

REPORT ON THE POST-16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM CAMPAIGN AND ANNUAL GOAT-GIVING CEREMONY HELD IN MARALAL WARD, SAMBURU COUNTY ON 14TH DECEMBER 2023

INTRODUCTION

On December 14th, 2023, our organization actively participated in an **Advocacy Campaign Against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** held in **Ngari Secondary School in Maralal Ward, Samburu County**. This engagement was part of our commitment to the **Post-16 Days of Activism Campaign 2023**, aiming to transform community perceptions surrounding FGM. FGM, a harmful practice, not only poses a threat to the health of Women and Girls but is also a severe form of violence that strips them of their Dignity and Respect for their bodies. **Samburu County is among the 22 counties** that have high FGM prevalence in Kenya according to the **Kenya Demographic & Health Survey (KDHS)**. KDHS 2022 reveals that there is a 15 percent prevalence of FGM in the country which covers the percentage of females aged 15 to 49 who have undergone FGM.

This significant event coincided with our **Annual Goat Giving ceremony**. The Goat Giving Ceremony is one of our cherished celebrations that is often dedicated to celebrating the resilience and bravery of our **unsung heroes—the widows/ers within our community**. The Goat Giving ceremony symbolizes our deep appreciation for their courage and serves as a tangible expression of our love and support for them. It reinforces our **Mission of Leaving No one behind** by celebrating and empowering every widow/er in the community including the elderly who often go unrecognized.

Through this, we had the opportunity to extend our Early Merry Christmas wishes to widows and widowers through food donations, clothes, and goat-giving. We had the opportunity to put smiles on their faces, especially the elderly widows/widowers. The goal was clear and that was to ensure that every widow and widower felt valued and economically empowered



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SPEECHES

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



Dr. Dianah Kamande- Founder & Executive Director CTWOO gifting an elderly widower with a blanket during the Post 16 Days of Activism Campaign 2023 in Maralal, Samburu County

In her passionate speech as the main host of the event, Dr. Dianah Kamande highlighted the urgent issue of economic struggles faced by widows and widowers, especially the elderly. She emphasized that Economic Exploitation due to Economic Vulnerability is a silent form of violence that many do not know about. She mentioned that Economic Vulnerability often forces widows to engage in harmful FGM practices because they have no alternative source of livelihood.

She stressed the importance of helping widows/ers to achieve economic independence. She emphasized that Financial Stability is key to building resilience and breaking the cycle of Economic Vulnerability.

In her speech, she also called for cultural change and a commitment to ending FGM through the shift in the mindset of the Samburu residents especially the elderly who still hold firm to FGM practices. By emphasizing the detrimental impacts of FGM on both the Dignity and Health of Women and Girls, she aimed to cultivate a collective understanding that could pave the way for transformative change.

Through her words, she purposefully ignited a shared commitment within the community, recognizing that true transformation requires the active involvement of every individual, particularly men, in dismantling harmful practices and fostering an environment of Equality and Respect for the Dignity of Women and Girls.

She later shifted focus to the yearly Goat-giving ceremony, portraying it not just as a symbolic celebration but as a powerful tool for Economic Empowerment. She explained how providing goats offers a practical and sustainable solution to the various challenges widows and widowers in Samburu encounter.



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HON. JOSEPH LOLOJU, MCA MARALAL WARD



Hon. Joseph Loloju-MCA Maralal Ward giving a speech during the Post 16 Days of Activism Campaign 2023 in Ngari Secondary School, Maralal Ward, Samburu County

In extending a warm welcome to all participants, **Hon. Joseph Loloju** expressed his heartfelt appreciation for the impactful role of Come Together Widows and Orphans Organization (CTWOO) in driving positive change within Maralal Ward.

Recognizing the urgent need to address the intricate challenges faced by widows and widowers, he highlighted the prevalent issues of **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Economic Exploitations** as forms of violence that have always demanded immediate attention.

HON. NAISULA LESUUDA- SAMBURU WEST MP



Hon. Naisula- Samburu West MP addressing Widows and widows during our Post-16 Days of Activism Campaign in Ngari Secondary School, Maralal Ward, Samburu County

With a resolute spirit, Hon. Lesuuda's words echoed a call for collective action, emphasizing the imperative of safeguarding the well-being and dignity of every individual.

She highlighted the shared responsibility in dismantling deep-rooted cultural norms that perpetuate harm against women and girls. By stressing the significant role of men, she called for a sense of empowerment and accountability among the male members of the

community. She encouraged them to actively contribute to an end to FGM practices within Samburu County by placing a strong emphasis on the vital task of shifting cultural perceptions surrounding Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

In her vision, Samburu County could transcend the shadows of the past, embracing a future where the rights and safety of women and girls are upheld with dedication, commitment, and respect.



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CONCLUSION

The support from UN Women, through the provision of IEC materials (T-shirts and lesos and reflectors) played a pivotal role in the success of this campaign. These materials were instrumental in spreading the crucial message of **Uniting to Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls**. The significance of this message resonated with our elderly Widows and Widowers by emphasizing the gravity and seriousness of Gender-Based Violence. This message served as a catalyst for Awareness and Unity in our collective efforts to End Violence Against Women and Girls in our communities.

The Goat Giving Ceremony provided a valuable opportunity for these resilient individuals to generate income through the sale of milk and offspring thereby promoting economic self-reliance.

In combining these initiatives, we not only Advocated for Change and Raised Awareness against harmful practices specifically FGM. This campaign also helped us in honoring and uplifting our Widows and Widowers who have stood tall amidst life's trials. It reflected our commitment to fostering a community that is informed, compassionate, and dedicated to the well-being of all its members.



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PHOTOS



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