

H F A W



ANNUAL REPORT

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Reducing Gender Inequities through Empowerment



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Hope Foundation for African Women



A teenage mother receiving food supplies during HFAW's outreach for teen mothers. Read story on page 16.



HFAW's women's training. Read story on pg. 12



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FOREWORD

Dear Friends, supporters, beneficiaries and all stakeholders,

In presenting the HFAW Annual Report for 2025, we reflect on a year of profound resilience and sustained commitment to our vision of a society free from gender inequality. Our efforts focused on reducing systemic disparities through a robust Popular Education Model that addresses gender-based violence (GBV), prioritizes the eradication of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and promotes sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The impact detailed within these pages reflects the successful implementation of programs designed to empower the most vulnerable populations across Kajiado and Nyamira Counties.

This year, we significantly expanded our reach through targeted interventions that foster economic empowerment and social inclusion. HFAW implemented holistic projects that enabled women and girls with disabilities to access essential services and gain financial independence, while also championing inclusive community engagement through celebratory sporting events and awareness campaigns. Our advocacy efforts were comprehensive, spanning school-based initiatives to provide life skills education, reduce teenage pregnancy, and restore dignity through menstrual hygiene support. Crucially, our gender advocacy work engaged both women and men in community forums to address the root causes of GBV and FGM, shifting harmful social norms through candid dialogue with parents, youth, and leaders.

None of these achievements would be possible without the unwavering goodwill and partnership of our supporters. We extend our deepest gratitude to all our dedicated donors and technical partners, as well as the local and national government agencies, whose collaboration and administrative support were vital to grounding our projects in community realities. As we look ahead, HFAW remains committed to strengthening our financial sustainability to ensure the continuation and expansion of these life-changing programs. We invite you to explore this report as a shared testament to the power of collective action in advancing human rights and achieving dignity for all.

With much gratitude,

Grace Mose (PhD)



Mary Were (PhD)

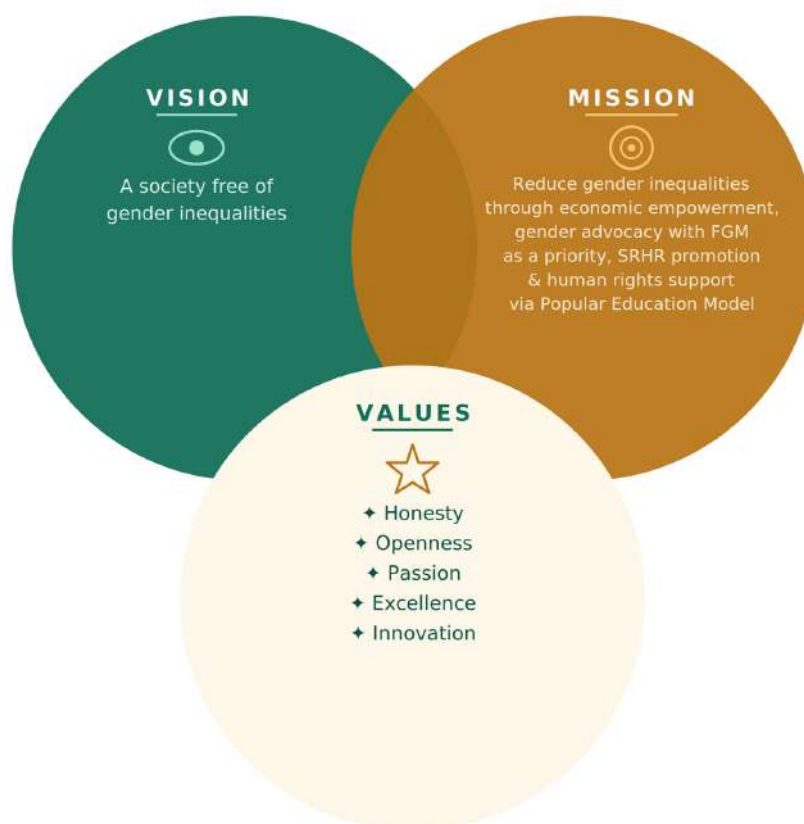


Sheila Mutuma (PhD)



