

Male Engagement for the Elimination of the Beading Practice in Samburu Communities

Community mobilization report



© Coexist 2015
Elders from Kirimon Village

Submitted by Coexist

Supported by UNESCO



Acknowledgment

The Coexist Initiative wishes to recognize the team that undertook the mobilization campaign as follows,

- Wanjala Wafula
- Dominique Kogo
- Esther Njenga,
- Derrick Bwonya.
-

They brought with them immense knowledge in working on women's rights and other overriding legal issues. We celebrate all who contributed to this ground breaking work that exposes a harmful cultural practice called beading among the Samburu of northern Kenya.

We thank the Coexist staff and volunteers, particularly Fredo Mansion, Evelyne Khisa, Beatrice Achulu, Becky Namarome, Abigail Ayuka Khanakwa and Ganash Sudi for their endless efforts to ensure the completion of the assignment and successful publication of the same. Thanks to Veronica Maingi for editing, typesetting and designing this report.

We wish to thank UNESCO for the financial support towards the implementation of this project and count on them for continued work around eliminating harmful cultural practices.

We wish to thank the elders in all the communities that we worked in. In particular we thank the elders that facilitated this work including Somoire Keriako, James Paita, Daniel Mpaai, Edwin Taani, Antony Parsaot and Jones Lemomo.

List of abbreviations and acronyms

ACPHR - African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights

AG - Attorney General

AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

DEVAW - Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women

FGDs - Focus Group Discussions

FGM - Female Genital Mutilation

HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus

ICC - International Criminal Court

INSTRAW - Institute for Research and Training

NaCSA - National Commission for Social Action

NFD - Northern Frontier District

NGOs - Non-Governmental Organizations

OAU - Organization of African Unity

PEP - Post-Exposure Prophylaxis

SASFS - Semi-autonomous Social Fields

SGBV - Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

SOA - Sexual Offences Act

STI - Sexually Transmitted Infections

UDHR - Universal Declaration on Human Rights

UN - United Nations

Dictionary

Abiyo- Samburu term for “uncle” although it doesn’t in all cases apply to the biological brother of the mother

Akuya – Samburu term for grandfather (used on elder men, not necessarily the biological grandfather)

Apaya – Samburu term for elder man

Banghi – Ghanja or marihuana

Borana(s) – Ethnic group in Kenya from Cushitic origin

Chamus – Ethnic group found in Kenya, Nilotic origin – ‘cousins’ of Samburus

Hotel (i) – Commonly used Swahili word for cafes

Kodi – Samburu word for taxes introduced by the British colonials

Laiboni(s) – Samburu word for ‘fortune-teller(s)’

Lari – Samburu word for rain season, greenness and pasture

Lais (i) – Samburu word for ‘witchdoctor(s)’

Lale – Samburu term for area warriors or men who gather with their animals for pasture outside their homes

Lchoni – A skin for sleeping on, usually of cow.

Leppapoos – Samburu adaptation of the English word labour force

Lgumbao – Samburu word for chewing tobacco

Lkishami – Current warrior generation of Samburu males

Lmasula – The largest clan in Samburu culture

Lmoimoi – Tree with soap like effect

Lmoly – Age-set of Samburu males

Lokop – Samburu name for original Samburu person

Longeli – Samburu Clan of the white cattle

Lorora – A very large enclosure with numerous traditional Samburu houses, formed during ceremonies.

Maa – Linguistic term for the language family of Samburu and Maasai amongst others

Maasai – Ethnic group found in Kenya and Tanzania, Nilotic origin – ‘cousins’ of Samburus

Mala – Samburu term for gourd – used to store milk

Manyatta – Enclosure with a couple or more traditional Samburu houses and room for domestic animals.

Mooti – Samburu word for clay pot

Moran(s) – Samburu word for warrior(s)

Mpira – A small bottle of liquor, spirits sold in bars for 50 shillings.

Murata – Samburu term for ‘fellow circumcised’, used between warriors and age sets

Muratara – Samburu word for circumcision

Naimaralal – Samburu word for ‘shiny surface’

Ngrumma – Samburu word for maize flour

Nkaji – Traditional Samburu hut

Nkai – Samburu word for God

Nkang – Samburu word for home

Nkige – Samburu word for a certain tree which produces branches used as natural toothbrushes

Nkolong(i) – Samburu word for drought or hunger, or also meaning that ‘you don’t have’...

Rendille – Ethnic group of Cushitic origin

Rungu(s) – Samburu word for wooden or metal club(s)

Pokot – Ethnic group of Nilotic origin

Rendille – Ethnic group of Cushitic origin

Rungu(s) – Samburu word for wooden or metal club(s)

Sampurr – Samburu name for Samburu

Sintaani – lover, girlfriend/boyfriend

Table of Contents

• Acknowledgments	2
• List of terms	4
• Appreciation	6
• Forward	8
• About Samburu County	9
• Background of the Samburu	12
• Statement of the problem of Beading	19
• Beading as a Human Rights violation	22
• National Laws	24
• Intervention Strategy	32
• Who is Coexist	35
• Community Mobilization Strategy	44
• The Study	51
• Study Findings	52
• Data Management and Analysis	55
• Study Challenges	60
• Recommendations	64
• Activities Report	66
• Observations	70
• Narrative Report	71
• Program Accomplishments	85



© Coexist 2015

Gicharu Gichanga, extreme left (CEO masculinities Institute) making a brief about the mobilization exercise at the Samburu Governor's office.

Introduction

As defined, culture outlines the space within which authority is conveyed, conferred and enjoyed in various communities across the world. From the onset, we report that there needs to emerge a conversation on the definitions and frameworks of culture which are vital to the complete understanding of gender based violence and its manifestations which include numerous detrimental customs and practices as will be discussed in this report.

The understanding around culture is interpreted to the advantage of the perpetrator but to the sustained detriment of the victims. Social commentators have for generations explained that “culture” is mistakenly perceived by communities across the African continent and forced onto generations through varied socialization processes. It remains a common tool that is used to deny women and girls an opportunity to progress at political, economic and social levels in society.

The dynamic nature and experiences around beliefs and socialization processes contribute to remodeling culture from time to time and from place to place. In abundant communities across the African continent, the “evolving nature” of culture remains retrogressive and immobile on myriad fronts including social justice.

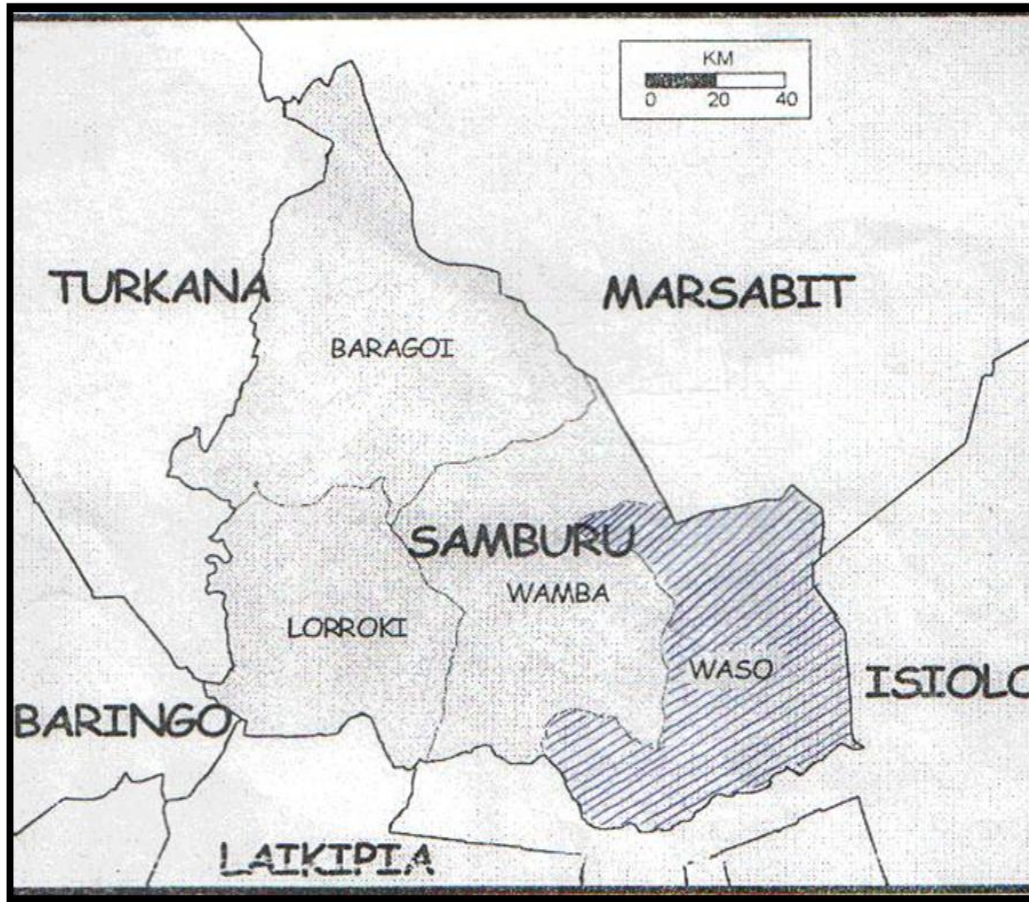
The inclusion of culture into the governance systems in Kenya largely remains farfetched with unclear definitions of culture which in many circumstances are used as justifications for the sustained vices

against women and girls. Our experience in Samburu has revealed the fact that existing legislation lacks accurate instruments for application and execution. In order to address retrogressive and or detrimental traditional practices, there is need to isolate the drivers of violence, trends and manifestations of the destructive practice. There is need to identify entry points into the community through which to combat the vice and engage and transform men, boys and communities.

