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**THE EMPOWERMENT OF THE LOITA MAASAI WOMAN  
THROUGH FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION**

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A paper submitted for the fulfillment for the requirement of a BA in

Liberal Arts with a focus on Leadership and Management

**November, 2009**

**STUDENT DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, declare that this research paper is my own original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the bachelors degree in liberal arts with a focus in leadership and management. It has never been submitted to any other institution for academic credit. All sources have been cited fully and acknowledged.

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### **ACRONYMS**

FGM.	FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION
LDF	LOITA DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION
ILDF	ILKERIN LOITA DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION



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## **ABSTRACT**

This study assesses the potential of cultural heritage and the development of formal education among the Maasai women based in Loita. The process of providing formal education has had albeit little impacts to women in local communities among the pastoralists especially the Maasai. Formal education intervention ought to be considered against the background of the entire view of indigenous knowledge and cultural circumstances. The clarion call by the international community at large for women empowerment is by and large a Western feminism affair and only attracts better-off families. The need for engendering inclusion of cultural education and its preservation causes a “momentum for change” particularly among the disadvantaged communities due to their historical lifestyles.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Loita Masaai community predominantly occupies the southern parts of Narok District. They live on 200m high plateaus. To the east is the Nguruman escapement while to the northern are the Loita hills .To the west lies the Mara Siana plains. Southwards, the Loita Maasai extend across the border to Loliondo District in north Tanzania. According to the national census of 1999, the Loita Maasai were a total of 25,000 persons within an area of 1.718 square kilometers. They are a pure pastoralist community who live a more traditional lifestyle than other masai groups in Kenya. Livestock keeping especially cattle, sheep and goats is their main economic base although crop cultivation is gaining some popularity, making the Loita Maasai an agro-pastoralist community.

The Loita Masaai lives in villages each consisting of several homesteads scattered evenly. These homesteads lack facilities such as clinics and schools. The homesteads form locations which include; Olmesutie, Olorte, Ilkerin, Moriyo, Olingarua, and Entasekera.

The Loita Maasai have tenaciously clunged to their culture .They are usually against domination and change, but this does not imply that they are against modernization. The community has an independent way of thinking, faithful to their kinsmen and happy to retain their traditional way of life and traits. Issues affecting women in access to reproductive health and education have been a concern only to a few educated Maasai due to the fact that cultural practices have developed deep roots such that 90% of women in most cases are subjected to oppression and other forms of abuses.

Most of these practices are observed as rites of passage, taboos, customary practices, ceremonies and rituals. Gender disparities with other Kenyan women are large and adversely affects the Loita women to realize and access their own rights and freedom of choice. Historically, European colonization claimed indigenous knowledge was backward and primitive. They imposed their knowledge systems to friendly communities and “filling of the country with European moral philosophy, social values, cultural traditions and economic fundamentals”. The entry of Europeans therefore denied the indigenous Maasai women the opportunity for social knowledge by further entrenching the Traditional beliefs. Education is a very important tool meant to enlighten open our eyes and give us and open up better opportunities of looking at the world around us differently with wider horizon. Ecological education, in Leopold’s (1966) words, is directed towards changing our “intellectual emphases, royalties, affection and convictions” (p.246). It requires breaking free of old pedagogical assumption. Women need to embrace education without discrimination.

To this extent the woman has suffered a lot of evils in the society and to mention but some of them is that she has lacked the opportunity to go to school. If she ever goes to school the child is denied the opportunity to finish or go through secondary education. On the other hand, she has been abused physically, sexually and this has denied her woman dignity and the right and opportunity to speak out of the evils.

Formal education intervention ought to be considered against the background of the entire view of indigenous knowledge and cultural circumstances. The need for engendering inclusion of cultural education and its preservation causes a “momentum for

change” particularly among the disadvantaged communities due to their historical lifestyles.

This study assesses the potential of cultural heritage and the development of formal education among the Maasai women based in Loita. The clarion call by the international community at large for women empowerment is by and large a Western feminism affair and only attracts better-off families.

As Erick Erickson’s asserted in his theory of development that the woman fails to comprehend and integrate the developmental stages hence, suffering her right to develop fully into a potential person in the society. Due to these women suffer emotionally and this has been evident psychologically as they break through in future due to burying the evils and pains in their subconscious. Women are conscious of this environment deterioration, yet they see themselves alone and powerless in their situation of being oppressed.

The Maasai community is a patriarchal society and very hierarchical in the manner in which leadership power is exercised. Although Wichterich and Christine(2009) argues that “women have been increasingly integrated in recent years into the markets as self-responsible and independent actors, while gender has been integrated into political programs”(p.10) gender roles and gender specific knowledge among Maasai women like in the past heavily depends entirely on informal education.

The situation in Loita case of the Maasai can be best described in the statement of Isaac Nguema, ‘the mental barriers’ (1989); “African societies were and are still largely of the oral tradition. Illiteracy is widespread and creating awareness of human rights amongst the people is extremely difficult. In the absence of writing, rules cannot be fixed;

the spoken word is grossly inadequate and indeed not valid. African leaders can see the notion as being totally alien to the African culture. The western concept of human rights is one based on the vision of man created in the image of the Christian God. There was no Christian God in the pre-colonial African societies.” Nguema concluded by saying that “Christianity can thus be seen as having brought light to Africa”. Empowerment is a process that challenges assumptions about the ways things are and can be. It challenges our basic assumptions about power, helping, achieving and succeeding. The core concept of empowerment is the idea of power.

