



## A PRACTITIONER'S TOOLKIT

Making water, sanitation and hygiene safer through improved programming and services

## Toolset 3-G

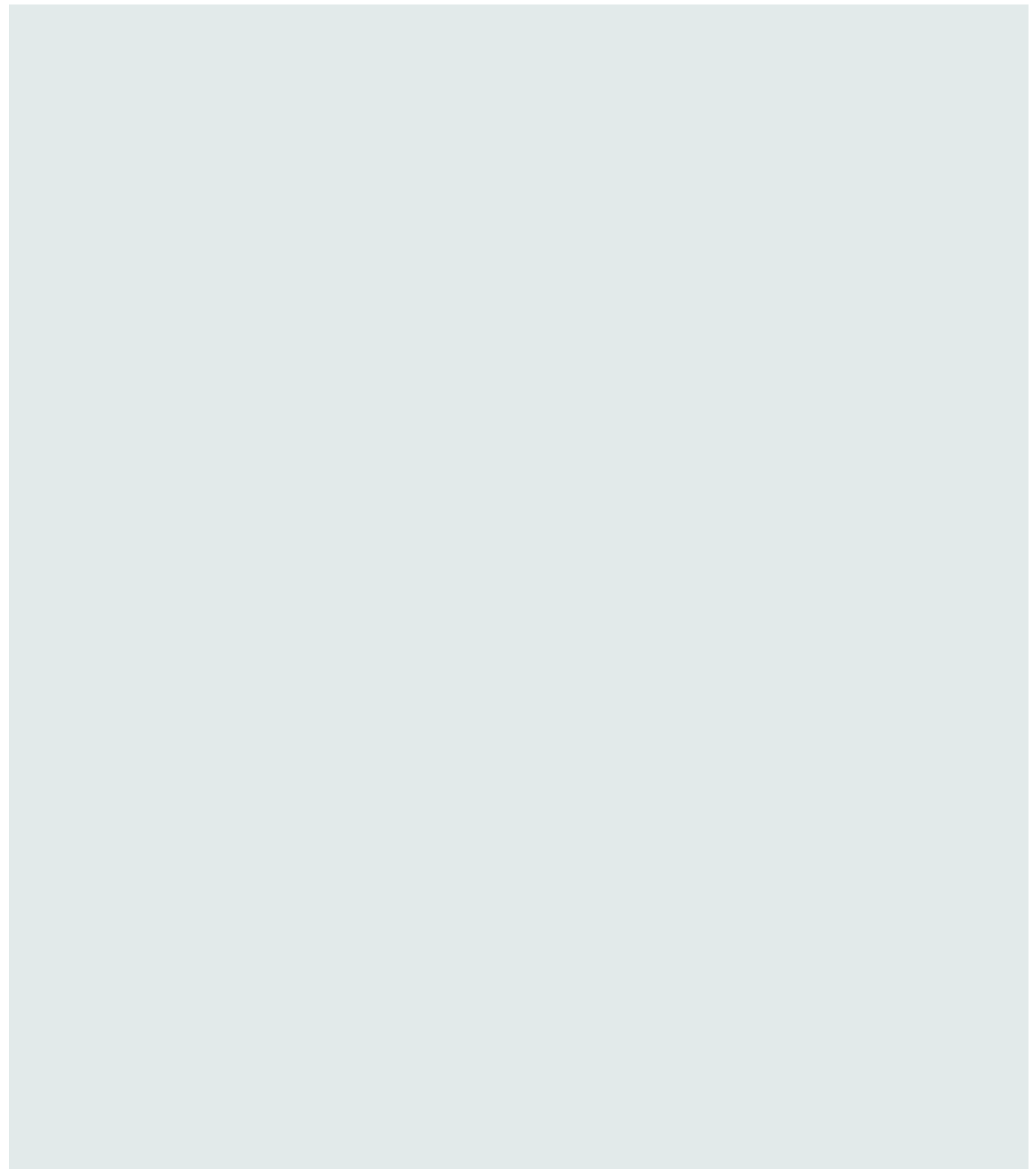
Codes of conduct, peer mentoring

# TS3-G-2 – Supporting and empowering girls and women studying engineering and technical trades: TUSEME Club, Liberia

<p><b>Context</b></p>	<p>The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) believes that unless girls are empowered enough to participate effectively in education and development, nothing will be achieved when it comes to the gender gap in education in Sub-Saharan Africa.</p> <p><i>“Experience has shown that girls who face numerous obstacles in their development towards academic and social achievement can be facilitated to understand better those obstacles, identify solutions to solve them and harness existing resources and strengths for viable interventions.”</i> (FAWE, 2002)</p> <p>One of the practices that FAWE has adopted and advocates for towards that end is the TUSEME ‘Speak Out’ girls’ empowerment process.</p> <p>The TUSEME Clubs started in 1996 in the Department of Fine and Performing Arts, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and are now supported by FAWE in a range of countries across Africa. Although the clubs focus mainly on the empowerment of girls, boys can also be members.</p> <p><b>Broad objective of TUSEME:</b></p> <p>To empower girls to understand and overcome problems that hinder their academic and social development, give girls a voice to speak out and express their identified problems, and to find solutions and take initiatives to solve these problems.</p> <p><b>Objectives of TUSEME:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To enable the girls to identify what they see to be factors leading to the following problems: school dropouts; poor academic achievement; school girl pregnancy; sexual harassment; any other gender-related problems as identified by the girls themselves.</li> <li>2. To find ways through which the girls themselves can actively participate in the process of solving the above problems.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Implementing organisations</b></p>	<p>Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) and was initially started with the support of the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania.</p> <p>The TUSEME Clubs have been implemented in many countries in Africa, with core funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and from DANIDA in Liberia.</p>
<p><b>Description of good practices</b></p>	<p><b>TUSEME Club in Liberia</b></p> <p>This case study describes good practice in the context of Liberia, where the TUSEME Clubs provide a peer support network for women and girls studying in technical fields. The clubs empower their members, encouraging them to be able to resist problems. Such problems include GBV, which most girls and young women encounter throughout their studies and working lives and which is highly prevalent in many fragile states. In Liberia, FAWE has been supporting girls and women studying</p>