Geography of Samburu County

Samburu County borders Baringo County to the west, Laikipia County to the south, Isiolo County to the East, Turkana County to the northwest and Marsabit County to the north. Maralal town is its headquarters. Samburu County is administratively divided into three sub-counties: Central, East and North.

Samburu County land covers an area of 20,826 Km² with a total population of 224,000 out of whom 90% are nomadic pastoralists. The area is inhabited by the Samburu who are the majority and a few Turkana, Somali and Rendille ethnic groups whose main economic activity is keeping livestock. They practice a seasonal migratory lifestyle in continuous search of grazing pasture and water for their livestock, which provides them with milk, meat and blood for food as well as serving other socio-economic functions such as for dowry payments.



The rainfall pattern in Samburu District is quite erratic and on average receives rainfall ranging from 750mm in the lowlands to 1200mm on the mountain and plateaus making the area not quite suitable for arable farming in the lowlands.

In areas where dry land agriculture is practiced the persistent and severe droughts/famine causes crop failure as well as livestock deaths further compounding the problem causing Samburu county to be ranked among the poorest in Kenya (UNDP 2013).

The Samburu people

Many people refer to the Samburu people as the aggressive yet fashionable warriors (Morans) who traverse the vast lands North of Kenya in search of pasture for their livestock. Others have christened them as diehard traditionalists who would kill in the name of their culture. Yet the Samburu are pastoralists esteemed for their stern devotion to their traditions and customs.

The Samburu people live in northern Kenya, where the slopes of Mount Kenya unite into the northern desert. They are a cattle-herding community that is estimated to have reached their current destination about five hundred years ago. Their dependence on cattle dictates that they constantly move to find food and water for their animals. Their society has depended on cattle and combat for so long that they find it hard to transform to a more conventional lifestyle. They have an equally intricate and fascinating culture. They are a people both proud and defensive of their culture and the ancestral lands to which it binds them. The inventive appreciation of splendor is a key part of Samburu principles, and this shows itself in a great attention to physical appearance and decoration



© Coexist 2015

Moran Enock Rempti on the right and his friend Olenkan during a community forum at Kirimon village

The Samburu are a Patriarchal society heavily influenced by negative masculine attributes. Their culture and traditions exclude girls and women from the enjoyment of all human rights and entitlements including ownership of property, participation in decision making processes, access to education and other related social services. Patriarchy also exposes Samburu girls and women to harmful traditional practices including female genital mutilation, early marriages and the prevalent gender and sexual violence.

The Samburu are among a few communities that are in unending conflicts with their numerous enemies. Their way of life makes them

dependent on livestock and its correlated resources including water, vast land and pastures hence the unending hostilities over the same. In a nutshell, experts insist that conflicts are the worst nightmare for each Samburu family hence remaining a great influence to their social, economic and political direction



Samburu elders resting under a shade in Luai Village- © Coexist 2015

Moranism

Cross-cutting the Samburu community structure, which is characterized by numerous clans, is a hierarchy of age-sets encompassing all adult men. However, this system is largely focused on the Moran, the most junior age-set. The young men may only marry after their age-set has performed a sequence of ceremonies controlled by the clan elders, by which time many of them are over 30 years old and they can be replaced by a new age-set of youths. It is through this prolonged bachelorhood for men, and not through any imbalance in numbers between the sexes, that the high degree of polygyny is achieved by Samburu elders.

Elders delay the ritual sequence in order to retain their monopoly in marriage, hence precipitating a direct competition between Morans seeking their first marriages and elders seeking more wives. Ritually, the Morans are associated with the bush where they are supposed to defend their herds and families. They are persistently at a midpoint between boyhood and elder hood hence the sustained confusion around the roles they were meant to perform and the sustained social and economic pressures they constantly find themselves under. “We have to persistently raid our neighboring communities for livestock so as to sustain ourselves and our extended families (read numerous underage girls) and many get killed”, exposes James Likoyan, a Moran from the litik age set in Samburu.

It's Moran Kesasik that summarizes the conversation well. “The problem facing Morans stems from the less virile elders determined to

keep us out here in the bush for long so that they can keep their young wives under control. They have for years allowed us to bead and find sexual pleasure from our very young female cousins. I think this practice of Moranism will not last long as many boys now leave the manyattas in pursuit of education”

It is vital to point out that the Morans are held in check by the elders, who keep them in a state of delayed adolescence until they are replaced by a new age-set. The responsibility for holding the Moran in this state and drawing them up slowly to elder hood is delegated to the elders who are two age-sets senior to the Moran (i.e. about 30 years older and exclude their fathers). These are the ‘firestick patrons’ of the Moran, over whom they are believed to hold a powerful curse. The patrons play a leading part in overseeing their ceremonies and in scolding the Moran periodically to cultivate a sense of respect. The collective wisdom of the elders is a major premise of the Samburu society. This is based on their extensive experience and knowledge, which is shared through local discussions and debate. Elders who can shape a particularly perceptive argument in these discussions play a significant role.

Beading

Beads are a part of the Samburu people’s way of life as they can be traced back centuries. The Samburu have an equally complex and fascinating culture. They are a people both delighted and protective to their way of life and the ancestral lands to which it binds them. Their inventive appreciation of physical appeal is a key part of Samburu values and it shows itself in their great attention to physical look and decoration. It’s imperative to insist that beads form a great part of the Samburu people’s way of life. However,

the attachment to beads in the community has resulted in the worst forms of human rights violations including exposing girls as young as twelve to life threatening situations through informal marriages and the consequences attributed to it. The practice of beading allows Morans to qualify as “legal” boyfriends accepted by the community, sadly with the consent of the family and facilitated by mothers. Simply put: beading is a community-sanctioned, non-marital sexual relationships between Samburu men in the “warrior” age group, and young Samburu girls who according to the existing Kenyan law are not yet eligible to be married.

Beaded Samburu girls MUST undergo female genital cutting and “marriage” for a bride price at any age decided by the parents especially fathers and uncles. The results of the mobilization and



mapping exercise contained in this report confirm that the girls are often “married” by 12-14. It emerges in the community mobilization exercise that the youth and naivety of the girls prevents them from

doing anything about it. Beading allows a Moran to buy a girl he fancies from his clan, basically a family member and places beads on her neck. This acts as a sign of 'engagement'. He is allowed to have sex with her. However, he cannot marry her, and they must not have a child. When the girl gets pregnant, her mother and fellow clan women conduct crude abortions. The women press the girl's abdomen with their elbows until the fetus dies. The young mothers to be almost always die, or they get life threatening complications like excessive bleeding, sepsis, and fistula. Others never conceive again. When they carry the pregnancy to term and give birth, the child is killed using a concoction of tobacco and other dangerous traditional herbs. Considered, beading is an affront to all development efforts as defined by the elusive millennium development Goals and Kenya's own Vision 2030.

Beading is an outcome of the official tolerance of treacherous cultural, societal and customary norms that shape and govern the perceived entitlement of men and boys at the expense of women and girls vulnerability. Beading is culturally packaged as a social necessity, but it amounts to socially licensed sexual abuse and exploitation of girls, some as young as six.

In a nutshell, the cost of beading on the Samburu community as a whole is too expensive to disregard. The Samburu community cannot progress when even the common practice of beading dooms girls and women to a life of poverty, ignorance and agony. National indicators on maternal health, education, food security, poverty eradication, HIV/AIDS, and gender equality are all negatively correlated with beading. Beading has lifelong consequences which unfortunately have been largely ignored by communities where the practice is prevalent. Beading frustrates girls

chances at education, endangers her health and cuts short her personal growth and development.

There needs to emerge a paradigm shift in approaches and strategies around eradicating harmful traditional practices. Efforts need to be directed at the grassroots where approaches that are participatory in nature and ones that utilize the expertise and tools that are respected by target communities are implemented. There is need to galvanize support toward the eradication of harmful practices such as beading among the Samburu by endeavoring to spur change through culturally sensitive, human rights-based approaches that promote collective rejection of the practice. It's imperatively important that men, boys and communities take lead.

© **Coexist 2015**



Statement of the Problem

The archaic cultural practice of beading among the Samburu remains one of the most dreadful practices that recurrently exposes girls as young as ten to death and life threatening complications including excessive bleeding, sepsis, fistula, segregation and expulsion from society. There is need to increase knowledge and understanding around the drivers and dangers of harmful traditional and cultural practices such as beading among the Samburu. We propose that extensive strengthening and operationalization of the existing legal regime around local and international conventions and laws on the child be prioritized by targeting the key drivers of negative traditions and cultures who are men, boys and communities.

