

Coming together to safeguard children

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:4

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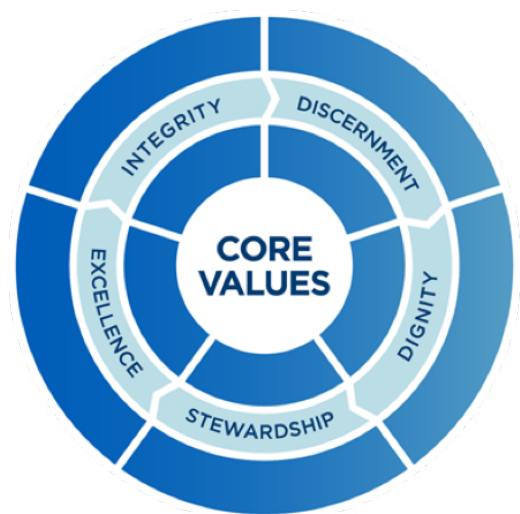
Our Mission



Our Vision



All children in poverty thriving
toward their God-given potential.



Defying social odds for children's sake



Calm, kind and soft-spoken are some of the attributes you quickly notice when you meet Jackson Loisa. His polite demeanour could make you underestimate his bold resolve to fight against harmful practices affecting children.

Despite living in a community that condones harmful practices against children, Jackson has persistently advocated for children and their wellbeing.

A committed and protective father, Jackson thoughtfully recounts how he once became an outcast in his community. His family and peers could not understand his resistance against early child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM).

“Taking a stand against harmful practices like FGM has not been a walk in the park. I remember how my family and neighbours would sneak behind my back to convince my daughters to undergo FGM. My parents and parents in law interpreted my defiance as an attempt to embarrass our family. I spent a lot of time explaining to my wife and children why we would not go down that cultural route,” said Jackson during the Day of the African Child celebrations in Kajiado County.

Although the Maa culture has traditionally accepted such practices against children, Jackson notes that the tide is turning with more people in the community shunning them. Compassion International Kenya has proactively conducted community training on the effects of harmful practices against children. This is helping change perceptions and drive change among the elders and the community. Rescue centres go a step further to protect children from risky environments and situations.

Compassion has engaged former perpetrators to share their turning point experiences and perspective on why these practices must be abolished. These personal stories have been very powerful in changing mindsets.

Jackson continues, “I am very grateful for Compassion’s support in eliminating harmful practices in our community. Their training programs have educated children, parents, community elders and other stakeholders on why these practices must not continue. The community’s trust in Compassion’s work has helped me reintegrate into our society. Most people can now see why children should not undergo such practices.”

The community now reaches out to Jackson to persuade parents, who plan to put their children through harmful practices. Plus, he has become a trusted confidante for some vulnerable children, enabling him to find help for them, before it is too late.



Convening stakeholders to address harmful practices affecting children



The Day of the African Child is commemorated annually on June 16. This year, stakeholders convened across the country to deliberate on the harmful practices affecting children.

The Compassion team joined First Lady Kajiado County Edna Chelangat Lenku, Hon. Rachel Shebesh, CAS, Ministry of Public Service, Gender, Senior Citizens Affairs & Special Programmes, Lady Justice Teresia Matheka, and numerous Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) for the national celebrations in Kajiado County.

In line with this year's theme *"Eliminating Harmful Practices Affecting Children"*, it was a moment to reflect on the progress being made in safeguarding children in the community. The day also provided an opportunity to discuss harmful practices that affect children, and why the community must stand against them.

Speaking during the celebrations, Compassion International Kenya National Director Samuel Wambugu said,

"Harmful practices are a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. These forms of violence or ritual discrimination were normalized, hindering children's development. It has therefore been an ongoing priority to ensure that no child undergoes any harmful practice."

The Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have collaborated with the government and national child agencies to conduct civic education across various counties. Through this collaboration there have been community dialogues and mentorship activities for both boys and girls.

Alongside the government, the CSOs have trained 109 child protection volunteers (CPVs) and other stakeholders on child protection. These educational drives have helped enlighten communities on harmful practises and their effects on children.

Former perpetrators have been given an opportunity to share their experiences and their 'light-bulb' moments on the long term impact they had on children. Their advocacy message has played a crucial role in changing perceptions and initiating change.

The CSOs have set up 94 rescue centres in Kajiado County, with 52 of them registered by the National Council of Children's Services. These rescue centres have assisted in protecting and supporting children who have been exposed to harmful practices. Government child protection agencies have then worked on the re-integration of affected children into the community.

As the advocacy messages against harmful practices continue to sink in, it is evident that the shared commitment from all stakeholders will create an enabling environment for children to develop and thrive.



Compassion International National Director giving his remarks during the Day of the African Child Celebrations in Kajiado County.



Fighting Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM involves the partial or total removal of external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice poses serious risks to the health and wellbeing of girls and women and is widely recognized as a human rights violation.

Nevertheless, it is estimated that at least 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone some form of FGM and a further 68 million are at risk of being cut by 2030.

According to the Kenya Demographic Health Survey (KDHS 2014), 21% of women and girls in Kenya aged between 15 and 49 years have undergone some form of FGM.

What the Law Says about FGM

Kenya has adopted a robust legal framework to address FGM. The country has ratified several international legal instruments that have become part of Kenyan law as provided for in Article 2 of the Constitution and the enactment of the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2011.

The Penal Code, Chapter 63, also outlines offences under which circumcisers can be charged. The Protection against Domestic Violence Act, 2015, classifies FGM as violence, and provides for protective measures for survivors and victims of domestic violence, including FGM.

