

Maasai Health Education Outreach

October 2023 Selela, Tanzania



Masai gratitude song ceremony provided to Health & Hope Volunteers in June 2023

Masai Villagers' Celebration of Health Education!

Strong relationships and ongoing discussions with Maasai leadership in Selela are a result of our Healthcare Outreach with them in June. The health concerns of local leaders mirrored our observations. As a result, together, we developed a community education program to address these needs.

Education provided:

1. Prevent Continued Rise in HIV
2. Eliminate Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
3. Promote Family Planning

500 Masai village “Ambassadors” (men, women, teens) from sub-villages of Selela are attending classes taught in Maa, the local language, by a female Maasai physician and Health & Hope Tanzanian Representatives. To spread education as quickly as possible, knowledge is passed from class Ambassadors to all his/her family and friends, who in turn share the education until the sub-village has been informed. The entire community has a population of 10,000.

As a result of a language barrier and poor access to education, few villagers have been exposed to these topics. The local language, Maa, is oral and unique. Many villagers have not had an opportunity to attend primary school, and 50% are unable to write their names. Families are polygamous and patriarchal. Traditions run generations deep.

Prevent Continued Rise in HIV



HIV Prevention, Testing & Treatment Class *plus...* Fun with Condoms!

HIV rates are increasing in Maasai society due to a lack of general and health education, as well as limited access to HIV prevention, testing, and treatment. Additional complications include polygamy, the societal stigma of HIV, and individual movements to secure livelihoods and conform to government relocations.

Condom practice/proper use education was a fun first. None had experience in using a condom, many had never seen a condom package. This Village Leader and retired Selela Chairman (two men front left) jumped into the condom lesson with enthusiasm leading the class of village men and women by example.

Eliminate Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting



Dr. Grace Lemomo (red dress, right side) a Masai woman, Health & Hope physician, and community educator, attended the International Conference for Female Genital Mutilation this month. The international goal is education for the elimination of female cutting within a generation.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) has no health benefit and is illegal. However, it is practiced in a variety of forms from "minor" to very major in many societies including this community. Complications include infections, hemorrhage, severe scarring, vaginal pain, urinary pain, and life-threatening birthing complications.

Attendees for this class are women who do the cutting (there are many in each village), parents of girls aged 10-15, who may choose to cut their daughters, and women aged 16-25, who may choose cutting themselves. It is important to reach our goal to complete FGM/C classes by the end of November. Traditionally, December is a high season for "cutting ceremonies". Our goal: Education to prevent further "cutting ceremonies".

3. Promote Family Planning



Well-Fed and Educated Children

Large family size with multiple wives each birthing 4-8 children or more is a valued tradition. For most village families changes in pastoral life, local and global economics and drought mean it is increasingly difficult to provide food, medicine, and education to large families.

Modern birth control methods (injections/implants) are available but used by only about 25% of women. Community class members include married partners, women, and teen girls.

Building Relationships



A special treat! At classes, many community members received photo prints of themselves. The photos were taken during activities with them during our Healthcare Outreach in June.

Receiving or gifting was equally fun for all of us. Another layer was added in forming bilateral trust needed to talk and learn about sensitive societal topics.

Thumb up means "yes"!



HEY!! Here is a peek at the answer to a class review test question!

Oral community classes with a thumb-up or down answer are designed so that being literate is not necessary to learn or measure knowledge.

Keeping More Girls in the Classroom



Wahoo! New Panties Too!!

Washable menstrual kits were delivered to 80 more Maasai girls grades 5 and 6 this month. The girls at Nainokanoka Primary School, Ngorongoro Crater are delighted with their gifts!