The Kenyan Constitution

Culture plays a crucial part in the identity of the Kenyan people and its importance is noted in the preamble at Art 11 of the 2010 Kenyan Constitution. Art 44 goes further to guarantee every citizen the right to participate in the language and culture of their choice, and at Art 44 (3) states “A person shall not compel another person to perform, observe or undergo any cultural practice or rite.” More specifically, under Art 53(d) children are “to be protected fromharmful cultural practices, all forms of violence, inhuman treatment and punishment.....”

However, the right to culture is not unrestricted, Art 24 of the Constitution states “A right or fundamental freedom in the Bill of rights shall not be limited except by law, and then only to the extent that the limitation is reasonable and justifiable.....” The practice of beading is therefore not justifiable as a practice that is protected as a cultural right.

Furthermore, Kenya’s Constitution 2010 specifies that “Any law, including

customary law that is inconsistent with this constitution is void to the extent of the inconsistency, and any act or omission in contravention of the constitution is invalid Art 2(4). The Constitution also makes general principles of international law and all ratified treaties a part of the domestic law of Kenya. Art 2 (5 &6).

Kenya is a signatory to various international and regional instruments which require the elimination of all harmful traditional practices and as such provides an avenue for redress in a court of law as specified in Art 22 on the enforcement of the bill of rights.

Shortcomings of legal provisions in ending the practice of beading

It is obvious that there is more than ample legislation to curb the practice of beading, but it is also clear that so far the law has not been able to tackle the problem effectively. There are a number of reasons why this is the case.

1. Lack of knowledge

Among both community members and law enforcement officers there is little or no knowledge of not only national laws but also of the international obligations that Kenya has in ensuring the eradication of harmful practices. This lack of knowledge leads to victim's being turned away from police stations upon reporting or even worse being treated as rebels who are disrespectful of their culture and elders. Even where there is some knowledge of the law, officers have little resources to follow up on all cases especially since they cover a wide remote area where access is problematic. More education and awareness rising of the law is needed among the community and law enforcement agents to help end the practice.

2. Lack of enforcement

There is also a lack of willingness by law enforcement agents such as the police and area chiefs from enforcing the laws in place. This is brought about by a perception that this would be an interference with long preserved cultural practices and would cause animosity between the local community and the law enforcement agency.

3. Defiance

In most cases where the community is educated on the laws, there is much resistance as the members consider it their right to continue with this long preserved practice. Some community members view the laws as an interference with their cultural way of life and an attempt to introduce western culture with the aim of eroding their traditional culture.

Conclusion on existing laws

There is a robust legal framework in place to help end harmful traditional practices such as beading. What is required now is more education and dissemination of the existing laws to ensure their contribution within a wholesome array of strategies and initiatives to end the practice and safeguard the health and welfare of the girl child.

It's against this background that UNESCO contracted the Coexist Initiative to carry out a community mobilization campaign in order to engage the male members of the Samburu community. By contract, Coexist was to undertake the following key assignments:

- (1) Mobilize the Samburu communities in particular a critical mass of about 1000 males i.e. Morans, male elders, men and boys and

undertake awareness raising activities that highlight risks, dangers and consequences of beading in order to contribute to the elimination of the beading practice in these communities.

- (i) Carry out a comprehensive mapping of the communities in question,
- (ii) Design an appropriate general survey questionnaire to be used as a guide in the engagement of the target groups in the communities in question;
- (iii) Organize preliminary meetings with the community elders to introduce the project and to get their endorsement;
- (iv) Identify and train male role models from within the community to be used in the community meetings.

The Coexist Initiative

It's a multi-global award winning Kenyan NGO working across Kenya and the entire East and Central Africa region to promote gender transformation, human rights and social justice. Established in 2005, Coexist has quickly established itself as a pioneer in promoting gender transformation, and advancing human rights by targeting men and boys as its key cluster. Coexist has won numerous international awards and been selected by experts in the field as one of the most effective organization's working to end violence against women and girls by addressing negative socialization processes, negative cultural practices, stereotypes and masculinities. This year, Coexist's work has also been selected by many agencies including UNHCR as examples of best practice and its materials translated into many languages across the world.

Some of the awards and recognitions include

2015- The global Avon Award (USA)

2015- Effective mentoring Award- Standing with boys (USA)

2014- The European Union Intercultural Award (Austria)

2013- Africa Achievers Awards (UK)

2012- Role of honor (Kenyatta University-Kenya)

Why target Samburu Morans, men, and community

- Because of the non-existence of explicit resources, tools and guidelines that directly target men and boys in efforts to eradicate beading among the Samburu.
- Because among the Samburu, everything that relates to marriage and sexuality is taboo and girls have been forced to cope with it on their own bodies and lives whereas men have maintained a more distant perception on the practice yet remain the main beneficiaries.
- Because social and cultural barriers (including patriarchy and male-female power relations) have continued to dominate discussions around beading and minimum efforts have been made to mainstream male engagement in anti-beading programming.
- Because of misconceptions and stereotypes that men do not need to be involved in beading eradication other than oversee its continuation and the further torment of Samburu girls
- Because once the men get information on the risks of beading and they really understand what it is, they usually get shocked and they can react pro-actively hence reducing the vice.

Activities

- **Activity 1: Design Survey Questionnaires**

In order to remain focused, a general questionnaire was designed in order to provide guidance to the facilitators and to ensure that most of the known risks and consequences of beading were interrogated. This helped the team to gain deeper insight into the beading practice and demystified the attitudes, fears, perceptions and experiences. It established the baseline for the readiness of the

community to change.

- **Activity 2: Identifying and training Role Models**

In the preliminary meetings, efforts were made to identify a role model in each of the target groups who was willing to speak out against the practice. They were later coopted into the facilitation team, capacitated and used to speak out during the focus group discussions. Two role models were identified in each location and a total of 10 were trained for the exercise.

- **Target Group Mapping**

In order to ensure that as many elders, men, boys and Morans were targeted, a preliminary mapping was carried out in the Samburu community to identify the concerned villages and their groups of Morans. The mapping also established the governance structure within the focus communities i.e. if there was a Council of Elders within these communities. This required a preliminary visit to the various locations and ascertained the existence of the villages and profiled the focus groups: elders, men, women, boys and Morans

- **Activity 3: Preliminary Meetings**

Samburu communities are very sensitive and structured; no meetings could be organized without engaging the elders of the communities and getting their buy in and support. Hence preliminary meetings were organized with the elders of all the targeted communities and villages.

- **Activity 4: Focus Group Discussions**

In order to determine attitudes and perceptions on beading and forced abortions in the Samburu target communities, 15 focus group discussions were organized in 5 locations, targeting 3 groups per location. These discussions were targeted,

in that there were to be some for elders only, for men only, for boys only and for Morans only. They were facilitated by Coexist staff.

	Activity	Location	No. of participants	Comment
1	Focus group discussion	Kirimon village - Samburu	Elders 16 Moran leaders 5	Faced enormous resistance from the elders
2	Community open forum	Itirim Village	250 hundred participants including elders 150, Morans, community leaders 30	Used music and dance as the entry point and it worked very well
3	Community edutainment activity	Luai village	320 participants	Used music and dance as the entry point and it worked
4	In depth Interviews	Luonoi Village Itirim Village	16 elders	The elders remained determined to continue with the beading practice
5	Forum with Morans	Kirimon Village	65 Morans	All the Morans are currently beading more than one girl
6	Launch of the Speak Out	Mugu Village	172 boys and 10 Morans	The initiative was well received

	initiative			
7	Community Mobilization & consultation with local leaders	Kurdai village	82 in total	They stuck to beading as a cultural practice and blamed the government for marginalizing them
8	public dialogue on beading and other harmful traditions	Garmaelowai Village	64 participants	They saw nothing wrong with the practice
9	Forum with Morans	Lowabene	31 Morans	Determined to continue with the practice. Only one Moran was opposed to the practice
10	Community edutainment activity	Garmananyekie	422 in total	Used music and dance as the entry point and it worked
11	Community Mobilization & consultation with local leaders	Igirigiri village	115	They were in support of the practice to El Molo Bay
12	In depth Interviews with Morans	Garmaelowai, Lowabene	33	Determined to continue with the practice
13	Follow-up on the Speak Out	Kirimon, Kelele,	Coexist Team	Initiative well

	Initiative	Kurdai Villages	(6)	received
14	In depth Interviews with traditional spiritual leaders	Mugu , Igirigiri	44	They vehemently defended the practice
15	Focus Group discussion with elders	Loiyangalani	25	In total support of the practice
	Edutainment activity	Lowabene	73	A divided group that comprised of educated men and women who supported most harmful traditional practices including beading and FGM
17	Community mobilization & consultation with local leaders	Kurdai Village	18	
18	public dialogue on beading	Lowabene Village	94	Used music and dance as the entry point and it worked
19	Morans' Forum	Garmaelowai Village	9	Determined to keep the practice

Beneficiaries

Beneficiary	Direct	Indirect
Morans	1000	2000
Boys	500	1500
Media	7	22
Elders	350	1000
Total	2247	4522

Community mobilization

Community mobilization is a dynamic process that involves planned actions to reach, influence, enable and involve key segments of the community in order to collectively create an environment that will effect positive behavior and bring about desired social change.

