TUNAWEZA EMPOWERMENT ORGANIZATION
FREE JUST AND TRANSFORMED SOCIETY

ORGANIZATION NAME;

TUNAWEZA EMPWORMENT ORGANIZATION

ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR: 2023

Organization at a glance

About us:

TUNAWEZA EMPOWERMENT ORGANIZATION is a non-profit youth-led, women rights and youth development advocacy community-based organization working in Migori county that catalyze the power of the most vulnerable girls, young women and youth to create the future they imagine –for themselves, for their society and for the world.

Organization mission:

To advocate for full realization of social-economic and political rights of women, girls and youth through innovative, sustained and structured advocacy and empowerment to challenge social injustices.

Organization vision:

Realize a just, free and transformed society where girls, women and young people fully enjoy their social, economic and political rights.

Core Principles:

Transparency

Team work

Accountability

Commitment

Voluntarism

Honesty

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Acronyms

ACC – Assistant County commissioner

AGYW- Adolescent girls and young women.

DCC- Deputy County commissioner

DCS- Directorate of children services.

FGM – Female Genital Mutilation

SBCC- S0cial Behavior change and communication

NGAO- National Government Administration officers

MOE- Ministry of Education

MOH- Ministry of health

MURA- Men united ready for Action

From the CEOs Desk

Who we are

TUNAWEZA EMPOWERMENT ORGANIZATION is a non-profit youth-led, women rights and youth development advocacy community-based organization that catalyze the power of the most vulnerable girls, young women and youth to create the future they imagine –for themselves, for their society and for the world. Tunaweza is working in Migori County and focuses its interventions in all the 10 sub-Counties. Tunaweza Empowerment Organization CBO was established in the year 2015 with a group of young women who had been discriminated in their own society because they refused to undergo female genital mutilation and had wanted to end the vice among girls and young women in Kuria – Migori County. Tunaweza has been on the forefront to ensure that adolescent girls and youths rights are upheld, promoted and protected. Tunaweza ensures that these young people are reached out in all development aspects through linkages and partnerships, offering monthly and quarterly psychosocial support to youths in and out of schools as well as rescuing and putting to safety survivors and most at risk of GBV youths.

Over the past years Tunaweza has championed for eradication of FGM among girls in Kuria community through community dialogue sessions, Radio talk shows, engaging the duty bearers and cultural leaders, conducting intergenerational dialogues, offering psychosocial counselling to rescued girls and conducting health talks in schools.

Vision: - to realize a free, just, equitable and progressive society in which women, girls and youth fully enjoy their social, economic and political right.

Mission: - to advocate for full realization of socio-economic and political rights of women, girls and youth through sustained and structured advocacy and empowerment interventions challenging injustices in the society.

The Journey so Far

Migori county just like any other part of the country has a youthful population with nearly half 548,401 (49%) of the total population being below age 15 years and 25% being between 10-24 years. This youthful population can spur the development of the County if the right investments are made. The population can however add to pressure in the provision of Services if relevant investments are not made. As it stands, increased rate of unemployment, increased rate of teenage pregnancy, increasing cases of new HIV infection and gender-based violence among youth in Migori County are some of the challenges that require more attention and increased investment.

In the reporting period of 2023, Tunaweza continued to engage the young people, community members and duty bearers in migori county towards a meaningful and inclusive youth participation (MIYP) to ensure efforts towards full eradication of harmful cultural practices and addressing other developmental issues affecting the young people in Migori.

2023 began on a high with concern being the reintegration of the girls rescued from the 2022 FGM season. This was however met by a few challenges as some of the girls were forcefully taken for the cut.2023 also saw to increased secret cutting in the month of April 2023 which was unexpected. This among other emerging trends i.e. cross boarder FGM in the practice continue to create need for more collaboration towards ending the practice.

Migori county was one of the heavily affected counties in the anti-government protests on the cost of living. This affected scheduling of program activities or accessing relevant offices. Tunaweza empowerment through the support of power to youth project (PTY), Catalyzing whole community Response (CWCR) project and partners continued to engage with policy makers on budget and county legislations. Tunaweza also gave a focus on capacity building and engaging the AGYW, men and other community members in forums and dialogues to address issues arising from the community. Migori county was also lucky not be adversely affected by the heavy rains which provided safe environment to conduct the program activities. There were no major shifts in the program only that Tunaweza intentionally chose to work in remote areas with higher prevalence of FGM and child marriages i.e. Ntimaru Subcounty

Our Impact

Tunaweza in the year 2023 had a major focus on the following areas;

a) Capacity building

Tunaweza has identified capacity building as a major pillar of fostering meaningful engagement between young people, community members and duty bearers. In the 2023 Tunaweza offered capacity building through technical assistance sessions and short trainings as well as linkage to capacity building opportunities from external partners. These trainings have been offered to organization staff, community mobilizers, state actors, CSOs, Adolescent girls and Young Women (AGYW). The trainings offered include; Gender Transformative approach (GTA), Meaningful youth inclusion and participation (MIYP), Reporting and referral mechanism, safeguarding, policy, budget and media advocacy.

