



CTWOO
NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

**COME TOGETHER WIDOWS AND ORPHANS ORGANIZATION
(CTWOO)**

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REPORT ON A VISIT TO MARY IMMACULATE GIRLS RESCUE CENTRE

VENUE: SUGUTA MARMAR WARD, SAMBURU
COUNTY



DECEMBER 10, 2023

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A VISIT BY THE ANTI- FGM BOARD KENYA AND COME TOGETHER WIDOWS AND ORPHANS ORGANIZATION TO MARY IMMACULATE GIRL RESCUE CENTRE, SUGUTA-MARMAR WARD, SAMBURU WEST CONSTITUENCY ON 10TH DECEMBER 2023



Photo Courtesy: Rescued girls at Mary Immaculate Girls Rescue Centre carrying UNFPA dignity kits presented to them by UNFPA Kenya through the Anti-FGM Board Kenya and Come Together Widows and Orphans Organization

INTRODUCTIONS

Mary Immaculate Girls Rescue Centre is a haven and a Centre for Hope to 90 girls of various ages who have escaped the perils of **Early Marriages**, **Gender-Based Violence**, and **Female Genital Mutilation**. These courageous girls receive not only accommodation but also essential provisions such as food and clothing, as well as education, generously sponsored by well-wishers. Hailing from both the entire county and Turkana County, these girls find shelter under the guidance of the current director, **Terecia Nduku**, who leads a dedicated team that includes three sisters, a matron, a secretary, and a watchman.

In a bid to achieve sustainability and financial independence, the center has implemented various projects. Notable among them including a greenhouse cultivating sukumawiki, indigenous vegetables, cabbages, tomatoes, and onions. Additionally, there is a garden used to cultivate sorghum, bananas, and mangoes, along with a poultry section housing chickens and turkeys. The girls also engage themselves in beadwork making during holidays.

The visit provided a platform for various girls to share their compelling stories of resilience and the journey that led them to the center. Some had fled directly to the center to escape the harrowing practice of Female Genital Mutilation, while others were rescued by police officers and other local administration officers when found in distress.



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The girls expressed their disturbing experiences through recited poems, shedding light on the profound impact of cultural norms and traditions that had made them victims. It became evident that the fight against female genital mutilation faces significant challenges due to prevailing negative cultural practices. Girls who have gone through the post-mutilation, are often traded for cows and blankets in marriage arrangements therefore exacerbating the struggle against this harmful practice.

Furthermore, morans, assigned the duty of reclaiming girls attempting to escape early marriages, add an additional layer of complexity to the situation. Tragically, even during holiday visits home, rescued girls risk falling prey once again to the very practices they sought refuge from.

In light of these challenges, the center's director appealed for assistance in building a computer room and acquiring beddings. This call not only underscores the immediate needs of the center but also highlights the broader imperative of collective action in combating entrenched cultural practices and providing a secure haven for these resilient young girls.

SPEECHES

MS. IPATO SURUM-CHAIRPERSON ANTI-FGM BOARD KENYA



Anti-FGM Board Chair Ms. Ipato Surum addressing the girls at MARY Immaculate Rescue Centre.

Madam Ipato Surum urged the rescued girls to become champions against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in their communities. She specifically called upon those girls who have pursued college and university education, emphasizing that they hold a respected position in society and should lead the fight. Madam Surum also appealed to the Samburu community to



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reject outdated traditions that view women as wealth only after marriage, as this belief encourages FGM when parents rush to have their daughters cut in order to get them married.



Anti-FGM Board Kenya CEO Madam Bernadette Loloju addressing the girls at Mary Immaculate Girls Rescue Centre.

Madam Bernadette Loloju called for involvement of men in the fight against FGM. She noted that since men are the cultural custodians of society, their voices are crucial. She also called for boys to be protective of their sisters undergoing the cut. As the visit marked the World Human Rights Day as well as the end of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign 2023, she educated the girls on their fundamental human rights as enshrined in the constitution especially the right to dignified life and freedom from all harmful health practices where the Anti-FGM Board draws its mandate.



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DR. DIANAH KAMANDE-BOARD DIRECTOR, ANTI-FGM BOARD KENYA,
FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CTWOO



She began by congratulating the girls for being brave and confident by standing firm against FGM. She encouraged them to let the flame of Anti-FGM Champions to continue thriving in them so that they can all make sure that their Rights are Protected, Respected and Safeguarded. She affirmed that as the Founder of Come Together Widows and Orphans Organization and as a Board Director at the Anti-FGM she will remain at the forefront in the fight against the harmful practices that violate Women's and Girls Rights.

She urged the staff at the Rescue Centre to stand united in the shared commitment to upholding the Rights of every Girl, fostering an environment where freedom, dignity and empowerment reign supreme.

Dr. Dianah Kamande addressing girls at Mary Immaculate Rescue Centre during the World Human Rights Day

CONCLUSION

The visit we paid was very meaningful to the center since we were able to extend our support in partnership with the Anti-FGM Board through a donation of assorted foodstuffs, encompassing cooking oil, rice, unga, and refreshments, along with dignity towels. We were also able to champion for the Protection for the future of the Girl Child and to inspire hope to these brave girls.



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