

ASANTE SANA

July 2019

“Thank you very much for your kind support. It helped us graduate 198 girls through the Alternative Rite of Passage Programme. Amref Health Africa in Kenya highly appreciates your partnership.”

Dr Meshack Ndirangu, Country Director,
Amref Health Africa in Kenya



Community-Led Alternative Rite of Passage in Esonorua, Kajiado County

Amref Health Africa in Kenya through the Yes I Do Alliance and in partnership with the community of Esonorua, the East Africa Safari Rally, ABS Foods and individual donors conducted an Alternative Rite of Passage (ARP) Ceremony in Esonorua Village, Kajiado County. The ARP was held between 23 April and 26 April 2019. The activities included:

- 1. Community Dialogues:** Having engaged the community of Esonorua on their role as cultural elders, reformed female cutters, health staff, religious leaders, school teachers, parents, local administration, girls and boys in ending FGM, early marriage, and Teenage Pregnancies for over two years through dialogues, the community affirmed their zeal by undertaking an alternative to FGM.
- 2. Pre-ARP Training:** The ARP was preceded by training of boys and girls on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights helping the girls to understand the Maasai girl and community values, understanding their bodies, health relationships, sex and its outcomes, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), Child pregnancy HIV and AIDS, life skills, meaning and history of FGM types and effects of FGM, Child Rights violated during FGM, the seven offenses stipulated in the prohibition of FGM Act 2011, what the Bible says about FGM; ARP and benefits of ARP. The training employed different learning approaches e.g. use of videos, role modelling, and roleplay.
 - On day one of the pre-ARP training, a team from the Eastern Temple Nairobi distributed food packages to about 300 households in Esonorua. They also distributed reusable pads to 184 girls and young women after sensitising them on use and maintenance.
 - The girls and boys also benefited from toothbrushes issued by the same team after they were enlightened on the importance of regular dental care.

- The community through its leadership applauded the effort of taking care of their immediate need - hunger in light of the hard-hitting drought.
- 3. The 'Candle Night Out'** On the eve of the ceremony, a beauty contest was organised where girls competed adorned in Maa attire, walking along an imaginary runway heads high exuding confidence and beauty. They answered quiz questions on what they had learnt during the two days.
 - The girls and some of the community leaders also got a chance to watch 'The Cut'; an award winning film produced by beneficiaries of the Amref Dagoretti project that tells the story of a young boy determined to protect his sister from FGM. This further connected the girls with the reality of FGM and child marriages.
 - Two winners 'Miss ARP Esonorua' were announced and gifted with scholarly accessories during the ARP ceremony. They were given the power to read, read and read.
 - 4. The ARP ceremony:** The community members together with the girls (heads branded No FGM, No child marriage & No Teenage pregnancies) and the chief made a public declaration to end FGM, child marriage and teenage pregnancies.
 - Entertainment messages by the girls, women and local artists revolved around the importance of education to the children as opposed to FGM and child marriage.
 - Speeches by the leaders in attendance i.e. the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Women in Energy all called on the community to abandon harmful traditional practices and embrace change that was clearly finding its way into the community
 - All girls received scholarly accessories and their certificates as cultural elders and religious leaders in two lines chanted blessings to them.

Results

- 198 girls initiated through the Alternative Rite of Passage.
- 321 girls reached through community dialogues and Alternative Rite of Passage Training.
- 229 boys empowered with life skills and more knowledgeable on their role in safeguarding the rights of their sisters.

- 330 community members participated in the ARP and in support of ARP as an alternative to FGM
- 300 households benefitted from food stuff
- 198 girls and 164 boys received toothbrushes
- 198 girls and about 80 young women benefitted from reusable pads.

Esonorua ARP in Pictures



Girl branding before the procession



Flagging off of the procession by YIDA Coordinator



Presenting the Miss ARP Esonorua



Miss ARP Esonorua receiving her gift and certificate from YIDA Coordinator



Girl blessing by cultural elders



'Candle Night out'



Presenting the Miss ARP Esonorua



Engaging the boychild in ending FGM, Child marriage and teenage pregnancies



Eastern Temple Nairobi distributing food packages to households of Esonorua and reusable sanitary pads to girls & women



Thank you to all the partners for making this possible.