

About **act:onaid** Kenya

Since 1972, ActionAid International Kenya (AAIK) has had operations in Kenya as a non-religious, non-partisan development organization to end poverty and injustices.

AAIK works in solidarity with communities living in poverty and exclusion to shift power to the communities and facilitate their own leadership by holding duty bearers accountable to Protect, Respect and Fulfill their rights in line with the constitution of the Republic of Kenya.

We have presence in twenty five counties working closely with local organisations and partners. The counties include: Baringo, Garissa, Homabay, Isiolo, Kajiado, Kilifi, Kisumu, Kitui, Laikipia, Makueni, Meru, Murang'a, Nairobi, Nakuru, Siaya, Taita Taveta, Tharaka Nithi, Turkana, Wajir, Marsabit, Elgeyo Marakwet, West Pokot, Embu, Mombasa and Migori.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About ActionAid Kenya	P1
How a Girl-Centred Approach is Ending FGM in Garissa	P2
How Reflect Circle Meetings are Ending FGM and Gender-Based Violence	P4

EDITORIAL TEAM

Ezra Kiriago, Communications Coordinator, AAIK

How a Girl-Centred Approach is Ending FGM in Garissa

In a corrugated iron shed in Bura Sub-county, Garissa County, 20 girls aged five to twenty sit on colourful mats, sharing stories of school achievements, resilience, and long-held dreams. Giggles ripple from the little ones while older girls lean in, listening and confiding. In this simple space, ActionAid Kenya, through the Girl Generation Programme uses a girl-centred approach to empower girls to challenge female genital mutilation (FGM) and reclaim control of their futures.

Fahma Jirree, a student at Umma University, guides the session as one of the mentors of this girls' forum by the Girl Generation initiative.

"We arm them with knowledge to recognize and report FGM," she says. "FGM related complications can make girls miss weeks of school and derail their education."

"Patriarchy governs everything," she says, pointing to customs that silence girls' voices and hide assaults behind family "resolutions."

For Naima, FGM is violence disguised as tradition. Speaking out invites backlash, but in the initiative's safe spaces, she and the girls confront elders and imams with courage, reclaiming their rights and agency.



Through the Girl Generation programme, we used art as a powerful voice, replacing harmful traditions with bold messages of bodily autonomy, dignity, and every girl's right to live free from violence

"The Girl Generation centres us. We own the narrative."

The initiative's success stems from a clear, girl-centred blueprint, which has been deployed in regions where FGM remains most prevalent, including Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Senegal.

"Girls fuel the movement through their voices, ideas, and leadership," says Dorothy Mulei, Gender Lead at TGG-ALM, ActionAid Kenya.

The initiative blends a broad strategy that involves parents, educators, policymakers, and faith leaders with a girl-centred framework that drives real change. Find Her reaches every girl, whether in school, married, parenting, or living with a disability. Listen to Her turns grievances into action through Girl Councils. Co-Create with Her gives girls a say in programmes and policy. Learn with Her lets them track results and improve approaches, making sure they shape the change that affects their own lives.

Teresa Awili, ActionAid Kenya's Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, surveys the shed. Five years in, Garissa's FGM rate has dropped from 98% to 83% (Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2022). Over 31,000 people have participated directly, including 6,411 girls, 4,371 boys, and 678 with disabilities; 30 girls were saved from the cut, and 120 returned to school.

"Resistance was fierce," Teresa recalls. "Translation hurdles, security threats from extremists, and leaders who pretended to support but undermined efforts. FGM thrives on poverty and muted voices."



Naima Ali, Girl Council representative from Garissa

The Girl Generation initiative is designed to last. Forums are integrated into school clubs, while groups like Women's Rights Networks and Men for Change ensure continuity. She notes that initiatives linking education, economic empowerment, and climate adaptation weaken FGM's roots.

As the session winds down and the midday call to prayer echoes from the nearby mosque, Dorothy insists that this girl-centred model not only fights FGM but also turns shy voices into confident advocates and young leaders with real agency.

Teresa adds that ending FGM requires tackling the gender inequalities that sustain it. When girls and women have equal opportunities, a voice in decisions, and access to education, the cycle of violence can finally break.

How Reflect Circle Meetings are Ending FGM and Gender-Based Violence

In Toghomo sub-location, the once-unshakeable wall of silence surrounding harmful traditions has finally begun to crumble. For years, the lives of women and girls in this part of Pokot Central were dictated by Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), gender-based violence (GBV), and the destructive cycle of alcohol abuse. While the pain was felt by many, the fear of cultural backlash ensured that these issues remained hidden. Today, that narrative is being rewritten by the Chemukut Reflect Circle.

This profound shift was ignited by the Komesha FGM Sasa Project, implemented by Ripot Community Based Organisation (CBO). This vital community work is made possible through the support of ActionAid Kenya, a grantee of the UNFPA Kenya project, which is generously funded by the European Union in Kenya. By introducing the “Reflect Circle” approach, Ripot CBO moved away from traditional lecturing, instead creating a safe, mentoring-based environment where women could finally speak their truths without judgment.

