

*A NGO with consultative status with ECOSOC, United Nations Organization*

## **NEWSLETTER – August 2012**

Dear members and friends,

We hope that you had a lovely summer break and a successful return to your activities.

For Maasai children in Kenya, the school holidays are limited to the month of August, in line with the national education system. The school year starts in January and finishes in December. After every three months of school, the schools close for a month. So the holiday months are April, August and December. However, this last month is the worst for Maasai children, because it is the season when traditionally female genital cuttings and forced early marriages occur.

Below is a typical Kenyan class, here in Enaramatishoreki village, Naroshura area, near Maasai Mara. It was taken on the day of the alternative ceremony of passage followed by the girl students of that school. This form of alternative ceremony is the best prevention from female genital mutilation (FGM).



### **Our Campaign and Action against FGM**

Annie Corsini, the founder-president of MAA, spent all of July in Kenya visiting Maasai and Samburu villages and organizing workshops and alternative rituals of passage in villages and schools with MAA's local collaborators. This was the final phase of the project called « **Campaign for Progressive Eradication of FGM in Kenya** ». Have a look at the pictures below, illustrating the activities:



300 young girls from 9 to 15 years, at DEB primary school, Maralal, Samburu



Justine, our tireless collaborator speaking to the school girls. She is also a teacher in that area. She is using as educational means the anatomical model that MAA has created and markets for other NGOs.



Workshop in the bush, Lengusako area, Wamba. The Samburu women there are almost all illiterate and extremely poor.



Samburu women in Wamba during another workshop.



Pamela, our collaborator in Wamba, a lady devoted to the women's cause. She is also a teacher in the local High School. She suggested MAA to offer to the participant women 1 kg of unga (maize flower) as a food relief action.



Alternative rite of passage for 48 pupils at Enaramatishoreki primary school. The whole village was invited. July 2012



Girls Primary in Dol-Dol (Samburu, Laikipia). More than 200 pupils attended the workshop given by Elisabeth and Ann (Samburu facilitators).



Annie (right) with Elisabeth (on left) and the deputy Head Teacher (center) at Dol-Dol primary.



Elisabeth, our Samburu facilitator in Dol-dol area is carrying her baby on the back, like all Samburu mamas.



Workshop about FGM for 120 Samburu women, coming from all around Dol Dol town. An arid area, a « no man's land ». They woke up at 5 am and came by foot crossing the bush, so that could attend the seminar at 10 am. MAA offered to them lunch at noon, as recognition to their determination and courage.



Always smiling, Pamela in Wamba is preparing 80 small bags of unga (maize flower) to be distributed to the participant women. Indeed, instead of offering them chai with bread or small cakes, they asked MAA to provide flower, so that they bring back to their homes something eatable for the kids. The lack of food is a permanent preoccupation for those brave mothers.

Stories that Severina, our collaborator from Maralal, reported: In her town, people greet her by: « Hello Mrs. FGM! », as she is the one who is always warning about the risks and harm of FGM. Severina, her husband Sarafino and Justine, all of them teachers, are our trusted collaborators for the whole district. Severina has been invited by the Police chief once, and a second time by a school director, to come with the MAA anatomical model and speak to them privately about FGM, women's anatomy and many other taboo issues. It is clear that even well-placed people ignore everything about this harmful tradition, even if they are living inside the community that practices it. Severina is going with pleasure everywhere she is invited to speak about FGM, children's rights and health: to churches, schools and other community gatherings. She works on the issue as a volunteer, she finds her preventive action rewarding enough to do so.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2012, MAA's project against FGM **was officially closed** in agreement with its main donor and sponsor, the State of Geneva's Service of International Solidarity. After receiving MAA's final operational report, accounts and bills, the project was terminated. The whole MAA team thanks them very much, as well as all the county councils in the Canton that have supported the project for so long (2009-2012).

See the project at a glance:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Workshops in villages</i>	<i>Alternatives rites of passage (ARP), avoiding FGM</i>	<i>Rehabilitation of women practicing excisions</i>	<i>Total participants</i>
<b>2009</b>	40 villages in 5 districts	10 ARPs (700 young girls escaping FGM)	25 rural women	Around 6500
<b>2010</b>	55 villages in 7 different districts	17 ARPs (900 young girls escaping the ritual cutting)	150 rural women from 4 different tribes	Around 7700
<b>2011</b>	37 villages in 5 districts (Loitokitok, Narok, Transmara, Samburu et Wamba)	5 ARPs. Among them 2 very big, for 300 girls each.	0 because now we are applying the Kenyan law, that forbids FGM. Women who practice excisions can be jailed.	Around 4700
<b>2012</b>	25 villages dans 4 districts différents (Narok south, Loitokitok, Wamba, Nanuyki, Maralal, Laikipia-Doldol)	1 ARP pour 50 fillettes et plus de 1000 écolières renseignées en détail sur le sujet et sur leurs droits	0	Around 3500
<b>Total, for the laps 2009-2012</b>	<b>157 villages initiated and reconverted</b>	<b>33 ARPs (alternative ceremonies to cutting)</b>	<b>175 women rehabilitated</b>	<b>22'500 persons</b>

#### ❖ **MAA events (demonstration) :**

In June, we participated to the big end of school year party of all primary Geneva schools with a booth selling food, beverages, and sweets. This event took place into the « Parc de la Grange ». Paule, Françoise and Annie cooked many sauces for spaghettis. Sylre and Lucio worked hard during that afternoon and night. MAA raised around CHF 1500, which was spent for the following activity.

#### ❖ **Surgery of handicapped children :**

On 20th August, two new children were operated at AIC Children Hospital in Kijabe for serious orthopedic problems. We value very much this action and we consider it of high importance. In

Kenya, like in all developing countries, a person is “handicapped” for life not for medical reasons or because they are incurable, but because they lack money for their treatment. The families of the handicapped children cannot afford to pay a medical visit or a surgery, and often not even the transport to go to the nearest Hospital. Thus, they endure their handicap as their “fate”. MAA is trying with lot of conviction in spite of its limited means, to break this fate, and to give them a future.



Hassan, 15 years underwent spinal surgery. He must wear a corset for a while.



Sipanto, a baby under 1 year with club foot, operated and repaired permanently.

For the next months we have a **waiting list of 4 more children** needing surgery in Kijabe. If you are interested to contribute in giving hope to these children, please send your donation indicating: **for kids’ surgery**.

Here are two more pictures of healed children that I met last summer, during my stay in Kenya:



A photo to say thank you from Transmara.  
Sempeyio can now walk !



At Intumtum village, with young Sipanto operated 2 years ago. Now she is attending school like the other children, and she is not crawling on the ground anymore.

Thank you for your attention.

We will keep you informed continuously about our activities.

**Annie Corsini-Karagouni**      **Katy François**

For MAA's committee  
[www.e-solidarity.org](http://www.e-solidarity.org)