

THE LINK

**A NEWSLETTER BY WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT LINK
NAIVASHA GBV/FGM/C COUNTY WORKING GROUP EDITION 3**



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WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT LINK

Empowering the Flower Farms' Gender Committees

Women's Empowerment Link sought to engage flower farms' gender committees in a 2 day training on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) prevention and response sensitization workshop considering their role in addressing the vice.

The 42 participants from the 7 flower farms represented including 29 women and 13 men were sensitized on SGBV prevention and response, legal frameworks addressing SGBV, and the impact of SGBV on reproductive health and HIV.

Engaging the flower farms gender committees remain a thorn in the flesh due to the dynamics of the flower farms leadership who seek to protect their space. Some representatives never managed to

join in the training which limits the intended results. This has been reflected in the inactivity of the gender committees in the flower farms dealings especially in having impact among the employees.

Concerns on Sexual exploitation in the flower farms has been raised being that they are not taken seriously by authorities for lack of evidence (Kenya Report; Gender, Rights & Participation in the Kenya Cut Flower Industry) thus the need for the training to cre-



Representatives from the flower farms gender committees engaging in role play

ate awareness by addressing the root causes, contributing factors and consequences of SGBV to individuals and among the community members.

Taking Positive Power into their hands

Known for her vigor and passion in the campaign against FGM/C in Naivasha, councilor Esther Njeri has dedicated herself and is at the forefront in responding and rescuing girls from the cut in the larger Naivasha area.

Hand in hand with members of the Naivasha GBV/FGM/C working group, Councilor Esther and the team visit villages and schools campaigning against FGM/C and early

marriage among community members and school children.

FGM with its twin tradition of early marriage have denied girls in Naivasha especially from the Maasai Community the pursuit of higher education .

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Special points of interest:

- Women work two thirds of the world's working hours
- Women earn only 10% of the world's income
- Women own less than 1% of the world's property
- Women make up two thirds of the estimated 876 million adults worldwide who cannot read or write

Information courtesy of care organization

Engaging Teachers in Eradicating FGM/C



Teachers engaged by WEL in a training on FGM/C

After the release of a baseline survey conducted by the Ministry of Gender, UNFPA and UNICEF which reported that 19.8% of the respondents surveyed in Naivasha believed that FGM/C is practiced in the area, WEL with support from the UNFPA/UNICEF joint program conducted a training for teachers with the aim of building their capacity and enhancing their re-

sponse to cases of FGM/C in the area.

The training which targeted 31 primary school teachers from Marai-gushu, Maiella, Longo-not and Central zones engaged them as the teachers spend a lot of time with the pupils as well as sharing close relations with the parents and thus educating them on the dangers of

FGM/C.

The teachers were engaged to increase their understanding of GBV/FGM/C, create awareness among them on gender relations, GBV/FGM/C and increase their participation on FGM/C abandonment in Naivasha.

The teachers have actively been engaging the community through community forums especially with parent teachers associations. They remain great agents in the abandonment of FGM/C in Naivasha.

Maai Mahiu Community Sensitization Forum

“We must be the change we wish to see”

M. K. Gandhi

Maai Mahiu is one of the areas with the highest rates of GBV within Naivasha and with this background, WEL in collaboration with GBV /FGMC Working group conducted a community awareness forum highlighting the challenges faced and factors hindering GBV prevention and response. The community

was informed on the role of different sectors i.e. health/medical, legal, safety/security and psychosocial and livelihood at the community level.

The forum which had 46 participants including panelists from the District Health Ministry and the Deputy OCPD dis-

cussed on the importance of educating the community on the importance of acting as witnesses to a case and preserving of evidence.

The participants were also able to get key contacts from the various sectors for effective and quick response to Gender Based Violence and referral of cases for sharing of roles.



Students from Maai Mahiu Secondary school entertain guests during the Day of the African Child celebrations

Celebrating the Day of the African Child

It would have been mistaken for a carnival as around 800 people from Naivasha came out in droves this 16th day of June, 2011 in celebrating the Day of the African Child.

The day's theme, 'All Together for Urgent Action in Favour of Street Children' was marked through

a procession in the town of Naivasha which was led by the street children and pupils and students from various schools from Naivasha.

William, a motivational speaker from AIC Naivasha, a Pastor and a rehabilitated street child urged the government to ensure a balance be-

tween the rights of the boy child and the girl child adding that the boy child was getting lost in the process of the fight for the girl child only.

Naivasha's District Education Officer (D.E.O) urged parents to ensure that their children received an education stating that each child should get an opportunity to get educated as it was a child's right to get an education.

Capacity Building of the Kongoni GBV/FGM/C W.G

Kongoni GBV/FGM/C Working group committed themselves in foreseeing a future where women and girls live in safety from Sexual and Gender Based Violence and especially Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting. WEL conducted a training for the Kongoni sub-working group members to sensitize them on GBV/FGM/C and give them capacity to become ambassadors and mentors within the communities they represent.

