

## **KOMOLION ALTERNATIVE RITE PASSAGE REPORT DEC 2019**

(Note: Komolion is the name of the village. Noonkera is the name of the Kenya non-profit organization founded by Zippy and Daniel Sindiyo. The funds raised by the Komolion Human Development Fund for projects in Kenya are wired to Noonkera to be used by the Sindiyo for the purpose we designate. Sharyn Dowd, secretary.)

### **FACILITATORS**

<b>Noonkera Organization</b>	<b>Noonkera Girls</b>	<b>Komolion Community</b>
Daniel Sindiyo	Viola Kamarwa	Joash- Teacher
Zippy Sindiyo	Sheila Kasetem	Pastor
Reson Sindiyo	Faith Domoki	Mama Sheila
Nancy Sendeu	Carol Tosany	Ronny- Teacher
Chao Maina	Lilian Kipturu	Chief
		Nurse Grace

### **Government Representatives**

Assistant County Commissioner  
Area Chief  
2 Assistant Chiefs

### **WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES**

This workshop is intended to help decide what information is necessary to understand the community and context of the lives of girls/boys in Komolion and provided tools to gather this information. This information helped participants understand the challenges, how to handle them and how resolve them.

### **PARTICIPATION OBJECTIVES**

Participants were enabled to:

- Understand and appreciate the dangers of FGM
- Understand and appreciate the need to do away with the practice of FGM
- Understand and appreciate the value of education
- Understand and appreciate dangers of early marriages and early pregnancies
- Gain knowledge on reproductive health
- Understand the dangers of drugs and substance abuse
- Appreciate what role and contribution each one plays in the community
- Identify channels within the community to get assistance/advice/mentorship
- Graduate with a clear understanding of the importance of replacing FGM with Alternative Rite of Passage

### **MODE OF DELIVERY**

- Group work
- Discussions

*Noonkera –“Education is my Foundation”*

- Lectures
- Participants' interaction

### **INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT**

- Blackboard/chalk
- Manila paper
- Marker pens

### **EXPECTATIONS – GIRLS**

1. Understand why FGM has been banned
2. To better understand the dangers of FGM
3. Address stigma directed to girls who do not undergo FGM
4. Education – benefits and importance
5. Early pregnancies and marriage
6. Sex education –sex abuse, rape
7. Rescue channels and safe houses for girls escaping from FGM, early marriage, sexual abuse
8. How to identify them

### **EXPECTATIONS – BOYS**

1. Adolescence stages and impact
2. Reproductive health
3. Dangers of engaging in early sexual intercourse and marriage
4. Drugs and substance abuse
5. Sexual abuse
6. FGM – dangers

### **TOPICS COVERED BY THE BOYS AND GIRLS SESSIONS**

#### **FGM**

Both boys and girls were informed and educated on what FGM is and the dangers which included physical, emotional and psychological.

#### **What is FGM?**

Partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for cultural reasons

#### **Challenges of FGM eradication**

A key challenge is not only protecting girls who are currently at risk but also ensuring that those to be born in the future will be free from the dangers of the practice

#### **How does FGM affect the health of the girl?**

FGM has serious implications for the sexual and reproductive health of girls and women.

Immediate complications include severe pain, shock, haemorrhage, tetanus or infection, urine retention, ulceration of the genital region and injury to adjacent tissue, wound infection, urinary infection and fever. Haemorrhage and infection can be severe enough to cause death.

Long-term consequences include complications during childbirth, anaemia, damage to the urethra resulting in urinary incontinence (fistula), painful sexual intercourse, sexual dysfunction, hypersensitivity of the genital area and increased risk of HIV transmission.

### **What are the psychological effects of FGM?**

The psychological stress of the procedure may trigger behavioural disturbances in children, closely linked to loss of trust and confidence in parents, relatives, caregivers etc. In the long term, women may suffer feelings of anxiety and depression. Sexual dysfunction may also contribute to marital conflicts or divorce.

### **How can the community help in the eradication of FGM?**

- Challenge the discriminatory reasons for practising FGM such as perceived need to control female sexuality
- Change harmful cultural practices with the support of older and current generations and introduce alternative rites of passage
- Educate and empower girls on their right to decide what happens to their bodies
- Speak out on the dangers of FGM
- Communicate that religion does not support or demand FGM
- Expose the secrecy that allows FGM to continue
- Educate the community especially the men and boys on the need to stop stigmatising girls who have not undergone the cut
- Educate communities on the legal consequences of engaging in FGM

## **CHILD MARRIAGE**

Child marriage is driven by gender inequality and the belief that girls are somehow inferior to boys.