In this case the Maasai community does associate power with the male gender while the women are subordinated in their state of being. The women in this community are subject to oppression whereby they are allocated different kinds of roles which vary according to the status and situation they find themselves in. These roles include; a working in the kitchen, tea maker and often earn less, cooking and taking care of household, giving birth, constructing houses and taking care of the calves. Krishna 2004; and Rupp 2007 assert that “Under the influence of local regional and global forces and in the socio-cultural allocation of gender –specific tasks and capacities, traditional responsibilities and social ascription of masculinity and femininity are entangled in ever-new ways and transform power relations.”(p.34)

Women empowerment is one of the central issues that has to be marked in this community, in the process of development of the Loita community in general. The empowerment will have a multifaceted effects in the process of gaining greater share and control over resources, material, human and intellectuals like knowledge, information, ideas, and financial resources and finally control over decisions making in the

'manyattas', community and society at large. Maasai family systems like many other indigenous communities in East and South Asia (India & Korea) have for a long time associated preference for "sons and generated strong disincentives for raising daughters while valuing adult women's contributions to the household." (Gupta, Zhenghua *et al*; 2003). However, the actual division of labor often differs from what is considered as "ideal" or cultural norm. What women actually do depends on labor availability, nature of the task, the intensity to which people adhere to roles, settlement patterns, possibility of cooperation, development phase of the family, and other economic considerations. Women are called upon to perform men's roles much more frequently than the reverse (Tuboly & Penny, 1997). Today, strategic gender needs challenge the hitherto existing gender roles. These are the needs of men and women which change existing roles and are affecting the whole of power relations (ibid).

Lungula - links library, Formal education is the process of training and developing people in knowledge, skills, mind and character in structural uncertified program. (Lungula, 1999). The only saving way to this group of people (women) who are undergoing oppressions is through education, embracing both either formal and informal. Gender-sensitive development means a jointly designed process in which men and women have an equal share of all the responsibility for the social, economic, political, cultural and spiritual development of their society, a process to which they can each contribute their own skills, their own ideas, aspirations and needs (ibid). Accordingly, Gender sensitive education would adopt a process in which girls and boys would inculcate the equality of sharing responsibilities without necessarily the gender division of labor but contribute their own skills, ideas, aspirations and needs. Exploitation or

manipulation of women is a growing problem of concern in the society today. In many cultures including the Maasai women are victims of injustices; education being one of the issue that is raising alarm in the community.

## **1.2 Objectives**

### **1.2.1 Overall objective**

The overall objective of this study is to investigate and establish the twin role of formal and informal education in women empowerment within Loita Division in Narok district.

### **1.2.2 Specific objectives**

1. To understand what is formal and informal education and how it empower Maasai women.
2. To a certain education role of empowerment in marriage
3. To find out whether the concretization of men will empower women

## **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What is to done to enhance empowerment of the maasai women?
2. How does education act as a tool to empower Maasai women?
3. Who are the key players in the empowerment of Maasai women?

## **1.4 Limitation of the study**

The limitation of the study was the small population studied which therefore limited the breadth and depth of the information gathered and analysis.

### **1.5 Scope of the study**

The research covered women in the Loita community only of Narok district. However the results could be a microcosm of the larger Maasai society regarding the status of women education.

### **1.6 Definition of the terms**

**Empowerment:** the capacity of individual or groups to make choices and transform those choices in to desired actions and outcomes.

**Manyatta:** a small round hat long and at shoulders height from closely woven frame.

Maendeleo: literally means development.

**Maendeleo ya Wanawake:** is a womens non governmental organization that deals with issues to do with women right and gender equality in Kenya.

**Maasai:** Maasai are indigenous African ethnic group of semi-Nomadic people located in Kenya and Tanzania.

**Culture:** is the way of life imprinted in the human mind. It is expressed in rituals, artifacts knowledge and behaviors in the community.

**Informal education:** learning process that takes place almost unconsciously. it includes all that a person learns from the family friends, experience and environment in order words informal education refers to learning experience from the daily life as the person interacts with other people and the environment.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

According to Wolfensohn (2000), Poverty refers to the world has been broadened to include lack of empowerment, security, and opportunity as well as income growth and thus the commitment to reduce gender inequality in our day-to day work, and help all men and women build lives of dignity, free from want(We know that when girls are prevented from attending school and are denied the gifts of literacy and numeracy, as women they will have fewer opportunities for employment, will be less likely to participate in important decisions, and will be less able to prevent unwanted pregnancies and ensure the survival of the children they bear”(ibid).

At independence the government of Kenya recognized education as a basic human right and a powerful tool for human resource and national development. ‘In the 1960’s in Kenya, as in most developing countries, the emphasis was on formal education, or more specifically on quantitative expansion of the schools,i.e. on the broadening of school opportunities, improved facilities. Education was seen as a major remedy to major social ills-unemployment, social inequity etc. The 1970s’ ushered in an era of disenchantment with the capacity of formal education to yield to the anticipated results.” (Akivaga, S.K.1989). It is possible to argue that in the early 1960s’ planners, educationalists and politicians were perhaps rightly preoccupied with the need to train Africans to fill the high and middle-level positions vacated by the colonial officials, but the realities of the

1970s' and '80s' indicated that there was need to reconsider policy planning priorities in the educational sector(ibid). Kenya like all developing countries in the world has had an educational system with numerous problems. Over thirty years, the education sector has been the subject of more than ten reviews by special commission and working parties established by the government (ibid). Gauri & Vawda (2003) argue that "In many of the poorest countries there are significant deficits in affordable access and staggering differences in attainment between children from poorer and rich households." Moreover, "Government spending is often insufficient, and inefficiently and inequitably allocated among educational inputs and across levels of education. And even where educational systems are adequately funded, the systems can be indifferent to families concerns because they are dominated by an unresponsive state or by elites. In these settings, high rates of teacher absenteeism and low enrolment rates for girls are symptomatic of systems in which incentives are inadequately aligned"(ibid). A number of initiatives have been practised in many third world countries as a probable solution to these encumbrances, Carnoy,M.1998; Angrist, J.D et al,2001; Gill, B,et al,2001.These cover various forms of vouchers for basic education among them:

- (i) giving parents a voucher that can be redeemed at qualifying private schools,
- (ii) reimbursing private schools based on their enrolment rates,
- (iii) School of choice in which a significant part of school financing is channelled through a direct payment proportional to the number of students enrolled in or in attendance at a given school.

Most of these have had a strong emphasis on girl child education but it is not evident how this practice can translate for the Maasai of Loita.