b) Community engagement

Tunaweza in the year 2023 managed to reach over 10,000 community members directly and over 100,000 indirectly. Tunaweza was able to conduct grassroot community dialogues, intergenerational dialogues with the young and older generations, Men united ready for Action forums (MURA), AGYW cycle mentorship sessions and participation in commemoration of international days relating to Tunaweza thematic areas. Tunaweza was able to implore use of art as an innovative strategy in approaching sensitive cultural issues. This was also a way of fostering meaningful collaboration of the youth and older generation in addressing harmful practices. This was successfully done through use of personal stories from survivors, folk tales from the community and performed short skits. This approach help increase the number of people attending barazas from the way that the messages were delivered. Tunaweza was also able to engage with the community through media. Tunaweza partnered with Radio Togotane and Pure Africa radio to conduct radio talk shows and awareness creation through radio. This enabled Tunaweza to reach a wider audience with information. Tunaweza also partnered with CSOs and stakeholders from Tanzania to establish and strengthen the cross-border task force responsible for coordinating all interventions and activities for addressing cross boarder FGM issues. This has also enabled Tunaweza to organize and hold dialogues with communities along the Kenya-Tanzania boarder in Mara region.

c) Engagement with Policy makers and duty bearers.

In 2023 Tunaweza worked closely with policy makers and duty bearers to fast-track action on the issues raised from the community. Tunaweza worked with members of county assembly in addressing the issues raised by young people in public participation. Tunaweza supported lobby

and advocacy strategic meetings that involved analysis of budget documents to highlight issues for concern. From theme meetings the county government of Migori prioritized construction of 9 youth resource centers and 4 rescue and recovery centers in Migori county in the CIDP 2023-2027. Tunaweza also worked closely with National Government administration officers (NGAO) i.e., County commissioner, Deputy County commissioners (DCC), Assistant County commissioner (ACC), chiefs, Village elders, police department, Judiciary, MOH,DCS, MOE. This collaboration has strengthened coordination, response and prevention of GBV cases. This collaboration also helped in fast tracking child related cases that have been prolonged. This enabled the renovation of children's court at Kehancha law courts and setting aside the month of November as the children service month to address all the pending children's cases.

d) In school engagements

Since the introduction of the new curriculum the school going primary and secondary school students spend most of their time in school. This has necessitated engagement both primary and secondary schools. Tunaweza has been able to engage students from 25 mapped schools in Kuria west and Kuria east. Through these engagements there has been formation of girls' forum clubs and Tuseme clubs in schools. These are peer to peer learning and mentorship sessions. Tunaweza was able to created awareness on menstrual hygiene management and supported AGYW with reusable sanitary towels as well as training others on how to make the sanitary towels.

Challenges faced.

- **There was noted an increase in the Presence of kangaroo courts that deny justice to the survivors in the Kuria community discouraging reporting of cases**. These has been occasioned by parents/guardians who seek to get other benefits from the perpetrators or the perpetrator using influence of material wealth or threats to have the cases solved out of court. Tunaweza has enhanced Training/Sensitization for more CSOs/community members on GBV response and prevention through case reporting and improved community policing. Tunaweza has also engaged other state actors on case follow up to ensure fast racking and timely conclusion of reported cases. Tunaweza and other stakeholders are also lobbying for operationalization of the recently renovated children's court in Kehancha.
- **In 2023 Tunaweza empowerment and other stakeholders faced the challenge of reintegrating rescued girls back to their families.** This was seen in instances where reportedly over 30 girls were cut after they had been reintegrated back to their families. One case was of a girl who was assaulted by her brothers and forcefully taken for the cut. Some of the school going girls were also reported to be denied basic need like support for their education. This has since forced stakeholders in Kuria to sit down and

develop a comprehensive reintegration strategy that will require huge commitment and obligation from the parent to ensure protection for their children.

- **Strong underlying patriarchal social norms, beliefs and attitudes.** This has been a major challenge while implementing GTA. In some areas some males are stuck for the idea of marrying cut girls sighting that there is often stigma from other male friends, family members and even parents when one marries a girl who is not cut. However, from the GTA sensitization sessions more men showed willingness to transform attitudes. There is need for more capacity building on GTA and social behavior change communication strategies.
- **Inadequate IEC material for GTA and MYE**. Tunaweza made efforts to integrate GTA and MYE in programming however there few materials available to effectively carry out the trainings.

  Key lesson learnt.

Use of art for social norms change is one of the effective ways of approaching very sensitive cultural issues. Using art such as storytelling, performing skits and using folk tales helps the audience to relate closely with the issues being discussed making it easier for them to take action.

