

# Annual Report 2021



# Table of Contents

Vision & Mission .....	3
The Kenyan School Calendar .....	4
Reflections .....	5
Outcomes.....	11
Partners .....	15
Finances .....	21
Our Team.....	25



# Our Vision

When girls thrive, we all thrive.

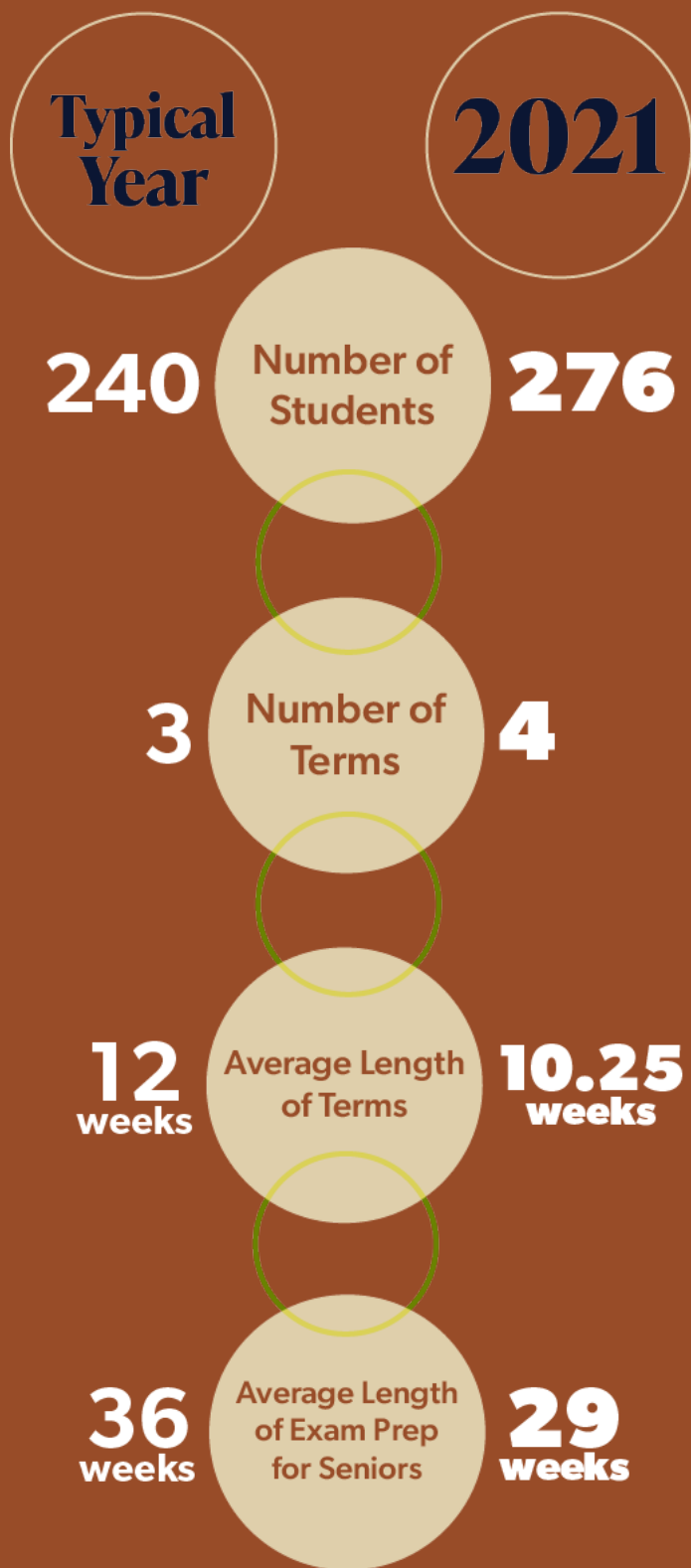
# Our Mission

Empowering girls and communities through transformative education and (w)holistic health.

You may notice that our mission and vision looks a little different this year! Throughout the fall of 2021, a joint task force of board members in the United States and in Kenya gathered to re-vision our mission and vision to best help WISER work toward our collective goals. As we approach a pivotal season of strategic planning, expansion, and deepening partnerships, our hope is that these words will guide WISER's future to be the brightest it can possibly be.



# The Kenyan School Calendar



The COVID-19 pandemic has caused educational disruptions worldwide, and Kenya is no exception. After a complete shutdown of schools in 2020, the Ministry of Education designed a staggered schedule to recoup time lost and attempt to mitigate anticipated educational setbacks. These setbacks are predicted to be particularly challenging for girls, with the Malala Fund anticipating that the number of out-of-school girls could increase by 20 million before all is said and done.