According to Jacqueline (1999) Education in Kenya has been seen as fundamental strategy for human capital development and crucial factor for enhancing the quality of life. Changes and challenges have marked the development of education and so have been the impact this sector has had on national development. On the other hand the government according to the ministry of science and technology (2005) recognizes the strategic importance of improving the over all education of the Kenyans with the context of poverty and poverty reduction and economic growth. “Integrating gender issues into education projects and making full use of participatory processes empower women while improving the quality of education”(World Bank,2000).In El Salvador Basic Education Modernization Project-EDUCO, which supports school committees- formed by the communities themselves –made up of parents, teachers, public employees, and funding agency representative in which-, majority of the committee members are women whose views are having a direct and highly public influence on local schools, have incorporated gender issues into the project, increasing access to education and raising its quality for girls as well as boys. Overall academic performance has improved, and the program has empowered mothers, who report feeling proud of their visible role in providing quality learning for their children. World Bank.The real problem of the right for women to have education has been through the process of degrading and marginalizing indigenous African knowledge systems. This process took place in the colonial era when the Maasai through resistance to colonialism failed to meet the critical requirements of the

transforming society. Scholars in education have ignored informal education and ideas on how empowerment of women can tackle locally and finally globally.

According to Newhouse & Beegle (2005), in examining issues relating to educational outcomes in Indonesia found “students attending Muslim private schools, including Madrassahs, fare no worse on average than students attending secular private schools, and the results provided evidence that higher quality inputs at public junior secondary schools promote higher test scores.” Women empowerment is a complex, multi-faceted concept. It is a process in which the education system has been regarded by many development agencies as a tool and destiny that can be reached in a transforming the livelihoods and rights of the poor communities. The United Nations has acknowledged “gender-based” violence which occurs in many societies and forms throughout the life cycle and is rooted in gender inequality often tolerated and condoned by laws, institutions, and community norms. This is not only a profound violation of human rights, but also a costly impediment to a country’s national development.(Bott, Morrison, & Ellsberg;2005).

Much depends on how the term “empowerment” is interpreted. In some parts of the world, empowerment has come to be synonymous with projects that give women small loans and enlist them in small scale business activities such as producing handicrafts for sale. Claims to be “empowering women” through engaging them in the market conflate power with money, and imbue the acquisition of money with almost magical powers- as if once women had their own money , they could wave a wand and wish away overnight the social norms, institutions and relationships that are part of their

lies. In the midst of all this, women's own strategies to negotiate the constraints of their everyday lives are rendered virtually invisible: poor women are, almost by definition, lacking in power and in need of development's interventions. These interventions may not only bypass the sources of women's power, they may make safer borrowers, but whether small loans enhance their "agency" and "choices" depends as much on what comes along with the package. And the ambivalent effects of training courses and reported the following exchange.

Paxson & Schady (2005), in their study of cognitive development among young children in Ecuador showed that household socio-economic characteristics, in particular wealth and parental education, are protective-children from wealthier households with more educated parents have higher scores. Additionally, they also showed that child health and measures of parenting quality such as "responsive" and "harsh" toward children, and whether children are read to, account for a portion (ibid). "In African society, the social and cultural context of the traditional African environment merged socialization, work and growth into adulthood. Because of the patterns and values inherent in the indigenous social structures, the sense of 'failure' resulting from failure in the school system was uncommon. In the modern economy, however, "academic failure" results in failure to enter the labor market, thus leading to a generalized sense of overall failure in life" (S.K. Akivaga, 1989). In Mali, the Ministry of Sports, Art and Culture in conjunction with UNESCO and the UNDP run a rural program of rural libraries with the objective of disseminating of information and orally transmitted traditional lore. The overall purpose was to end the inevitable isolation and lack of information (Dumezy par Michele; 1989). If this ancestral lore is "preserved" only in written form it may well die

out, since 80% of Malians are illiterate. Rahneba Madjid(1982), “ But so-called illiterates have always been the living force of the culture, and in any case they too are keen to learn everything they can....learning does not necessarily mean reading. So oral communication skills have to be seen as a prime objective of any education and development measures”. It can thus be argued as commented by *development dialogue* that “The peasant women have had their own understanding of biodiversity and of the seed as their own means of production for centuries. They see their work self-consciously as value creating activity and their knowledge as productive capacity, with the help of which they have not only maintained their genetic stock, but have productively further developed it. Furthermore, they have accumulated detailed knowledge of the nutritional value and healing powers of local species. Traditional knowledge in these reproduction contexts is a constitutive element of survival spaces and a central livelihood resource(Kuppe 2002). The women peasants therefore understand themselves as investors: they give value to the plants and develop their productivity, which in its turn ensures that the women enjoy esteem in the community”(development dialogue, January 2009).

The right to be an African University, which implies Africanisation, is essentially part of continually creating and redefining educational standards within appropriate context of relevance to Africa. In other words, the focus on relevance and usefulness is not antithetical to high standards. Rather, the imperative for inscribing indigenous African studies into the curriculum and underpinning education with African philosophy is, in the first instance, a question of rights, and a matter of natural and historical justice(Teboho J. Lebakeng,2008).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter highlights the research design, research description, data collection, justification addressing any ethical issue in my research and description.

##### **3.1.1 Research Design**

The research design used in this study was a case study. Study method was used best suits Loita is the case under study. According to Welman and Kruger (2001) research design is “The plan to which we obtain research participant and collect information from them” (p.46). Research design can be qualitative or quantitative. Wolcott (1990) wrote that, Qualitative research “emphasises on the importance of looking at variables in the natural settings in which they are found.” (p.2). the focus of Qualitative research is quality and it produces comprehensive information. In addition ploeg (1999) concurs that qualitative research can produce a rich and deep description of the phenomenon being studied. It is for this reasons that researcher opted for the qualitative phenomenological study.

##### **3.1.2 Target population**

The target population of the study is the Loita Maasai women. Population is the study object in which the collection of data and analysis are made and the researcher uses it to make the conclusion of the study. (Welman and Kruger, 2001) Population can be

individual human product or events. Population can also be defined as a larger group from which the sample is elected (Kombo and Tomp, 2006). The study was carried out in Loita division in Narok district.

### **3.1.3 Sample and sampling procedure**

The sample size of the study was fifty participants, and ten women groups. The sample size was large enough. According to Nsubuga (2000) define a sample as a “determined population where the hypothesis will be tested.” (p.27). This definition is also similar to that of Ploeg (1999) who states that a sample is a selected portion of the population for study. Ploeg categorizes sampling into two; non-probability and probability sampling. He asserted that qualitative research is generally based on non-probability sampling and purposive sampling. Therefore this research being qualitative uses purposive or judgement and convenient sampling, because in this type of sampling decision are made for the purpose of obtaining the richest source of information possible in order to answer the research questions. Kombo and Tomp (2006) added that, purposive sampling enable the researchers to get rich information for in depth analysis of data.

