



Women living with disabilities
economic empowerment
project in Kajiado County



Primary school advocacy in
Nyamira county



Secondary school advocacy in
Nyamira county

HFAW PROFILE



P.O Box 672-00511, Karathe road
Ongata Rongai, Plot number 12822
Kajiado, Kenya



+254111657472



Hope Foundation for
African Women



@HFAW2015



www.hopefaw.org



info@hopefaw.org

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About Us

Hope Foundation For African Women is a non-governmental organization registered under the NGOs board of Kenya in 2013. HFAW works in Kenya in five counties namely: Nyamira, Kisii, Kajiado, Kisumu and Kiambu Counties. The areas were selected on the basis of rampant nature of issues such as Gender Based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation, HIV/AIDS, poverty, rights abuses, early marriages and polygamy among other rights based issues.

Introduction

Hope Foundation for African Women (HFAW) was started by Grace Bonareri Mose-Okong'o (PhD) to address rampant GBV and FGM in Kenya. Her original name was Grace Fund which was a community based organization in Nyamira County. Joined by Hellen Mutanje Njoroge, the two women believed in creating a bigger impact across the country, Kenya and so Grace Fund gave birth to Hope Foundation for African Women.

Grace's vision is to transform communities to be more sensitive to women; respect them and include them in the development of their families, communities and nation. Grace believes that women can be powerful agents of change. Having grown in rural village she understood vulnerabilities women have to overcome, the power structures and how culture objectify women and girls, FGM as a cultural practice had drastic impact on her life. Grace studied FGM and other vulnerable women and populations and understood the impact this has on people's lives. Her postgraduate studies adopted a theoretical framework, Popular Education (PE) by Paul Freire. She proceeded to South America in 2010 to learn the model's real life application to transform communities. Grace discovered that this model is powerfully transformative due to its critical consciousness raising, participatory and community engagement. Convinced that this model will work to address GBV Grace moved from USA in 2011, founded HFAW and registered it with NGO Board in 2013. She then trained 6 rural and peri-rural women in Chile to help in spreading the model to advance Sexual Reproductive and Human Rights and prevent Gender Based Violence while supporting vulnerable groups. The 6 women immediately began to use the model to end FGM in Kisii community. During the initial stages HFAW trained 30 health and human rights promoters to combat GBV with FGM as a priority and improve access to reproductive health information in their community. The trained health and rights promoters reaches students, parents, and teachers directly and indirectly through the local media with anti-FGM messages since 2014.

HFAW's outreach strategy focused on schools, churches, markets, road shows and media and local county leadership with anti-GBV and anti-FGM messages and related messages on child abuse, early pregnancies and women rights. The health promoters also held small face to face discussions with community (men, women and youth) where they critically engaged on FGM and other gender issues. Our target is all rural and peri-rural vulnerable women including poor women, young women and children and women living with disabilities, commercial sex workers and women living with HIV/Aids with a special focus on GBV survivors.

The HFAW multi sectoral approach involving advocacy with children, youth, teachers, parents, community leaders as well as economic empowerment and media outreach presents winning formulae to reduce and prevent GBV and end FGM in the communities she works in. HFAW has a firm belief in the power of the often left out ordinary people at grassroots to change and unveil their situation and cultivate their strengths and talents through participatory strategies and collective action to end FGM, foster sustainable development, and enable them to become equal participants in their families and communities.

Our Vision

A Society free of gender inequalities

Our Mission

To achieve Gender Equality through Socio-Economic Empowerment, eradication of GBV and FGM, promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Health and advancement of Human and women rights for a transformed society.

Core Values

- **Honesty** to ensure HFAW staff and volunteers are trusted and credible in the eyes of all stakeholders.
- **Openness** to feedback, ideas to ensure we are creative and innovative
- **Passion** to address the myriad of needs related to gender in the communities. HFAW staff will often have to go out of their way.
- **Excellence** in everything we do. We strive to have done our very best by the time we finish tasks.

Key Priority Areas

- Socio-Economic Empowerment for Women and Girls
- Eradication of GBV and FGM
- Promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Health
- Advancement of Human and Women's Rights
- Climate Change Measures and Adaptation
- Institutional Development and Capacity Building

Strategic Objectives

- To improve the Socio-Economic well-being for women and Girls
- To improve the health and wellbeing of women, girls and children
- To engage all stakeholders towards eradication of GBV and FGM
- To promote Sexual and Reproductive well-being of girls and women
- To have well informed and empowered women and girls on their rights
- To respond and adapt to climate change through best practices
- To adopt best organizational governance practices
- To improve on resource mobilization and fundraising
- To attract, recruit and retain competent staff

CORE STRATEGIES, COMPETENCIES AND TECHNICAL EXPERTIES

Popular Education and Social Change and Communication Training

All HFAW programs are initiated and delivered through Popular Education Model and Social Change Communication approach training methodologies. This is done with individuals, groups or organizations who become Trainer of Trainers depending on the target communities. The training may take three days to six months depending on the level and support needed for the participants and the ability to personalize the intended information through collaborative efforts. The trainings are done year round with new groups to expand and increase the scope of influence hence creating greater impact. This model has enabled us to reach some very remote areas through requests from several organizations in areas such as Mong'oni and Menyenya through the generous support from our donors such as Lutheran Church of Kenya, Global Giving and the Global Media Campaign group. The approach ensures sustainability of structures and networks beyond our trainings as cohesiveness is achieved and people are able to work closely with families, government representatives, local authority administrators and service providers to support their communities.