The 32 members who were sensitized were facilitated on under-

standing GBV and FGM/C, creation of awareness among the youth on gender relations and increase the men's participation in response and prevention against GBV and FGM/C.

The GBV/FGM/C working group members were especially sensitized on proper preservation of evidence especially when

dealing with SGBV survivors as this would help in punishing perpetrators in the court of law.

The GBV/FGM/C W.G members promised to play a major role in the fight against GBV and in collaboration with the Provincial Admin.

Be an Agent of change Committed to ending SGBV



Representatives of the Flower Farms Gender Committees who were sensitized on prevention and response of SGBV

An Agent of Change

The most important thing that is expected when conducting a training is that the message spurs the trainees to make a positive change in the community and that is exactly what Mr. Kasero did after the teachers TOT training on FGM/C; he went from house to house in his village sensitizing the community members on the effects of practicing FGM/C.

Mr. Nkero Kasero, a parent &

teacher at Ol-noong'onot Primary school in Olkaria, Kongoni Division who hails from the Maasai community, (the Maasai community practices 93% FGM/C according to the 2008/2009 KDHS report), was able, through one of his home visit campaigns

to convince a father to transfer his daughter to a boarding school after finding out his wife planned to have their daughter undergo the cut.

Mr. Kasero with support from Kengen Naivasha is also engaging boys & young men to change their attitude and join the campaign on FGM/C abandonment through a football tournament.

"Today is the happiest moment for women who have suffered through FGM" Nominated MP Sophia Abdi Noor after the passing of the FGM Bill

Sensitizing Religious Leaders on Responding to SGBV

As leaders who are often key catalysts for positive social change, WEL sought to engage 34 religious leaders in a TOT training aimed at improving their response to GBV/FGM/C and its link to HIV.

The training of these religious leaders which also included women of faith as key stakeholders in the fight against GBV/FGM/C, aimed at strengthening the capacity of the leaders to prevent and respond to GBV as well

as increase the engagement and commitment of the religious leaders to address GBV and HIV issues.

With one voice and in agreement that they have a major role in preventing and responding to GBV, the religious leaders decided to

create multi-religious support groups for victims of violence, advocate enactment and enforcement of laws to protect community members and most importantly, sensitize communities on GBV & related issues.

The religious leaders were also encouraged to set up safe houses and thus provide immediate



Religious leaders from various Faith Based Organizations in Naivasha during a training on SGBV

For the Strength of Women; For the Strength of Africa

P. O. Box 22574-00100
Nairobi, Kenya
Muringa Road & Elgeyo Marakwet
Junction
Off Ngong Road
Opposite Red Cliff Gardens

Cell: 0711 907 132/0732 574 060
Email: info@wel.or.ke
Facebook ID: Women's
Empowerment Link

We're on the web
www.wel.or.ke



ABOUT WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT LINK

Women's Empowerment Link (WEL) is a non-profit, non partisan non-governmental women rights organization committed to empowering women and girls to realize their potential, worth and strength politically, socially and economically through advocating for opportunities that explore their potential.

WEL recognizes that the survival of women and girls is increasingly being challenged by economic dependency, illiteracy, Sexual & gender based violence (SGBV), HIV/AIDS, gender inequalities & marginalization, conflict, insensitive laws & policies which underscore WEL's purposeful programming on five key thematic areas:-

- Women Economic Empowerment
- Access to Education
- Reproductive health and rights
- Sexual & Gender based violence & HIV/AIDS
- Transformative leadership & Governance

WEL's Mission: To empower women to realize, exercise their rights and freedoms, and access opportunities and privileges towards gender equality.

WEL's Vision: A society that is gender sensitive where women and men have equal rights and opportunities for a just society

A Word from WEL's Organizational Director



*WEL's Organizational Director,
Mrs. Grace Mbugua*

With the passing of the FGM Bill into law, the Kenyan women and the girl child can now breath a sigh of relief in that the rule of an archaic culture has been brought to an end .

While the Children Act (2001), had provided some protection from FGM, the same only protected girls under the age of 18 and there remained a big gap as women over the age of 18 had no sort of protection under the law from FGM.

This is now remedied by the FGM/C Act 2011 which prohibits the practice of FGM on any female regardless of the age as well as providing harsh penalties for persons who carry out or aid in any way in the carrying out of FGM.

It is our responsibility to ensure that this Act will go a long way in the prohibition and finally the death of this harmful cultural practice in Kenya.

The FGM/C Act also places a duty on all of us to help stop the vice by reporting to the relevant authorities of any planned FGM/C ceremonies.

Kenyans also have a duty to protect all women and girls from the vice by shunning it and realizing that it has no value with the myth that it makes a woman mature is just that; A MYTH! In reality, it has serious health repercussions, in some cases, leading to death.