

## **SAFE Samburu Annual Impact Report**

### **September 2020**

#### **Introduction**

SAFE Samburu have continued to create a significant impact over the past year, in spite of the challenging operating context. Dialogue has deepened and community members are discussing FGC and sexual health more openly. The men are becoming more engaged, showing an increasing desire to understand the experiences and perspectives of women. The women continue to gain confidence and are more vocal, both about the side effects of FGC and the behaviors which are putting the community at risk of HIV. The new mixed workshops are accelerating change by facilitating dialogue between different community groups.

Although the COVID-19 restrictions reduced the number of participants allowed per workshop, the project team reported that due to the smaller groups, there was an increase in participants opening up and contributing more of their experiences and opinions. This was particularly true of the youth, who the team were able to engage more deeply due to the long school closures.

This report measures the progress which SAFE Samburu has made against the project aims, comparing the 2016 Baseline Survey with data collected in 2020 and using qualitative data to support the information gathered.

#### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Data Collection**

In the past year, SAFE Samburu has created and implemented new M&E activities to better track progress in the target locations. This was in response to feedback given by the Egmont Trust on S.A.F.E.'s previous reports. The SAFE Samburu team designed a questionnaire which would both capture the change that happens within the specific activities, and quantify the progress made since the 2016 Baseline.

The data in this report has been extracted from workshop participants from all Westgate Communities; Ngutuk, Remot, Sasaab, Naisunyai, Lpus Leluai, Waso West, Kiltamany and Lempaute.

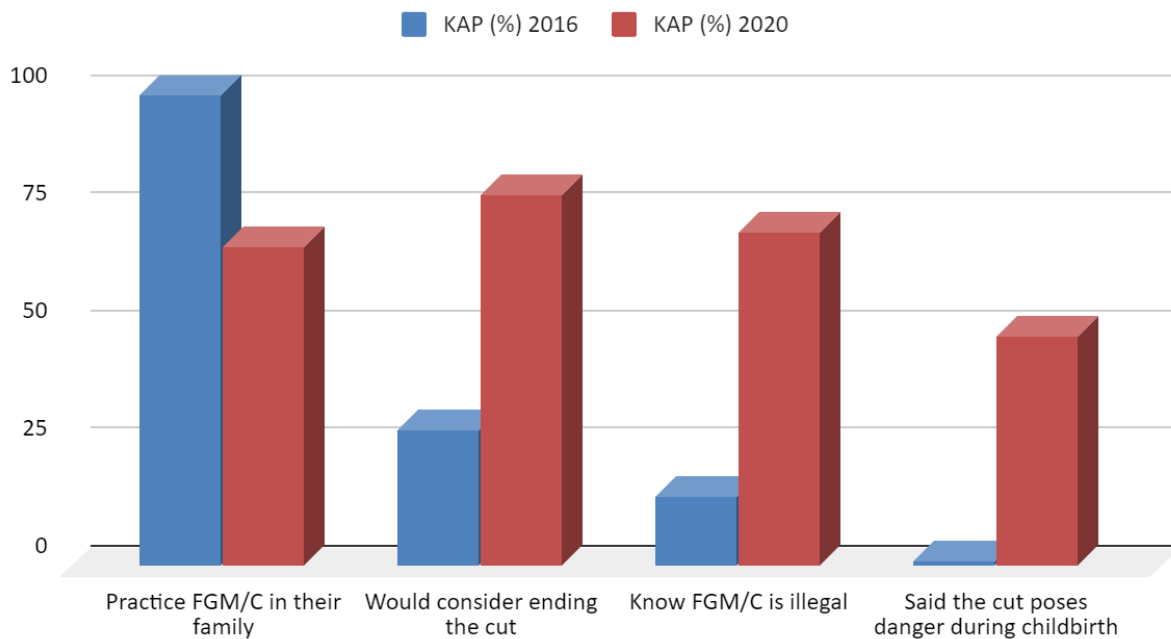
**FGC**

**Aim 1: Increase in families who are willing to abandon FGC**

**Comparison between the 2016 Baseline and the 2020 Survey**

	% 2016	% 2020	% Point Difference
Practice FGM/C in their family	100%	68%	32
Would consider ending the cut	29%	79%	50
Know FGM/C is illegal	15%	71%	56
Said the cut poses danger during childbirth	1%	49%	48