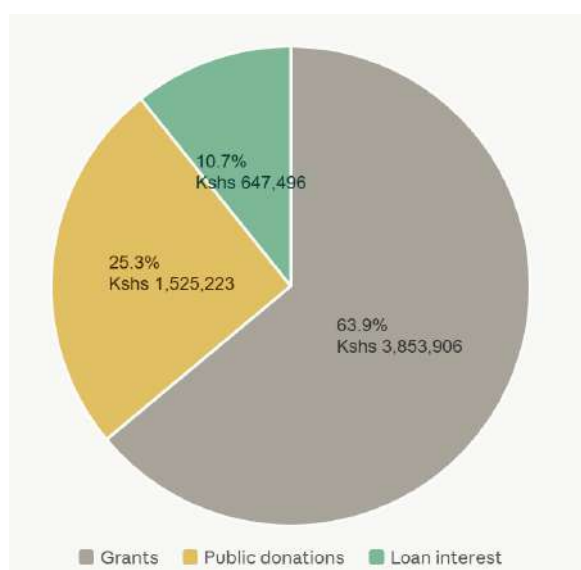
ABOUT US

Who We Are · What We Do · What We Stand For

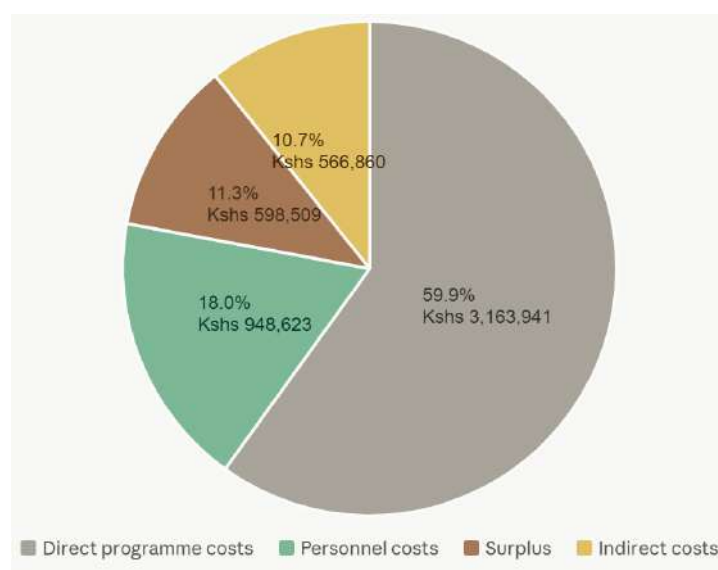


FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

INCOME 2025



EXPENDITURE 2025



OUR IMPACT IN 2025



8,429

Students Reached



494

Teachers reached



40

Women & Girls with Disabilities Empowered



113

Children living with Disabilities Celebrated (PISCCA)



288

Students Issued Pads & Pants



100

Men Enlightened on End FGM and GBV



125

Women Empowered with End FGM, GBV and Lifeskill



125

Teen mothers Empowered with Lifeskills and food supplies.



7020

Reached through media

WOMEN WITH INCLUSION, GROWTH AND STRENGTH

The Women With Inclusion, Growth and Strength (WINGS) project is a community-driven and rights-based initiative implemented by HFAW with financial and technical support from the African Women Development Fund (AWDF). Operating in Kajiado South, Kajiado County, the project is designed to enable women and girls with disabilities (WGWDs) to overcome the structural and social barriers that limit their ability to access essential services and achieve dignity, safety, and economic independence.

WGWDs in this area face multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities arising from gender inequality, disability-based discrimination, poverty, and deeply entrenched harmful cultural practices. These challenges manifest in disproportionately high exposure to GBV, limited access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information and services, low levels of educational attainment, and restricted access to livelihoods and economic opportunities.

Entry Meeting

This multi-sectoral participation which brought together 19 people reflected HFAW's commitment to fostering inclusive, government-aligned implementation and reinforced its role as a trusted convener bridging government structures with grassroots realities.



Key outcomes from the entry meeting included:

- Formal endorsement and administrative support pledged by the Assistant County Commissioner.

- Mapping of existing government social protection programs, including *Inua Jamii* and *SHA*, with the Social Services Officer highlighting registration pathways through the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) and the associated monthly stipend of Ksh. 2,000 available to eligible beneficiaries.
- Identification of critical data gaps, with Community Health Volunteer Mrs. Martha Nyambura noting that official statistics do not fully capture the growing prevalence of disability, particularly among women and girls, underscoring the need for community-validated data.
- A formal request from Community Health Volunteers for HFAW to spearhead community sensitisation dialogues in high-risk and informal settlement areas, focusing on GBV and FGM prevention, response, referral mechanisms, and SRHR education. Chief's barazas were identified as culturally appropriate and effective platforms for these engagements.

Workshop to build capacity on leadership

Following the successful entry meeting, HFAW implemented a two-day training workshop targeting key community actors and project stakeholders. The sessions were conducted from 29th to 30th January, 2026 and brought together 40 WGWDs at Lemalepo Chief's Office. The workshop was designed to build the capacity of participants in areas directly aligned with the project's objectives, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to support women and girls with disabilities within their respective communities and roles.

The training provided a structured platform for deepening participants' understanding of disability inclusion, gender-based violence prevention and response, SRHR rights and referral pathways, and the legal and policy frameworks protecting women and girls with disabilities in Kenya.

Issues Raised by Participants:

- Parental abandonment and denial of education: Several participants shared experiences of being separated from their families and denied access to schooling due to their disability, resulting in long-term socio-economic marginalisation.
- Abandonment by intimate partners: Participants described being deserted by spouses after acquiring a disability, often left to raise children alone with no financial or social support.

- Barriers to obtaining identification and disability documentation: Caregivers of women with disabilities highlighted significant difficulties in securing national identity cards and disability registration cards for their dependents, thereby preventing access to government services and protections.
- Economic exploitation: Participants reported instances of exploitation such as customers refusing to pay for goods, underscoring economic vulnerability linked to disability.
- Limited access to disability-inclusive GBV services: Participants identified a significant lack of accessible reporting and support services for survivors with disabilities.
- Stigma and fear around disclosure: Some participants initially found it difficult to discuss their experiences due to fear, shame, and past trauma, reflecting the deeply entrenched stigma surrounding both disability and GBV.

