Research Project Title: How to Improve Reading Culture and Literacy in Rural Kenya
Location: Chavakali, Kenya
Research Topic: Education, Community Mobilization
Partner Organization: Foundation for Sustainable Development and SAIDE

Description of FSD: Foundation for Sustainable Development is an international development organization that seeks to support communities in achieving their goals through asset-based development and international exchange in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. FSD provides opportunities for students and professionals to engage in real community development work—instead of a typical study abroad or drop-in service project program. FSD works in six countries, and for more than two decades has supported more than 250 community partner organizations and trained more than 3,000 volunteers. Its community development efforts have maintained an ongoing project sustainability rate of nearly 80 percent, addressing health, social, environmental, and economic issues by responding to community priorities and offering training, grants, and volunteer support to community partners.

Description of Community Partner: SAIDE was started as a self-help group in 2009, registered under the Ministry of Culture and Social sciences. It was started by a group of professionals and non-professionals for the purpose of improving the lives and illiteracy levels of Chavakali Town, Sabatia constituency and the whole of Vihiga County. SAIDE works with the aim of initiating, operating and supporting education among the project beneficiaries.

Programs and Activities:
- Improving reading and writing skills of project beneficiaries
- Enhancing and mobilizing the community on importance of educating girls
- Mobilizing the low income members of the society to become effective agents of development and change
- Building capacity/training and provision of advisory services to communities and grass root civil society organizations and institutions
- Mobilizing local and external resources from NGOs, donors, and governments for the support of the local initiatives
- Sensitizing and mobilizing communities
- Advocacy on gender based violence, sexual assault, and domestic violence

Social Issue: Poverty is the main social issue among people of this community. Many people work so hard to put food on their table and barely think of buying books for their children’s class work or even for their own reading. SAIDE works with schools to improve the reading culture by taking books and e-readers to schools as a way of encouraging students to adopt the reading culture.

Research Project Description: There are many educational institutions in Chavakali but still the reading culture among the young and old is not common. Many students just read to pass exams but never read for fun. This fact means that the intellectual capacity of the community is
not improving once students are out of class. As a community researcher with SAIDE, you will work with local schools and community members to find out why most community members do not read for fun, why students only read for class work, and what can be done to improve the reading culture among community members of Kakamega county.

**Methodology:** The research would combine quantitative and qualitative methods. Data collection methods will include interviews with community members, students and teachers, surveys on the subject with students and teachers, focus groups with students, and online research on the subject and any other methods deemed appropriate.

**Community Impact:** This research will give better understanding to the impact of introducing the one-hour reading culture in schools by SAIDE and will help SAIDE understand ways of helping improve the literacy levels in the communities they work.

**Student Profile:** The researcher should have a background in research methodologies and a strong desire to work in community development.