KAP (%) 2016 vs KAP (%) 2020



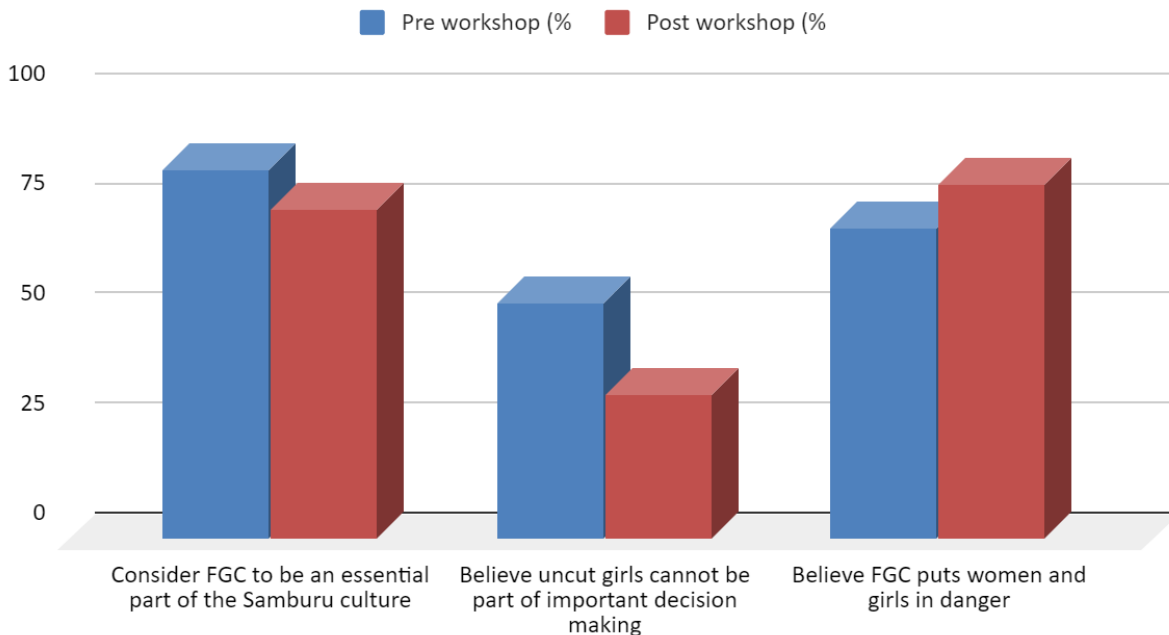
The data shows a significant swing in attitudinal change in the importance of FGC within the community, backing up the observations of the SAFE Samburu team. The team reported that at the beginning of the year, support for FGC abandonment lay with the women, and that the men were resistant to throw their weight behind the movement. However, over this year, the men have started to join the women, showing a more united front. The data found a reduction in the number of families who said they practiced FGC since 2016 - 68% compared to 100% in 2016 (although this is unlikely to be a genuine reduction in the cut as probably some of the respondents, now knowing that it is illegal, are reluctant to admit to continuing the practice). But very significantly, in 2016, only 29% of people would consider ending FGC, this has increased to 79% in 2020.

In addition, there is an increased prevalence of stories within the community of girls who despite not being cut, are being embraced by their families. SAFE Samburu have worked closely with one girl from Nysunsai who has given birth uncut, and is being supported and accepted by her family. The fact that this girl and her family are well known in the community and are not experiencing any discrimination is an encouraging indicator of attitudinal change.

### Pre and Post Activity Survey Results

	Pre workshop (%)	Post workshop (%)	% Point Difference
Consider FGC to be an essential part of the Samburu culture	84%	75%	9
Believe uncut girls cannot be part of important decision making	53.7%	32.7%	21
Believe FGC puts women and girls in danger	71%	80.9%	9.9

Pre workshop (% vs Post workshop (%



The pre and post activity surveys show that the workshops are facilitating the change that the team are seeing in the community, with participants experiencing a shift in attitudes and knowledge during the workshops.

**Aim 2: Increase influential groups supporting SAFE Samburu’s FGC campaign**

The 2016 data showed that the community believed the elders had the ultimate decision making power about girls’ transition into adulthood. Only 9% of respondents felt that the father could make the decision, and 76% of respondents said it was the elders. This has been backed up in workshops, where the different age and gender groups report that if total abandonment is to be achieved, it would have to be led by the elders. Although there has been significant progress being made in creating a whole community movement towards FGC abandonment, and importantly the creation of a Samburu specific Alternative Rite of Passage, the support of the community leaders continues to be essential.