Factors that influence our Community Mobilization Strategies:

- The ability to give the people a stake in the issue
- Buy-in by the community
- Sense of ownership by the community
- Partnership and coalition building
- Development of a movement
- Synergy between the movement/intervention and governance agencies
- A good cause or relevant social development issue
- A clearly defined, time-bound, achievable goal



© Coexist 2015

Elements of our community mobilization approach:

- Capacity Building (of community members and implementers)
- Participatory Processes
- Dynamic Processes (not routine or static unchanging process)
- Planned Actions (Action - Oriented)
- Behavior and Social Change
- Self-Help by the Community
- External Influence or Catalyst
- Collective Action
- Goal/Result Orientation



Key observations around the Mapping exercise

- Beading is a deeply entrenched practice and efforts to end it must include educating and enlightening all members of society to understand beading for the harmful and destructive practice it is. Beading violates girls' and women's human rights, denying them their physical and mental integrity, their right to freedom from violence, discrimination and in the most extreme cases, their lives.
- The exercise went at length to reflect on the deep-rooted inequality between the sexes. Beading represents society's control over girls and women. Beading perpetuates normative gender roles that are unequal and harm girls and women. It

violates the rights to health, security and physical integrity of the person, the right to be free from torture and cruelty, inhuman or degrading treatment.

- Beading and other destructive traditional practices are part of a continuum of socially accepted and morally 'justified' communal actions whose outcomes only the victims know. Parents and community attitudes are mainly influenced by traditional beliefs regarding the ideal roles of women and girls in society and this is where beading is used as a validation and a justification. Beading is treacherously used as a conduit that separates childhood and maturity for Samburu girls.
- The exercise ascertains that beading is a social convention governed by rewards and punishments which are a powerful force for continuing the practice. In view of this conventional nature of beading, it is difficult for families to abandon the practice without support from the wider community, specifically men and boys who remain largely ignored in beading programming in Kenya.
- While laws at the national level provide a legal platform for activities aimed at eliminating all harmful traditions and customs and act as state-sanctioned rejections of the practice, they have not been able to change attitudes and perceptions among Samburu men and boys who were the key target of the study. The deeply-entrenched cultural practices and beliefs are still prevalent in the target community, primarily because of the difficulty of large-scale enforcement.
- Irrespective of the fact that beading violates key local and international legal tools and instruments, it persists openly with a majority of the respondents in the study affirming that they support the practice. We sadly note that, because the practice is

so prevalent, laws criminalizing beading in Samburu will not end the practice. Instead, the practice has been driven underground, encouraging families to discreetly force their daughters to be beaded and subjecting them to dehumanizing treatment when they get pregnant.

- It is evident from the exercise that the role of men and boys in the eradication of beading in Samburu County has to be mainstreamed and prioritized. It is also evident from the exercise that men and boys hold sway to leveraging social dynamics towards the abandonment of the practice among the Samburu people.

Methodology

The exercise was premised on several principles and components that continually affirm our findings as sound scientific work. We worked to ensure that our results are deemed accurate and reliable, as well as provide a base for auxiliary clarification and learning:

The exercise was conducted as a descriptive and explanatory one with the aim of a rapid situational assessment on the practice of beading in Samburu County. We employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. In the qualitative phase, a simple discussion guide was used to obtain salient issues around beading. Five in-depth interviews were conducted amongst men and boys in the community. In the quantitative phase a structured questionnaire was used to collect data on a face to face interview procedure. A total of 1,000 men and boys were interviewed for this phase of the study. The study population was constituted by the boys, men,

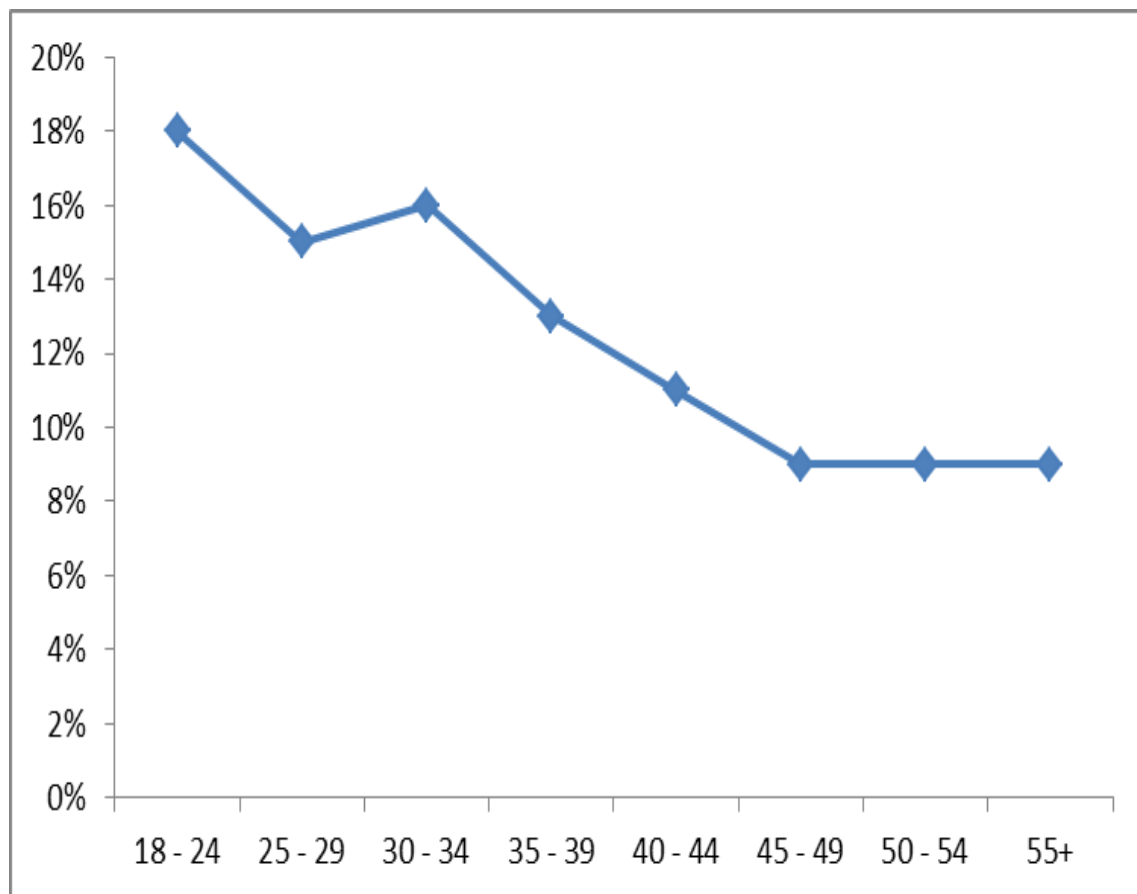
elders, community gatekeepers and religious leaders in the community.