Community Mobilization

HFAW understands that community mobilization process helps bring together many stakeholders within the community, presenting a great opportunity to raise people's awareness on matters FGM and GBV. However, due to the high demand for FGM and GBV awareness programs among the Abagusii people, mobilization has helped in strengthening community participation for sustainability and self-reliance. We acknowledge that a lot can be achieved when people from different parts of the community share a common goal and actively participate in both identifying needs and being part of the solution. By involving the community members in our campaigns on anti-FGM and GBV over the years, we have witnessed Community members empower themselves, enabling them to initiate and control their own development with a unique understanding of challenges and obstacles standing in the way of achieving their objectives.



HFAW staff during community women engagement in Nyamira county

Additionally, the knowledge obtained by community representatives, empowers them to become change agents within their communities.

HFAWs application of P.E and SCC approaches in community engagement forums, facilitates a learner-centered participatory education exchange where groups of people explore and share their lives experiences and ideas about their social, political and economic problems. The explicit purpose of popular education is for communities to gain understanding of their common problems and to develop, implement and evaluate solutions. This concept helps a community to Identify and address myths and misconceptions that may lead to harmful and detrimental effects of a practice like FGM on its members. HFAW has successfully used this model to reach out to rural women, law enforcers, professionals, healthcare providers, organization leaders and policy makers.



Zero Tolerance for FGM Campaign in Nyamira

HFAW has created a program aimed at accelerating abandonment of FGM/C among Kisii communities that is empirically grounded in the ethnographic research completed by the founder, Grace Mose's, "Thinking the Gusii Way: Insider Perspectives on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)/Cutting and Strategies for Change." In this work, Dr. Grace Mose presents a "thick description" of the meanings associated with FGM/C, along with a critical feminist anthropological analysis of the factors leading to the perpetuation of the practice. She makes a compelling argument that FGM/C is rooted in system of gender socialization that perpetuates segregated gender roles, gender inequality, and highly restricted economic opportunities for women linked to gaining access to land through marriage. She critically analyzes the failure of the popular alternative rites of passage program that was conceptualized by Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization (MYWO) and Program for Appropriate Technology of Health (PATH). She maintains that while the program was intended to remove the cut and retain the useful cultural aspects of FGM, it did not address the values associated with marriage, wifehood, motherhood, children, dowry, gender socialization and the roles of women in the domestic and agricultural sector. She also contends with the fact that it rests on a health risk approach that may have spurred the radical medicalization of FGM/C that is found throughout the Abagusii communities.



HFAW Staff members

OUR GENDER ADVOCACY PROGRAMMES

Over the past 10 years, HFAW has directly reached and impacted over 7000 community members (men, women, law enforcement officials, men, women living with survivors etc. directly. Within the schools we have reached over 35,000 students directly. Indirectly, we have reached over 10 million radio and television audiences and social media users through integrated gender advocacy and economic empowerment programs. HFAW has engaged in advocacy both locally and internationally in Kenya and Tanzania, while we typically deliver an integrated program, the below summarizes our approach under each of our goal areas. HFAW does Capacity building to ensure Community Based Organizations are able to deliver quality programs with sustainable impact in the host communities. Our pioneer group was CHRPs in Borabu constituency in Nyamira county, who currently continue with awareness campaigns and outreaches within the community. These CHRPs include Law and health professionals, health promoter trainers, Youths, Community Based Organizations, Self Help Groups, NGOs, community administrative leaders such as chiefs, assistant chiefs and ward administrators.

School and Community Outreaches including Anti-GBV, anti-FGM, sexual and Reproductive Health, life skills and Early Pregnancy prevention projects

HFAW has trained over 50 Community Health and Human Rights Promoters to combat GBV with FGM as the main area of focus while advocating for improved access to reproductive health information within their communities. The trained CHRPs have continued to propagate the anti-FGM messages through the local media stations and reached students and pupils in schools, parents and teachers in the community both directly and indirectly since 2014. HFAW's outreach strategy focuses on schools, churches, markets, road shows and media campaigns while reaching out to the community leadership with anti-FGM messages and related information on child rights and abuse, teenage pregnancies and women rights.

At the core of these anti-FGM advocacy programs, men play a pivotal role as heads of families and decision-makers within the patriarchal structure of our community. Despite the misconception that women are the consumers and initiators of FGM,

HFAW has made it a top priority to engage men and boys in the fight against FGM in Kenya. In concerted efforts, HFAW initiated a project to sensitize, empower and equip men who have witnessed the effects of FGM firsthand, to boldly and actively campaign against this harmful and outdated practice.