### **3.1.4 Description of research instrument**

Research instrument is a mechanism that the researcher needed to develop for the study, whereby data is the information that is required for the research (Nsubuga, 2000). Research instrument used for the study included: interviews guide and observation. This study use semi-structured interviews guide. This instrument was appropriate and

observation because there are the most common methods of data collection in qualitative study for the purpose of getting deeper description of the phenomenon (Ploeg, 1999).

### **3.1.5 Semi-structured interview**

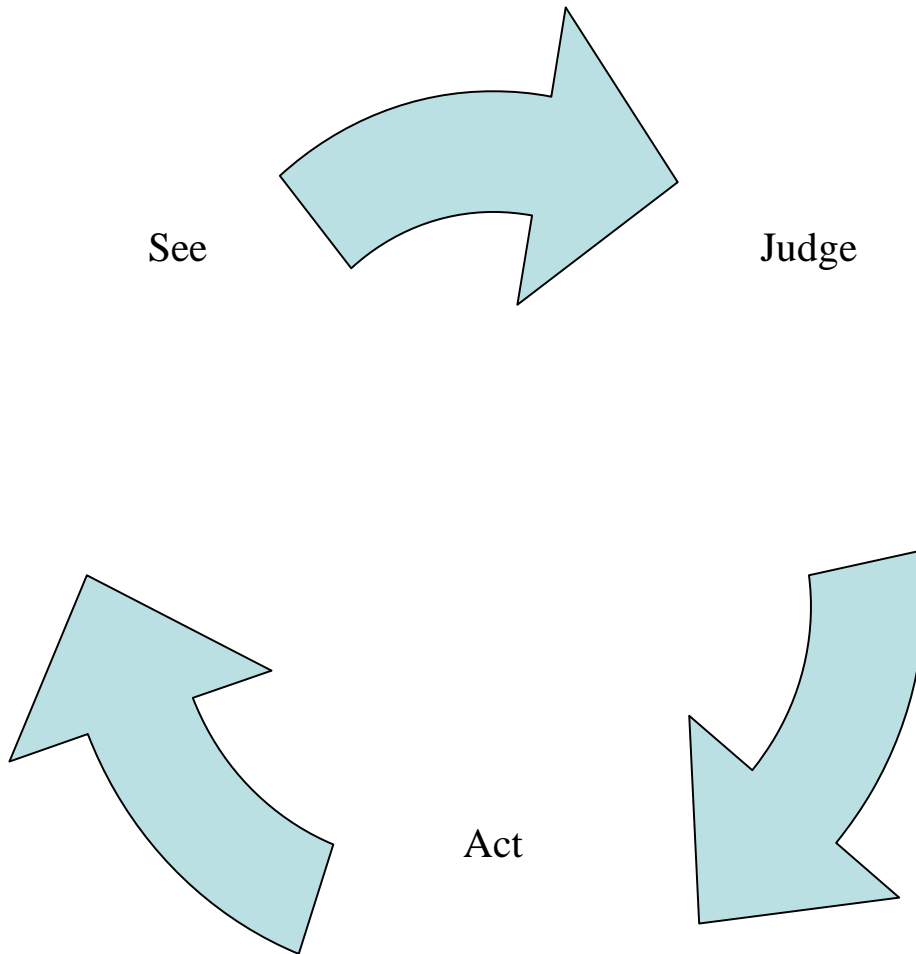
The researcher made use of semi structured interview guide. This instrument was appropriate for the focus group discussion because the researcher was in a position to manipulate the question to suit the situation on the subject. The tool facilitated the researcher to observe non verbal language while collecting data in the field. The tool was very helpful especially while dealing with illiterate Loita women.the researcher used the tool to interview ten women groups, female.

According to O' Leary (2004), interviewing is one of the methods of data collection whereby the researcher gathers information from respondents. He wrote that interviews can be structured or unstructured. For the purpose of this research, a semi structured interview is used to collect the data. This is because a semi- structured interview is flexible. It starts with a prepared question and probes the respondents to a more conversation style in order to get deeper information. (O Leary 2004).the women will be interviewed in there meeting stations.

### **3.1.6 Data collection methods**

The method used to carry out the research was drawn from the social ministry methodology of "See Judge and Act." See judge and act in the pastoral cycle is a method where a researcher is inserted into the community with an aim of carrying out the research. This is a very important method in research because the researcher is able to

participatory learn the culture of the community. Anthropologically, the research live with the people. This creates a good environment for data collection. He/she learn the dislikes and likes of the community. The target group willingly respond to the research on the information he/she looking for.



### **3.1.7 Justification choice of research**

This research uses the small groups of Maasai women such as beads work group, milk selling groups, maendeleo ya Wanawake group, cultural women group, merry go round group and church group. This is an added advantage for small groups because they know each other. Therefore they respond freely and truthfully. The target population meet normally in groups hence the researcher fix him/herself in their meeting schedule. The other advantage is that these small women groups use the common language understood by all.

### **3.1.8 Research Ethical issues**

In the research it is good to make clear introduction so as to create Confidentiality to the respondents. It's important to acknowledge the respondents information. Kennedy (1993) articulates that, "on occasion it requires the good sense and moral energy to say no to things." This means that, a researcher should not take advantage of the respondents.

