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# NEWSLETTER

Power, Voice, Agency



**A year of survivor leadership, community courage, and global advocacy**

## Projects Highlights

👤 3,500+ community members directly reached through dialogues, forums, girls' camps, and public events.

👨 300+ men and elders engaged as allies through male engagement forums and age-set leadership dialogues

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📻 2,000+ people reached through radio talk shows and media engagement

🌐 3 high-level advocacy platforms represented nationally and internationally (UK Zero Tolerance Dialogue, CSW69 – USA)

## Projects Highlights

📞 200+ FGM survivors engaged in healing spaces, survivor forums, and advocacy initiatives

👉 45 adolescent girls empowered through life-skills, leadership, and SRHR-focused girls' camps

## 2025 at a Glance

### A year of survivor leadership, community courage, and global advocacy



2025 was a year that reminded us why community-led change matters.

At Afyaafrika, we witnessed courage in its truest form, survivors choosing to heal and lead, elders rethinking long-held traditions, men stepping forward as allies, and girls finding their voices. These were not easy conversations, but they were necessary ones. And because they were rooted in respect, culture, and truth, they led to real change. This year, our work reached beyond villages and counties to global spaces. From Narok to London and New York, we carried the voices of girls and survivors into rooms where policies are shaped and commitments are made. We went not as observers, but as contributors, grounded in lived realities and guided by community wisdom.

One of the most defining moments of 2025 was witnessing the Maa Elders publicly declare the abandonment of FGM. This historic step affirmed what we have always believed: culture is not static, and when communities lead, transformation is possible.

To our partners, supporters, survivors, and communities, thank you for walking this journey with us. As we look ahead, Afyaafrika remains committed to strengthening survivor leadership, engaging men and youth, and ensuring that every girl grows up safe, valued, and free.

Together, we are not just ending harmful practices, we are restoring dignity and shaping a better future.

**Catherine Mootian, Executive Director**

## Key Highlights of 2025

### ● Survivor Voices at the Center

Through partnership with TGG African Led Movement to End FGM, Our Binti wa Nguvu approach, convened FGM Survivors Forums across villages in Suswa Ward, Narok County. Survivors came together not only to heal, but to lead. These forums strengthened confidence, advocacy skills, and collective action, resulting in survivor-led groups that continue anti-FGM campaigns at the grassroots. This was complimented by yet another project; Wezesha Dada, aimed to strengthen girls' and women's agency by addressing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), teenage pregnancy prevention, and women's economic empowerment. Survivors reminded us that lived experience is power. When survivors speak, communities listen.

### ● Men as Catalysts for Change: The Maa Elders' Declaration to End FGM

Afyafrika intensified engagement with men, age-set leaders, and councils of elders through respectful, culture-responsive dialogues. These spaces allowed men and elders to reflect deeply on the impact of FGM, child marriage, and gender-based violence on families, girls' futures, and the dignity of the community.

A defining and historic moment of 2025 was the public declaration by Maa elders to abandon Female Genital Mutilation. After months of sustained dialogue, reflection, and intergenerational engagement, elders chose to speak openly and collectively against a practice long considered untouchable.

The declaration was made during a widely attended community gathering and witnessed by the first lady of Kenya Rachel Ruto, first ladies from FGM hotspot counties and over 2,000 community members, including women, men, youth, survivors, government representatives, and civil society organizations. Standing together, elders affirmed that culture is meant to protect life, dignity, and the future of children, not cause harm.

This declaration marked a powerful shift from silence to accountability. By using their authority to publicly reject FGM, the elders sent a clear message across villages and age-sets: harmful practices have no place in a culture that values its girls. The moment also strengthened survivor confidence, reinforced parental responsibility, and accelerated community-owned enforcement of abandonment commitments.

The Maa Elders' Declaration stands as one of Afyaafrika's most significant milestones, and proof that when communities lead, change becomes irreversible.



*Maa Elders' during a declaration to end FGM and child marriage at Suswa Girls Secondary School.*

-  **Intergenerational Dialogues: Bridging Past and Future: Wezesha Dada Project**

In the rolling villages of Narok, under trees, in school compounds, and within familiar community meeting spaces, Through the Wezesha Dada project, Afyafrika brought together generations that rarely sit in the same circle to speak openly. Mothers sat beside daughters. Fathers listened as young people spoke. Elders shared wisdom, while youth asked questions they had carried silently for years.

The aim of these intergenerational dialogues was simple but powerful: to create safe, respectful spaces where families and communities could openly discuss tradition, health, rights, and dignity, without fear or judgment. Guided by trained facilitators, conversations explored FGM, child marriage, education, bodily autonomy, and the changing realities facing girls and boys today.

What made these dialogues transformative was not confrontation, but connection. Parents spoke of the pressure they had inherited. Girls shared their fears and dreams. Young men reflected on responsibility, respect, and protection. Slowly, understanding replaced silence.