The new school calendar is incredibly challenging for both teachers and students. It began with welcoming back the Form Four students in January of 2021 to complete their final two terms of Secondary School and take their national exams. We were elated that despite the challenges faced, this class once again had a 100% pass rate, and were twice as likely as the average Kenyan student to qualify directly to University! Then, WISER welcomed an entirely new cohort of students for an additional two terms. This meant that instead of the three terms and 240 students WISER usually engages, we welcomed 276 unique students over four terms of academic instruction. That's right: we taught more students more material in the shortest amount of time in WISER's history!

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to our incomparable educators, our stellar alumni interns, and of course, our dedicated and focused students for yet again excelling even in the most challenging circumstances!





# Reflections



# Joint Reflection from the Chairs

**SHERRYL BROVERMAN, PHD  
AND MELISSA KATZ**

The first time Sherryl took me to Muhuru Bay in 2013, I met a girl named Millicent. Millicent took pride in her tidy WISER uniform and was quick with a smile. She was eager to learn what our group had come to teach her, having no idea what that even was. She was like a sponge. The only thing she knew for sure was that education was her ticket to a better life. As we talked, I asked her what she wanted to do with her education.

“My ambition?,” she replied. “I want to be a lawyer.”

Immediately impressed, I couldn’t help but ask the natural follow up question,

“Why do you want to be a lawyer?”

She looked at me incredulously as though the answer wasn’t floating above our heads and responded,

“I want justice.”

Millicent was one of the first graduates of WISER. Since then, over 250 students have gone on to higher education. As WISER grows and evolves, we must never lose sight of a world without WISER. How different the fate of these young women would have been if they had not seized the opportunity put before them. How pervasive and inescapable the injustice would have been.



## *Joint Reflection from the Chairs*



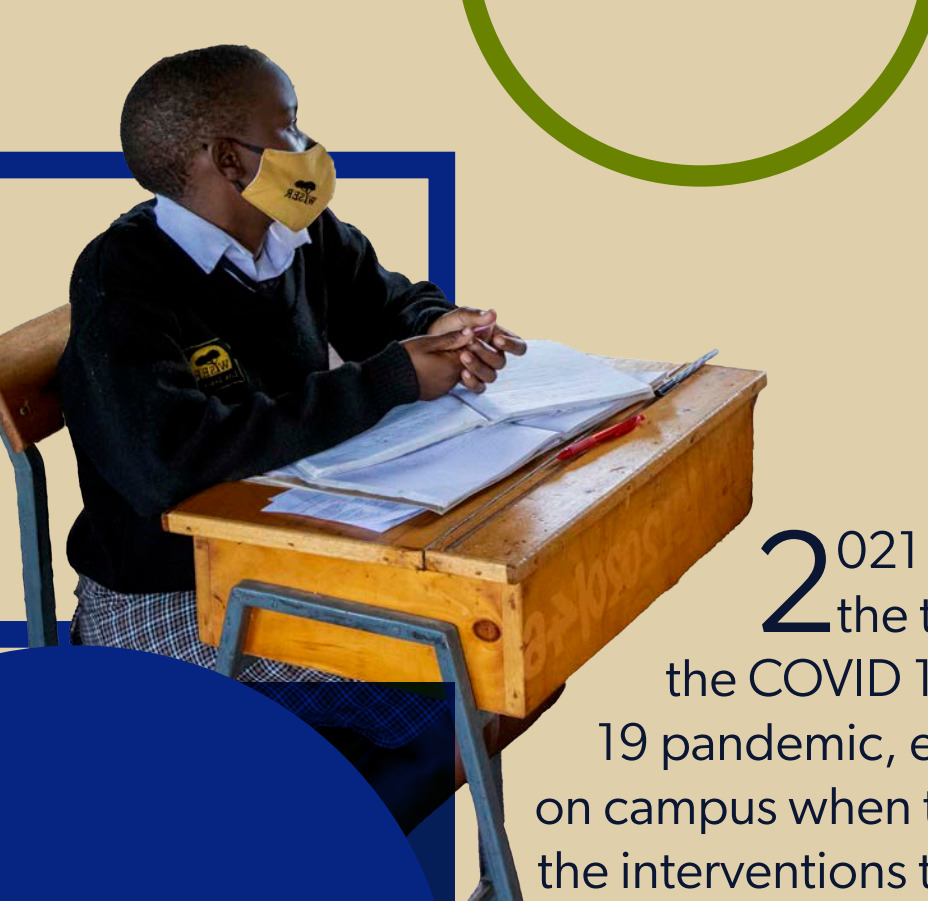
In the ten years of volunteering for WISER, my involvement has grown from gala emcee, to volunteer teacher, to first graduation attendee, to supporter, to board member and now international board chair. I am evolving right along side the girls. Luckily, they had brave young women who were willing to go first and forge new ground. Just as I am lucky to pick up the mantle of the international board leadership from Sherryl. What an amazing pioneer! And just as our WISER alumni are still involved with the school, Sherryl remains our Founder, International Board member and NGO board chair. She's changed so many lives for the better, including mine.