### **Reasons for child marriage include:**

- FGM
- Poverty
- Level of education/illiteracy
- Early pregnancy
- Natural disasters e.g. drought, floods, famine
- Man -made disasters e.g. war, conflict
- Lack of parental guidance
- Harmful traditional and cultural practices

### **Dangers of child marriage include:**

- School drop-out /illiteracy
- Suffer physical, emotional and psychological abuse

- Subjected to poverty
- Increased risk for sexually transmitted diseases, cervical cancer, malaria, death during childbirth, and obstetric fistulas

### **How to avoid/abolish early marriage**

- Education is empowerment
- Beware of your rights as a child
- Report to necessary authorities if in danger- chief, pastor, teacher, safe house,
- Respect, value and believe in yourself – self-esteem
- Aim for a better life- avoid peer pressure
- Beware of the legal consequences of engaging in early marriage

### **EARLY PREGNANCIES**

Teenage pregnancy, also known as adolescent pregnancy, is pregnancy under the age of 18

#### **Factors that contribute to early pregnancies include:**

- FGM
- Poverty
- Lack of self-esteem
- Peer pressure, engaging in drugs and substance abuse
- Lack of education or dropping out of school
- Lack of information about sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Inadequate access to services tailored to young people
- Family, community and social pressure to marry
- Sexual violence
- Child, early and forced marriage

#### **Dangers of early pregnancy**

- Complications relating to pregnancy and childbirth leading cause of death
- Health risks and complications due to immature bodies
- Negative social and economic effects on girls, their families and communities
- Face stigma or rejection by parents, peers and community
- Violence and abuse from partners or families
- Infections of STD and HIV
- Abortion and the consequences

#### **How to avoid/ abolish early pregnancy**

- Implement comprehensive education on sexuality and relationships in and out of schools
- Boys and girls educated on reproductive health e.g. life stages
- Boys and girls educated on dangers of engaging in early sexual activities e.g. STD, HIV
- Boys and girls educated on life skills topics such as peer pressure, self-esteem, drugs and substance abuse
- Focusing on education for a better future

- Raising girls' awareness of their sexual and reproductive health and rights, protecting them from abuse and connecting them with education and health services
- Identifying people within the community as mentors/advisors/confidants e.g. parents, relatives, pastor, teachers, nurses who they can talk to when need be
- Educate community on the social responsibility of treating all children equally

### **PRESENTATION BY NOONKERA PIONEER GIRLS**

Viola, Sheila, Carol, Lilian and Faith shared with the girls their individual journeys since their meeting with Zippy in 2008 and the support from Randall (BMUC), Brenda, Sharyn and Komolion foundation as a whole. They mentioned the challenges they had faced and how they had overcome them. These challenges included personal, educational, physical and psychological. How they had managed to replace harmful cultural practices by substituting them with alternative ones and focusing on the education opportunities they had been accorded. They encouraged the girls to be focused, determined, dedicated and courageous in their pursuit of education and a better life not just for them but their families and community at large.

### **ALTERNATIVE RITE OF PASSAGE CLOSING CEREMONY**

This was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the workshop and was presided over by the Assistant County commissioner and three area chiefs. Parents of the graduating children were in attendance as well as members of the community.

The girls totalling 47 were each presented with a lesa (wrap) and T-shirt each inscribed with the words "I SAY NO TO FGM". The boys were totalling 33 were presented with T-shirts inscribed "I AM ANTI FGM".

The ceremony was very festive with the boys and girls entertaining the guests. A representative from each group was given an opportunity to share with the crowd what they had learned and what they were taking away with them.

The Assistant county commission addressed the crowd and expressed gratitude to Noonkera and the sponsors for the commendable work they were doing in Komolion. He emphasized the urgency of eradicating FGM and the consequences of engaging in it. He was categorical in reminding them that FGM had been outlawed and anyone found engaging in it would be dealt with in accordance with the law. He encouraged them to focus on educating their children as this would empower them and the community through education.