### **3.1.9 Sources of bias**

Assumption is a vague idea people have in mind either from rumours of which it is not verified. Hypothesis is put down with some assumptions on the out come of the study and cultural mind set gives us different ways of looking at things.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **3.2.0 Introduction**

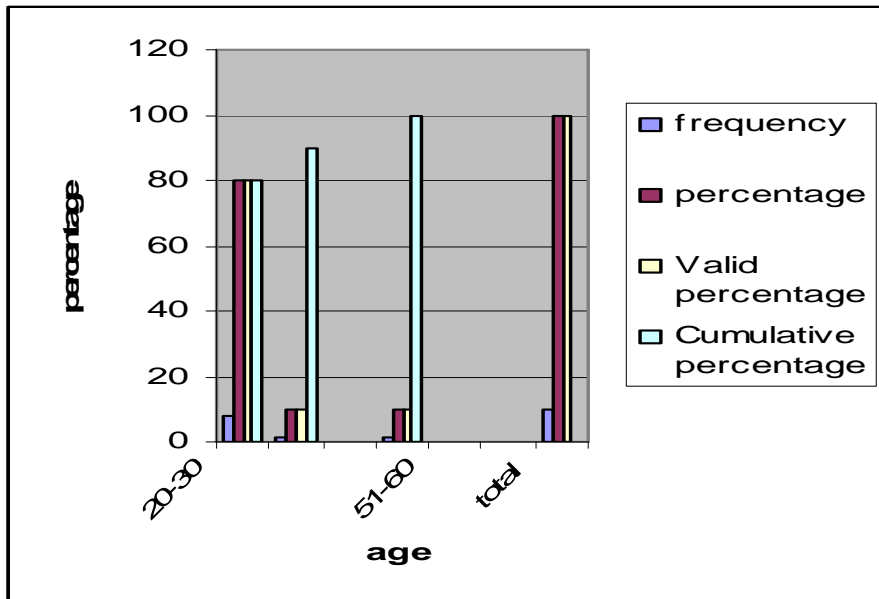
Data was collected using interview guide, questions, observation and the social ministry approach of see, judge and act. The analysis used tables, bar graph, and pie charts which explain the study. This study used the soft programs excel

#### **Background information**

This section comprises of the background information of the women in Loita in relation to the empowerment of women through formal and informal education. The objective of this research is to investigate how women can be empowered through formal and informal education. The background of participants is presented and analyzed using qualitative approach.

#### **Women attitude towards formal education**

Majority of women in Loita division strongly agreed on formal education with 80% of them sighting that they will get the white collar jobs economic benefits for instance some are involved in income generating activities, ability to control resources for example land use, animals, and money and this attributed to the fact that they are aware of their rights.



The frequency table reflects the respondents show the effect of the age to the support of formal education, the young see the need of formal education while the old do not; from the researcher observation the young people strongly agree that formal education is very important 80% of the populations are youth and they say that they have seen the importance of formal education.

Issues affecting women in access to reproductive health and education have been a concern only to a few educated Maasai due to the fact that cultural practices have developed deep roots such that 90% of women in most cases are subjected to oppression and other forms of abuses. Most of these practices are observed as rites of passage, taboos, customary practices, ceremonies and rituals. These restrain women to realize and access their own rights and freedom of choice.

### **Reproductive Health**

The respondents stated nearly all women in Loita Maasai women are still struggling with cultural practices that do not recognize the rights of women to control

aspects of their health, in particular their own fertility. For sure empowerment and access to health care enhance women sexual and reproductive health. Apart from a few educated women less than 6% are aware of their reproductive health, majority of the rural women are ignorant about aspects of reproductive health such as safe sex, sexual freedom, family planning methods and right to access health care services.

A high percentage of Loita Maasai women are not aware and therefore lack access to reproductive health care system. Young girls are subjected to immoral customary practices, which are based on ideas of inferiority or stereotype role of the men. According to the Maasai community, warriors have the right to enjoy young girls sexually throughout their warrior hood before they are circumcised and married off to spouses of their fathers' choice. One respondent of nine years shared that she was forced to marry a man of fifty years and to a man who is the age of her grandfather and worse still to a man she will be seen first on the day she will be married off.

The respondents from the women group stated that pregnant women lack recommended pre-and post-natal health care due to ignorance and customary practices that de-link them from accessing the services more appropriately. All these are accelerated by lack of knowledge

### **Pregnancies**

About 100% raised their concern in relation to early pregnancies for the girl-child and unplanned pregnancies among rural Maasai women are widespread. Such situations have raised concern among parents whose daughters drop out of school, eventually

putting their future into oblivion. The effects on women are numerous and devastating. So far cases of abortion and prostitution are minimal but many women do not survive the exposure to STI/HIV/AIDS infection. The consequence is the vicious cycle of poverty, large unplanned families and high child mortality.

The risks of early pregnancies include excessive bleeding, Psychological trauma, and injury to the genital organs, difficulties in education and a gloomy future for the girl-child. The local dispensaries in every sub-center as well as the Entasikira Mission Hospital have not addressed this issue by putting up initiatives to educate and create awareness among the Loita Maasai women to reduce the scourge. The situation is worsening due to the fact that poverty is jeopardizing many families and parents prefer educating boys to girls due to cultural factors.

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### **Female Genital Mutilation**

The practice of F.G.M has been a subject of debate for several women groups. While the literate members of the society have been trying to discourage the practice because of alleged it is harmfulness and a violation of human rights, traditionalists on the other hand argue that FGM retains community identity and symbolically endorses the growth of young girls into woman hood. Therefore condemnation of FGM among the Maasai would provoke the community.

FGM is still widespread among the Loita Maasai community and the practice is performed at between ages 10-15 years of age, posing a danger to the girl-child. The loita practice excision, which involves removal of the entire clitoris as well as the labia minora

and the cutting back of the labia majora which is more severe and drastic to the life of the initiates.

The respondents who work with the organizations that discourage FGM argue that FGM has developed deep roots among the Loita Maasai, jealously guarded by strong cultural beliefs and traditions which don't realize the implications as well as recognizing the status of women in society. FGM remains to be a traumatizing experience endangering the lives of many young girls particularly among the marginalized communities. It has to be addressed urgently.

### **Early Forced Marriages**

The respondents argued that the practice of FGM is to prepare girls for marriage. In most cases after circumcision, women are married off after parents have arranged for the spouse without the knowledge of the girl child. Such marriages are valued for many reasons including; bride price, parental respect from community, family bonding, friendship between male parents, avoidance of early pregnancies and above all the notion that women are meant for marriage and procreation.

Another point raised by the respondents is that, early forced marriage has many effects to the girl child. These include; inadequate childcare, illiteracy, malnutrition, high child mortality and vicious circle of poverty. Forced marriage also breeds two main dimensions of violence there are domestic and sexual.

