

# Ep.5 Transcript

[00:00:00] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Disclaimer, the following episode features details of a graphic nature. Discretion is advised for sensitive and underage listeners. xx

[00:00:12] **Naomi Simon Lukumai:** My name is Naomi Molel. I come from Maasai society. My parents are Maasai. My father, my mother, my grand, and the whole society are from Maasai land. And I like my culture and my tribe.

[00:00:26] **Naomi Simon Lukumai:** But what I don't like is there are still some practices that are not good in my society. But if they are, they have been eliminated. I won't lie. I will continue to love my culture because not only bad practices are there in my culture or my tribe, but there are some good things. I will be the one who will spread the gospel about it to stop female genital mutilation.

[00:00:51] **Naomi Simon Lukumai:** As we know, it has many effects in our society, and when you go around the hospitals, you will see a lot of girls are [00:01:00] from Maasai society who had many complications during delivery because of female genital mutilation.

[00:01:09] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** This season finale episode explores a topic very close to my heart. As a proud believer and follower of my own culture, I regard myself as an advocate for still following and practising elements of what celebrates me and my community. In the same breath, as a woman, and moreover as a mother to 2 daughters,

[00:01:32] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** I am aware of how some practices to date work and are inclined to the detriment of young girls and women. Similarly, it is also important to take note of the major strides happening with individuals and organisations who are at the forefront of being the solution to Alternative Rights of Passage- a world where culture, traditions and empowerment can co-exist.

[00:02:00] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** My name is Masechaba Masemola waMdaka, and I invite you today in this finale episode to take a journey down memory lane as well as raise important awareness and continued conversation to this important topic of the rights of young girls, women, rights to their bodies, wellbeing and accessing opportunities.

[00:02:24] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** We're recording this episode outside in the elements in Tanzania, in a community at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro. The following excerpt I'm about to read is taken from World Vision's News and Press Release dated 11 October and titled "African girls stand at crossroads as the practice of Female Genital Mutilation deprives them of being children

[00:02:54] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** “The 2nd International Conference on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is underway in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, from October 9th to 11th, under the theme “Change in a Generation.” World Vision commends the African Union and the Government of the Republic of Tanzania for hosting this crucial event, which also coincides with the International Day of the Girl.

[00:03:20] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** The conference aims to assess progress made in eliminating FGM in Africa, where 160 million women and girls have undergone the practice that is prevalent in parts of West, East, Central, and Northern Africa. The urgency to end FGM has gained momentum, with international, regional, national and local organisations, including youth and child activists, calling for an immediate elimination of this harmful practice.

[00:03:54] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** As Tenema from Sierra Leone reminisces “It's violence against children and no girl should go through FGM particularly because it violates their rights and takes away their childhood”

[00:04:14] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** We have been enriched by a great lineup of guests on this podcast, speaking to various issues and topics impacting human rights, like my conversation with Barbie Kyagulanyi in season 2 and my conversation with Nice Lengete in Season 3. Allow me to take down memory lane to reflect on their important contributions. We've linked these episodes in the show notes.

[00:04:45] **Nice Lengete:** Uganda is a unique country. We have 56 tribes. That means 56 or more cultures.

[00:04:52] **Nice Lengete:** So as an African and as an African girl, you know, when your parents raise you, they raise you in the confines of your [00:05:00] culture, they teach you what your culture says. And so that's what you grow up knowing until you mix and mingle with everybody else at a certain age that you realise It's the different ways each one of you has been brought up.

[00:05:15] **Nice Lengete:** So in this uniqueness, girls are brought up differently in our culture, in our different cultures in Uganda. We have those who do genital mutilation, that's a culture.

[00:05:28] **Nice Lengete:** You have those who believe in early marriages, that's a culture. You have those who believe in selecting a spouse for you.

[00:05:38] **Nice Lengete:** The spouses, that's a culture. We have a culture where the women fend and, uh, look for the needs of the family while men stay home and drink. That's a culture. We have a culture where the women pay dowry to the men. So, depending on which culture you're [00:06:00] raised in Uganda, the experiences are different. You asked what my experience was.

[00:06:06] **Nice Lengete:** I just wanted to give you an overview of what it is.

[00:06:12] **Barbie Kyagulanyi:** I remember it brings a lot of pain and injuries. You know, we've seen even other girls bleeding to death. So it has a lot of consequences, not only on the health part but also socially and economically because remember, their dreams are taken away. They can't continue going to school. They become women or they become brides when they are still children.

[00:06:37] **Barbie Kyagulanyi:** They become mothers when they are still children, and, uh, it means if you're not educating our girls if you're not educating the community, we cannot have, uh, um, we cannot have, uh, uh, a society, uh, that is well developed. Where I come from, you know, we had cultures that way back we thought they were [00:07:00] important, but now it has changed, though it has taken time because of a lot of things.

[00:07:06] **Barbie Kyagulanyi:** Things that we really feel are important to us. We have, we, we keep on saying it's because culture is what culture says. It's important to us. It's our identity. It's what makes us who we are. That's why we are special and all that. And, uh, that's why also for us in our work, we decided to have a cultural solution to end female genital mutilation, because we know how important culture is.

[00:07:30] **Barbie Kyagulanyi:** But we are simply saying a culture that has no meaning is what we need to stop.