A community forum at Kelele Village

The exercise sample split

by age group /Age of respondents



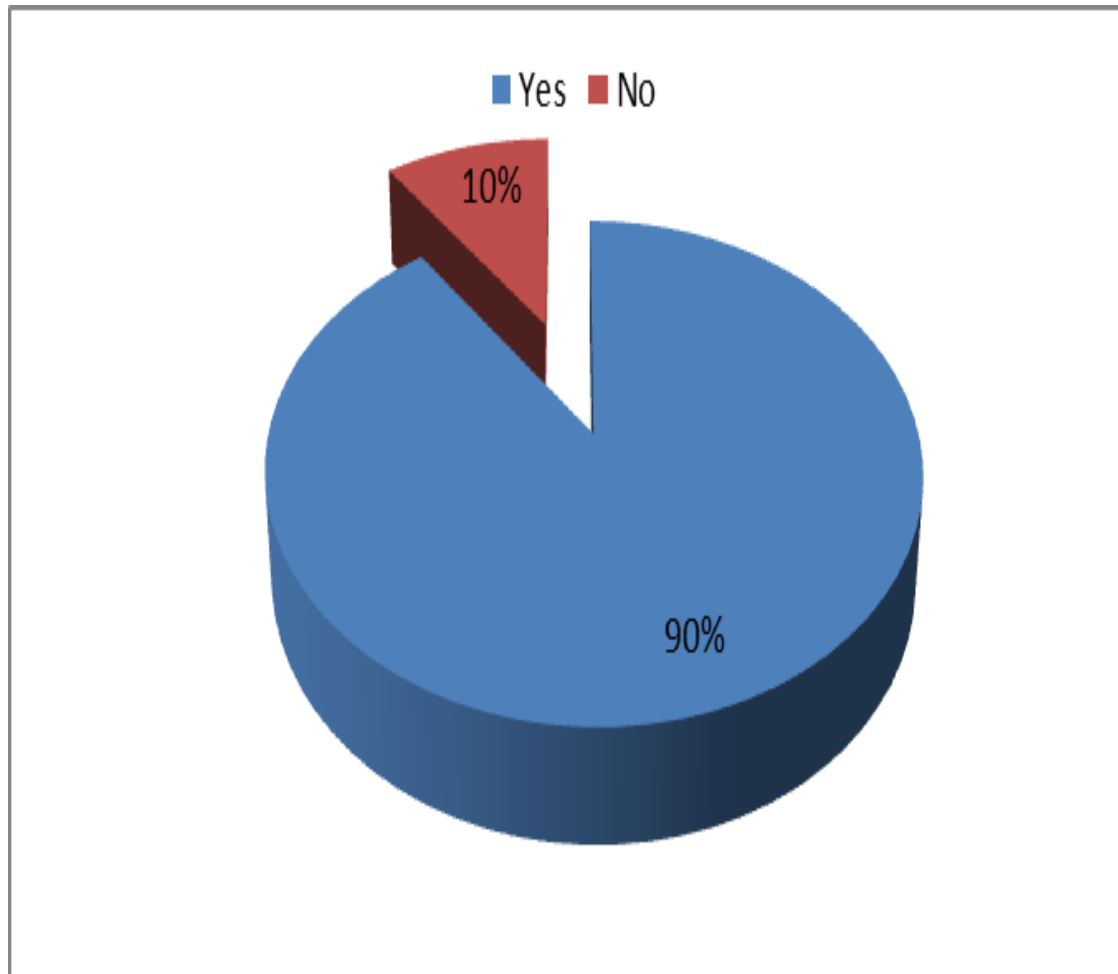
Base: All respondents n =1,000

Data management and analysis

Data entry and analysis from the quantitative phase was done using the SPSS software. The training on the use of the software was conducted by Meadows Research for free. The software has helped us to accurately collect data and project the outcomes in terms of the extent of the beading culture and practice in the Samburu County.

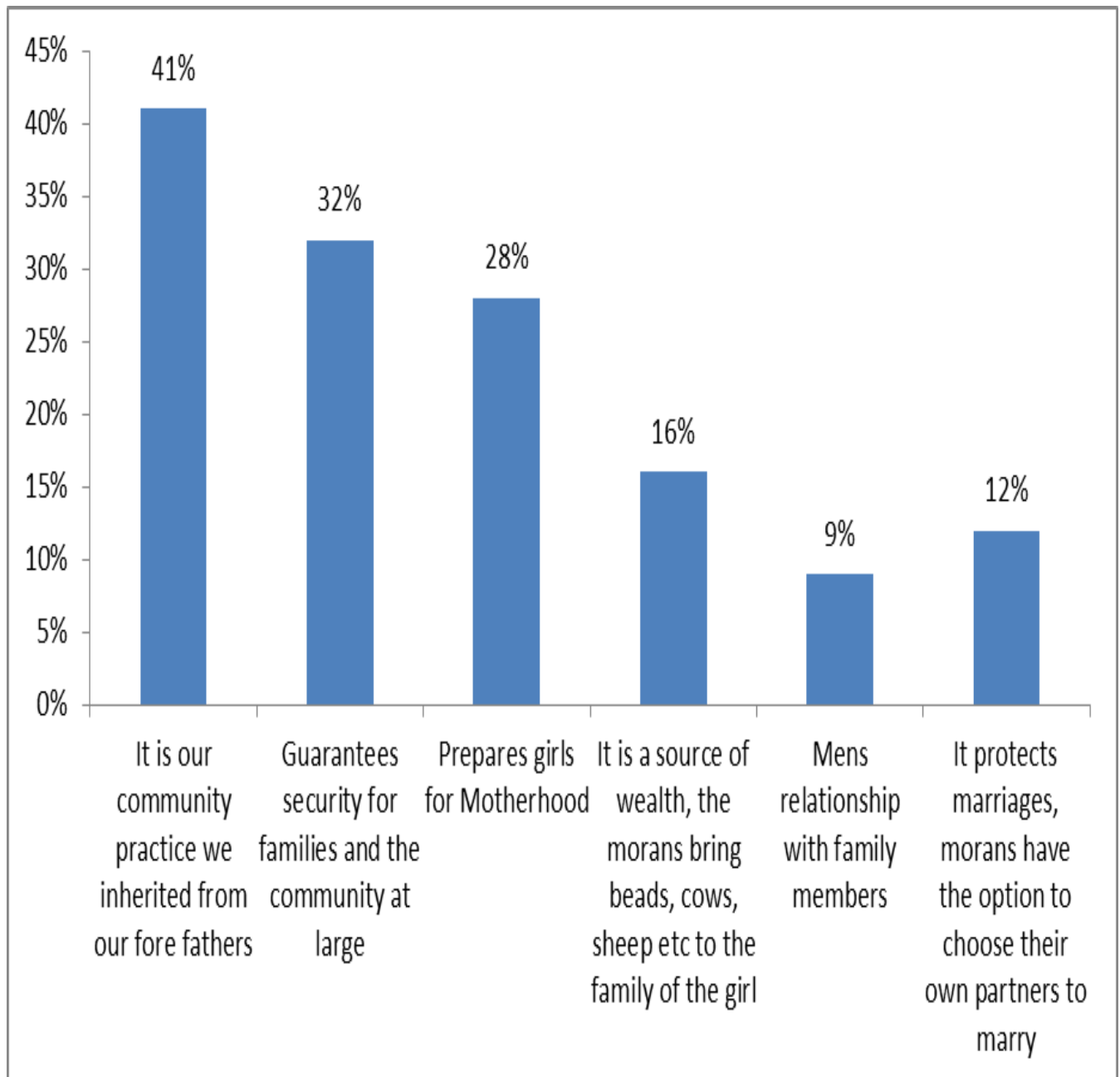
Responses

Should Beading Continue



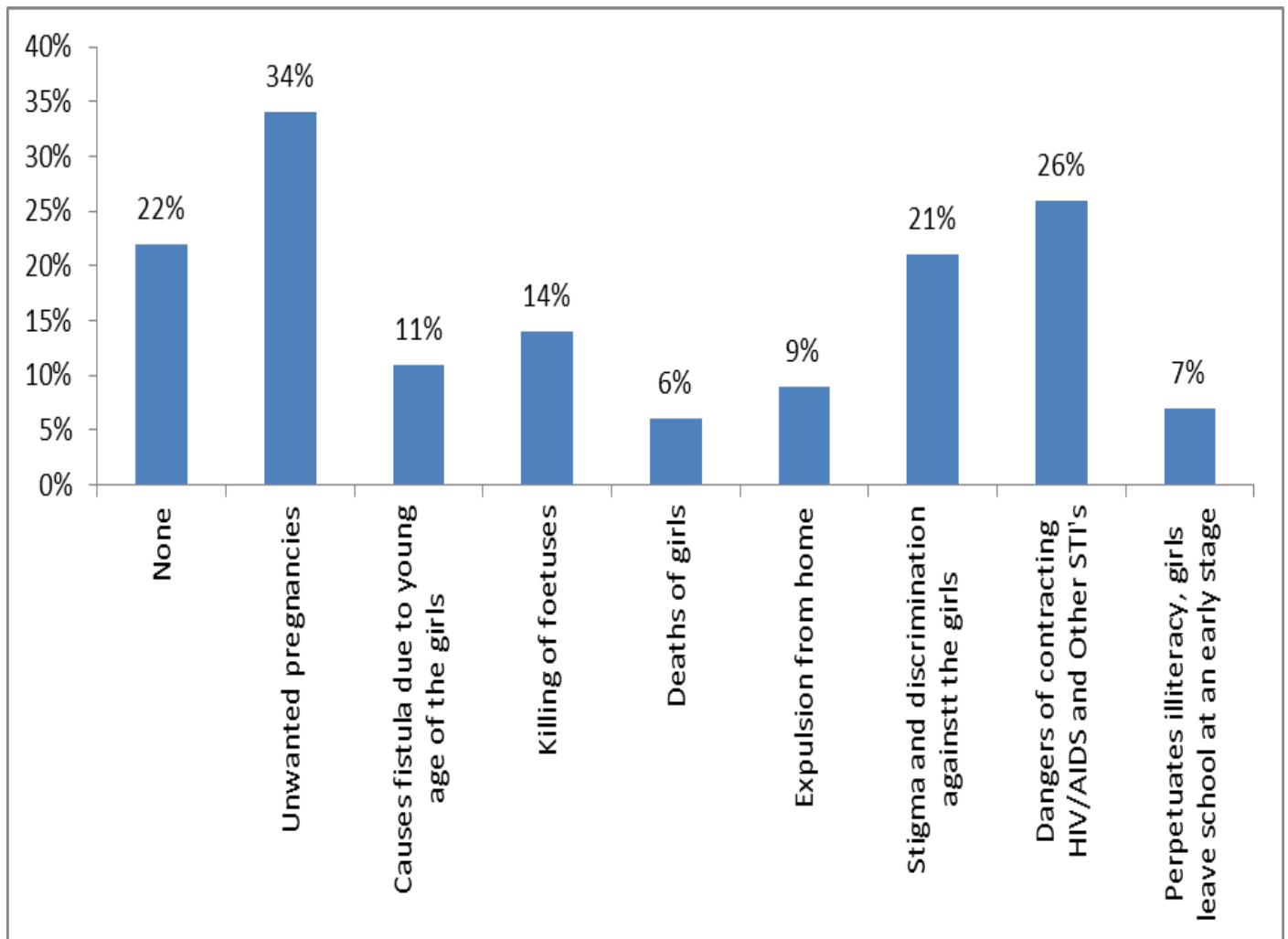
Base: Total Sample =1,000

The above chart shows that a large proportion of the community (90%) still support the continuance of the practice of beading. The findings support the need for more education and awareness rising to sensitize the community on the reasons why beading is a harmful practice.