### **Domestic violence**

About 80% of the women argued that when the parents of the child use physical force on her causing bodily harm, she will have severely suffered injuries or maims at the

home under the pretext of mating punishment. Violence can also spill over from parents and affect the girl child's emotional development and learning capabilities.

### **Sexual violence**

All the women groups agreed that there is the issue of sexual violence, this is done by the morans. This is done by the use of some traditional beliefs that the morans are the community guards and so they should be treated well for the "good" done. The Maasai women have no choice for sex regarding when and how to do it. Men can have sex with their wives at any time; they can also force them to have sex even when they are expectant or breastfeeding. As a result the married women may end up with a very large family which she may not be able to care of and increases the rate of poverty. The society also dictates that a woman should have sex with all the men who are the age mates of the husband and threaten them that if one refuses her children will die. This has raised the rate of HIV/AIDS. The women gave a saying that "do not ask a woman if she is married but simply look at the marks in the body" this is a sign that women are seriously beaten.

### **Women attitude towards formal informal education**

From the research 80% of the women attitude towards formal and informal education was positive. They went ahead and expressed that education is very important and all girls should be taken to school. There were complains that they would like their girls to get even informal education because they are taught on the importance of not having sex with men till the right time and this would help them finish school.

In addition they argued that when one gets informal education the woman is

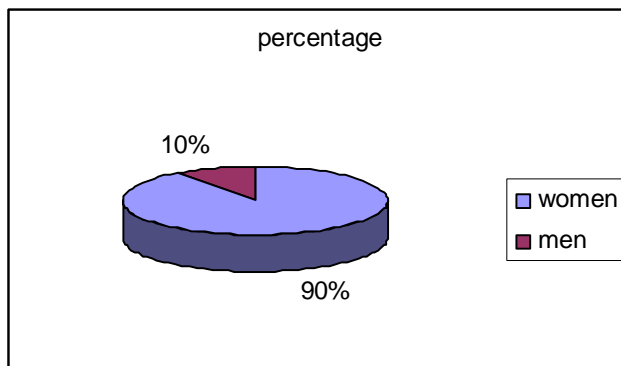
taught the importance of respect to all people and the women will use that in school by being obedient to their teachers and have fewer troubles with fellow students and use most of her time concentrating on her studies. She is also given tips on how to be a good wife, good mother, and trained to promote values like respect, love, generosity and obedience.

Based upon my own experience as a maasai girl I can ascertain that a lot is told to a girl as one grows up by training her to imitate the mother.

### **ROLES AND DECISION IN THE COMMUNITY**

100% of the women in the loita community raised their views that decisions are made by the men and so they have very little to say on the education of the women. They went ahead and said that women are considered to be “children.” and so they cannot take part in decision making because they do not make sound decisions

In the issue of who goes to school and does not, one shared that she was seriously beaten because of making a decision that her daughter should go to school and worse still she is not allowed to go to the women groups meetings. The participants shared that about 90% of the decisions are made by men and 10% of the decisions are made by



women.

### **Informal education**

90% of the women in loita did not go to school and so some non governmental organization have created income generating projects for the women and from the interview the women. These organizations have helped women to be able to feed their families and it has also raised their morals this was said by the women on the meeting we had in loita.

### **obstacles to Development that women face in improving their life**

<b>Factors hampering development</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lack of job alternatives	18	23
No support from men	13	16
Poverty	12	14
Uncertainties	9	11
Lack of Education	8	10
Negative Attitude of Women	7	8
No market for Goods produced	6	7
Polygamy	3	4
Alcohol Dependence	2	2
Lack of funds	2	2
Alcohol Dependence of Women	1	1
No Exposure of Women	1	1
Lack of Time for Women	1	1

The responses of women from Loita highlight lack of alternative jobs with 23%. It seems there is lack of planning in creating jobs for women and people.

During the interviews, I saw many projects initiated in the past but failing to succeed and ending up being abandoned, leaving behind structures were obsolete. It was difficult to establish reasons for failure. They are what we call “white elephants”. People themselves referred to them as “the projects of so and so,” who worked for some time then closed down because something got broken and was never replaced. These sentiments reflect lack of ownership and participation of the people in the conception,

implementation and evaluation of the projects. Once organizations move away from Loita, the project also collapses.

Some women (16%) underlined that they did not receive support from men because of many motivations that are summarized in the table below.

**View of women on why men do not support them**

<b>Motivations</b>	<b>Frequencies</b>
Men do not support economically the family/ wife	4
Men stop women doing things, interference of men in what women do.	3
Men are against women's groups	1
Men are against sending children to school	1
Men do not provide alternatives	1
Men do not allow us to go in search of work and they themselves do not work: they are a problem for us and for down because of tradition.	1
Cultural and traditional role do not allow women to do anything new.	1

These seem to contradict the earlier affirmation that men support women. A Maasai adage goes, “A house headed by a woman is a home headed to doom” This reflects and reinforces the stereotype that a decision taken by a woman leads to disaster, although such stereotypes exist, women do not get discouraged.

Women's' Group, asserted that they have the power to change things, even their husbands. But they also added that in this process of change, women invest a lot of energy and sacrifices. At the end, women also asserted that they are the ones who suffer most during this process where they try to change their husbands.

Poverty is also a hindrance to development, because “If you are poor you cannot develop.” Under the category of “uncertainties” women brought forth many issues. These included drought and its consequences, migrating in search for better pastures forcing women to miss the women group's programme. They also risked losing their animals if they got sick, got lost or eaten by wild animals. Another uncertainty seen by

women as hindrance for development was sickness. This is because it is expensive for them to reach the nearest dispensary and get treatment for themselves or their children.

Time was pointed out as an impediment by only one woman.

Some women also brought out some negative attitudes that hampered their development initiatives. Examples comprised desolation, discouragement, lack of unity in the women's groups, and having focus on a greater "survival" style of life.

In the table below professionals indicate what, according to them, are the possible challenges that women face in venturing into a project.

**Main Obstacles to Development That Loita Women Face in improving their lives.**

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Maasai Professionals</b>	<b>Non Maasai Professionals</b>	<b>Frequencies</b>
Management	8	3	11
Cultural	5	3	8
Economic	4	1	5

Under management, two professionals pointed out that sustainability could be a problem if all the stakeholders were not involved. This raises the issue of the importance of involving the whole community in formulating, evaluating and implementing the project, though the women run the women groups. Another danger pointed out by professionals was transparency versus corruption. It was stressed that monitoring and evaluating the project were invaluable. In a different way, lack of management capacity of women in handling a project was also raised.