Someone once said that the best development projects go from being unaware of a problem, to being aware, to developing relationships, to co-creation of solutions. WISER has always followed that model, from discussions under the official WISER tree (see our logo!) with community members in Muhuru who helped start a new grassroots organization to support their daughters, to my treasured friendship with co-creator of the WISER school model Madame Dorcas Oyugi.

Now Melissa and I - and board members on both continents - are learning and co-creating a new dual chair model for "the WISERs" as we work to combine the strengths of the devoted boards and staff on both continents and create a truly global, integrated organization. Over the ten years I have known Melissa, whether in sequins (her, not me!) on stage leading a fundraiser in the US or sitting on the steps with girls to listen deeply to their stories, she has always given her full heart to WISER. As the new chair she now brings her stellar executive skills to leading a large and rapidly growing organization, as well as her deep respect for and commitment to our community partners.

I can't imagine a better person to take over the reins of WISER International and be my partner as we enter a period of strategic planning for WISER's next big steps in co-creation to help all girls thrive.





# Reflection: Grace Murika

## WISER COUNTRY MANAGER

2021 was a unique year for WISER. We now had to adjust to the “new normal” after the tough and difficult period of the 9 months of school closure in 2020 due to the COVID 19 outbreak. The reports that were all over media on the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic, especially on high rates of teenage girls, were alarming. Seeing all our girls on campus when they resumed in January was such a relief. It was a powerful statement that the interventions that WISER had put in place - remote learning, home visits for follow up & psychosocial support and food relief for families - had born fruits.

WISER set the highest standards of adhering to the COVID 19 protocols by the government. The organisation was determined to ensure that both the students and the staff were safe. Extra spaces were created to ensure adherence to social distancing. Our multi-purpose hall was turned into an extra dormitory. The uniqueness, love and care of the WISER teachers was demonstrated when they sacrificed their staff room to create an extra class. Thanks to the support of donors and well-wishers, masks were provided and 25 handwashing stations were set up in strategic positions through campus.

When the government availed the vaccine, WISER staff were on the frontline to receive the vaccination, despite the misinformation within the community. WISER became the champions for vaccination and strict adherence to the COVID 19 protocols. A COVID 19 committee, comprising of teachers, students and support staff was set up to track and ensure that all the risks were mitigated. With all these efforts, we did not have a report of any of our students or staff testing positive to COVID 19.



## *Reflection: Grace Murika*



We applaud the resilience and determination of our girls. The class of 2020 beat all odds to achieve 100% transition to universities and colleges despite the pressure of an accelerated program and minimal time to cover the syllabus. WISER's strength in STEM was evident with computer studies being the best performed subject with a mean grade of A-.

WISER had to be innovative in our interventions. The limitations on gatherings and interactions between schools meant that we had to scale down our activities. Inter-school competitions were restricted. However, we ensured that our girls were engaged by having internal competitions between our girls and the teachers, providing an opportunity for interaction and psychosocial support. Towards the end of the year, SRHR (Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights) sessions were introduced for neighbouring girls. The sessions were held within WISER for safety as well as sensitizing the neighbouring schools on COVID 19 protocols.

2021 was a year of learning from the past and projecting to the future. By the middle of the year, WISER hit the ground rolling in preparations for the government's new education initiative, the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC), which will see the admission of younger girls to the institution through junior secondary in 2023. WISER embarked on acquiring government approvals and mobilizing resources for the expansion project that would include construction of new classes, dormitory, library and staff houses in preparation for the roll out.

The success of the year 2020 was possible by our donors and partners' belief and trust in us, passion and commitment of the staff, community ownership and participation, and the resilience of our girls. The pandemic made us stronger and taught us that, no matter what, we still have the capacity to offer our girls the best for they deserve nothing less!



# #StartSmall Investment

## WISER RECEIVES \$750,000 GRANT FROM JACK DORSEY

One of the most transformative pieces of news from WISER this year was our inclusion in #StartSmall, Jack Dorsey's philanthropic initiative to fund global crisis relief, girls' health and education, and efforts towards universal basic income. Dorsey — Block Head, Chairman, and cofounder of Block, Inc. — transferred \$1 billion (28% of his wealth) to #StartSmall in 2020. #StartSmall announced that WISER would receive an unrestricted grant of \$750,000 on March 30, 2021.

WISER received this grant along with three fellow members of the Obama Foundation's Girls Opportunity Alliance Organizations: AGE Africa, Asante Africa Foundation, and Women's Global Education Projects. WISER and the other three organizations reach over 20,000 high-risk women and girls in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a combined 57 years of experience supporting and uplifting women and girls. In a joint statement, WISER and our fellow recipients shared: "We are honored and inspired by Jack Dorsey's generous investment and belief in the ability of grassroots efforts to change the lives of girls in Sub-Saharan Africa. Together with our supporters worldwide, this opportunity empowers us to expand our work, fight for gender equity, and bring critical skills and resources to adolescent girls in economically disadvantaged communities. With #StartSmall, we will fundamentally transform the lives of thousands more girls, giving them a voice and a choice in what their futures hold."