The Children's Act, 2001, Section 14, criminalizes the subjection of a child to harmful cultural practices. The law provides the framework for public engagement and advocacy to accelerate the eradication of FGM.

Fighting FGM in Migori – Narok Cluster

A REVIEW



Compassion International Kenya is in partnership with 13 churches in the Migori-Narok Cluster. This is a region where many girls have been cut, or at a very high risk of being cut. Data from a 2017 UNICEF survey covering Kuria, one of the districts in the cluster, showed that as many as 78% of girls and women had undergone the cut.

Alongside like-minded stakeholders, churches in the region have put in place a range of programs to drive community sensitization trainings and setting up of rescue centers. The Migori- Narok cluster recently undertook a review of its efforts in eliminating FGM in Kuria. Its findings can help shape future interventions.

Community engagement and dialogue are critical processes that ultimately form the basis of genuine programme contextualization – a central focus of FGM programming in Kenya.

Organizations in the Migori-Narok cluster adopt a long-term approach to build relationships with communities. This enables and supports iterative programming and long term dialogue. This shapes community understanding about FGM and the integral role of the community as a whole in its eradication.

They also help position mutual interest between communities and the different stakeholders on the social, political, and economic factors that shape the lives of children.

The government's integrated approach allows a range of actors, depending on the specific needs and context, to work together with ministries, county governments and sub-county officials to ensure better resource and time utilization.

Outcomes from the long-term collaborative approach

- Enablement of the stakeholders to educate communities on FGM and the broader child protection and welfare issues.
- Access to justice for girls at risk of FGM or who have undergone FGM.
- Strengthened coordination and cooperation between different child protection bodies like the police, prosecutors' offices, and courts.

Challenges remain

- Perpetrators perform FGM in secret either during the night or outside the typical circumcision season.
- Girls are exposed to FGM at a very tender age to ensure they do not report.
- Cross-border FGM with Kuria girls being ferried to their relatives in Tanzania for the cut.

The impact of fighting FGM in Migori Cluster



Kuria region is among the leading areas across Kenya where FGM is most practiced. Cases of FGM are highly prevalent in Kuria East where Mashangwa Centre is located.

Since 2011, Mashangwa Centre has proactively taken program participants to youth rescue centers to shelter girls from undergoing the cut. 30 girls were rescued in 2011. The rescue centers have been set up in different locations such as St. Joseph Secondary School in Ntimaru, Komotobo Missions, Ikerege Centre among others.

Since 2011, 233 girls in the Migori-Narok cluster have been rescued from FGM. The girls who have been rescued have managed to pursue their education with some already done with college education. The churches in this cluster continue to respond to every child protection issue ensuring no girl undergoes the cut under their watch.

*By Alex Shiguri,
Project Director Migori County*



Training session with parents on the dangers of FGM

Joyce's Story



Joyce Nyawira Peter was the oldest beneficiary in our Sultan Hamud Centre. We call her our 'first born'. Her personal discipline, responsibility, spirituality and drive are an inspiration to all of us.

Joyce performed well in the KCPE, with a score of 353 and was admitted in Tumu Tumu Girls High School. We shared and supported her dreams of becoming a neurosurgeon.

But all this was to change in form three, when she was diagnosed with a brain tumor that affects the optic nerves. After her diagnosis she underwent treatment and chemotherapy in AIC Kijabe Hospital and the Texas Cancer Centre and Aga Khan Hospital.

Like many patients going through this type of aggressive treatment, she found it physically draining and difficult to sustain her academic progress.

Eventually she did her KCSE and got a grade C. This was a good performance, considering her ill-health, but it killed her dream of becoming a neurosurgeon. Undeterred, she enrolled in a Business Management Diploma at the Technical University of Kenya. However, the tumor reoccurred in her first year and she had to drop out for further treatment.

Due to ongoing treatment and ill-health, Joyce was not able to complete her diploma. After further deliberation, we helped her with a business plan for a children's clothes boutique. We supported her financially with her first year's national health scheme (NHIF) enrollment and a Ksh. 100,000 exit package to start her new venture.

HIGHLIGHTS

Compassion International Kenya hosted the Bishops Conference convening bishops from our frontline church partners. The full day session focused on the role of leadership in accelerating child and youth development.

Most Rev. Dr. Jackson Ole Sapit, Archbishop, The Anglican Church of Kenya and Rev. Dr. David Oginde, CEO, The Catalead, joined our National Director, Samuel Wambugu and the leadership team for the conference. Their invaluable insights and contribution were highly appreciated.



Our National Director Samuel Wambugu with Most Rev. Dr. Jackson Ole Sapit, Archbishop during the Bishops Conference.



Frontline church partners with the guest speakers and the Compassion team.



L-R Rev. Dr. David Oginde, Founder and CEO, The Catalead with Most Rev. Dr. Jackson Ole Sapit, Archbishop, Anglican Church of Kenya, Samuel Wambugu, National Director, Compassion International Kenya and Catherine Wamiti, Senior Manager of Program Support, Compassion International Kenya during the Bishops Conference.

In pictures:

Day of the African Child celebrations



Boys wearing traditional Maasai regalia during the Day of the African Child at Elangata Wuas School in Kajiado. **June 16, 2022.**



Girls wearing traditional Maasai regalia during the Day of the African Child at Elangata Wuas School in Kajiado. **June 16, 2022.**



Compassion team with First Lady Kajiado County Edna Chelangat Lenku, Hon. Rachel Shebesh, CAS, Ministry of Public Service, Gender, Senior Citizens Affairs & Special Programmes and Lady Justice Teresia Matheka.



Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.
(Proverbs 31:8-9)



**FOR ANY
FEEDBACK OR
COMMENTS PLEASE
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