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Youth Excel
Our Knowledge, Leading Change



AfyAfrika

It's a women-led, youth-serving Organization Established in 2007 and registered on 27th September 2007 under social Services. We aim at providing a local platform for catalyzing and amplifying the social movement to End Female Genital Mutilation, Child Marriage, Teenage pregnancy and Violence against Women. We support local grassroots organizations and communities to strengthen their social change communications and develop locally-owned strategies, informed by national priorities, to address local contexts and needs.

We envision a Healthy and empowered girls and women, exercise their fundamental human rights, and have the opportunity to realize their full potential.

Youth Excel

It's a global program that empowers young people and youth organizations to use implementation research to strengthen local, national, and global development solutions.

Youth Excel supports young leaders and youth-led and youth-serving organizations around the globe to conduct quality implementation research; use data and learnings to improve their own cross-sectoral, positive youth development programs; synthesize data and learning; and engage in intergenerational dialogue with adult decision-makers so that together youth and adults can shape and advance data-informed development policies, agendas, and programs.

Scars to Stars Project:

It's a youth-led, grassroots-led, survivor-centered project aimed at promoting emotional wellbeing and breaking down stigma associated with FGM, by building and testing a package of support for survivors and activists and creating portraiture exhibitions to catalyze social change in Narok, Kenya.

The overall goal of this project is to strengthen the grassroots-based end FGM movement's ability to:

- ☐ Provide sustainable emotional support for young women and girls affected by FGM, in order to enhance prevention efforts and support survivors,
- ☐ Ensure self-care for campaigners, staff and volunteers working to end FGM, and
- ☐ Break down the stigma associated with FGM and associated emotional/mental health issues.



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My name is **Amina Omar**, I am the YANK focal person for Tana River county. I am an FGM/C Survivor, I come from Orma community that practices FGM in the Kenyan coastal region.

AMINA OMAR

I was cut when I was 9 years old together with other three girls from my extended family. We were taken to be cut by our grandmothers and women from our family to a designated area where the cutter and other women are waiting for us. They forcefully held us down and made sure we couldn't move or run as the cutter did her job with unsterile blades. I still remember the pain of freshly cut organ going through my body with the excuse of making us pure and protected.

As a result of the cut I up to date experience constant reproductive health problem with regular visits to gynecologist. FGM is painful experience no girl should go through because the consequences of the cut are lifetime. It is a continuous pain from the cut to menstrual cramps to UTIs to difficulty in giving birth. It is a cycle of pain we survivors go through and as an activist I would not rest until every girl coming from practicing communities in Tana River is free from FGM.

With this in mind I founded a Community based Organization called Better Dreams Kenya where we create awareness on the harmful cultural practices and build the capacity of grass root women against the vice.

DAHABO GURACHA



DAHABO GURACHA

My name is Dahabo Guracha, I am from borana community born in a village called Sololo, Marsabit county.

Having undergone the cut, I understand the effects/serious health issues that are long term including infections, birth complications, bleeding, psychological trauma etc that fgm has on a girl or a woman.

This limits a woman from getting opportunities that can help her grow socially, economically and professionally and it is for this reason I stand to fight against fgm and every bad culture to restore a woman's dignity.

MUMINA JIRMO



MUMINA JIRMO

My name is Mumina Jirmo.

I'm a survivor of fgm/c. I underwent through it when I was seven years old, for me the experience was shocking and painful so much so that years later, the sight of someone sharpening the knife is still disturbing to me as it brings back traumatising memories.

I'm a mother, but my journey to motherhood was not easy, i experience prolonged labour and postpartum hemorrhage with my pregnancies, and sadly, I have lost two babies due to delivery complications such as cervical incompetent a condition that if i want another baby i should go and get my womb stitch.

Through my community based organisation women Rising i became a fierce anti-fgm advocate, working with young mothers and young girls to protect the next generation from the practice. I speak to young girls and young mothers with the goal of educating them on the dangers of fgm/c so that they don't circumcise their daughters.



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My name is **Esther Matara** a journalist from Nyamira County. At 9 years I went through Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) it wasn't easy for me because I bled almost the whole day but wasn't taken to hospital I really got worried but could not move out of the house since it was a taboo.

Years later in my secondary education I started being sick on and off later on doctors discovered I was anemic and the question they asked me was if I had an abortion or given birth because it's like I bled alot.I explained to them that the only time I had excessive bleeding was the time I was cut. The doctor explained to me that the bleeding had caused the condition and advised me to be eating some foods to keep me stable.

While in my hospital bed I asked my mother why she allowed me to be cut, and she only replied that it's our tradition as 'Omogusii Tribe'

If you don't get cut then you are counted as an outcast so she had to allow that for me to fit in the society.

ESTHER MATARA

Since my mum had experienced my health conditions she seemed helpless from her facial expressions and I couldn't judge her.

