

## **Vane Aminga, the lady who beats the odds to educate 60 Samburu girls**

Date

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**Location / Venue:**

Mechanical



I had to visit Samburu. This was because one of my classmates dropped out of school in Form Three and got married off. I just had to go to Samburu and find out why girls drop out of school or do not go at all. Three years ago, during the Easter holiday, I made my first visit."

When Vane first visited Samburu County, she noticed that most girls did not go to school. Instead, they took the livestock to graze while their brothers got formal education.

In what seemed an unfair twist, most schools in the county had food programmes, meaning the children in school would eat while those in the grazing fields stayed hungry the whole day. Asked if they would like to go to school, the girls eagerly answered in the affirmative.

That was enough reason for Vane to begin a spirited yet uphill fight for the education of girls in the community. For starters, on her return to Nairobi, she managed to convince her friends to support her cause. They agreed and accompanied her on her next visit, during which they sat with the girls and got to hear about the challenges they faced.

The next step was to meet the elders and convince them of the importance of girl child education. "It was hard talking to the parents at first," Vane admits.

To prove they were genuine, Vane and her friends did not insist on taking pictures, and would sleep in their hosts' homes. At times, when there was nothing to eat, the team would sleep hungry like their hosts.

Through this sacrifice, they were able to understand the Samburu girls' challenges better and gain the families' trust.

"They were shocked that we kept coming back. We talked and listened to them and they saw the value of taking their children to school. What they lacked was money," the fifth year Mechanical Engineering student explains.

Vane and 15 other members of Fly Sister Fly, among other volunteers, collected books from family and friends and presented these to the girls. The team was offered a wooden room at Girgir Primary School, where they started a library.

The Sh200 contributed monthly by members of the team went towards buying uniform, stationery, books, and sanitary towels, and meeting other expenses that would keep them in school. Even though the amount needed to keep a girl in primary school for a year varies, it is Sh10, 000 on average.