In March this year, the Samburu team mobilised sixty of the most influential leaders in Samburu County for a joint leaders meeting to discuss FGC abandonment. This meeting did not go ahead because the emerging COVID-19 pandemic would have

potentially put this vulnerable group at risk. Therefore, the team have carried out smaller meetings with this group, filming their testimonies on FGC abandonment on video to be shared with others, facilitating exchanges between the leaders without them meeting in person.

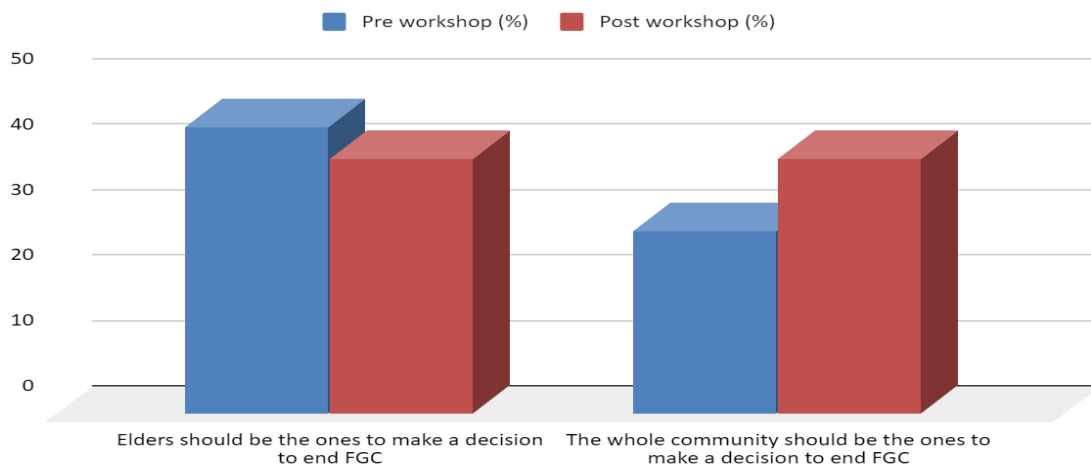
Lkuresian Lekenit, from the influential Nyiro Region gave the following testimony:

*‘ My name is Lekenit, I am a leader from Nyiro. After the meeting with SAFE Samburu, I am now informed about Corona, HIV and FGC. I have learnt about the effects of FGC, - most leaders do not know that women and girls go through such challenges. It is my opinion that no single region of Samburu would be able to declare abandonment alone. All six regions would need to meet and declare an alternative rite together. I insist that this meeting should happen.’*

### Aim 3: Creation of a Samburu Specific Alternative Rite of Passage

	Pre workshop (%)	Post workshop (%)	% Point Difference
Elders should be the ones to make a decision to end FGC	43.8%	39%	4.8
The whole community should be the ones to make a decision to end FGC	28%	39%	11

Pre workshop (%) vs Post workshop (%)



Although community members acknowledge that an alternative rite of passage will only be accepted if it is agreed, blessed and promoted by the leadership, there is evidence that individual community members are taking a leading role in the creation of it. The number of respondents who believe that the responsibility for ending FGC lies with the leadership has 32 percentage point reduction since 2016. This data is supported by the case study provided in the 6 month progress report submitted in August 2020 with Kimiti Legala, a man from a Ng’utuk Men’s workshop who made the bold step of suggesting an alternative rite of passage. He also requested that SAFE Samburu present his idea to the leadership.

The workshops are having a significant impact on the community members' views of their individual responsibility to bring about an end to FGC, with the team recording an 11 percentage point increase in participants believing that it is for the whole community to decide on the way forward after the workshops.

