



PRESS RELEASE

EU boosts girl-child education in Kwale County

Life has changed for former Bombolulu Girls Secondary students as they access secondary school education in secure accommodation.

October 5, 2015 – The European Union (EU) will hand over a Ksh 5.9M dormitory to Mazeras Memorial Girls Secondary School, the former Bombolulu Girls Secondary school, in Kwale County.

The facility is part of a project which started in 2013, funded by the European Union through the Community Development Trust Fund (CDTF) at a cost of Kshs 5,372,700 , while the Bombolulu community contributed Kshs 599,189 in form of labour and construction materials bringing the total project cost to more than Ksh 5.9M

The school was renamed Mazeras Girls Memorial Secondary School when it re-opened in 1999, following a 1998 fire tragedy that claimed the lives 26 girls at the then Bombolulu Girls Secondary School.

The new 80-bed dormitory will increase the schools capacity to accommodate more girl students in a safe environment as they pursue their education.

According to the school's Principal Lillian Mwalekwa, the institution currently accommodates 250 girls out of the total 600 students, while the others are accommodated at boarding facilities in the neighbouring shopping centre.

"Accommodating girl students outside the school compound presents numerous challenges such as high drop-out rates and early pregnancies, not to mention the risk the girls face of contracting HIV/AIDS. The institution prioritized the need to increase the school's boarding facilities in order to

accommodate the 250 day students and applied for financial assistance from European Union through the Community Development Trust Fund to construct a dormitory,” Mrs Mwalekwa said.

Speaking during the handover of the boarding facility equipped with beds, mattresses, double component lockers and curtains to the school management, European Union Head of Social Affairs and Environment Section in Kenya Hjördis D'Agostino Ogender stressed the need to ensure that the girl-child can access secondary school education, and reduce the number of drop-outs and early marriages.

“Increased access to secondary education, retention and improved school performance can lead to higher transition rates from secondary to university education for the girl child. This would be a yet another step in empowering women and girls to make significant contributions towards national efforts to reduce gender inequalities,” Dr Ogender said.

Mazeras Girls Memorial Secondary School is the only girls boarding secondary school in Kinango District, Kwale County. Unemployment rates in the area are high and the County has high poverty levels due to low incomes, and funding education is a challenge for many families. The County is semi-arid and often experiences food deficiency, leaving communities dependent on food aid and handouts to supplement subsistence farming in the area.

The project also included the purchase of and installation of a water harvesting tank, setting up of kitchen garden drip irrigation system on a one acre farm to serve the school and surrounding community, and provision of a solid waste management system.

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