Why Beading should continue**Base: All respondents, n=1,000**

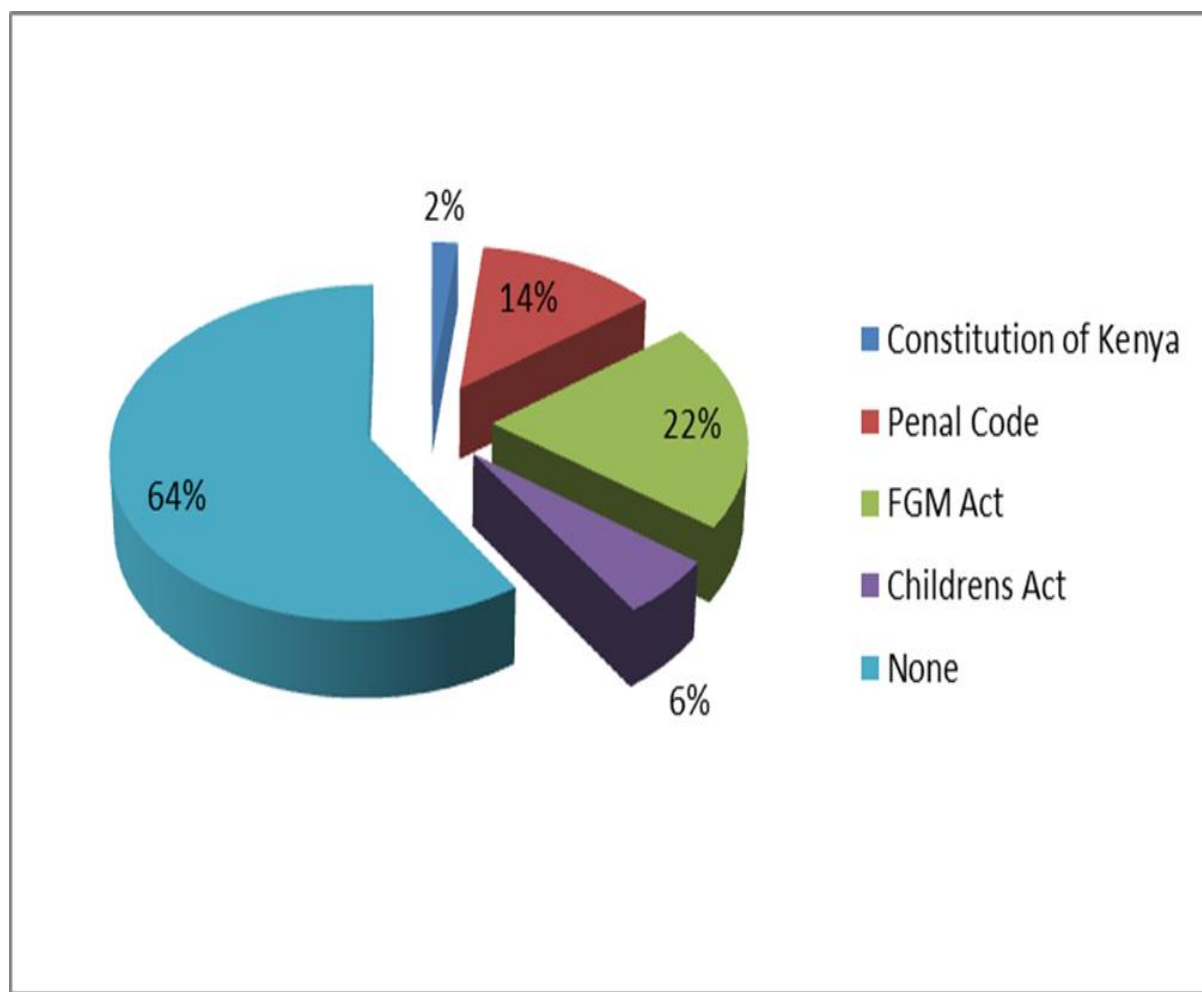
The exercise shows most people who support the practice (41%), do so because it is a practice that has been going on for generations within their communities. 38% believe that it guarantees security of the family as girls are married within the community ensuring continuity of family ties. For others it is a source of wealth because the Morans give animals and other gifts to the girl's families. 28% believe that the practice prepares girls for motherhood.

Are you aware of any dangers associated with beading?



Base: All respondents, n=1,000

The above results show a varied array of knowledge on the dangers of beading. Unwanted pregnancies figure as the danger most associated with the practice at 34% because girls are not expected to get pregnant as a result of these relationships until they are married. The results show that there is an increased awareness of the risk of HIV/AIDS and other STI's from the practice (26%). 21% of participants acknowledged that girls were stigmatized and discriminated against as a result of the practice. A significant percent (22%) of the participants were not aware of any dangers associated with the practice. The knowledge of the health dangers of the practice was relatively low, only 11% were aware of the prevalence of fistula among the young girls and 6% of the possible death of the girls. More community based education is needed to address the serious health consequences of the practice.

Are you aware of any law that prohibits the practice of beading?

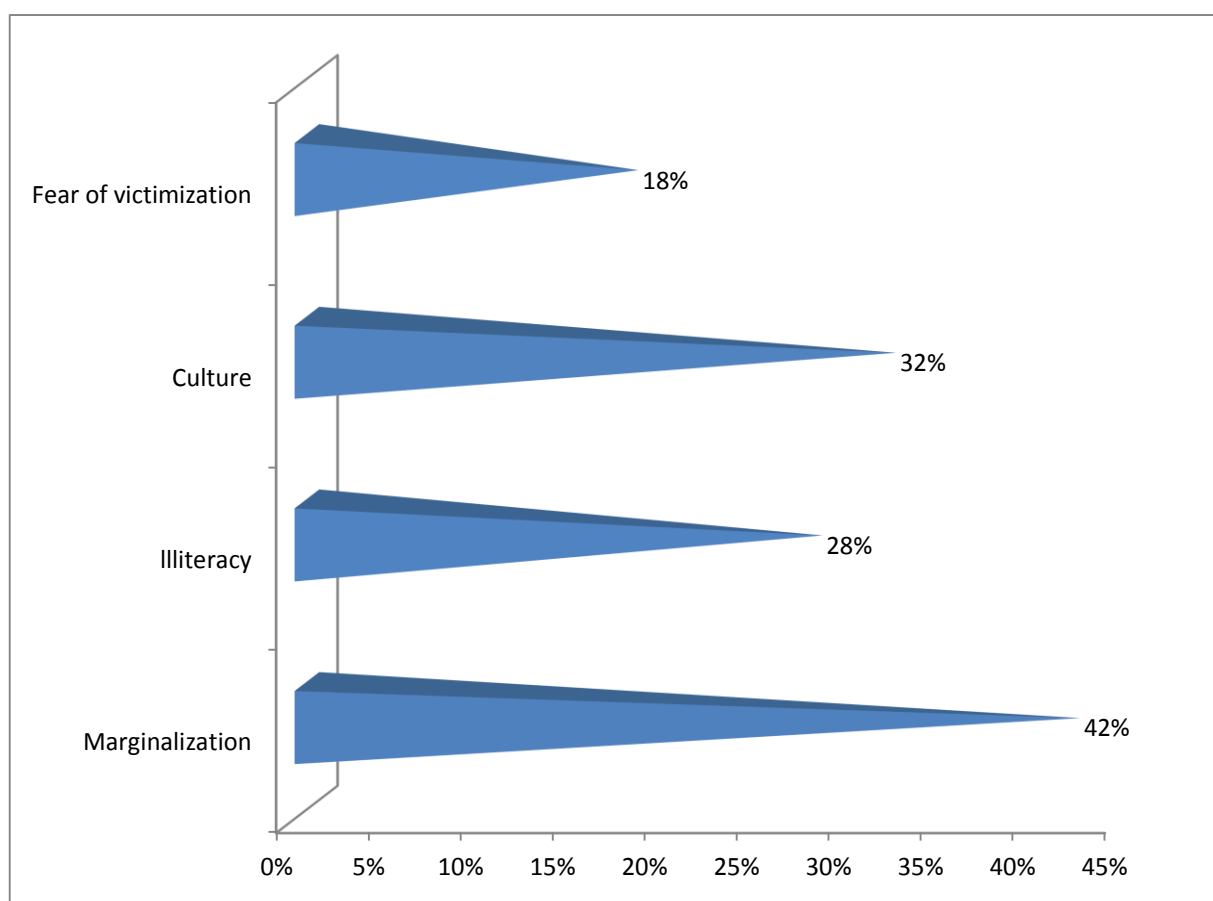
Base: All respondents, n=1,000

A large majority of the participants (64%) are unaware of any laws on traditional harmful practices, beading being one of them. Despite country wide dissemination of the Constitution in 2010 only 2% are aware of the Constitutional provisions addressing harmful traditional practices.