While in campus most of my classmates were from tribes that don't practice FGM they used to make fun of me and wanted to hear more from me and why my community does it. I used to feel embarrassed, frustrated and confused at the same time also remembering my health condition that emerged from the act. In my mind I felt like the practice is of no use and when I did my research it was unlawful that's when I decided to open up and be a voice to the voiceless.

Since the year 2018 I started practicing Journalism and through my easy way of mingling with many people in my community I saw it as an opportunity to talk to them about FGM, though people never feel free to talk about it openly since it's perceived as a taboo.

I started radio interviews with human rights activists who talked about Fgm and sensitized the listeners it's negative impacts.

Through sensitization women started opening up to share their experiences mostly when giving birth a good number strain alot, some lose lives and their babies others have fistula etc.

Through the good will of the chiefs in my county I have been going to churches, schools and barazas sensitizing men, women and youths that FGM is against human rights, asking boys to be their sisters' keepers, also informing girls to speak out when parents wants to have them cut and how they can report to the relevant authorities.

For many years people thought FGM was just a right of passage, but nowadays they are informed to make worthy decisions that saves a girl's life.

Everyday I say, 'No girl should experience what I experienced through FGM'

Let the girl be whole!! Thank You!

SOIPANA



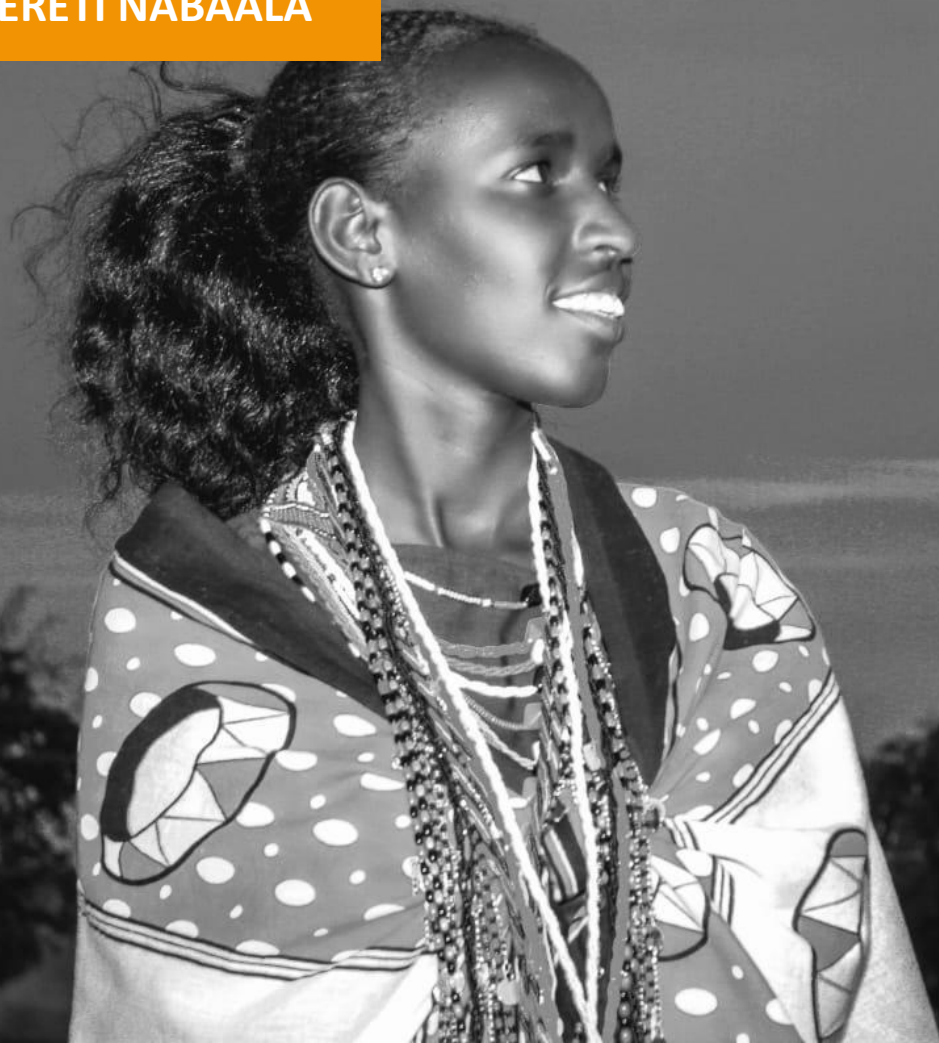
SOIPANA

I still remember it like yesterday!!!!

The pain, the bleeding, the girls who have travel from difference part of the my community to come and witness if I will dear to face the knife!!!! The very innocent me I was just 10 years old I never any the damaged I am thought it was something to be proud of poor me.