Participants' testimonials powerfully illustrated the lived realities of women and girls with disabilities and the transformative impact of the training:

"I come from a family of three. I am the only girl, but my disability made my parents take me home to live with my grandmother. I was not able to go through education because my grandmother was financially unstable and I struggled a lot. Later in life I came to realise that my mother lived in Nairobi with my two brothers who are now well educated with good jobs, and I am here still struggling to make ends meet. I feel I was denied my rights to education and parental love."

-Esther, workshop participant

"I have been quiet about such cases in the community because I thought I should not interfere with people's issues. But today I have learnt that no woman should be violated while I am helplessly watching. As a Community Health Volunteer, I feel more empowered and informed to perform my duties."

— Jacinta, Community Health Volunteer and workshop participant



Jacinta highlighting the effects of GBV and response measures

Key Outcomes and Achievements

- Increased awareness and understanding of the multiple forms of GBV, including disability-specific abuse.
- Strengthened understanding of consent, bodily autonomy, and the right of women with disabilities to make their own decisions.
- Enhanced knowledge of SRHR rights and the barriers to accessing reproductive health services.
- Improved knowledge of Kenyan legal frameworks protecting women and girls, empowering participants to seek justice.

Financial Literacy Training

The training was facilitated by Ms. Faith Mwaniki, a Finance Specialist from Equity Bank Kenya, who provided expert guidance on budgeting, saving, record keeping, and entrepreneurship.

- Budgeting and Financial Planning: Participants were guided on how to develop simple household and business budgets that prioritize essential needs while also allowing room for savings and investment.
- Savings and Financial Discipline: Saving is possible regardless of income level and that consistency is key to building financial resilience. Various saving options were discussed, including individual savings, group savings initiatives, and formal banking services.
- Basic Financial Record Keeping: The facilitator shared simple methods of documenting income, expenses, and profits. This skill is essential for monitoring business performance, making informed financial decisions, and planning for future growth.
- Entrepreneurship and Income-Generating Opportunities: The facilitator encouraged participants to identify business opportunities that align with their skills, available resources, and market demand.



Women during the financial literacy training

- Financial Inclusion and Access to Financial Services

Participants were sensitized on the importance of engaging with formal financial institutions. The facilitator provided information on available financial products including savings accounts, credit facilities, and financial advisory services. Participants were encouraged to view financial institutions as partners that can support their long-term economic growth and stability.

“This training inspired me to pursue entrepreneurship as a path to independence. Before this, societal attitudes had me doubt my abilities, but I now feels empowered to explore ventures that match her interests.” **Khasiala**

The Financial Literacy Training achieved several significant outcomes, including:

- Improved understanding of essential financial management practices including budgeting, saving, and financial record keeping.
- Increased confidence in managing their finances and exploring income-generating opportunities.
- Enhanced participants’ awareness of financial services offered by formal institutions and encouraged them to consider engaging with these services to support their economic activities.

- Strengthening the economic agency and self-confidence of women with disabilities, enabling them to envision pathways toward financial independence and sustainable livelihoods.

Moving forward, HFAW intends to strengthen the impact of this initiative through follow-up mentorship sessions, linkages with financial institutions, and expanded capacity-building programs that will reach more women and girls with disabilities across Kajiado County. These efforts will further contribute to building resilient, economically empowered, and inclusive communities.



Maureen (HFAW) emphasizing on the need for financial management

Pads and Pants Initiative

In 2025, HFAW continued to address the crisis of menstrual dignity and educational equity through the Pads and Pants Initiative in Nyamira and Kajiado Counties. For many adolescent girls, the lack of basic supplies is a significant barrier to education. By integrating distribution with life skills training, the initiative restores confidence and ensures that no girl is sidelined by her own body.

Across both counties, a total of 288 girls were reached. Each beneficiary received a dignity pack containing sanitary pads and undergarments, providing the resources necessary to manage menstruation with safety, comfort, and pride.

Nyamira County

In Nyamira County, the initiative was timed to coincide with national examinations. The intervention reached 100 girls at Kenyerere Primary School and Gesweswe Primary School. This ensured girls could sit for their exams without disruption, fostering a school environment where menstruation is normalized and stigma is reduced.

By conducting the distribution with a focus on privacy and respect, HFAW helped foster a school environment where menstruation is normalized and the stigma that often haunts young learners is reduced.

The Nyamira intervention demonstrated that timely, practical support does more than provide supplies; it protects a girl's emotional wellbeing and her right to participate fully in her education.



Joyce giving out the sanitary towels

Kajiado County

In Kajiado County, the initiative expanded into a comprehensive program reaching 188 girls across four schools: Ollolua Primary School, Arap Moi Primary School, Ongata Rongai Primary School, and Nakeel Primary School.

The impact was measurable, with participating schools reporting a 30–40% reduction in menstruation-related absenteeism. This translated directly into better concentration and increased classroom participation.

Life skills training formed the core of the program, equipping girls with tools for decision-making and emotional resilience. Discussions on early pregnancy prevention further strengthened their capacity to make informed choices and remain on their educational journey.



