

The health of Maasai girls and women in rural Tanzania and Kenya: A pilot study.  
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The objectives of the pilot study will be to complete a preliminary needs assessment in advance of the larger project on the educational and health issues facing Maasai girls and women in rural Kenya and Tanzania. Working collaboratively with the NGOs and community leaders already active in the identified communities, the research team will assess the effectiveness, gaps, priorities and needs for further health education. The research will involve site visits, and interviews with key informants, with a longer term view of studying in depth and developing a sustainable program of locally based health education and related services. Utilizing the expertise already available in the communities, the research team will introduce additional interventions that have been adapted from work in rural communities in other geographical and cultural contexts (Varpalotai & Thomas, 2007). The research and interventions will rely on a participatory action research framework (CRIAOW, 2002) whereby community members become a part of the research team and ultimately shape and lead developments that are culturally appropriate, relevant and deemed to be most effective in their communities. Two case studies, one each from Kenya and Tanzania, will serve as comparative models, with ramifications for more general community development, health and well-being.