

Presentation by Agnes Pareyio

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Greeting! Thank you for giving me an opportunity to be part of this noble discussion.

Kenya has made strides towards elimination of Female Genital Mutilation and child marriage. However, this good progress has been heavily impacted by the current covid 19 pandemic. The President made a commitment to end FGM by 2022. The board is working closely with the administration at the grassroots level, which has helped a lot to reduce the FGM cases. .

During the covid 19 pandemic, the grassroots organizations have noted increased incidences of gender based violence against women and girls. Incidences of child marriage have increased since the curfew and the schools shutdown. This is because the girls are at home with the parents, for long hours, and this gives an opportunity for them to marry off their daughters, and those who want to cut them can do it silently at night. Organizations fighting FGM at the grassroots levels have not relented and they are now using FM radios to reach out to the communities with anti- FGM messages. Even though not everybody have access to a radio, but this is better than nothing.

Tasaru Ntomonok Initiative (TNI) is a community based organization founded in 1999 to provide a safety net initiative for girls running away from FGM and ECM. It imperatively ensures that they are protected from further harassment, their rights and integrity are respected and that they continue in school.

Our objectives:

- To educate the community on the dangers and effects of FGM and ECM
- To advocate for the Alternative rite of passage without the cut
- Advocate for the need to educate the maasai girl child
- To carry out a reconciliation process between the runaway girls and their parents.
- To empower the girls and women to make their own informed decisions about their life and future.

During this covid 19 pandemic, We have indentified key resource persons from different parts of the county to make sure that they monitor and report all the cases of FGM and early marriage. The resource persons are facilitated with airtime to make sure they report all the incidences as they occur. We also check with the OCS desk on gender based violence reported cases. At the moment, there's one case of defilement court. We also have one rescued case, where advised the OCS to take for quarantine, before she joins the rest at the rescue centre.

We have been monitoring the community on FGM to find out if there's anything happening. FGM is a practice that is valued by the community and cannot happened under any crisis. The

covid 19 pandemic put the community in a situation where they are sure of survival. They also believe that, when it's cold and raining, the wounds cannot heal. Early marriage is high and its happening at night. We are following up and investigating 4 cases, which has been reported to us

We also visit the communities while observing the MOH rules and regulations to sensitize them on the rules and regulations given by MOH on how to prevent covid 19. We donate foodstuffs and masks to old women and widows who have been forced to stay at home because the markets have been. These are the women who used to do business to earn their living and take care of their families.