Students excited to receive the sanitary towels in Kajiado

The Pads and Pants initiative demonstrates the power of combining material support with education. Key outcomes include:

- Improved menstrual hygiene management across communities
- Significant declines in school absenteeism linked to menstruation
- Restored dignity, confidence, and self-esteem among beneficiaries
- Deepened knowledge of menstrual health and personal wellbeing
- Strengthened awareness of personal safety and human rights

Celebrating Ability in All its Forms-PISCCA



The youth representative engaging the pupils illustrating to them that disability is not inability

On a bright and sunlit day, the fields of Nakeel Stadium in Ongata Rongai came alive with laughter, cheers, and the vibrant energy of children celebrating their abilities. HFAW, with the generous support of the French Embassy under the PISCCA Project, organized a remarkable sporting event for 55 girls and 58 boys from the special units of Nakeel, Ongata Rongai, and Nkaimurunya Primary Schools on 22nd March, 2025.

The day began with a spirited opening ceremony, where music, dance, and lively performances set a tone of celebration. Speeches were delivered by key figures, including ACC Madam Metrine Wafula, who served as the guest of honor, Deputy OCS Madam Josphine, OC Gender Madam Beatrice Kavata, and Community Policing Agent Mr. Raphael Mbulu. Representatives from the schools and officials from HFAW also addressed the gathering, emphasizing the dual focus of the event: fostering inclusion and raising awareness about GBV prevention and reporting mechanisms.

Each speaker highlighted the importance of creating safe, inclusive spaces where every child, regardless of ability, can thrive. As one HFAW official stated during the ceremony, the event was meant to “celebrate ability in all its forms while protecting children from violence and promoting equality.”

“For the first time, my child felt equal and celebrated, and I could see the confidence growing in them as they played alongside others.”-One parent remarked

Once the formalities concluded, the children eagerly moved to the sports arena. A variety of adaptive games were organized, including wheelchair races, ball-passing relays, tug-of-war, and team-based obstacle courses designed to accommodate both physical and cognitive abilities. The field echoed with laughter as children ran, rolled, jumped, and cheered one another on. Teachers, parents, caregivers, and community members lined the sidelines, waving banners, clapping, and offering encouragement. The atmosphere was electric, filled with energy and mutual support.

A highlight of the day was a mixed-ability football match, where students from all three schools formed teams together. The game emphasized teamwork, communication, and inclusion over competition. One teacher noted, “The children were not just playing; they were learning to support each other, to communicate, and to celebrate each other’s strengths.” Every goal, every assist, and even every attempt was met with enthusiastic cheers from both participants and spectators alike.

The day concluded with an awards ceremony where every team received medals, and each child was gifted a book and pen, symbolizing courage, perseverance, and the spirit of learning alongside athletic achievement. Group photos captured wide smiles and the pride of accomplishment, as children posed with their trophies and shared stories of their favorite moments. One participant excitedly shared, “I have never run this fast before, and I loved cheering for my friends too!”



School Advocacy to End FGM, GBV and Impact Life Skills

Schools represent one of the most powerful access points for social change. They bring together children from across communities, provide trusted adult figures in the form of teachers, and offer a structured environment for learning that extends well beyond the academic curriculum. HFAW's advocacy program leverages this opportunity to address some of the most pressing challenges facing young people in Nyamira County, including FGM, GBV, early teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, and the broader erosion of children's rights and dignity.

In 2025, HFAW conducted an extensive school advocacy program across Nyamira County, reaching 32 educational institutions. The outreach covered primary and secondary schools, ensuring learners across all age groups were engaged reaching 8429 students (4218 girls and 4211 boys). In addition, we reached 494 teachers and 42 subordinate staff.

The sessions focused on six core themes: GBV, FGM, early teenage pregnancy, feminine hygiene, drug abuse, and life skills development. Facilitators used participatory methods including open discussions, guided questioning, and storytelling to draw out learners' experiences and perspectives.

Across the sessions, six consistent themes surfaced: FGM, teenage pregnancy, household risks, drug abuse, menstrual health, and gender responsibilities.



Joyce (HFAW) advocating against FGM

"You are told now you are a big girl, so you start behaving like big people. You are told never to play with young boys, so you look for big boys who can obviously make you pregnant." —

Learner, Nyamira County

FGM: A Practice Maintained Through Secrecy and Social Pressure

FGM was found to be deeply embedded in cultural life across several communities in Nyamira County. Learners described how the practice is carried out clandestinely — often very early in the morning or at night — by individuals who arrive concealed, transported by motorcycle taxis. Girls are told not to cry and not to tell anyone. Immediately after the cut, the framing shifts: the girl is now a woman and expected to behave accordingly.

This cultural reframing often leads girls into early sexual relationships. Facilitators addressed persistent myths directly, using medically accurate information to counter harmful narratives.



Learners showcasing FGM learning materials

Facilitators addressed each of these directly, using medically accurate information and peer discussion to counter harmful narratives.