There is slightly more awareness of legislation on FGM (22%) and the Penal Code (14%). At only 6% there is very little knowledge on the

Children's Act. The above result shows a significant gap in the knowledge of the law as it relates to traditional harmful practices and the rights of children. Therefore more education is needed to ensure that community members are aware of existing laws and their penalties.

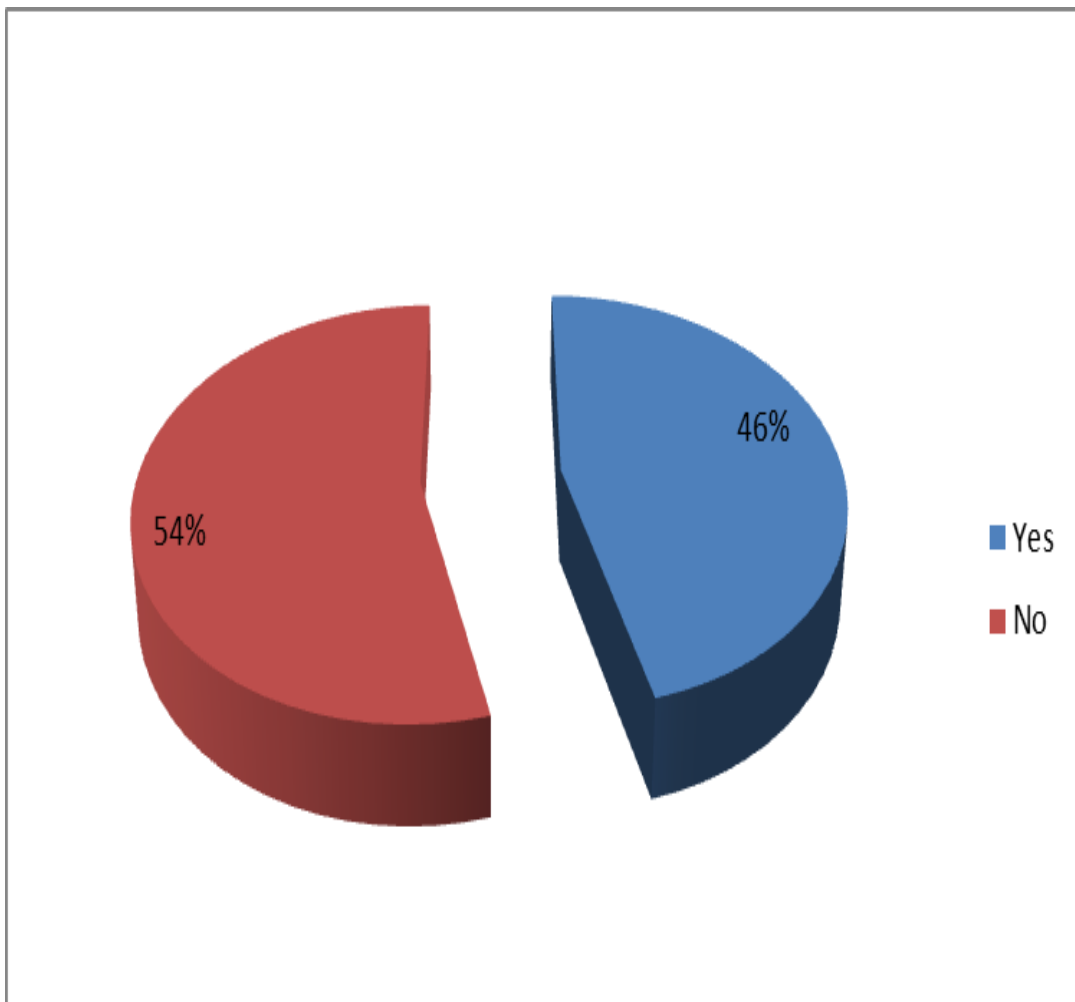
Reason why they don't respect the existing laws on harmful practices



Even where there is knowledge of the existing laws against traditional harmful practices, there is defiance from the community for several reasons. This study shows that 42% feel that they are a marginalized community politically, economically and socially and therefore show

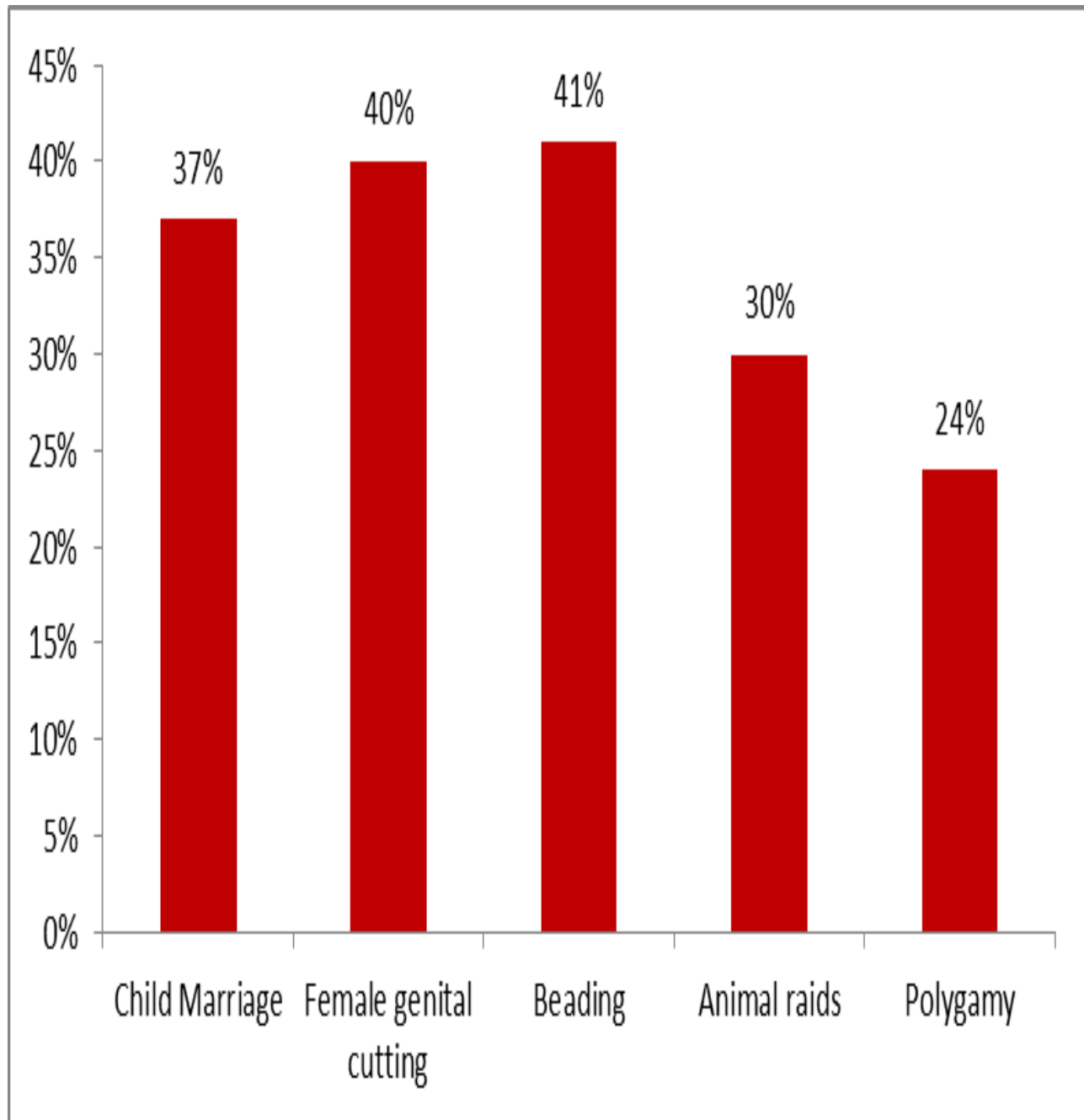
their defiance by not following the law. 32% of the participants feel that culture is more important than laws and consider such laws an unwarranted interference with their cultural traditions. Illiteracy at 28% has meant that most people are not able to read or access information on existing laws. 18% of participants sighted fear of victimization as the reason why they do not respect existing laws.

Are you aware of programs that teach people about harmful cultural practices?



Base: All respondents, n=1,000

The results show that there is relative knowledge of existing programs on harmful traditional practices at 46%. However, at 54% a significant number of participants are unaware of existing programs and therefore more dissemination of such programs is needed in local languages to be effective.