### HIV/AIDS

#### Aim 4: Increase in condom use/ VCT services

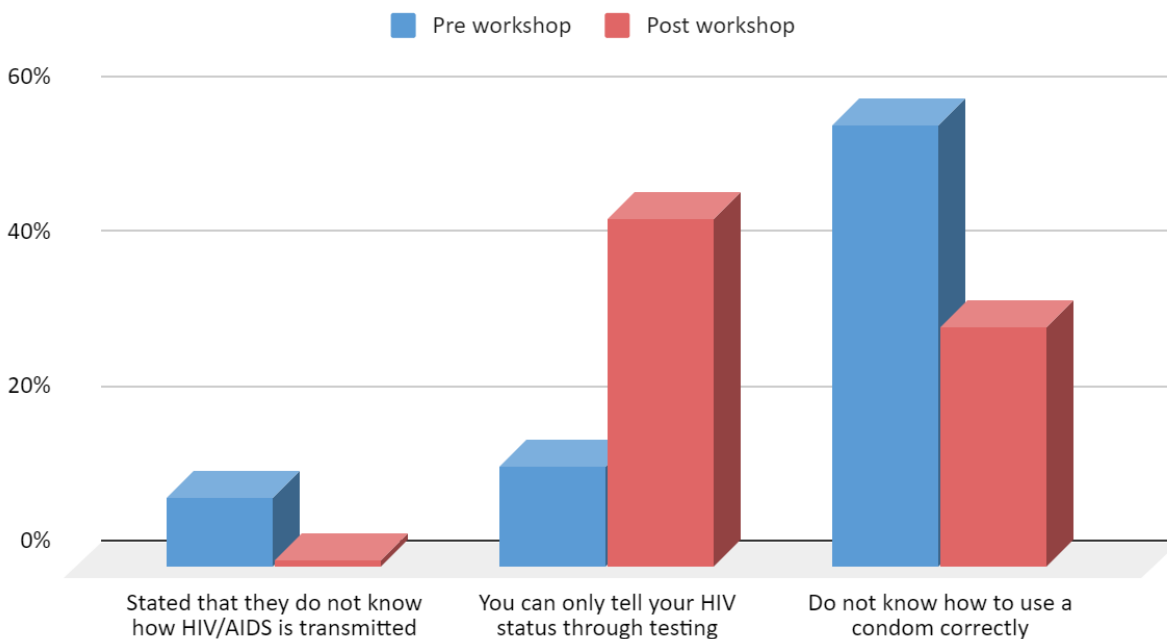
**Table showing Condom use in Westgate Conservancy Health centres and facilities**

Data source	Number of boxes of condoms used per month (1 box $\cong$ 144 condoms)	Number of people tested for HIV over the last 6 months	Comment
Ngutuk Ong’iron Dispensary	5	1579	The nurse from the facility stated that the patients get their ARV drugs from a different health facility due to worries about confidentiality - as the facility is in a central position.
Local shop in Kiltamany	8	-	Kiltamany health facility lacks condom dispensers - therefore the community in this zone access condoms through the local shop.
Remot Dispensary	3	106	The nurse reported that the patients were taking their ARVs in secret because of fear of stigmatisation.
Westgate Dispensary	1	82	The Condom dispenser is broken. The center is also understaffed and this is limiting the capacity of the facility to provide comprehensive VCT services.
Total	17	1767	

### Pre and Post Workshop Findings

	Pre workshop	Post workshop	% Point Difference
Stated that they do not know how HIV/AIDS is transmitted	9%	1%	8
You can only tell your HIV status through testing	13%	45%	32
Do not know how to use a condom correctly	57%	31%	26

### Pre workshop vs Post workshop



The health centers serving the Westgate Conservancy community have reported an uptake in HIV counselling and testing services. Anecdotally, they have reported that they receive a surge in people coming for testing in the wake of a SAFE Samburu activity. This is backed up by the results from the pre and post activity questionnaires, pre workshop only 13% of respondents knew that testing was the only way to know your status, this increased to 45% post workshop.

Although testing is improving, there are still challenges in adherence to ARVs as reported by the nurses from the dispensaries. They report having to do regular follow ups with the infected patients to ensure they adhere to the treatment programme.

However, the centres are understaffed and they cannot do this regularly. SAFE Samburu are working with the PLHWA who are willing to disclose their status to the team, to encourage adherence.

During the collection of the HIV testing data, a health worker, Naiseku, confided in the team that she has received death threats from some of the people she tested when she informed them that they were HIV positive. She said this was brought about by denial and fear of stigmatisation.

Throughout the period, the SAFE Samburu team found an increase in the use of condoms, especially amongst the youth. However, they have also found that there is considerable misuse of condoms, with community members using them more than once, and storing them alongside sharp objects or in direct sunlight. The pre and post workshop questionnaires showed that the workshops are effectively educating people about the correct usage of condoms - with a 26 percentage point decline in incorrect condom use.

**Aim 5: Increase in acceptance of those who are HIV positive**

	Pre workshop	Post workshop	% Point Difference
People who do not know what they can do to take care of PLWHA	18%	2%	16
Believe that a discordant couple can live together in harmony	52%	76%	24



### Pre workshop vs Post workshop



Care of PLWHA is better understood in the community post workshop. At the end of the workshops, there was a 16 percentage point reduction in those who did not know how to look after someone with HIV. Additionally, there is a 24 percentage point increase in people who believed that a discordant couple could live together in harmony. This is an indication that community members are becoming more willing to look after PLWHA in the home.