Teenage Pregnancy: Poverty, Exploitation, and Silence

Teenage pregnancy was consistently described by learners as a growing and visible problem across their communities. Poverty was the most frequently cited driver. Girls described lacking access to basic necessities — including sanitary products — and explained how this vulnerability creates openings for exploitation. Adults in positions of economic power offer material support in exchange for sexual access, and girls describe staying silent about it out of shame, fear, or a sense that no one will believe them.

"Instead you keep quiet and look for another way of getting the sanitary towel, by so doing you are impregnated by the so-called good Samaritan." —

Learner, Nyamira County

In some schools, learners disclosed instances of severe exploitation. At Rianyamage D.O.K School, one learner revealed that girls were being exchanged between adults for money — a deeply troubling disclosure that points to the intersection of poverty, patriarchy, and familial abuse.

"They exchange us... the man uses me and my parents are given more money." —
Learner, Rianyamage D.O.K School

Home Environments and the Role of Parents

Learners across multiple schools described chaotic or unsupportive home environments. Many spoke of domestic violence witnessed between parents, lack of supervision, and homes where parents were emotionally unavailable or hostile. In several instances, children described sleeping in the same room as their parents, exposing them to adult intimacy and behaviour they are not prepared to process — creating curiosity that then manifests in risky behaviour outside the home.

Media exposure compounded this. Learners noted that television and, increasingly, mobile phones and unsupervised internet access expose children to sexual content without any adult guidance to contextualise it. Teachers reported this as one of the most concerning emerging trends.

Drug Abuse and Peer Pressure

Drug abuse and peer influence were raised in multiple sessions as drivers of risky behaviour. The learners inquired on how to resist bad company, handle threats and negative peer pressure, the effects of substance abuse on their health and wellbeing. Competition among peers — particularly around material goods acquired through relationships with older men — was cited as a motivating factor for girls entering exploitative relationships.

Menstrual Health and Reproductive Concerns

Health concerns were particularly visible in schools where private consultations were offered alongside group sessions. Girls asked about persistent infections, painful menstruation, and reproductive complications.

Gender, Boys, and Shared Responsibility

One of the most encouraging themes across the reporting period was the active and thoughtful engagement of boys. In multiple schools, boys were not merely passive participants — they asked questions, challenged harmful norms, and in some cases took explicit positions of solidarity with girls. At Kowidi School.



Outcomes of HFAW School Advocacy

- Improved Awareness and Changed Attitudes
- Increased Willingness to Speak Out and Report
- Pledges to Change Behaviour and Stay in School
- Courage to Resist Harmful Practices
- Teachers activated as allies
- Shifting Gender Norms Among Boys

The most powerful outcome was hearing from learners who had already taken steps to resist FGM. At Nyakenyomisia Primary School, one girl shared:

"I ran away when I heard my grandmother saying that she was going to cut me."
Learner, Nyakenyomisia Primary School

"This learner had acted on instinct, and the advocacy session helped her understand that her instinct was right. It validated her decision, gave her language to explain it, and connected her to peers who could support her. For other girls in the room who had not yet faced this pressure, her story became a model of resistance.

Schools Reached During Advocacy Sessions

	School Name	Girls	Boys	Teachers
1	Gesweswe ASDA Primary School	93	100	5
2	Nyairanga Mixed Secondary School	251	247	8
3	Kiemuma D.E.B Primary School	87	107	15
4	Nyairang'a Primary School	43	73	16
5	Nyameko Primary School	80	98	12
6	Kengu'so Primary School	208	101	15
7	Kea Primary School	300	150	23
8	Kea Secondary School	80	70	12
9	Keng'uso Secondary School	42	45	16
10	Magura Secondary School	144	141	20
11	Joved Educational Centre	58	62	10
12	Magura Primary School	116	127	12
13	Kiptendeni Primary School	170	169	33
14	Kitaru Primary School	93	106	18
15	Sotik Highland Primary School	215	173	13
16	Ekegoro E.L.C.K Primary School	70	62	12
17	Mageni Marabu Primary School	103	104	13
18	Nyakenyomisia (ECDE,Primary and Junior)	320	235	37
19	Magwagwa Primary School	221	233	15
20	Rianyamage D.O.K School	66	86	14
21	Getare D.E.B School	166	253	15
22	Kenyerere D.E.B School	143	130	14
23	Riomego P.A.G Primary School	68	105	13
24	Mwanicha Comprehensive School	178	170	20
25	Nyaobe Primary School	140	146	12
26	Kowidi School	92	113	11
27	Mochenwa Secondary School	42	41	10
28	Kebuko Primary School	153	138	18
29	Nyabuya Primary School	176	204	19
30	Chebilat Highway	173	174	17
31	Good Hope Academy	127	124	13
	Total	4,218	4,211	494



Women's Training on FGM, GBV, and SHR

Across sub-Saharan Africa, women and girls continue to bear a disproportionate burden of gender-based violence and harmful cultural practices. Female Genital Mutilation remains one of the most entrenched of these practices, sustained by deeply rooted beliefs about womanhood, marriage, and community belonging. In many rural communities, the silence around FGM and its consequences is itself a form of harm. Women live with pain, confusion, and shame, often without the language or the safe space to name what has happened to them or to understand that they deserve better.

