including Girl’s Education, Healthy Environment, Alumni Support, Partner Programming, Leadership Development, Community Outreach.
WISER International
Financial Accountability FY 2019

Revenues $747,234
- Program Revenue $95,987 (13%)
- Foundations $194,336 (26%)
- Corporations $152,354 (20%)
- Partner Schools $33,581 (5%)
- Individual Donations $270,976 (36%)

Expenses $696,847
- Programs $534,520 (77%)
- Fundraising & Marketing $88,413 (13%)
- Operations $73,914 (10%)

WISER NGO
Financial Accountability FY 2019

Revenue $625,306
- WISER International Support
  $421,811 67%
- In-Country Donations
  $10,092 2%
- Student Fees
  $27,623 4%
- Foundations
  $165,780 27%

Expenses $583,201
- Girls Education
  $273,459 47%
- Healthy Environment
  $185,836 32%
- Leadership Development
  $27,465 5%
- Partner Programming
  $16,607 3%
- Operations
  $44,837 7%
- Alumni Support
  $9,940 2%
- Community Outreach
  $25,057 4%
WISER NGO Board Members

Neema W. Kanyua
Linda Njeri Kamau
Dr. John Muthee
Linah Achieng Kowitti
Richard Okinyi
WISER International Board Members

Sherryl Broverman, PhD*
Founder & Chair

Carrie Arndt, MS, PMP*
Board Secretary

Joseph Sanginiti
Board Treasurer

Michael Schreiber, MBA

Steve Tremitiere

Frances Woodard

Sara Benjamin Neelon PhD, JD

Hardy Vieux, MPP, JD

Kristin Ashcraft

Melissa Katz

Prashant Swaminathan

*Denotes concurrent leadership on NGO Board
Letter from WISER Leadership

My 14-year journey with WISER began in the Fall of 2006 in my first semester at Duke University where I took WISER Co-Founder and Board Chair Dr. Sherryl Broverman’s Global Diseases course. I was both intimidated by the scale of health inequities faced by the most vulnerable populations in the world, as well as inspired by the creativity and doggedness of the researchers, healthcare workers, and community leaders on the front lines of improving health outcomes for their communities. I was part of the DukeEngage pilot program in Summer of 2007 to conduct disease field research in a fishing village on the shores of Lake Victoria called Muhuru Bay, Kenya.

This was the summer WISER began laying its important groundwork, and the atmosphere was electric – it was palpable to the entire community that they were stakeholders in a transformational initiative. When I returned home, I stayed involved with WISER at Duke – working on tech-related initiatives, raising funds by performing shows with my sketch comedy group, and spreading the word about this fantastic experiment taking place – the first girls’ boarding secondary school in the Lake Victoria region.

In the years that followed, I watched WISER graduate 6 classes of inspiring young women – with a 0% dropout rate and 93% of alumni going on to college compared to 3% of girls throughout the region. I also saw WISER bring clean water, solar power, and sexual and reproductive health training to the community at large, delivered by WISER’s own students. When I learned that the WISER board was expanding last year, I saw it as my chance to transition from a student volunteer and donor to a fully immersed board member of this awe-inspiring initiative that has been with me my entire adult life.

To the WISER family of supporters, I applaud your wisdom in choosing to dedicate your time and resources to one of the highest ROI investments the developing world has to offer: girls’ education. I hope you feel as proud as I do seeing WISER students excel despite every possible barrier in front of them. More importantly, I encourage you and anyone who could be interested to stay on for the ride: with new STEM initiatives, growing enrollment, deepened measurement and evaluation, and expanded NGO partnerships ahead of us, this rocket-ship is only just blasting off.

Prashant Swaminathan
Board Member
WISER International
“When things go wrong the first crop you harvest are the girls.”

“You do not need to read, your husband will read for you.”

“Should I stop having sex with the man paying my school fees? I am afraid of getting AIDS.”

When I first started working in rural Kenya investigating health and education, these were common refrains I heard about the barriers faced by women and girls. And again and again, while women and girls identified daunting obstacles, they also offered solutions.

And thus WISER’s community-driven, girl-centered model to fight poverty, disease, and gender inequity was born. From the beginning, WISER has been a magnet that attracts the best professionals and thinkers from across Kenya to improve the lives of girls in a region where many would not have thought to work.

Our founding principal left a wealthy, elite school in Nairobi to develop the WISER model. Kenyan teachers who could have worked in vibrant cities with clean water and paved roads came to WISER attracted by our mission and outcomes.

USAID-KIWASH built a water system in Muhuru Bay because WISER was the implementing partner. The list goes on.

And the results are better than we ever anticipated. Our original goal from before the WISER campus opened was to have 60% of our girls graduate. One board member commented that there was so much drop-out in Kenya that we should enroll 150% of our planned class size just to reach that goal.

Yet, even from our very first class – and year after year since - 100% of WISER girls have graduated among the brightest students in Kenya. And when WISER girls graduate, they are graduating healthy, with fewer early pregnancies, and the confidence to be leaders in their community.

It is no surprise, then - but still a deep honor - that WISER has also pulled in a wonderful family of donors and supporters from across the globe. All girls deserve a path to health and education, no matter where they are born. Thanks to you, WISER girls can see that path clearly, even in rural Migori County. Your investments are truly transformative, and we look forward to a bright and expansive future with you in our corner.

Sherryl Broverman, PhD
Co-Founder & Board Chair
WISER International &
WISER NGO
Join Us
We’d Love to Hear from You
info@wisergirls.org | www.wisergirls.org