Additionally, the SAFE Samburu team have reported an increase in knowledge in the specific ways that you can look after people with HIV. The top 3 answers to the question *How would you look after your friend/relative if they became HIV positive*, were:

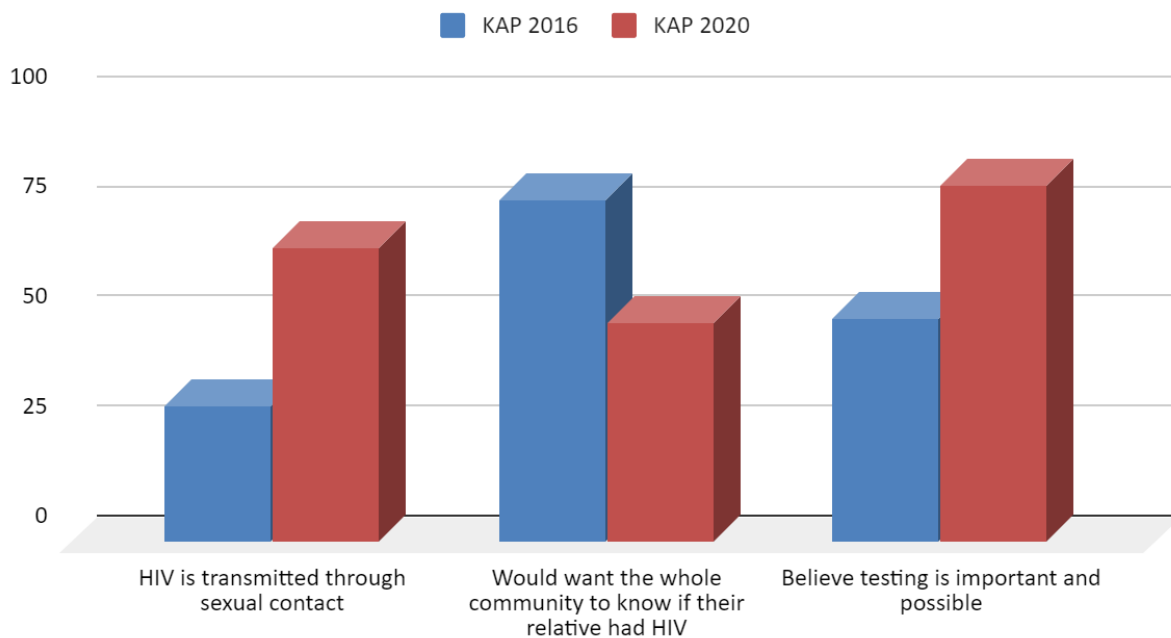
- Take care of them - 28%
- Give them a balanced diet - 27%
- Take them to the hospital to get medication - 19%

The 2016 baseline reported that the most common answer, which 18% of respondents gave to this question at the beginning of the project was that PLWHA should be fed traditional herbs.

**Aim 6: Improved general knowledge on HIV transmission, prevention and treatment**

	% 2016	% 2020	% Point Difference
HIV is transmitted through sexual contact	31%	67%	36
Would want the whole community to know if their relative had HIV	78%	50%	18
Believe testing is important and possible	51%	81%	30

KAP 2016 vs KAP 2020



The data gathered this year shows that community members have a good base understanding of the ways through which HIV/AIDS can be transmitted. 67% of the respondents mentioned sexual contact, while 12% said blood contact, and sharing sharp objects was listed by 10.3% of the participants. The level of knowledge increased further during the workshops; post workshop, the respondents listed the following ways of transmission is mainly through sexual intercourse (50%), blood contact (34%), and use of sharp objects (14.6%).

Although mother to child transmission was not mentioned by the workshop participants in the pre or post activity questionnaires, it is brought up by many of the women during

workshops. Additionally, the nurses at the clinics reported that many of the community members who have accessed their services were women during their pre-natal care. The nurse from the Remot dispensary reported that one pregnant woman came to her for testing and tested positive. She received care at the clinic and her baby was not born positive. However, the baby was later infected through breast feeding. This testimony shows that there is an awareness that a mother can transmit HIV to her child during birth, but not of the specific details. The fact that it was not mentioned during the pre and post activity questionnaires shows that it is not at the forefront of the community's mind. SAFE Samburu will put more emphasis on the different ways HIV can be transmitted from a mother to her child in the workshops going forward.