In Nyamira County, this silence is familiar. Women who have undergone FGM frequently experience chronic pain, complications during childbirth, psychological distress, and difficulties in intimate relationships, yet many have never connected these experiences to the practice itself. Gender-based violence in its many forms, physical, sexual, emotional, economic, remains widespread, often normalized by cultural expectations that frame male authority as absolute and female endurance as virtue. Without targeted, respectful, and community-rooted interventions, these patterns continue across generations.

This year, HFAW organized women's training forums across Nyamira County in Riechieri, Riakebaso, Kitaru, Magwagwa, and Kenyerere. A total of 125 women were directly reached.

The forums were deliberately designed to be inclusive and community-representative. Participants included women of different ages and backgrounds, alongside religious leaders, health workers, community administrators, and local opinion leaders. This mix ensured that the conversations were grounded in the realities of participants' lived experiences while also drawing on medical, legal, and community expertise.

The sessions addressed three interconnected areas: FGM and its physical and psychological consequences, the various forms of gender-based violence including within marriage, and sexual and reproductive health. Participatory methodologies were used throughout, creating safe spaces where women could speak, ask questions, share personal experiences, and support one another without fear of judgement.

One of the most significant outcomes of the forums was helping women connect experiences they had long carried in silence to their root causes. Many participants shared that before the training, they had never fully understood the link between FGM and the pain, conflict, and estrangement they were experiencing in their marriages and personal lives.

A recurring theme was the impact of HFAW's male engagement work.

"We used to have misunderstandings, but since my husband attended your training, there is a great change. He is now supportive and thoughtful." Emmah, one of the participants at the women's training noted.

The women's training forums reinforced what HFAW has long understood: that sustainable change requires more than information. It requires creating conditions in which women feel safe enough to tell the truth about their lives, supported enough to ask the questions they have been carrying for years, and connected enough to one another to act collectively.

Reaching 125 women across five communities in a single year is significant. But the deeper measure of impact lies in the testimonies: women who walked into a training session carrying years of pain and confusion, and left with clarity, language, and resolve. Women who returned home and started conversations they had never been able to have before. Women who committed to ensuring that their daughters and granddaughters would not inherit what they had endured.



Group photo at the women's training



Men Engagement in Ending GBV and FGM



FGM and GBV are often framed as cultural rites in Nyamira County. These narratives are upheld by men who hold significant influence. Therefore, ending these practices requires engaging the men who shape community culture.

In 2025, HFAW conducted male engagement forums in Bokurati, Kitaru, Nyamarimba, and Chepilate, reaching 100 men.

The forums were deliberately inclusive and participatory. Participants included youth representatives, clan elders, religious leaders from Catholic, SDA, PAG, Muslim, and other faith communities, as well as local administrators, among them area chiefs. By bringing together voices from different generations, faiths, and positions of authority, HFAW created platforms where no single perspective could dominate and where change could be seeded at multiple levels of community life.

Facilitators began by helping participants understand what GBV looks like in practice, moving beyond physical violence to name emotional, psychological, sexual, and economic abuse as well. Many participants acknowledged that these forms of violence had rarely been named or discussed in their communities and that the sessions offered new ways of understanding experiences they had long treated as normal. When the conversation turned to FGM, facilitators used visual materials to walk participants through the physical realities of the practice, including excessive bleeding, infections, complications during childbirth, psychological trauma and death in severe cases.

Participants were also confronted with a reality that is often left unspoken: men are consumers of FGM. The practice persists partly because some men associate it with a woman's suitability for marriage. Naming this dynamic openly prompted deep reflection.

The forums also created space for men to speak candidly about family life and relationships, conversations that rarely happen openly in community settings. Some participants connected the dots between FGM and difficulties in their marriages for the first time.

"I have known the reason behind my wife having a negative attitude towards sex whenever I ask for it. I am the cause because I don't prepare her early, and you find she is not ready, and it ends in quarrels." **Omae reflected on his own behaviour with honesty**

By the close of each forum, participants were not merely informed but were called upon to act. Several made public commitments. Area chiefs who attended committed to carrying the sensitization into community barazas, extending the reach of the forums far beyond the participants in the room. In Nyamarimba, participants went a step further, agreeing to form a local male champions group to sustain awareness-raising on GBV and FGM within their community.

Community Advocacy

Training of Health and Human Rights Promoters



The Health & Human Rights Promoters trainings mark an important step in strengthening community awareness and action against female genital mutilation FGM, GBV, and other harmful cultural practice. The training 150 CHHRPs including women, men, and community leaders in inclusive and reflective discussions aimed at promoting health, dignity, and human rights. Both the male and the female engagement training took place in various places in nyamira county such as; Nyamarimba, Chepilat, Kenyerere, Magwagwa, Kitaru, Riakebaso among other areas within the county.

Across the different training sessions, participants were supported to clearly understand FGM as a violation of human rights and a form of gender-based violence with serious sexual and reproductive health consequences. Women's sessions created safe spaces where participants openly discussed lived experiences, challenged long-held myths, and learned about available medical, psychosocial, and legal support services. Many women expressed renewed confidence in speaking out, protecting girls, and questioning cultural practices that cause harm.