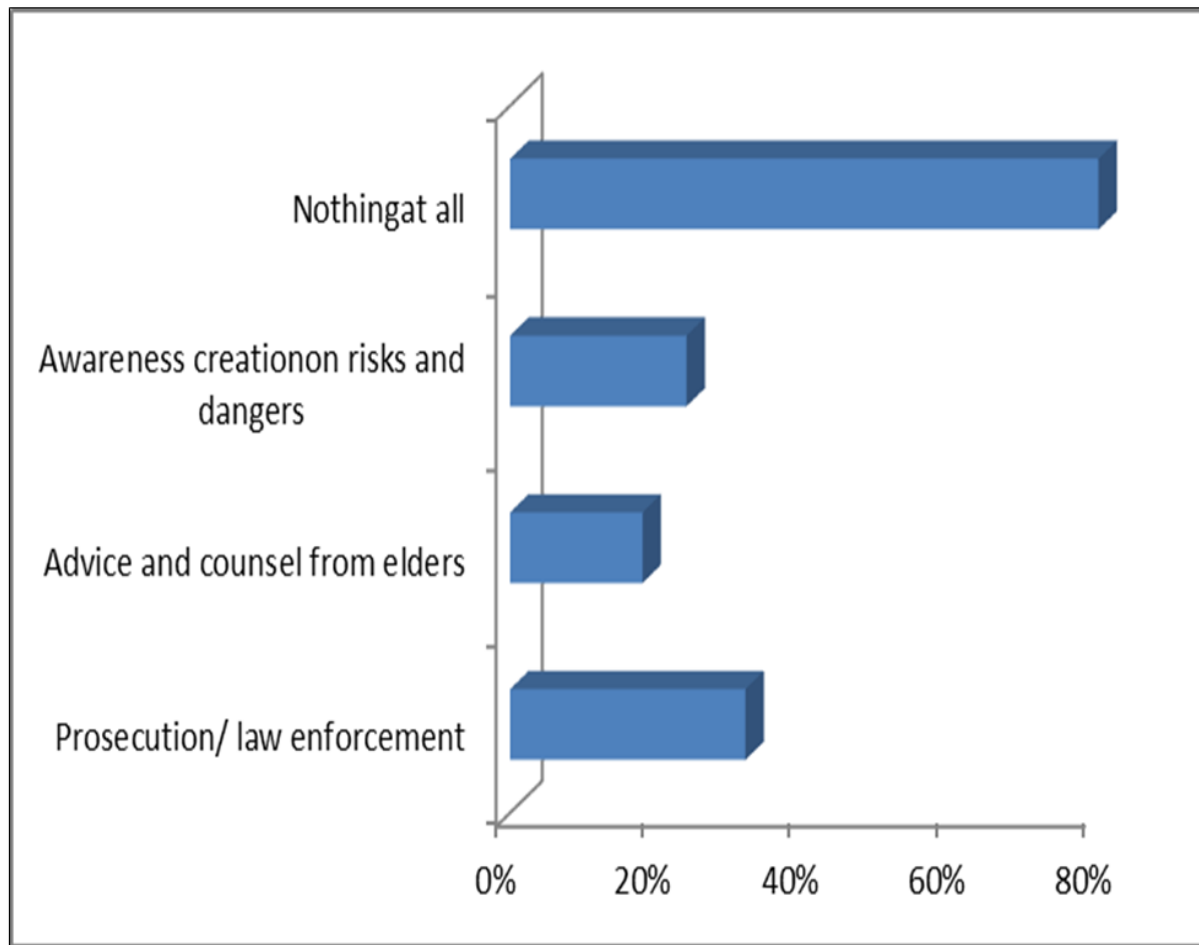
Which cultural practices do you support the most?

Base: All aware, n=460

There is relatively high support for cultural practices with Beading and FGM gaining most support at 41% and 40% respectively. Child

marriage follows closely at 37% and animal raids at 30%. Polygamy has less support at 24%. All of these practices have negative consequences, which need to be addressed through education and awareness rising at community level.

Which is the one thing that will make you abandon harmful cultural practices



Base: All respondents, n=1,000

Almost 80% of participants are still resistant to change and feel that nothing will stop them from continuing with their valued cultural practices. Nevertheless, some change is promising with awareness creation on risks and dangers (30%) and prosecution and law enforcement at approximately (38%) being cited as reasons for abandoning harmful practices. Interestingly, only 20% of participants considered advice and counsel from elders as reason enough for them to stop these practices. The results show that a multi-faceted approach is needed in order to successfully engage with, and change the attitudes of community members.

Data management and analysis

Data entry and analysis from the quantitative phase was done using the SPSS software. The training on the use of the software was conducted by Meadows Research for free. The software has helped us to accurately collect data and project the outcomes in terms of the extent of the beading culture in Samburu County.

Key Lessons Learned

- Beading is a violation of girls' right to protection from all forms of violence and a fundamental breach to their dignity and integrity; it affects the achievement of their full potential as girls and hinders their progress in becoming responsible adults and citizens and it hampers any long-term development.
 - Beading among the Samburu is performed in the name of culture, religion or tradition and even sanctioned by customary laws and taboos and anchored on purported female inferiority
-

and supposed male superiority. Beading is guarded by stereotyped roles and definitions.

- Beading is a cause of many sexual and reproductive health problems including sexual violence, unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortions and the spread of STDs and HIV/Aids among others.
 - Forcing children into marriage severely limits the ability of young women (and men) to make informed and voluntary decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives.
 - We have established that beading is a social convention governed by rewards and punishments which are a powerful force for continuing the practice. In view of this conventional nature of beading, it is difficult for families to abandon the practice without support from the wider community, specifically men and boys.
 - While laws at the national level provide a legal platform for activities aimed at eliminating beading and act as state-sanctioned rejections of the practice, they have not been able to change deeply-entrenched cultural practices, primarily because of the difficulty of large-scale enforcement.
 - We sadly note that, because the practice is so prevalent, laws criminalizing beading and other harmful traditional practices in Kenya will not end the practice among the Samburu people. Instead, the practice has been driven underground, encouraging families to discreetly force their daughters to undergo the practice.
-

- The practice of beading has been marginalized as a cultural issue yet it remains one of the worst violations of human rights for women and girls among the Samburu. It is a practice that has been driven underground as a result of the deliberate alienation of men and boys in beading programming.
 - Men, boys and communities in general play a key role in the eradication of beading in Samburu County and more efforts need to be dedicated at working with the clusters.
 - It's possible to prompt attitude and perception change through culturally sensitive, human rights-based approaches that promotes collective abandonment of beading away from the current approach where beading is basically addressed as a girls' and women's issue.
-



© Coexist 2015

Meeting with the Morans at Mugu Village



Meeting with the Morans at Mugu Village



© Coexist 2015

Meeting with spiritual leaders at Garmaelowai Village

Challenges

- Rigid traditions and customs: It remains a challenge to objectively engage conservative members of the Samburu community on issues relating to beading.
- Logistics: The terrain and perennial marginalization of the area makes it extremely difficult to operate in Samburu County.
- Collaboration and harmonization between various anti-beading stakeholders is not common practice in Samburu County.

- Challenge in estimating the accurate prevalence of beading in the target location.
- The over emphasis on the physical harm with very minimal reference to other related attributes including integrating beading into health, hygiene, literacy and other awareness programs hence the need for a staged approach to deriving and improving estimates on the prevalence of beading and the involvement of key stakeholders.
- The secrecy surrounding beading among the Samburu and the protection of those who carry it out make studies about the practice intricate and costly.



Recommendations

1. There is need to carry out more community assessments focused on men and boys so as to inform future programming.
 2. There is urgent need to mainstream men and boys engagement in beading eradication processes.
 3. Negative traditions and customs supported by myths and stereotypes are a major force behind the sustained practice of beading.
 4. Synergize efforts through community networks as well as other community groupings so as to minimize re-invention of the wheel among stakeholders.
- Beading inclined behavior change takes time to happen, hence continuous programs geared towards behavior change need to be devised.
 - To achieve any substantial knowledge increase and understanding around beading eradication/ prevention as well as public support at the community level, men and boys have to be targeted, mobilized and empowered. There is need to develop more long-term interventions targeting men and boys in the eradication of beading in Samburu County, with the objective of empowering boys as peer advocates for change.
-

- The drivers of beading including patriarchy, power dimensions dominated by masculinity, negative traditional beliefs and practices have to be flagged and prioritized.
- Engage formal and informal media channels in the fight against beading at the grassroots. The radio is the second most believed item in terms of attitude and behavior change in the region

Proposed outcomes dissemination

Key outcome dissemination groups

- Government- Line ministries
- Communities- Elders, men and boys
- Academia- Universities and tertiary institutions
- Legislature - Members of parliament and parliamentary committees
- Media- Mainstream and alternative
- Civil society & UN agencies

We propose that the dissemination of these study findings be part of a comprehensive beading project where the study becomes a training component to last one year. The trainings should avail information, skills and tools aimed at building the capacities of men hence allowing them to understand the harmful effects of beading and the extent of the practice as well as share their attitudes and feelings on the issue. The capacity building attribute of the trainings will help men and boys to understand the broader social, physical, ethical and human rights contexts of beading. There is also need to host forums where the study findings are discussed and approaches and

strategies towards beading elimination explored. By the end of the trainings and community forums, men will be able to acquire skills to make them effective advocates and agents of change within the community.

Ends