The workshops are dominated by discussions led by the participants about the different social and cultural practices which are putting the community at risk of HIV. These conversations are increasing the understanding of the risks that the community are under, for example, having multiple sexual partners. These conversations are leading to a change in behaviour in the community as is evidenced through the story of workshop participant Anjilia Lowaupere *'I previously kept multiple sexual partners and avoided my husband but after the SAFE Samburu workshop I attended, I cut all ties with my lovers and I am now faithful to my husband. I also went for HIV testing and have encouraged my husband and co-wife to attend a workshop as well so that they can be educated. I now get on much better with my husband and co-wife than before.'*

### **SAFE Samburu and the Community**

SAFE Samburu were keen to collect data stories which reflected the community's attitudes towards the team and their approach as well to measure the progress the project was making against the intended aims. The questionnaires registered great positive feedback with 71% of the participants happy to have engaged with SAFE Samburu about HIV/AIDS, FGC and as of March 2020, information on COVID-19. Positivity towards SAFE Samburu and the project increases the chances of information retention and behaviour change, as was demonstrated by the testimony of Kimiti Legala, a 75 year old retired Safari Guide:

*'I am appreciative of SAFE Samburu's approach and friendly engagement with the community, it opened my mind to the possibilities of an ARP, now the government, the community and the community leaders need to have more dialogue and agree on the way forward.'*

SAFE Samburu were able to quickly and effectively adapt to the COVID-19 containment measures. Workshops were reduced to 10 people, were held outside with handwashing facilities available, and face masks had to be worn. The team focused on the youth in order to protect the elderly and more vulnerable people in the community. Permission to continue activities was granted by the County Government because SAFE Samburu combined COVID-19 education into their activities - contributing to the Country response to COVID-19. The team turned their performance tours into a series of short films (see below), which will be used to engage and educate the community through screenings, social media engagement and partners.

*FGC Piece*

<https://vimeo.com/458149089>

*password safe2020*

*HIV Piece*

<https://vimeo.com/458137039>

*password safe2020*

*COVID-19 Piece*

<https://vimeo.com/460049202>

*Password safe2020*

### **Evaluation report challenges**

The comprehensive monitoring and evaluation exercise that was scheduled for July 2020 was not conducted because of the COVID-19 restrictions in place within Samburu County. Instead, M&E has been incorporated into the schedule of activities carried out by the SAFE Samburu teams.

The team reported that conducting the pre and post activity questionnaires was challenging as community members were keen to return to their homes after a workshop and did not want to stay around to answer questions. Therefore, the team have planned a series of focus group discussions at periodic points in the year to better gather data.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

### **FGC**

The most significant progress has been the willingness to abandon FGC, this has been brought about by the increase in knowledge and experience sharing within the community. Over the next year, SAFE Samburu will continue to engage all community groups in workshops, through one on one interventions and using the new short films created by the teams in July, to take advantage of the momentum created and drive forward the conversation about FGC abandonment.

Significant progress has also been made in securing the support of influential groups within Samburu, and in the creation of a Samburu alternative rite of passage. This is an area which the team will be focusing on over the next few years, both through encouraging community members to suggest alternative rites of passage and challenging the different leadership groups to lead the community in FGC abandonment.

Through workshops, youth forums and outreach work SAFE Samburu will continue to engage with the youth as the indefinite school closure continues as a result of the pandemic. The youth will be encouraged to fight for their rights as well as disseminate the information from the lessons learned at the various activities.

### **HIV/AIDS**

The SAFE Samburu team are encouraged by the increase in the uptake of VCT services in the health centres, as well as the increase in the demand and use of condoms. This shows that the community members are implementing what they learn in the workshops into their everyday lives. The team is now working on increasing the accessibility of condoms by providing dispensers within the community. They will continue to use the workshops to promote VCT services and educate about the correct usage of condoms.

The knowledge on the care for PLWHA has greatly improved and this will help those who have tested positive have a better chance of living healthier lives with the support of their friends and family. SAFE Samburu will continue to work to remove stigma in order to facilitate more testing within the community. This work will also support the nurses as they continue to try and improve adherence to ARVs.



The two areas which have been identified as needing the most education are the role of ARVs in treating HIV and the different ways that HIV can be transmitted between a mother and her child. SAFE Samburu will focus heavily on these two areas during their workshops.

Activities after the enforcement of COVID-19 containment measures have been altered to follow regulations set by the Ministry of Health. By turning their performances into films that will be screened in the community, they are able to continue to create awareness and promote dialogue on both FGC and HIV/AIDS.