Recognizing the critical role of men in influencing household and community decisions, targeted male engagement sessions were also conducted. These forums allowed men to openly discuss FGM, GBV, and sexual and reproductive health, while reflecting on relationship dynamics, communication, and shared responsibility in ending harmful practices.

Community dialogues further emphasized the importance of rights awareness, equality, and empowerment. Women reported increased understanding of their rights, including participation in family decision-making and access to protection mechanisms when facing abuse. Local leaders and religious figures expressed support for continued awareness efforts and called for expanded outreach to youth and families to ensure sustained change.

Parents' Sensitization: Meeting on Ending FGM, Teenage Pregnancy, and GBV – Nyabonaira



HFAW conducted a parents' sensitization meeting in Nyabonaira, Nyamira County, in February, 2026. The meeting brought together 56 parents and local leaders to discuss their role in protecting children from FGM, GBV, and teenage pregnancy.

The objective of the meeting was to create awareness among parents about the dangers and long-term consequences of FGM, early sexual activity, and GBV, while also encouraging them to take an active role in guiding and supporting their children. The session also aimed to strengthen collaboration between families, schools, and community stakeholders in addressing the root causes of these social challenges.

During the meeting, the HFAW team facilitated discussions on the health, psychological, and social impacts of FGM, emphasizing that the practice not only violates the rights of girls but also exposes them to serious health complications such as infections, childbirth complications, and long-term trauma. Parents were encouraged to abandon the practice and instead support the education and wellbeing of their daughters.

Another key focus of the meeting was the growing cases of teenage pregnancies within the community. Participants discussed how factors such as poverty, lack of parental guidance, peer pressure, and exposure to inappropriate media content contribute to risky behaviors among young people. Parents were urged to maintain open communication with their children, monitor the type of media content they consume, and provide guidance on responsible behavior and life choices.

Community Dialogue with Teen Mothers

Teenage pregnancy remains a serious public health and social challenge in Nyamira County, particularly affecting girls between the ages of 14 and 18. Many girls who become pregnant at a young age are forced to drop out of school, which in turn affects their economic prospects and exposes them to deeper cycles of poverty and dependency.

During an engagement on 24th December 2025, with 125 teen mothers, they shared their experiences, shedding light on the challenges they face after pregnancy. Also, the teens were issued with food and hygiene supplies.

The discussion revealed that teenage pregnancy in the area is driven by several interconnected factors. According to Aznet, socio-economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and poor household conditions play a major role. She explained that many girls end up in vulnerable situations while trying to meet their basic needs.

“When you grow up in a home where there is no money and nothing to depend on, you start looking for ways to survive. Sometimes in that process you end up making decisions that lead to pregnancy,” Aznet, one of the teen mothers said.

Education was also identified as a key factor. Girls who drop out of school or who lack access to education are more vulnerable to early pregnancy compared to those who remain in school.

“I dropped out because my parents could not afford school fees. I tried to find another way to support myself, but along the way I got pregnant,” Mellen explained.

Family environment was another concern raised by participants. Joan shared that constant conflict at home sometimes pushes girls to look for support elsewhere. She described how lack of peace and stability within families can influence young girls to seek help from men who promise financial assistance. Also, during the discussion, participants emphasized the importance of guidance and counseling for young mothers. Many of the girls are dealing with emotional stress, stigma, and the challenges of raising children while still very young. Regular counseling sessions and mentorship programs were recommended to help them cope with these experiences and rebuild their confidence.

“My parents are always fighting and there is no peace in the house. Sometimes we go out to look for someone who can help us with food or basic needs, but afterwards you realize nothing comes for free,” she said.

Participants also pointed out that cultural and traditional factors, including practices such as FGM and weak parental guidance, contribute to the problem. In some cases, girls who undergo such practices are considered ready for marriage, which increases the risk of early pregnancy. In addition, lack of empowerment, limited awareness about sexual and reproductive health, and minimal exposure to opportunities for young girls were identified as key contributing factors.

The discussion also revealed that many teen mothers become vulnerable to GBV and other forms of exploitation after becoming pregnant. Without education or financial support, some are forced to depend on partners or family members who may not treat them fairly. Many of the young mothers also face stigma from their communities, which further isolates them and affects their mental wellbeing.



A moment of listening and learning as HFAW connects with teen mothers and their children.

The participants also proposed several long-term solutions to address teenage pregnancy and support affected girls. One of the key recommendations was to support teen mothers in returning to school or enrolling in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions so they can acquire practical skills for employment. Mentorship programs for girls who have not yet experienced teenage pregnancy were also suggested as a preventive measure. In addition, the idea of establishing a revolving fund or small savings group was discussed as a way of helping young mothers start small income-generating activities and support themselves.



International Women's Day 2026



A moment of listening and learning as HFAW connects with teen mothers and their children.

International Women's Day is celebrated globally to honour women's achievements and to reaffirm the ongoing pursuit of equality. The day recognises progress made toward gender justice, champions women's rights and empowerment, and celebrates the profound contributions women make to society. In commemoration of this day, Hope Foundation for African Women organised a training session on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) for women survivors of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The session was designed to raise awareness, promote healing, and strengthen survivor-led advocacy against harmful cultural practices. It brought together 25 participants, predominantly young women who have personally experienced FGM and related forms of gender-based violence.