Engaging the community audience participants on Human rights principles using the TOSTAN model of community well-being. During these sessions Tunaweza used infographics for learning. This has seen to build more agency and awareness of community members on the rights and responsibilities of each person

Collaboration with local leaders is key in enhancing community ownership pf the project. Tunaweza worked closely with village elders, Chiefs and their assistants, ACCs, religious leaders and community health promoters. These are key decision makers at the grassroot level. Tunaweza involved them in mobilizing and facilitating session in barazas that the community is used to. This has also increased the number of community members willing to attend barazas for information.

Case follow up to ensure timely conclusion and determination of cases. In 2023 Tunaweza worked with state actors on following up a few cases related to FGM and other forms of violence. There have been systemic challenges and also lack of awareness on prosecution procedures that has affected cases leading to dismissal, prolonging of the cases or Kangaroo courts. However, with more collaborative efforts to address these challenges there is hope in case being heard and determined on time for justice to be served.

Best practices.

Integration of GTA in programming – Tunaweza in 2023 used strategies such as Human rights-

based approaches and male engagement to ensure GTA is integrated in programming to demystify existing social norms/ barriers to ending harmful practises.

Cascading dialogue to grassroot areas with higher prevalence of FGM. In the past there have been areas that have been viewed as hostile, not respective and with high prevalence of FGM. In 2023 Tunaweza worked with local leaders i.e., ACC, Chiefs and Community health promoters to conduct dialogue sessions with community in those areas and these has enabled most of the community member to benefit from the program sensitization and other information shared during the dialogue. Since then, there has been progress as more community members including cultural elders are willing to attend the forums.

Men United ready for action Forums (MURA)- Bearing the duties of key decision makers in the Kuria community it is important that more males are engaged as agents of change in ending harmful practices. In areas where the men have been empowered through training or the MURA forums men have shown willingness and commitment to take up their role in ending these practices. The trained men have actively reported cases of GBV, led grassroot advocacy campaigns to end these practices and even committed to ensure that they lead by example by not allowing the practice even from their homes. Through these forums Tunaweza seek to reach out to more male champions in the conversation to end FGM and other forms of violence.

Impact Stories

Tunaweza has trained and continued to engage male champions in ending FGM and GBV through the established Men United ready for Action (MURA) forums. This has built agency among the male to take up action to prevent and report cases of SGBV. On 4th December 2023, Lamech Kibwe, a male champion from the trained cohort in Gwikonge village reported a case of

child marriage involving two minors, a girl of 16 years and a male of 17 years. He took swift action to report the case, coordinating with the leader of the Gwikonge AGYW cycle. The case was reported to children officer Mr. Cian Wambura who took swift action to ensure that the union between the two minors I ended and counselling offered to them as the matter continues to be resolved. This one notable of the many cases reported by the trained male champions. Through the support of the power to youth project Tunaweza is engaging men on gender transformative approach, human rights principles and the social behavior change communication. From the engagement through the MURA forum there has also been commitments by the male champions to lead as role models from their homes and families to end FGM and other forms of violence.

Throughout the year 2023 Tunaweza has worked closely with the Department of children services, Ministry of health, police department, paralegals and the judiciary to ensure that all SGBV cases involving minors are reported and swift action taken to arrest, process and prosecute the perpetrators. Through this case follow up strategy there was an increase in the number of arrests made. The various departments were also able to share the challenges that has always seen the delay in FGM and other SGBV cases related to minors. This enabled stakeholders to put in place strategies to Fastrack these cases. One achievement is that the Judiciary, DSC and police department set aside November 2023 as the children service month to hear and determine all cases involving. One woman in Kehancha was sentenced to three years for aiding FGM. About 23 other cases involving minors were also concluded. The Kehancha law courts also renovated the children's court and is awaiting operationalization. Tunaweza also presented a petition for formation of an SGBV court in Migori that was received by the Judicial Service commission.

In April and August 2023, Through the support of Power to youth and ATFGM from Tanzania Tunaweza conducted cross border engagements with 66 stakeholders and the established cross boarder anti FGM task force. This was to review the response and coordination during the 2022 FGM season and put strengthened strategies to prevent and respond to Cross boarder FGM cases. The countering cross-border movement began as a small unit of those committed to achieving the commitment from the inter-ministerial action by the 5 east African countries. Since then, it has grown to a formidable and coordinated movement working to enhance coordinated prevention and response to cross boarder FGM especially the one for Kuria-Mara region. The network went ahead and formed task force within the larger network which has effectively enhanced the cross-border initiative with meetings being held in all the four quarters. During these review meetings there has been reported huge progress in combating cross boarder FGM and other crime in Both Kenya and Tanzania through Kuria-Mara region border. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGMdlZHUsRs, The engagement was covered on Tanzania

National Television ten TV:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WYMrywKC0WfL_XtCoWE69gX4lx6BFniQ/view and Kenya National TV-KTN News: https://youtu.be/e0KPfCSri3I?si=Upi16OF79DaFkrO8

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Finance

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Partners Gallery