Our hope, in collaboration with these partners, is for this grant to represent a fantastic opportunity to expand our reach to include more girls, continuing the life-changing and life-saving work that WISER has continued to do in Muhuru Bay for years to come.





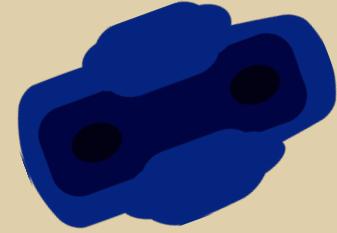
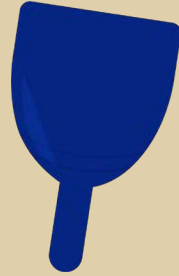
# Outcomes

# Every Girl Healthy



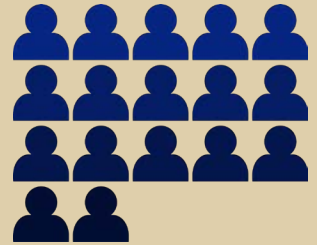
**101,344**

school days saved due to menstrual hygiene product access



**12,980**

menstrual pads distributed



**17** students trained as peer SRH counselors

**<5%**

**<5%**

pregnancy rate among students during COVID-19 crisis



# Every Girl Educated



**100%**

pass rate/qualification for tertiary education for KCSE exams in the class of 2021



**3,300**

textbooks distributed since inception

**100%**

**100%**

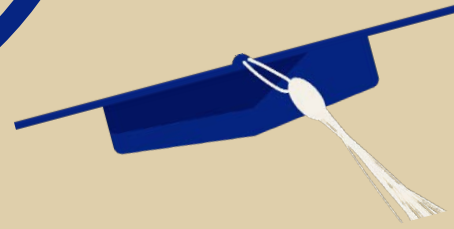
of staff members retained throughout COVID-19

**3x**

**<5%**

WISER girls more likely to qualify for higher education than students from other schools in Kenya

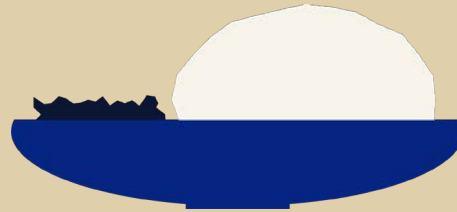
# Every Girl Supported



**257** active members of our alumni network

**0%**

**0%** student dropout rate



**579,150** healthy meals provided since inception

**14,850**

**14,850** hours of teacher support provided





# Partners

# Featured Partnerships

The logo for Johnson & Johnson, featuring the company name in a red, cursive script font.

## JOHNSON & JOHNSON

Johnson & Johnson (J&J) has been one of WISER's longest-term supporters, and they continued to play a key role in WISER's work this year. They generously stepped up as our premier Visionary Sponsor for our 2021 virtual fundraising event: Brighter, Bolder, WISER, Together. Additionally, WISER was chosen as a featured nonprofit partner in the Elevate Program, which was developed by the J&J Women's Leadership Initiative. While COVID-19 restrictions still sadly kept J&J employees from taking their annual visit to WISER's campus, J&J has continued to find innovative ways to commit to supporting WISER's bright future. We are grateful for their continued partnership in this vital work!

The logo for the Segal Family Foundation, featuring the name "Segal Family Foundation" in green and blue text next to a stylized green and yellow fireworks graphic.

## VIWANGO ASSESSMENT

In 2021, The Segal Family Foundation supported WISER to undergo a critical and valuable capacity assessment by Viwango, an independent Kenyan Civil Society Organization self-regulatory initiative. Viwango exists to improve performance of CSOs through the promotion and application of minimum standards of excellence and voluntary independent certification.

WISER's Organizational Capacity Assessment process was undertaken in November 2021, and it was concluded that WISER is a strong and sustainable organization. It met the majority of the criteria as outlined in the organization capacity assessment (OCA) tool. Guided by the organizational assessment tool, taking into account global best practices in the sector and upon a thorough examination of WISER's organizational health, insightful recommendations were given that are being incorporated into WISER's upcoming Strategic Planning process.





# Featured Partnerships

## DWIGHT SCHOOL

As you may know, WISER is honored to have built deep partnerships with high schools and colleges across the country (and even globally!) to create peer learning opportunities with WISER students, develop global health and service minded students through volunteer opportunities, and engage networks of new and future donors to fuel our critical work. Dwight is one of our longest-running and strongest partner schools.