On 25/12/2016 the day I will never forget. The day I knew they have really damage me, the day I almost thought I was a lesser human being than the rest. I when was giving birth to my first born son and the mid- wife and nurses who were attending me shouted " kuje ni muone vile watu wamepitia tohara wanakaa". Maybe they never heard. Since I decided to stand and fight for young girls who does know the damage and educate the survivors that is not never the end of life we must protect your kids and sisters.

SERETI NABAALA



SERETI NABAALA

My name is Sereti Nabaala, I was born and bred in a village called Lemek in Maasai mara, We are 21 in our family my dad has 4 wives, growing up in the village was such an amazing thing in my life, I grew up with so much love from everyone in my family. I will always remember how we used to play with my sisters and brothers in our big boma, we used to be taught how to milk, how to make manyatta and we started being responsible at a very younger age.

When I was at the age of 14, I knew I was suppose to go through some right of passage I was so afraid I remember not concentrating in school for that year, I knew it was painful because I used to go and see most of my relatives going through so much pain, actually one of my cousins almost bleed to death but thanks God she was rushed to the hospital. This day finally came a woman was brought at night and I remember my mum giving me and my twin sister some razor blades to go and save our private part, we were still young and did not really understand what was going on, but we really knew it was finally time. Morning came and three women held my sister one at the back and the other two held one leg, my twin sister was brave, she did not scream at all, my turn came and as the norm I was poured on very cold water and other girls were cheering me, I was a bit ashamed because I was naked in front of so many girls. I started screaming and I was forced to sit down by women and they held me by force and that's how I went through FGM.

When I went to school, I started having esteem issues I was not able to talk about FGM anywhere I remember in campus when organizations used to do FGM I always felt so bad, I was bitter with my parents and everyone. Today am glad I am not an anti-FGM champion.



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My name is **Monica Chepngetich**.
I was married at the age of 17 to an
elite, a high school teacher which I
thought I had made in life.

MONICA CHEPNGETICH

After living a life of tears, mistreatment and violence I thought of going back to my parents but feared because they were staunch Christians and wanted to save the embarrassment for them. After bearing two children then it got even tougher. The whole family turned against me that I was to undergo the cut. The family that I was married to was doing the practice. I had to undergo the cut to please the family and thought this would make me accepted to the family and even bring happiness to my husband then. Still it never went well with me, it even became worse. I was mistreated the man whom I had love and trust for him.

He went to an extent of bringing women to my own bed which made me develop hatred to all men. I have never loved or trusted any man in my life, I feel betrayed, I feel rejected and upto date when I see a men mistreating women I cannot tolerate I act throwing harsh words and even gone fighting severally. I have cautioned my sisters and my daughter and girls around me not to run to marriages. At last I had to run away, we divorced and though I am living a single life I feel wounded and have been in campaigns of discouraging early marriages and ending FGM.

SARAFINA



SARAFINA

As I always say, you are the better person to narrate your story; born and raised in a community that practices FGM, I knew I would be a victim one day; like any other school break, I was excited to go home, but I didn't know what was waiting.

I vividly remember everything, I was so young and scared to disobey my father, I followed his words and all rituals were done before the primary day, the cut was done on a chilly morning to prevent excess bleeding; it was a celebration for everyone except me.

The pain from the cut is still being felt from within, and the wound from that razor is still fresh as it was. The culture that was so embraced has broken many girls' dreams; I am just a young woman who decided to grow a thicker skin to survive through all trauma and pain to create new dawn for pastoralist girls.

SALLY JEPCHUMBA



SALLY JEPCHUMBA

My name is Sally Jepchumba Cheserek. I was born in 1990 and raised in Elgeyo Marakwet, Marakwet community. Marakwet community is among the communities that still practice FGM. I had a 'normal' childhood until 2001 when i underwent the cut. It was and still is traumatizing. The pangs of that days ordeal are still fresh yet hazy, given the numbing pain and struggle. Someone once said: what pained one most was not the injustices carried out against one by ones adversaries, but the silence of those who call themselves family. It is a painful betrayal that when i was 11, i was made to choose whether to undergo the cut or not. A child shouldn't be made to make such decisions. In my adulthood i have gone through low self-esteem, self-doubt , complications in giving birth among other things. And no one prepares for all these when you are being cut. I vowed to myself that i will not let any girl who i can help go through FGM/ the cut. That is why I sensitize girls on the effects of FGM and empower them with appropriate information that will lead to then making the right choices; saying NO TO FGM. I also help the survivors of FGM to understand themselves and accept what they have gone through and help them come out and tell their stories in the community with a view to ending FGM in Marakwet community. #NO GIRL SHOULD BE CUT #SAY NO TO FGM#



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Hello!my name is **Dorcas Jepkorir Lagat**, I am a survivor and also an activist.