The training equipped participants with a comprehensive understanding of their rights and the various forms GBV can take, including physical, sexual, emotional, and economic violence. Participants were educated on the health, psychological, and social consequences of both FGM and GBV, and were informed about the legal protections available to them. Emphasis was placed on the importance of reporting incidents of violence through appropriate legal and community channels.

A key component of the session was an in-depth discussion of community support systems and referral pathways accessible to survivors. Psychosocial support and trauma healing were woven into the program to help participants rebuild their self-esteem and emotional resilience. Economic empowerment was also highlighted as a critical pillar, recognising that financial independence significantly reduces vulnerability and enables survivors to reclaim control over their lives. Participants shared powerful reflections during the session.

“For the first time, I understand that what happened to me was not right, and I have a voice to speak about it.” Another added, “This training has given me strength. I now know my rights and I am not afraid to stand up for myself.” A participant also emphasized the importance of economic independence, stating, “When a woman is empowered financially, she is less vulnerable to abuse.”

The training used participatory methodologies, including group discussions, interactive learning activities, and structured experience-sharing sessions. These approaches fostered a safe, supportive environment in which survivors could speak openly, be heard without judgement, and draw strength from one another's journeys.

By the end of the training, participants demonstrated improved knowledge of GBV, increased confidence, and a renewed commitment to advocating against FGM. Many expressed readiness to step forward as agents of change in their communities.

Media Outreach

HFAW implemented an integrated media advocacy approach combining both traditional and digital platforms to expand its reach and influence.

A key highlight was a radio advocacy session conducted at Egesa FM, targeting audiences within the Gusii community. The discussion focused on critical social issues including FGM, GBV, teenage pregnancies, SRHR, HIV prevention and awareness, and substance and drug abuse. The radio platform enabled direct community engagement, raising awareness, challenging harmful cultural norms, and encouraging open dialogue on prevention and protection mechanisms.

HFAW complemented its radio outreach with active use of Facebook and Twitter to expand its reach both nationally and internationally. Between February 1 and April 1, the organization recorded 7,020 views on digital content, alongside notable growth in video engagement and audience retention. Total engagements reached 321, more than doubling from the previous reporting period, indicating increased interaction with advocacy messages.

Visual content, particularly multi-photo posts, proved most effective in driving reach. The majority of the audience was based in Kenya, with a strong concentration in Nairobi, while additional reach was recorded in several other counties and internationally. Engagement was highest among individuals aged 25–44.

Overall, the integration of radio and digital platforms strengthened HFAW's advocacy on FGM, GBV, SRHR, HIV, teenage pregnancy, and drug abuse, enhancing awareness, encouraging dialogue, and broadening impact.



You can watch the media feature here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVwYOE7OYfM>

International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM

HFAW conducted a focused advocacy session at Nyabuya Primary School in Nyamira County in February 2026 as part of activities marking the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The session aimed to raise awareness on the dangers of FGM, promote the protection of girls' rights, and create a safe space for learners to openly discuss a practice that is often surrounded by silence despite its serious consequences.

The activity reached a total of 380 learners, including 204 boys and 176 girls, alongside 19 teachers and 3 non-teaching staff members. Through participatory discussions, learners were encouraged to share their thoughts, beliefs, and experiences related to FGM and the broader challenges affecting girls in their community.

As the discussions unfolded, it became clear that while FGM is not always openly practiced or discussed, its influence is still felt through cultural expectations and societal pressures. Some learners expressed perceptions that reflect how the practice is normalized within certain contexts.

One learner noted, "Some girls undergo FGM so that they can be seen as mature and be accepted in the community." This statement highlighted the belief that FGM is associated with maturity and social acceptance.

The session also revealed how poverty and vulnerability can indirectly sustain harmful practices. Janet shared her experience, saying, "I normally help my mother in performing duties in other people's farms for our daily bread, then from there I am made to have a relationship with my boss's son so that we can get more." While not directly about FGM, her experience highlighted the broader vulnerabilities that place girls at risk of exploitation and harmful cultural expectations.

Additionally, learners pointed out gaps in guidance and communication both at home and in the community. One participant stated, "Our parents do not talk to us about such issues; we only hear about them from other people." This emphasized the lack of open dialogue between parents and children on sensitive issues such as FGM and sexual and reproductive health. From these discussions, the HFAW team observed that FGM is closely linked to deeper structural issues, including poverty, gender inequality, and limited access to accurate information. The conversations reinforced that many learners are navigating complex social pressures without adequate support or guidance.

In line with the theme of the International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM, the session emphasized that FGM is a violation of human rights and has no health benefits. Learners were sensitized on the physical, psychological, and social consequences of the practice, including risks of severe pain, infections, complications during childbirth, and disruption of education. They were also encouraged to speak out, seek support, and act as change agents within their communities. The school administration appreciated the initiative, acknowledging the importance of such engagements. Mr. Mogeni remarked, "These students have never told us all this before. Thank you for coming and sharing, especially on the difficult situations our learners are facing." This demonstrated the value of providing safe platforms where learners can openly express themselves.



Gladys discussing dangers of female genital mutilation

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