Our Impact and Grants Manager Emily Dake had the pleasure of visiting Dwight and the leadership of the Dwight WISER Club for an outdoor sweatshirt sale to raise awareness and funds on WISER's behalf. She met students who have been learning about WISER since elementary school, with the goal of traveling to WISER in their later high school years for a culminating and transformative service-learning opportunity. Because of the pandemic, these students were unable to realize their dream of visiting WISER's campus to meet their WISER counterparts and see first hand the work they've supported throughout their Dwight career. Despite this disappointment, these students' passion for WISER was undimmed - they have instead pivoted to fundraising, developing digital engagement opportunities like Harambee Literary Magazine coordinated by Dwight's global campuses, and continuing to recruit younger students to carry on their service. We are so grateful to have such committed and energetic young people in our corner!



Emily Dake, WISER Development Manager with Dwight School partners

# Funding Partners

saalt



Johnson & Johnson



GlobalGiving



PRESTON-WERNER  
VENTURES



Social Initiative



Seqal  
Family Foundation



AF JOCHNICK FOUNDATION



#STARTSMALL

A.L. MAILMAN  
FAMILY  
FOUNDATION



# Academic Partners



# WISER Champions

## CHANGE AGENTS

\$150,000+ LIFETIME

Don Sheppard • Anonymous

## MENTORS

\$10,000+ IN 2021

Sarah & Michael Jansch • Eric Wetlaufer

## SCHOLARS SOCIETY

\$1,000-\$9,999 IN 2021

Anonymous • Anonymous • Sandie Anderson • Kristin & Matthew Ashcraft • Scott Bell • Sara Benjamin-Neelon • John Bohn • Mary Ellen & Paul DeNoon • Chelsea & Chris Fletcher • Darrow Goff • Rebecca Grantland • Deardra Griffin • Sangeeta & Vikram Gulati • Shane Hansen • Wendy Hills • Melissa Katz • In Memory of Heather Kauffman • Kathleen Kratz • Peter Lichtenthal & Dr. Perry Eisman • Joy Liu • Margaret MacMillan • Dallas McCall • Molly & Alex McCarthy • John Moores • Richard Otwombe • Fred & Amy Paulenich • Diana Peters • Caterina Prestia • Joseph Sanginiti • Daniel Schiff • Michael Schreiber • Prashant & Ami Swaminathan • Paul Henry Tietz, Jr. • Steve Tremitiere • Eileen Vergino • Frances Woodard • Earnest Wotring • In Memory of Eileen Yeh • Shahrzad Zarkoob