Group cohesion, identification with goals and objectives of the project and the danger that women may lose focus on them were also emphasized as being critical. Connected with this point is the high expectations women have on the immediate success of a

project. Thus group cohesion and planning should be in such way that difficulties become integral part of the process of the growth for the group. Lack of market for women's products was specified as a hindering factor.

In addition, lack of ownership and control of economic resources were seen to be responsible for inability to capture emerging business opportunities.

Professionals indicated as a difficulty. Lack of time is caused by heavy workload on women. Thus they found themselves struggling between family chores and participation in business.

Respondents concluded that the time challenge could prevent women from attending training courses. Lack of resources was not specified.

Under cultural factors, early pregnancy was at the fore. It was seen as forcing young girls to drop out of school besides deterring access to high-level education. This compromised the formation of future women leaders in the Maasai society. Men were also mentioned as an obstacle, because they refused to support women's initiatives.

Another respondent observed that women's inability to withstand the pressure from society was a major hindrance. Most of the times, women are intimidated and pushed out from group's initiatives. Thus, they need constant nurturing and support to be able to undertake these activities.

The last objective of this paper, to see what vision women have for the future of pastoralist people. Pastoralists have a tendency to live in the present and not so much for the future. The question was raised in a more simple way, referring to what women dream for the future of their children. .

The voucher system is also used by most organizations to educate women. Women from the groups agreed that the organizations are really helping the girls to go to school, on the other hand they raised their complains that the organizations are making the whole thing political.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

In this chapter the selection and descriptive design and methodology proper for this study has been done. The research has specified the targeted population, the sample and the sampling procedures. Also the researcher describes research instrument as data collection procedures and data analyses.

#### **4.1 General Conclusion**

The theme of empowering women of Loita division, Narok district as attempted by this research is not exhausted fully. This is because empowerment is a process involving all members of the community. For it to be successful the loop holes should be looked into and be amended. Every member of the community should play his/her role responsibly. Lynd (1982) strengthened the above recommendation by saying that, “We cannot say that we know something until we understand the effects of this knowledge on real people and their community.” (P.13)

However, even today education is inevitable topic in discussion about development. This research paper has attempted to show the empowerment of women

through education. Ishumi (1981) has noted down the importance of empowering women in education in his book of community education and development. This is because education is an instrument, a prerequisite, and an outcome of development or transformation in any given community. Genuinely as opposed to manipulative education results in development process itself which is an experience that consists of many learning encounters as Ishumi (1981) expressed.

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Appendix 1

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

I am Maren Rosemary Sonkoi, a student at Tangaza College, undertaking a B.A in leadership and management in De Paul (SNL) program. This questionnaire is meant to gather information on the empowerment of the Loita Women through Formal and informal education. The information will remain confident and meant for academic purpose only.

**Part I DEMOGRAPHIC**

✓ Please tick where necessary

1. Age.....

Below 25( ) 25-30 ( ) 31-35 ( ) 36-40 ( ) 41-45 ( ) 46-50( )

2. Provide me with information especially in your day to day life regarding the following issues

	I agree	Strongly	Disagree
a. Women must have formal education			
b. Women must have at least some formal education			
c. Women do not need formal education			

3. Tell me what program me would contribute in making your life better through enhancement of your skill, knowledge

A) Skills...

B.)Adult education

.....  
.....

c) Primary education

.....

d)secondary.....

.....

e)tertiary.....

.....

f)Apprentice.....

.....

g)Village  
polytechnics.....

.....

b)Knowledge.....

.....

i) Cultural (old  
practice).....

.....

ii)Academic.....

.....

iii)Exposure (mixing with other  
people).....

.....

c)Values.....

.....

d)Attitudes.....

.....

.....

1. a)Do you get involved in school organization

Yes.....

No.....

b)What attracts or convinces you that it is worth  
while.....

.....

c) What are your expectations in this involvement

.....  
.....

d) What specific changes do you think should be brought in

.....

e) Who are the board members of your nearby school?

How many

male?.....

How many female?.....

f) What is the teacher ration?

Male.....

Female.....

g) Give the above (f) what would you ideally like things to be-----  
-----

1. What else would you like to share that you believe might be valuable to formal education (encouraging women to go to school)

Encouraging cultural education as part of the curriculum

i) Female genital mutilation

.....  
.....  
.....

ii) Reproductive health.....

.....  
.....

iii) Women

right.....

.....  
.....  
iv) Involving engaging you as cultural teacher in school you as a cultural teacher in school.....  
.....

v) Domestic violence-----  
-----  
-----

vi) Early forced marriages-----  
-----  
-----

vii) Pregnancy.....  
.....

**viii) Sexual violence**-----  
-----  
-----

5). who goes to school?

Girls.....  
.....  
.....

Boys.....  
.....  
.....

6) Has there been any provision by any organization or government presenting a voucher for any child.....  
.....

7) in your opinion to what extent is modern education changing the contact, attitude and performance of children, youth and parents

A)

Culturally.....  
.....  
.....

b) Socially.....  
.....  
.....

c) economically.....  
.....  
.....

d)spiritually.....

.....

8)what are women groups suppose to do?.....

.....

.....

## Appendix 2

Encounter with the women group.



### Appendix 3

Encounter with the women who are leaders in the women groups



# PRODUCT

**Title:** AN INTERGRATED PROJECT OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL  
EDUCATION FOR WOMEN IN LOITA

AN INTERGRATED PROJECT OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION  
FOR WOMEN IN LOITA

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2. Background
3. Objectives and rationale
4. Methodology
5. Activities and results
6. Expected outputs

## **Executive summary**

This is a project proposed from my advance project on the empowerment of the Loita Maasai women through formal and informal education. Highlighting the issues that address some of the major factors that lead to failure of majority of female students and women in education. The leading obstacle is the inability of women taking up formal education provided by the government. Women education can be promoted through training and sensitization as well as mobilization for the formal school teaching system to adopt an integrated informal and formal education

## **Background**

The Loita Maasai community predominantly occupies the southern part of Narok District. They live on 200m high plateaus. To the east is the Nguruman escarpment while to the northern are the Loita hills. To the west lies the Mara and Siana plains. Southwards, the Loita Maasai extend across the border to Loliondo District in north Tanzania.