As trust grew, these gatherings became a powerful engine for education. The women began to deconstruct the root causes of the challenges they faced, recognizing the clear links between alcohol abuse and domestic violence, and how FGM acts as a gateway to child marriage and school dropout. Through leadership mentoring, the members stopped seeing themselves as victims of their circumstances and started seeing themselves as the solution.

“For a long time, we carried the weight of our traditions in silence, believing that speaking out would only bring trouble. But in the Reflect Circle, we found a safe place to put down that weight. We realized that our voices are not just noise, they are the shield that will protect our daughters from the pain we once knew and went through.” stated Jeniffer Anagari, Chairlady Chemukut Reflect Circle

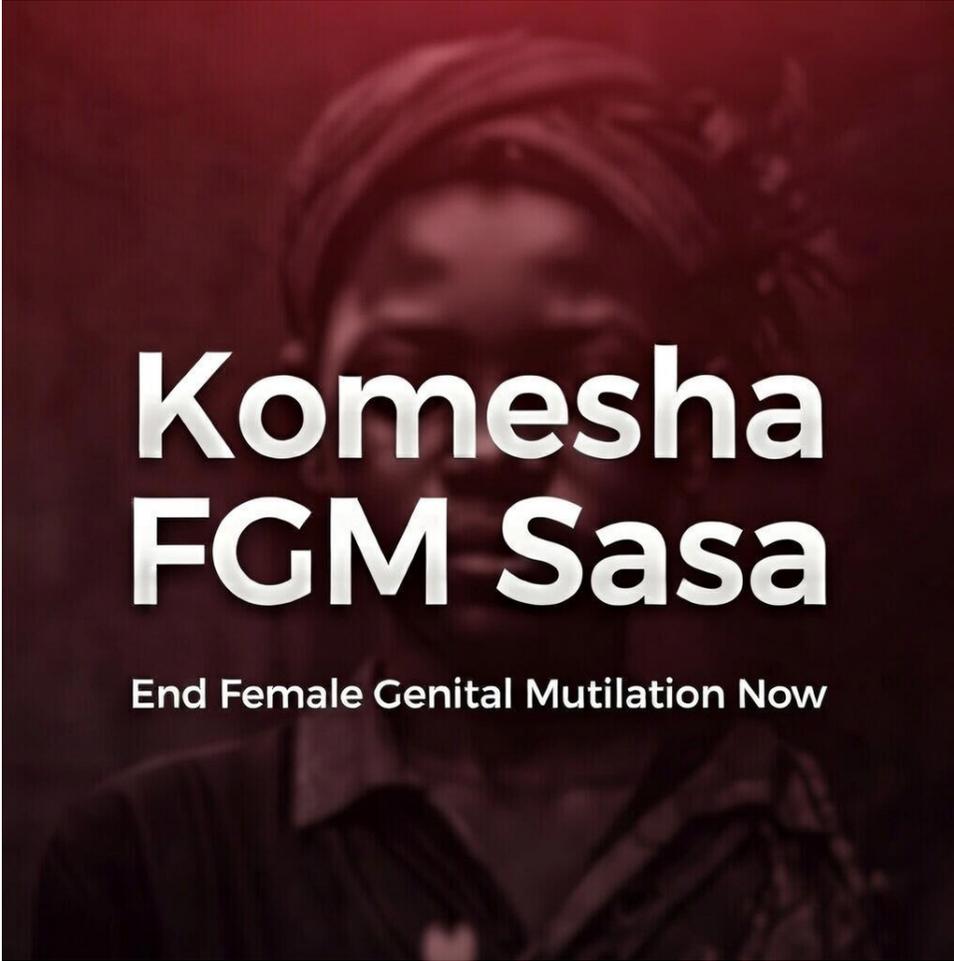


Women gathering in reflection, sharing wisdom and strength. Photo Credits: Ruth Chepkeu, Secretary, Ripot CBO

The true strength of the Chemukut Reflect Circle was tested during the festive season in 2025, a period traditionally marked by a high risk of FGM. Rather than waiting for external authorities to intervene, the women of the circle took the lead. They held heart-to-heart discussions with their daughters, engaged other parents in the village, and remained vigilant across the community. Their collective resolve ensured that not a single girl in their village underwent the cut during that season, a landmark victory for local leadership and mutual accountability.

Today, the impact of the Chemukut Reflect Circle extends far beyond FGM prevention. Every Friday, the group meets to advocate against illegal alcohol brewing and to champion girls' education as the primary pathway to dignity and independence. Supported by the Komesha FGM Sasa Project, these women have evolved from cautious participants into bold advocates and protectors.

Article by Ripot Community Based Organisation , West Pokot County



Komesha FGM Sasa

End Female Genital Mutilation Now

CONTACT US:

Email: info.kenya@actionaid.org

Physical Office Address: All Africa Conference of Churches Building, Waiyaki Way, Ibium House, Second Floor

P.O Box 42814-00100, Nairobi

 [@ActionAid_Kenya](#)  [ActionAid Kenya](#)  [ActionAid International Kenya](#)  [ActionAid.Kenya](#)

 [ActionAid.Kenya](#)  [ActionAid Kenya](#)