

## **Project Githae (Kenya)**

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### **Gender Outcomes in Using Brief Motivational Interventions (BMIs) on Shaping Beliefs and Attitudes towards Doping for Athletes in Secondary Schools**

Kenya, and indeed many countries globally, have experienced an increased use of psychoactive substances as well as drugs for enhancement of athletic performance. There are concerns that local, national, and international athletes continue to use dope despite the consequences. There is consensus to use of alternatives to doping such as nutrition and strength training. However it is the intrinsic psychological factors that are credited with long-term change in human behaviour such as anti-doping. The proposed research will elucidate the psychological factors influencing doping choices among athletes in secondary schools and how the students can be motivated to sustain aspects that help choose abstinence from dope. The school-based environment will be utilized for the intervention given that its population is at a vulnerable yet changeable period of life. Adolescents are at an early stage of change when they are considering initiating or experimenting with a new behavior.

The overarching objective of the proposed project will be to implement a behaviour change model to enable assessment of changes in psychosocial factors that influence decision making against use of dope. These factors will be examined within gender-based contexts and school systems where such decision making takes place. The following are specific objectives of the proposed project:

- (i) Explore beliefs and attitudes that lead individual athletes in making decision to use or not use substances for enhancement of sporting performance.
- (ii) Examine the contextual, systemic and gender factors that influence choices in use, or lack of use of substances for performance enhancement among athletes.
- (iii) Strengthen skills that build resiliency in anti-doping decision making among male and female athletes in secondary schools in Kenya.
- (iv) Build the capacity of games teachers and the school community members in the integration of anti-doping education during games training programmes.
- (v) Develop an evidence-based and contextually sensitive model for school-based anti-doping education.

These objectives will be achieved through using a case study of Uasin Gishu County in Kenya, which is a training hub for local, regional and international athletes. Athletics have been widely accepted in this County as a cultural and economic activity and many secondary students in the area aspire to become international athletes. The games teacher will be equipped with skills to motivate their teams to develop beliefs and attitudes against use of dope. The set of skills will be derived from the brief motivational interventions (BMIs) whose main goal is to sustain positive behaviour change. A quasi-experimental design will be used in the proposed project to determine the effectiveness of the BMI techniques on

shaping beliefs and attitudes of athletes in secondary schools. The design will allow for pre-testing of the athletes psychological factors before and post-testing after the use of BMIs. It is hoped that individual and gender differences will emerge to help make judgment about the effectiveness of the intervention model and to inform future research.