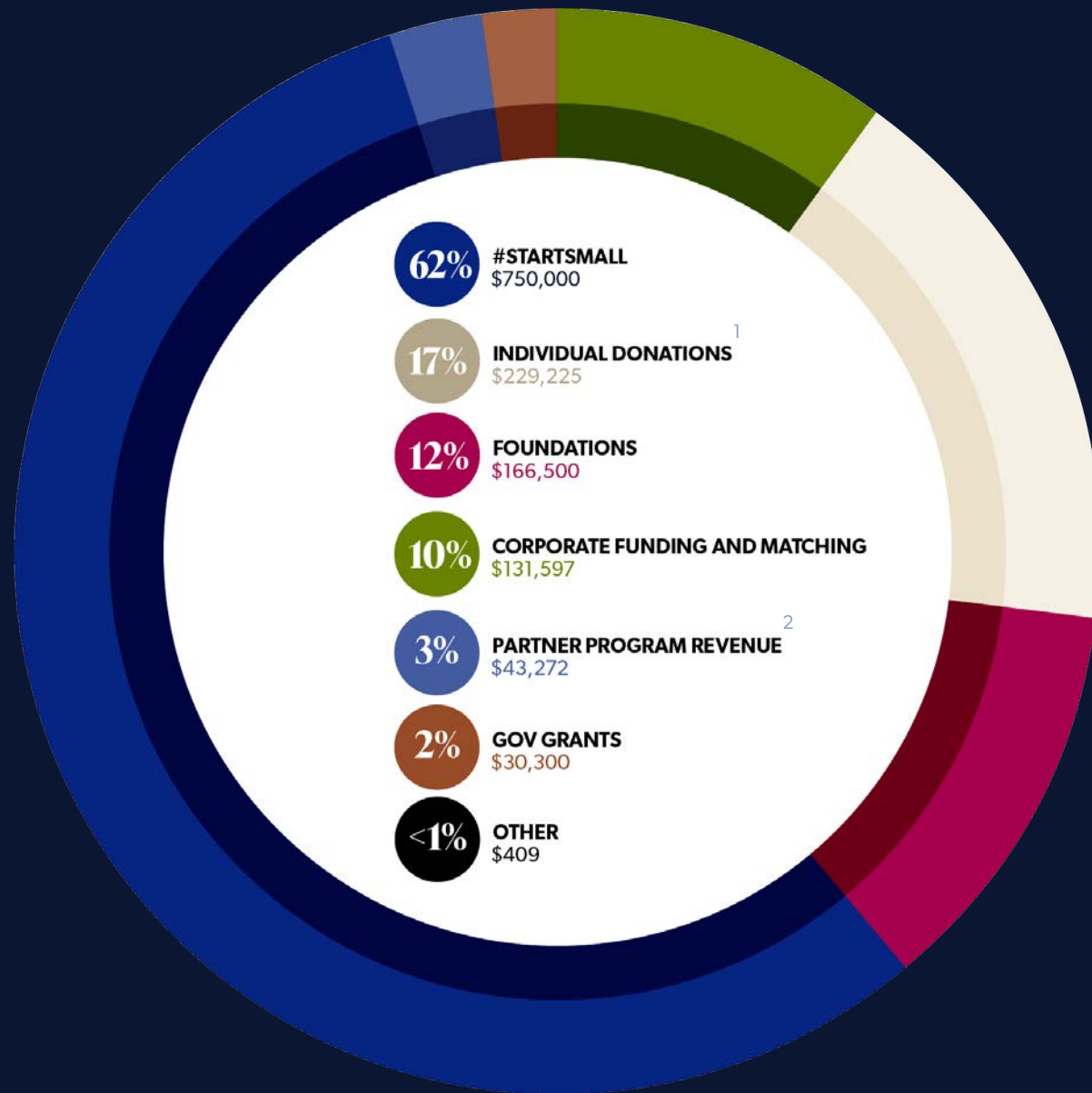


# Finances



# WISER International

**TOTAL REVENUE**  
\$1,351,303



**TOTAL EXPENSES**  
\$825,735



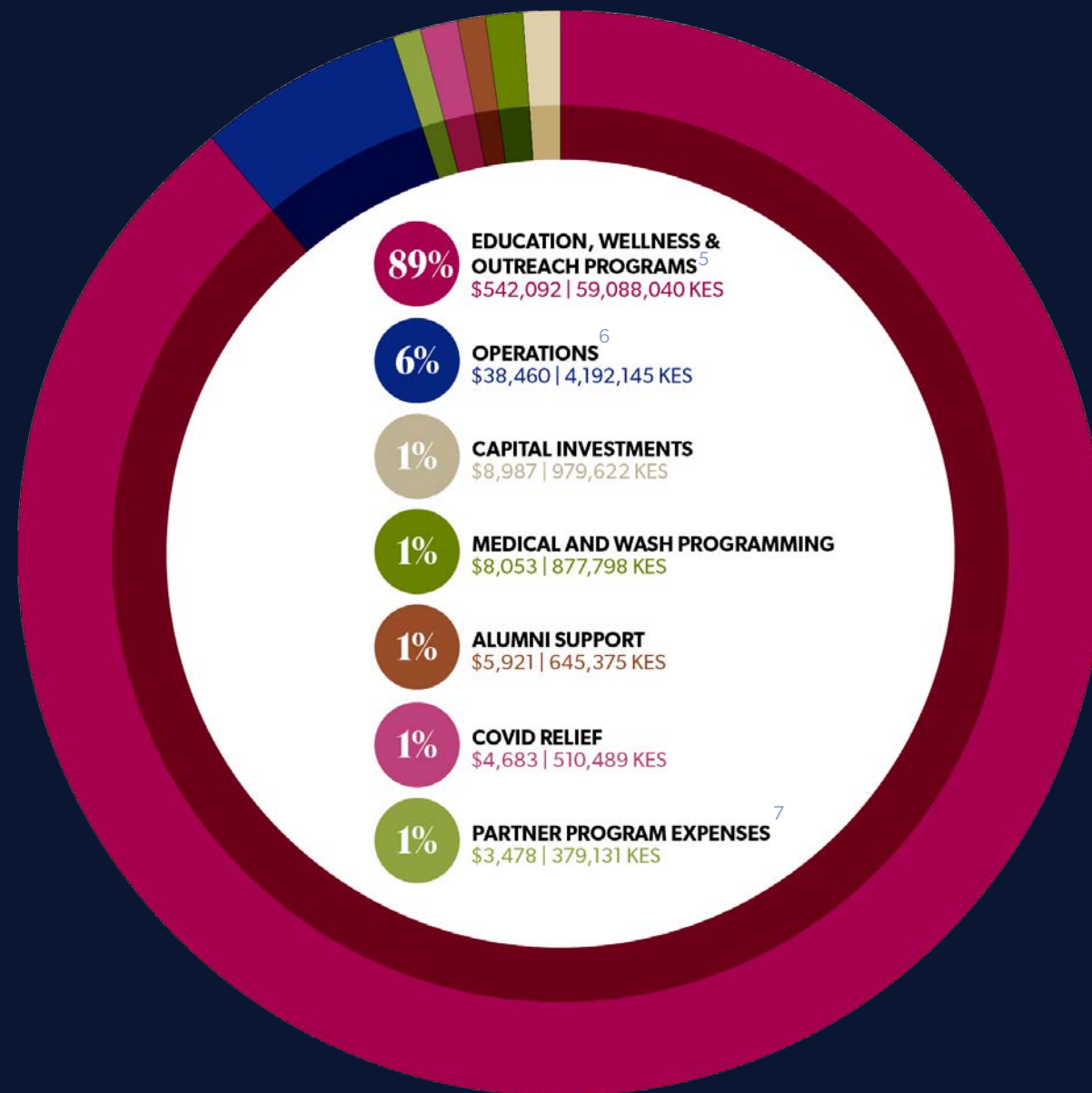