	<p>engineering and technical trades, which are particularly relevant to the WASH sector and where women form a minority of students/trainees.</p> <p>The TUSEME Clubs were implemented in Liberia in 2011 and 2012, and were introduced to various technical institutions such as the Stella Maris Polytechnic, Booker Washington Institute, the William VS Tubman Institute and other institutions. Their members study courses such as civil engineering, electronics engineering, heavy-duty mechanics, building construction, plumbing, computer engineering and architectural studies. Most students are supported by scholarships from FAWE due to their vulnerable backgrounds and the difficulties their parents face in paying their fees. As of early 2013, the clubs had 200 members who meet monthly.</p> <p>The members of the clubs support one another and undertake activities such as clean-up campaigns, using the opportunity to talk about problems facing young women. They go to talk to students in high schools and undertake advocacy with students and teachers. They also conduct radio interviews on issues facing girls and women, including GBV, and on the value of sending girls to school instead of them facing early marriage.</p> <p>The female engineering students at Stella Maris Polytechnic have three female mentors who support them: one from FAWE, one from the International Foundation for Education and Self Help, and one who is the Dean of the Teacher College. The mentors and FAWE also provide support and advocate on behalf of the girls when incidents occur.</p> <p>See also the case study <a href="#">TS3-G-1</a> on the code of conduct developed by FAWE for the scholarship scheme for girls in technical and vocational training institutions.</p> <p>The TUSEME Clubs in Liberia were initially financed by DANIDA through FAWE, but this funding came to an end in late 2012. The members are continuing their activities, but are now self-funding as far as possible – even though they are students with limited incomes. Two local radio stations provide them with free slots.</p>
<b>Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See the link below for a series of short videos/slide shows presenting the views of girls/young women studying in Liberia under FAWE scholarships, and linked together by the TUSEME Clubs. The combination of financial support, confidence building, peer support and the focus on empowerment provide a powerful and much-needed opportunity for girls and young women.</li> <li>• Initial links were being made with the WASH sector in early 2013 to see if there could be opportunities for the women and girls who are members of TUSEME to enter the sector for work and internship opportunities. Increasing the number of women in the sector, including in technical fields, is part of Liberia's national WASH Sector Strategic Plan, 2012–2017, and its national WASH Sector Capacity Development Plan, 2012–2017.</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	<p>Most of the girls and young women who are members of the TUSEME Clubs have to face the risks of GBV in their daily studies and working lives. The clubs and the peer support they offer provide them with additional confidence to be able to respond more effectively to protect themselves and other girls and women.</p>
<b>Lessons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The TUSEME clubs provide an effective and much-needed support network for girls and women in education and starting out in employment.</li> <li>• Given that this is a sector in which the majority of actors are male, the WASH sector in Liberia and elsewhere should make the most of the girls and young women trained through the FAWE scholarship schemes and whose confidence has been built by being part of the TUSEME Clubs.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More needs to be done on educating and empowering young women, including with regard to their economic empowerment. More women are needed in positions of power and more should be done to train them so that they can work in technical areas.</li> </ul>
<b>References/Links</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forum for African Women Educationalists (no date) Voices of women and girls supported by FAWE. Main webpage available at: <a href="http://www.fawe.org/resource/voices/precious-deshield---liberia/index.php">http://www.fawe.org/resource/voices/precious-deshield---liberia/index.php</a> [accessed 11 October 2013].</li> <li>• Forum for African Women Educationalists (no date) Videos of women supported by FAWE. Available at: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/user/FAWEAfrica/videos">http://www.youtube.com/user/FAWEAfrica/videos</a> [accessed 11 October 2013]. See short videos of:       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— A range of girls undertaking engineering and technical and vocational training courses in Liberia, as well as girls and young women studying in other countries; and</li> <li>— See the video for FAWE Voices of Hope – Gloria (Zambia) for a short video on the experiences of a young, 13-year-old girl who was raped when going for water and firewood in the forest, and the support that FAWE is giving her to go back to school.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Forum of African Women Educationalists (no date) <i>Girls Education. TUSEME Experience in Tanzania. Kenya: FAWE.</i></li> <li>• Personal communications (2013) Precious P. Yango and F. Patricia Pongay, TUSEME club, Liberia, and a handout of the history of TUSEME.</li> </ul>



**VIOLENCE  
GENDER  
& WASH**

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