DORCAS JEPKORIR

I am 20 years old, I grew up in a small village in Baringo county called Bartabwa. When i was 13 years old I underwent female genital mutilation the cut, which was painful and traumatizing act.

I was cut mercilessly, I cried day and night but no one came to my rescue, was left with no choice than to accept what has happened.

Whenever there is darkness there will be light. Angels sent by God came to my rescue, compassionate Girl generation team finally brought smile and hope to me, I lived at a rescue center which was just like home to me, I grew up in a conducive environment was educated and now I am who I am because of them, have gained strength and am happy to be a girl.

RUMANA ISAACK



RUMANA ISAACK

My name is Rumana Isaack,
I was born and raised in Korogocho.
I come from a family of 7 siblings.

At the age of 10, I underwent through FGM, it was really painful and traumatizing.

I wasn't aware of consequences that will follow aftermath.
My primary objective is see no other girl undergoes Female genital mutilation.

I urge everyone to unite and act to end FGM.

QARAM KASSIM



QAMAR KASSIM

Having undergone the cut at age of 7 years I know firsthand and has experienced the long term negative effects of FGM and that's what drives me to advocate for the complete ban on the century old practice.

I feel the pain and still hear the sound of the razor.

I do not want any other girl to face that trauma! This thing has to come to an end.



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My name is **Lucy Chebet**, being raised in a polygamous family where education is not considered as right, it was by chance that I went to school through my mother who took me to boarding school .

LUCY CHEBET

The rest of the other siblings did not go to school, my education journey was hell, my father wanted to get me back home to undergo FGM and be married off, I lived in fear I never saw our siblings for 7 years I stayed in school just to protect myself from the harmful practice. Upto date my young sisters are married off, living miserable lives, I feel so bitter, I lack peace once I think of their lives . They all depend on me.

Today am a volunteer child protection officer at I am Responsible foundation , I stand out to say No to FGM ,child marriage and sensitive on girl child education.

My story will change someone's life , I want girls to be given their rights so that they won't undergo what I went through, am living a life of full regrets being forced to undergo FGM , I feel empty ,. I call out to all girls to protect themselves. The nation be the voice to the voiceless children

PHILOMENA MAIYIAI



PHILOMENA MAIYIAI

My names are Philomena Maiyiai Saruni. Born in a small village of Enduet, Rombo Location, Loitoktok Sub-county. Am a Maasai girlfeio.a humble background from a family of eleven children. Being a third born child am y two elder sisters have never been to school and they had gone through a cut(FGM) I was raised by my grandmother who was a bit interested in education and was able to send me to school. it was in 2012 when I finished class eight, my father send a message for me to go back home. I was only thirteen years old. On arriving home at the eve of that day there were two elderly women in an isolated small house(Manyatta) my mother summon me on what was going to happen because am joining secondary and it's a must for me in whichever way to go through the cut for me to join high school. I knew it wasn't a good decision because I had from my sisters that it's a very bad act . I tried to refused almost four hours but my father by hearing that he came beat I and my mum thoroughly I got unconscious and that us how I was circumcised. It was very scary and painful at the same time. Joining secondary I was not comfortable bathing with other girls . I developed some ulcers, stress, I had no friends , I felt discriminated I lost attention many times in class . I isolated myself in bathroom bathing late hours. Later I managed to join child rights club in school and that's how I started healing. During school holidays I go to Female genital mutilation(FGM) seminars and that's how I came up with a strategy of joining in some NGOs I join Volunteering Survices Oversees(VSO) and now am in my organisation Maasai Transformation Organisation MATRO as a Co- founder and we are working with Power to youth in empowering vulnerable girls in my community and being a voice to the voiceless and we are also distributing sanitary towels and soaps to the girls. Am also working very hard to having seminars with the women cutters and making them know there is a law which is against the act. Also to the girls am making sure every child get education through taking those parents who neglected children from education to the chiefs. Am also making sure Kajiado is going to have zero acts of Female Genital Multilation. We are also educating the morans on how this cut brings effects to the wives to be. Thanks



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My name is **Fatma Ibrahim**, I was born in Wajir, am an FGM survivor. Although my story is painful you can't go through life allowing pain to dictate how you behave.

FATMA IBRAHIM

My mother brought me a midwife and other women from the neighborhood. She prepared everything and left me and them in the room

They took off my underwear and each one grabbed my legs, the midwife had a small knife and was cutting a part of my body, I was barely six(6)years old when all this was happening to me

I was an open, brave and intelligent little girl but things changed up after the circumcision, I used to meet these midwives on my way to school and after what happened I started to take a different route to avoid them. I thought they would do the same to me again.

I would never allow my daughters to undergo female genital mutilation, I will continue to tell mothers, fathers and the girls themselves about the danger of FGM

ACHA STRESS!

G-Express G-Jali G-Pende G-Nice