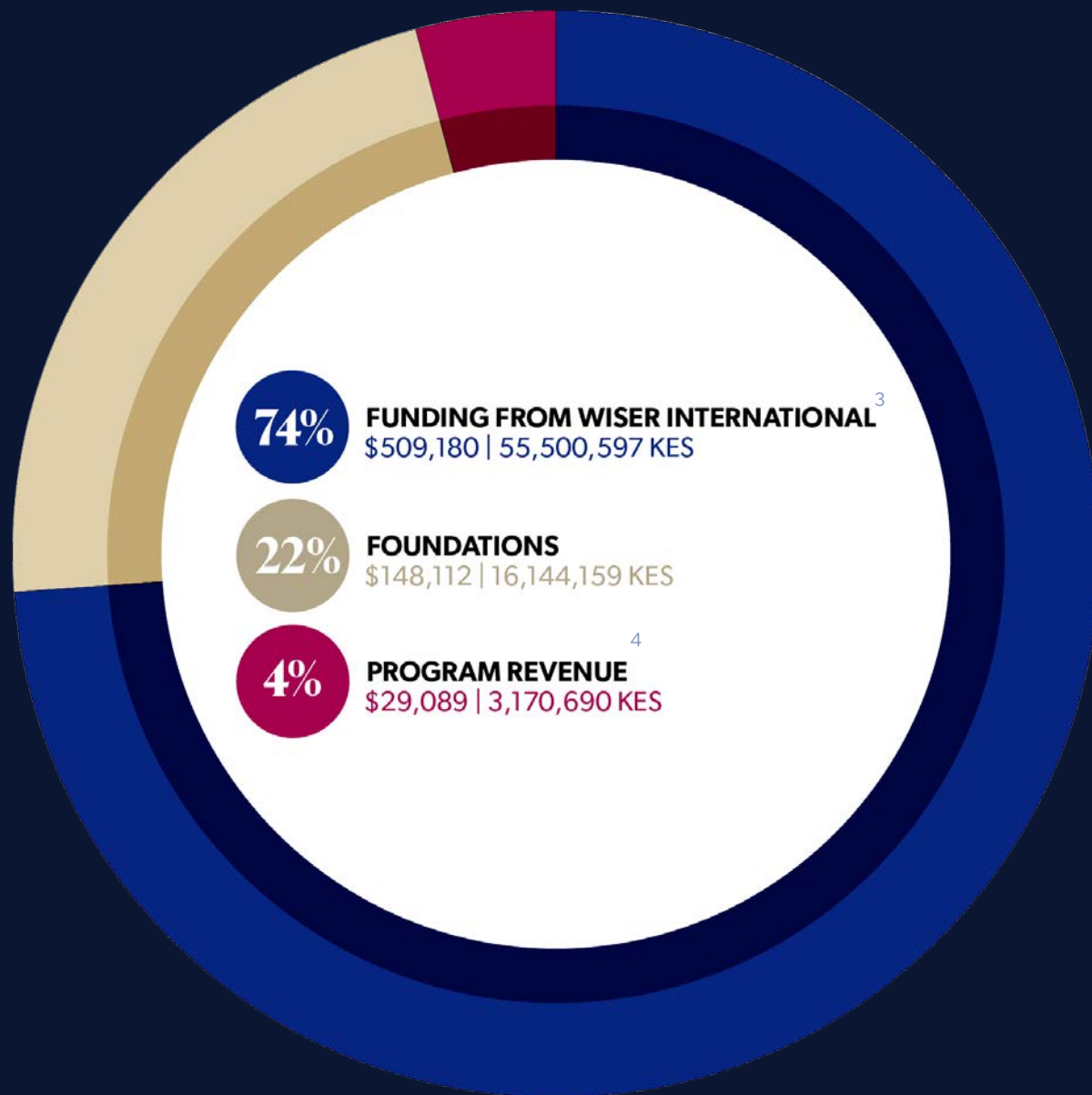
<sup>1</sup>Includes event revenue | <sup>2</sup>Revenue related to organizing volunteer trips and partner program implementation