The impact was visible and immediate. Families reported renewed trust between parents and children. Girls gained confidence to speak up and seek protection. Elders reaffirmed their role as custodians of culture who can adapt traditions to safeguard life and dignity. These dialogues strengthened collective responsibility, shifting the question from *"Why are girls resisting culture?"* to *"How can we protect our children together?"* Through intergenerational dialogue, Afyafrika witnessed a powerful truth: when generations listen to one another, communities begin to heal, and lasting change takes root.

-  **Girls' Camp: Building Confidence, Courage, and Sisterhood**

During the school holidays, we hosted a three-day Girls' Empowerment Camp in Empaash Village, Narok East, bringing together adolescent girls at risk of FGM and early marriage from surrounding communities.

For many girls, the camp was the first time they had stepped into a space designed solely for them, a space where their voices mattered. Through guided sessions on life skills, leadership, mental wellbeing, SRHR, and self-protection, girls learned not only how to stay safe, but how to believe in their own worth.

Evenings were filled with storytelling, laughter, and reflection. Girls shared personal experiences, supported one another, and built bonds of sisterhood that continue beyond the camp. Mentors and facilitators reinforced a clear message: your body, your future, your voice matter.

The impact was visible. Girls left the camp more confident, informed, and connected. Many returned to their communities as peer champions, ready to speak up, seek help, and support other girls facing similar risks.

The girls' camp reaffirmed a simple truth at the heart of Afyafrika's work: when girls are informed, supported, and believed in, they become powerful agents of their own protection.

### ● Taking Community Voices to Global Spaces

In 2025, Afyaafrika's work extended beyond community dialogues and village forums to global and national advocacy platforms. Our Executive Director represented Afyaafrika in key international spaces, ensuring that grassroots, survivor-led perspectives from Kenya were present in global conversations on gender equality and ending FGM.

In February 2025, Afyaafrika participated in a High-Level Dialogue on Ending Female Genital Mutilation in London, UK, held in commemoration of the International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM. The dialogue brought together policymakers, advocates, and survivors to reflect on global progress, survivor leadership, and the power of language in shaping attitudes toward FGM. Afyaafrika amplified the importance of community-driven and culturally grounded solutions, reinforcing the role of local organizations in sustaining global commitments.

In March 2025, Afyaafrika was represented at the 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) in New York, USA. Under the theme of accelerating gender equality by addressing poverty, strengthening institutions, and financing with a gender lens, Afyaafrika contributed to discussions on ending FGM, survivor leadership, intersectionality, and youth agency. These engagements strengthened international partnerships and elevated the voices of women and girls from FGM-affected communities onto the global stage.

These global engagements affirmed a core belief of Afyaafrika: solutions to FGM must be informed by the lived realities of survivors and communities most affected.



**“Survivors are not just victims; they are the most powerful agents of change. When we amplify their voices we amplify solutions”**

## Recognition and Milestones

2025 was also a year of recognition for Afyaafrika's growing impact and leadership:

- International Women's Day 2025 (Nairobi): Afyaafrika was recognized among the Top 30 Women's Rights Organizations Championing Gender Equality in Kenya by ForumCIV.
- 16 Days of Activism 2025 (Suswa, Narok): Afyaafrika received national recognition from the Anti-FGM Board for its outstanding contribution to ending FGM, during the official launch of the 16 Days of Activism.
- In December 2025 Afyaafrika was awarded two certificates; One a certificate of recognition by the Narok County government and two, a certificate of appreciation by the Narok Gender Technical Working Group for its exemplary work in addressing issues of gender equality and women and girls empowerment.

These milestones reflect the collective effort of communities, survivors, partners, and the Afyaafrika team in driving sustainable change.



## Our Partners and Allies

### 👉 Standing With Us

The progress we made in 2025 would not have been possible without the trust, solidarity, and support of our partners. From grassroots implementation to national and global advocacy, our partners walked alongside us, believing in survivor leadership, community-owned solutions, and the power of collective action.

Their support strengthened our ability to reach communities, amplify survivor voices, engage elders and men as allies, and carry local realities to global platforms. We are deeply grateful to every organization, institution, and network that invested in our vision and stood with us in the fight to end FGM, child marriage, and gender-based violence.



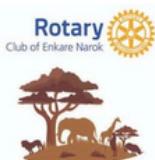
**NAROK COUNTY GOVERNMENT**  
*The Land of Diversity*



**Sweden**  
**Sverige**



Changing You, Transforming All!



**FORUMCIV.**



Together, we are proving that sustainable change happens when partnerships are rooted in respect, shared values, and community trust.

## Looking Ahead: The Road to 2025 Photo Gallery

A glance at some of the photos from a series of activities we conducted throughout the year.



## Acknowledging Our Team

The success of Afyaafrika's initiatives would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of our incredible team. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to :



**Catherine Mootian – Executive Director**



**Janet Mwende – Programs and Community Engagement Officer**



**Elizabeth Chepkemoi – Communications Officer**



**Isa Ndegwa – Communications Lead**



**Evelyn Karoro – Finance Manager**



**Joyce Simiyu – Programs Assistant**