According to the national census of 1999, the Loita Maasai were a total of 25,000 persons within an area of 1,718 square kilometers. They are a pure pastoralist community who live a more traditional lifestyle than other Maasai groups in Kenya. Livestock keeping

especially cattle, sheep and goats is their main economic base although crop cultivation is gaining some popularity, making the Loita Maasai an agro-pastoralist community.

This is a project proposal from my advance project on the empowerment of the loita Maasai women through formal and informal education highlights the issues that address some of the major factors that lead to failure of majority of female students and women in education. The leading obstacle is the inability of women taking up formal education provided by the government .Women education can be promoted through training and sensitization as well as mobilization for the formal school teaching system to adopt an integrated informal(traditional practices in health care, folklore, dance and music) and formal education

Issues affecting women include reproductive health and majority lack of education. Most of these cultural practices are observed as rites of passage, taboos, customary believe ceremonies and rituals. These restrain women to realize and access their own rights and freedom of choice

Loita maasai women are still struggling with cultural practices that do not recognize the rights of all women to control all aspects of their health, in particular their own fertility, which is basic to empowerment and access to health care and enhance women sexual and reproductive health. Apart from a few educated women that merely constitute less than 6% who are aware of reproductive health, majority of the rural women are ignorant about

aspects of reproductive health such as safe sex, sexual freedom, family planning methods, and right to access health care services.

Women are subjected to immoral customary practices, which are based on ideas of inferiority or stereotype role for men. According to the Maasai community, warriors have the right to enjoy young girls sexually throughout their warrior hood before they are circumcised and married off to spouses of their fathers' choice.

Pregnant women lack recommended pre-and postnatal health care due to ignorance and customary practices that de-link them from accessing them more appropriately. All these are accelerated by lack of formal education knowledge regarding institution that can address the issue through awareness campaign.

FGM is still widespread among the Loita Maasai community and the practice is performed at an early age, between 10-15 years of age posing a danger to the Loita Women. It is done traditionally and the consequences are excessive bleeding that can make women anaemic, absentism from school, spread of diseases like due to sharing of the cutting materials, they get danger during child birth, lowers the woman self esteem

In most cases after circumcision, women are married off after parent have arranged for the spouse without the knowledge of the woman, such marriages are valued for many reasons including; Bride price, parental respect from community, family bonding, friendship between male parents, avoidance of early pregnancies and above all the motion that women are meant for marriage and procreation.

The woman must not refuse to join the new husband because refusal is considered a taboo and total disrespect her parents. If the woman dares to refuse to join him, she will be considered a cursed deviant in the society

### **Objectives and rationale**

. The overall objective of the project is essentially to refine and educational standards within appropriate context of relevance to Africa and a Maasai woman as a fundamental strategy for human capital development.

### **Specific objectives**

1. Promotion of indigenous education in school
2. Recruiting the indigenous teachers as part of the staff in school

### **Rationale**

One of the major threats to the Maasai woman in loita is inadequate knowledge in understanding modern education and the consequences are continued backwardness and lack of alternative opportunities for their livelihood

The integration of both formal and informal education in school will enhance school attendance and promote awareness and decision making in the community. Most women in loita focus their effort on domestic jobs; firewood

collection, cooking, taking care of children and looking after livestock. This reduces their role in leadership and contribution to the economy.

Training of women will contribute to them being employed and work in various projects thereby reversing the poverty trend.

## **Activities**

### **Promotion of indigenous education in school**

- Identifying of old people who can provide indigenous knowledge-  
dance,stories,tales,dressing
- Identifying people from the locality to write down local publication
- Professional integration in the modern school curriculum

### **Recruiting the indigenous teachers as part of the staff in school**

- Identifying personnel who have the capability of teaching the indigenous  
knowledge
- Identify specific schools which can participate in the new educational programme

## **Methodology**

The project will formulate training sessions involving Tots for reproductive health experts to educate rural girls, men, and women on the importance of reproductive health awareness. Trained project personnel's will visit schools and churches to disseminate the information to Loita Women in there institutions.

The project will promote activities through local dispensaries in every sub-center and the Entasikira Mission hospital has not deeply addressed this issue by putting up initiatives to educate and create awareness among the Loita Maasai women

The project will improve the social and economic status of the people by generating income based activities on traditional handicraft

## Work plan

Objectives	Activities	Year	Year	Year	Indicators
		1	2	3	
<b>Promotion of indigenous education in school</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying of old people who can provide indigenous knowledge- dance,stories,tales,dressing</li> </ul>	X			Number of people recruited
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying people from the locality to write down local publication</li> </ul>	X	X		Number of reading materials written
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional integration in the modern school curriculum</li> </ul>	X			New curriculum developed and implemented
<b>Recruiting the indigenous</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying personnel who have the capability of teaching</li> </ul>	X	X	X	Number of indigenous teachers recruited

<p><b>teachers as part of the staff in school</b></p>	<p>the indigenous knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify specific schools which can participate in the new educational programme</li> </ul>			X		<p>Number of schools implementing the project</p>
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## **Expectation**

Increased number of educated women, fifty out of every a hundred women will be educated and women between 10-15 years will attain primary education due to the integration of formal and informal education.

The project will train trainer of trainees for dissemination of reproductive health. The project will disseminate.

The project will achieve 100% awareness among women in loita on the importance of education by the integration of formal and informal education.

The project will also achieve awareness about the danger of FGM and associated health risk.

The project will achieve equitable resource sharing between gender.

The project will create income generating activities to the women such as, training of handcraft and help them institute businesses for increased income.

There will be an increase in the Promotion and conservation of the indigenous knowledge and practices.

**Budget for the 3 year duration**

Administration	700,000.
Training and workshops	1,800,000.
Equipment	1,000,000.
Consultancy	1,800,000.
Travel and accommodation	1,000,000.
Salaries and emolumance	4,000,000.
Total	103,000,000

