



# FGM LIMITS GIRLS' POTENTIAL IN LIFE

The time to stop FGM is now

- FGM deprives girls of their sexual and reproductive health rights
- Despite being outlawed in Tanzania since 1998, FGM continues to be practiced
- Culture is often a disguise for the real reasons behind continuing this retrogressive tradition - drivers of FGM among the Kuria community are economic benefits and patriarchy, at the expense of girls and women
- A holistic approach targeting all actors involved works, though it needs long term involvement to ensure sustainable change

Imagine you are a girl from the Kuria community in northern Tanzania. One day in December you are forced to a clearing in the woods. There, you are undressed in front of all your family, friends and classmates. Then you get genitally mutilated in public, watched by a large audience of villagers. You are not allowed to cry, scream, or even move - as those are signs of not being brave, leading to further humiliation. After the cutting, despite the intense pain, you are forced to get up and walk home yourself. That same day the fresh wounds are washed, which causes even more hellish pains.

Once you are mutilated, your school career ends. Instead, you are married off at a very young age (from 9 years), which often leads to an early, risky pregnancy, even though you are not physically and mentally ready for it. For the rest of your life you struggle daily with the consequences of your mutilation, both emotionally and physically. Going to the toilet is a nightmare, sexual intercourse is a torment, pregnancies and deliveries are difficult, very painful and carry extra risks.

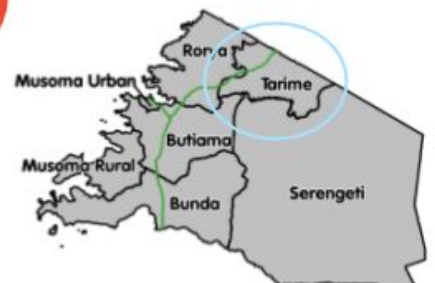
Many girls get disabled for life due to complications after their mutilation. Some even bleed to death. The girls often develop conditions such as fistula and incontinence, or get infected with sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV due to improper and unsanitary use of the mutilation instruments (usually a traditional knife). Moreover, girls who are forced to drop out of school prematurely will hardly have opportunities to break out of the cycle of poverty spiral through education. In addition, child marriages are often characterised by domestic and sexual violence against the girl.

## FGM PREVALENCE

TANZANIA  
10%

MARA  
region  
32%

TARIME  
district  
97%



> 1,000 KURIA ♀  
SUBJECTED TO FGM  
IN TARIME DISTRICT (2019)

terre des hommes  
stops child exploitation





A group of children, mostly boys, are gathered around a table, looking at a picture book. One boy is pointing at a drawing in the book. The background is a solid red color.

## A SOUND FUTURE FOR KURIA GIRLS

**Creating awareness on FGM, focused on  
protection of children in Tarime district**

- Rescue safeguard victims and/or girls at risk of FGM, Child Marriage and Gender Based Violence
- Provide educational support, counselling & legal aid services, life skills training and alternative rite of passage to the rescued girls
- Create awareness creation on FGM through media campaigns and child rights clubs
- Involve peer educators (girls & boys) as change agents
- Engage the communities to abandon the entrenched retrogressive cultural practices by holding community dialogues
- Provide (alternative) livelihoods for child beneficiaries (≥ 17 years), families of affected and highly vulnerable children, as well as for the ex-circumcisers
- Build capacities and advocate for government and civil society to prevent and respond to the child rights violations

In the project "A sound future for Kuria girls", Terre des Hommes Netherlands protects girls from the Kuria community in the Tanzanian district of Tarime against the harmful cultural tradition of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). During the 'cutting' period, the girls find temporary shelter in a safe place so that they can avoid the ceremony and undergo an alternative rite of passage to adulthood. In addition, the project focuses on the Kuria community, to transform the retrogressive cultural tradition of FGM followed by child marriage into new traditions that are culturally acceptable and that safeguard the Kuria girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights. At the same time, the project lobbies for law enforcement and, together with other NGOs, advocates for the change of the legal age of marriage to 18 years.