Women engagement forums are held on a monthly basis within the Abagusii community to provide them with a comprehensive understanding of various forms of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), the causes, effects, and strategies for combating it. Additionally, to give them an understanding of their rights, how to defend any infringement on them, boldly standing up as human and women's rights advocates. Special emphasis is placed on highlighting Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as a prominent form of GBV and providing insights on how to support and care for victims of FGM.

The CHRPs frequently hold face to face discussions with men and women in the community where they critically engage on matters FGM and other gender based issues. However, the core objective of these initiatives is to empower not only the girls themselves but also their teachers, parents, and community leaders, fostering collaborative efforts in reducing early teenage pregnancies and enhance educational opportunities for girls. In a bold move towards gender equality and balance, HFAW intentionally engages boys and men in discussions surrounding the fight against early pregnancies through meaningful conversations and initiatives. HFAW's efforts are geared towards dismantling harmful norms and stereotypes that perpetuate and sustain cycles of early teenage pregnancies.

Economic Empowerment Financial Literacy Trainings

HFAW aims to provide women with entrepreneurial skills and resources necessary to achieve financial independence. We promote entrepreneurship, and access to financial literacy programs to help women start and grow businesses. HFAW integrates economic empowerment into gender interventions to support individuals and groups to improve their living standards and quality of life. Trainings and workshops take place on a monthly basis for the women on entrepreneurial skills and financial literacy coupled with mentorship in collaboration with government officers and working Community Based Organizations.

Table Banking

HFAW initiated a robust economic empowerment program for Women of Hope Abled Differently (WHAD), a Community Based Organization working with women and girls living with disabilities in Kajiado County through table banking. The project was launched by HFAW in April 2023 with the support of the organization's staff. The pioneering beneficiaries of this project were 20 WWDs some of whom are also recipients of loans from the HFAW Fund. By prioritizing the economic empowerment of WWDs, HFAW sought to ensure sustainability and resilience for this vulnerable group to reduce dependency on abusers for their survival.

Table banking being a collaborative funding strategy where group members gather periodically to pool their savings, make loan repayments, and contribute towards a common fund, this approach allows the WWDs to borrow funds immediately based on their individual needs, be it for short-term or long-term purposes. The practice of table banking empowers WWDs to lead their groups independently, ensuring that decisions regarding savings and loans are made internally without external influence. More women have been motivated to join the program to enable them to start their own businesses through the loans they obtain from table banking thus encouraging a culture of saving. Unlike the other conventional financial institutions where collateral is required before obtaining a loan, here members save and borrow immediately from their savings.

HFAW KITTY

HFAW introduced low interest loans for marginalized poor women in the rural areas and women with disabilities in Kajiado and Nyamira counties. However, HFAW launched this women's fund targeting rural women majority who have no avenue to access credits and are normally the ones holding strongly to FGM due to deep socio-economic marginalization and gender inequality to ensure the war on FGM is won across the board. Many women have benefited from this kitty and are currently undertaking different ventures ranging from agriculture, dairy farming and retail businesses.

Key Achievements Over the Last Ten Years

- Trained **50** health and human rights promoters in Nyamira county
- We had **240** women and 30 WWDs benefitting from HFAW loans in Nyamira and Kajiado counties respectively and an additional 137 women benefited from KIVA loans.
- Engaged **40** WWDs on financial literacy training and mentorship programs to enable them start their own businesses to transform their livelihoods.
- Reached over **30,977** pupils with anti-FGM, anti-GBV messaging and trained them on life skills in efforts to curb the harmful practices.
- Reached **2899** parents with anti-FGM and anti-GBV campaigns while empowering them to resist the outdated cultural practices against the girl child.
- We reached **2420** teachers in several schools in Nyamira county with the anti-FGM and anti-GBV messages to ensure the protection of the girl child while in school.
- We sensitized over **700** men on matters GBV and FGM together with community and religious leaders.
- Over **200** duty bearers were reached with the anti-FGM and anti-GBV messages to enhance quick response and protection of survivors.
- We engaged **5** Community Based Organizations on creating awareness campaigns and also recruiting ambassadors for our advocacy campaigns.
- Reached over **10 million** on radio and Television with our anti-FGM and anti-GBV campaigns and on matters disability and inclusivity.
- Over **700,000** online users were reached with our weekly posts and engagements on GBV, FGM and Disability.
- We have also trained **over 120** people in countries in East and Central Africa using popular education Method.
- Over **300** men living with FGM survivors have been trained to be effective advocates against FGM
- HFAW has built a strong team of staff and volunteers to scale up its operations while building strong networks to help mitigate GBV, FGM and poverty among communities.

Our Partners





Women Leaders
of the World

Individual Donors


- Melanie Nelson
- Carol Larkin
- Lisa Fontes
- Roberts Family
- Judith Barlow
- Sheila Dauer
- Bonnie Spanier
- Timothy Frasca
- Christina Mills
- Beth Greck
- Jonathan White
- Elizabeth Hufnagel
- Nicola Forsyth
- Cox Farms
- Linda Simkin
- Thomas Schwable
- Evelyn Luna


Our Contacts

 P.O Box 672-00511, Karathe road
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