

ACCELERATING ABANDONMENT OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION AND CHILD MARRIAGE PROJECT IN KAJIADO COUNTY

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The above project, which began in 2016, seeks to end Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Child Marriage in Kajiado County. It is being implemented by World Vision through the support of UNICEF.

World Vision is also partnering with UNICEF to improve access to education for children in Kajiado County through the Bring Back Out of School Children Project.

GOAL

The project aims to rescue 1,500 girls in Kajiado County from FGM and Child Marriage through the following strategies:

- Transforming gender and social norms among community members through Intra and Inter-generational community dialogues. We target gatekeepers such as council of elders, circumcisers, as well as men, youth, boys, women and redeemed circumcisers who can expedite the abandonment of FGM and child marriage.
- Empowering girls who are at risk to abandon FGM and child marriage through life skills education, mentorship, alternative rites of passage and rescue where necessary.
- Empowering men, youth and boys to protect uncut girls by changing social and gender norms that promote FGM.
- Strengthening social systems set up to amplify prevention and response services for cases of FGM, child marriage and other types of child abuse

STATISTICS

- The rate of Female Genital Mutilation in Kajiado Central Sub-County - 51 percent (UNICEF 2017)
- The rate of Child Marriage in Kajiado Central Sub-County - 28 percent (UNICEF 2017)
- The rate of Child Pregnancy in Kajiado County - 20 percent (Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2014)

Girls who go through FGM are denied their right to education, childhood experiences and exposed to health risks and multiple sexual partners. Among the Maasai, the predominant community in Kajiado, FGM is associated with marriageability, marriage fidelity, social acceptance and wealth (inform of bride dowry).

APPROACHES/MODELS

- **Channels of Hope for Child Protection:** This approach empowers faith leaders to become child protection change agents among their congregants, and use their influence to bring to an end the FGM practice.
- **Community Change (C-Change):** This model is executed through Community Dialogues led by trained facilitators. They help communities to understand the adverse effects of FGM and become ambassadors for the anti-FGM movement. Community Dialogues are held mostly in school compounds as mobilisation is usually done through the schools. A community resource person facilitates the dialogues twice a month. The dialogues are usually themed around FGM, child marriage and quality education for girls and boys. Dialogues for different groups (men, youth, boys, girls, women and council of elders) are held separately to ensure adequate and meaningful participation. Inter-generational dialogues are also organised when the various groups are ready to provide a platform for open talks between parents/ guardians and their children. The dialogues are usually conducted in the local language.
- **Alternative Rites of Passage (ARP):** In collaboration with the community, World Vision





organizes the ARP for all girls at risk of FGM. The ARP initiates them into adulthood and equips them with fundamental life skills and values.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- 2,689 girls and 2,864 boys reached with life skills training
- 1,640 women and 821 men engaged in dialogues
- A total of 2,550 children have been trained on child rights and are leading child rights clubs in their respective schools
- 719 girls have benefited from the Alternative Rights of Passage
- Through a partnership with the Tawanga Community Based Organisation (CBO), 268 girls have been rescued and placed in different rescue centres. 79 of the girls are in secondary schools, 168 in primary schools and 21 in higher learning institutions (colleges and universities)
- Increased awareness on the effects of FGM and child marriage by the community has resulted in 7 circumcisers abandoning the practice and becoming champions against it
- Strong peer-to-peer mentorship has helped children to exercise their rights and reject harmful cultural practices
- Increased capacity of faith leaders to protect children from all forms of violence - especially FGM and child marriage - has led to 30 members of the clergy developing child protection policies to address FGM and other forms of violence afflicting children
- Media campaigns reaching more than 100,000 people through local language radio stations have enhanced awareness on the adverse effects of FGM
- Enhanced male engagement in the process of

abandonment of FGM. The project has since engaged 745 men, 1,241 youth (males) and 828 boys

- 92 teachers (61 Men and 31 Female) have been trained on life skills and child protection. The trained patrons have been instrumental in mentoring girls and guiding discussion in school clubs as well as assisting in surveillance and rescue efforts

PREVAILING GAPS

- We need to develop strategies that will reduce the number of FGM cases happening in secrecy e.g. when girls are still young or in hospitals (through the medicalization of FGM)
- Continued engagement in cross border forums should be enhanced to reduce the practice of FGM in neighbouring countries
- We need to strengthen alternative family/institutional care arrangements for girls rescued from FGM or those that flee their homes to avoid being cut. World Vision is working with families willing to care for affected girls and local boarding schools that offer refuge and safety to the children
- Kajiado County experiences frequent spells of drought that aggravates household poverty. This makes girls vulnerable to FGM as families often force them to get married in exchange for dowry (livestock), which they use for income generation. We are addressing this hurdle by integrating our anti-FGM initiatives with livelihoods and nutrition projects that can help boost household income

OUR SUPPORT TO ILBISSIL PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOL

Ilbissil Primary Boarding School has been supported with tents and chairs for hire. This helps with income generation for supporting the basic needs of vulnerable girls such as school fees for education and a feeding programme that ensures all children are well fed and hence retained in school. Moreover, there are regular dialogues on FGM and child marriage held with parents and pupils in the school to support the abandonment of both practices with the aim of enhancing the wellbeing of both girls and boys.

World Vision also offers life skills training and mentorship programmes for both boys and girls.



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