# WISER NGO

**TOTAL REVENUE**  
\$686,380 | 74,815,446 KES

**TOTAL EXPENSES**  
\$611,675 | 66,672,600 KES



<sup>3</sup>The small discrepancy in funds delivered and funds received is based on utilizing an average exchange rate from FY2021 to translate NGO audited funds into USD | <sup>4</sup>Includes nominal school fees charged to students from outside of Muhuru Bay and campus farm proceeds | <sup>5</sup>Includes salaries and program costs for academic instruction as well as SRH training, leadership development, athletics, academic competitions, and school clubs | <sup>6</sup>Includes non-school staff and related expenses, including finance, fundraising, security, and marketing costs | Expenses related to organizing volunteer trips and partner program implementation

# Notes on Finances

WISER International is the largest financial supporter of the WISER NGO and WISER Girls Secondary School.

WISER International provides the vast majority of operations and fundraising and marketing efforts for both US based activities and the NGO and School activities.

Partners provide fundraising as well as fees for the organization of volunteer trips to WISER. These fees are in excess of the actual costs of program implementation, providing an additional source of revenue for both WISER International and WISER NGO.

The nominal fees charged to students from outside of the Muhuru Bay area are about 1/3 of the true cost of attending WISER. These fees are charged because students from outside Muhuru Bay are from areas with higher socioeconomic status, and to continue to prioritize the girls of Muhuru Bay in the recruitment, application, and admissions processes.





# Our Team

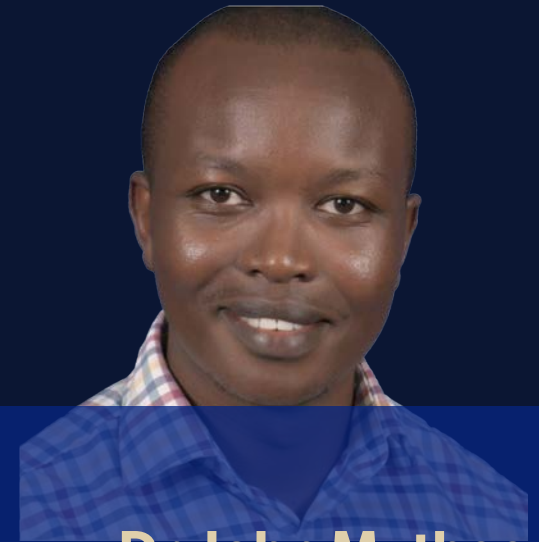
# WISER NGO Board



**Sherryl Broverman, PhD**  
WISER FOUNDER &  
BOARD CHAIR



**Carrie Arndt, MS, PMP**  
BOARD SECRETARY



**Dr. John Muthee**  
BOARD TREASURER



**Linda Achieng Kowitti**  
BOARD MEMBER



**Linda Njeri Kamau**  
BOARD MEMBER



**Neema W. Kanua**  
BOARD MEMBER



# WISER NGO Key Staff



**Dorcas A. Oyugi, HSC**  
PRINCIPAL



**Violet Singoei**  
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL



**Kennedy Mikula**  
DIRECTOR OF STUDIES



**Grace Murika**  
COUNTRY MANAGER



**Nipher Okemwa**  
GUIDANCE &  
COUNSELING FACULTY



**Cyrus Oroni**  
GAMES MASTER  
& FACULTY



**Judy Nyandwaro**  
FINANCE ADMINISTRATOR

# WISER International Board



**Sherryl Broverman, PhD**  
WISER FOUNDER &  
BOARD CHAIR



**Carrie Arndt, MS, PMP**  
BOARD SECRETARY



**Joseph Sanginiti**  
BOARD TREASURER



**Michael Schreiber, MBA**  
BOARD MEMBER



**Steve Tremitiere**  
BOARD MEMBER



**Frances Woodard**  
BOARD MEMBER



**Sara Benjamin-Neelon, PhD, JD**  
BOARD MEMBER



**Kristin Ashcraft**  
BOARD MEMBER



**Melissa Katz**  
BOARD MEMBER



**Prashant Swaminathan**  
BOARD MEMBER



# WISER International Key Staff



**Zack Fowler**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Michelle Gherardi, MPA**  
OPERATIONS MANAGER



**Emily Dake, MPH**  
DEVELOPMENT MANAGER



**Valerie Sagero**  
INDIVIDUAL GIVING MANAGER



**Liddy Grantland**  
DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR



**Amber-Ray Davidson, MS**  
DIGITAL MEDIA COORDINATOR



**Char'Lee King**  
OPERATIONS COORDINATOR



**Tevin Boyd-Hammond**  
BOOKKEEPER



# wisergirls.org

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