[00:07:38] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** There've been several touch points which since the immersive journey began, have left me deeply reflective. The podcast has largely been about raising awareness on important matters and creating the environment for conversation, but also to mention and appreciate where important milestones to achieve the activism have weighed successful. We've linked these episodes in the show notes.

[00:08:02] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** The following piece is a personal story shared by Ester Joseph- previously a young girl, a victim of the cut at a young age, then a mother followed by being a custodian of the practice of FGM in her community to now being an example in her community of having dropped the blade and saying NO to the cut. Mama Esther's delivery is in KiSwahili and is simultaneously interpreted in English

It's story time...

[00:08:50] **Ester Joseph:** My name is Ester Joseph. I was enrolled in school in 1981 to 1987. I got married in [00:09:00] 1991. I was blessed with seven children, six boys and one girl. I have 7 grandchildren. I'm doing well. I was a chairperson of UWT. CCM Women Union, a member of the village government. Some years back, I was a woman leader in our community, and a church leader for 16 years, and I retired from the position a few years ago.

[00:09:26] **Ester Joseph:** At the moment, I was married while I was aware of myself. I started my family with no challenges because my husband and I loved each other. When I was a young girl, it was common for girls to go through female genital mutilation, FGM. It was not a bad thing. FGM was a compulsory procedure. If the family was not doing it to their girls, they would be questioned by the community.

[00:09:56] **Ester Joseph:** That was our life. In the process, I also [00:10:00] became a cutter. I did it to girls. Keep in mind, that this is a very painful process. However, I was able to get an income. To attend one girl, I will get 50, 000 shillings and a certain part of meat when the animal is slaughtered for the celebration. We continued with the cut as the girls were reporting cases because schools started to prohibit the practice, so we agreed to make the cut when they were very young with an excuse that they had a disease called Lawa Lawa.

[00:10:40] **Ester Joseph:** There was no such disease, but we were trying to reduce sexual activeness for the girls. We were lying to men that we were reducing sexual activity for girls. Also, we were saying it was a right of passage for girls necessary for them to [00:11:00] be considered adults in their community. I then got awareness through KWIEKO.

[00:11:06] **Ester Joseph:** The clan leaders, Ligwianan, were the first ones to receive the training. Then we were selected as women leaders. Women Ligwianan, to attend the session. When we were there, we argued with facilitators telling them it was impossible for us to leave our practice. We'll continue to do it because it does not have any harm.

[00:11:31] **Ester Joseph:** They continue to educate us, and we realise the consequences of what we have been doing. When a girl is going through FGM, there is a complete removal of the clitoris. This increased complications during childbirth. Other girls have a lot of challenges with strength to the part that was removed. They lack sexual pleasure.

[00:11:57] **Ester Joseph:** We then realised we have been [00:12:00] removing this part unnecessarily. I was also made aware that we were marrying young girls. They became pregnant while they were children and during childbirth, they are prone to fistula. I then realised we did, we were not fair to them. We are part of gender-based violence.

[00:12:24] **Ester Joseph:** The organisation has been very helpful to us. Personally, I've seen the benefit, that it has been a valuable contribution. Personally, I've decided to be an activist against FGM since I got the awareness from KWIEKO. I'm against FGM. Even those who are trying to do it in disguise. They are hiding from me.

[00:12:49] **Ester Joseph:** Not to know. I also trying to be an educator and a mirror to society. When I hear that someone is continuing with practice, I'm [00:13:00] involving the village government and creating a culture to eliminate FGM and child

pregnancy. I also realise currently they are currently facing GBV. Girls are forced to be married to husbands they do not want.

[00:13:17] **Ester Joseph:** A young girl is forced to be married to an old man of 70 years. The girls are crying for their rights, but no one is listening to them. She's left to be going through the suffering. She's complaining about being married to an old man. No one hears her but asks to go. That is their new family. What I see is that we are losing young girls for not getting support.

[00:13:49] **Ester Joseph:** However, KWIEKO has been a support and now we are sure we will eliminate FGM in two years. I believe the percentage will be very low, [00:14:00] not as high as it used to be. I have become a safe space for the community, especially for young girls. When they got the information that I have been working with KWIEKO and I'm fighting for those who are forced to be married and those who do not want, so the girls are coming to me.

[00:14:26] **Ester Joseph:** Unfortunately, to some people, I have become their enemy. Some of the people in the community, see me as a person that is influencing their girls to say no to the harmful practice. I'm thankful to the KWIEKO for coming to give us awareness and show us a way, open the door for us, and work together to assist the girl child.

[00:14:54] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** What an incredible story. The often unsung heroines who are making all the difference. This can certainly not go unnoticed, thank you, Mama Ester. Today, I am very excited to be joined in person by Elizabeth and Daniel, my guests here in Tanzania. Daniel, can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

[00:15:24] **Daniel:** My name is Daniel Sifel from Siha District in Donyomura Ward.

[00:15:29] **Daniel:** I am the chairman of the Justice Defense Committee in Dunja Morawad. Our duty is to educate the community about the effect of gender-based violence and teach the importance of human right, using the wisdom, and using procedures of the relevant community to change them to abandon violence. Also, to cooperate with elders and other authorities to save the victims, to save the victim.

[00:15:59] **Daniel:** Who are [00:16:00] abused in the community. What we are continuing within the community at the moment is the provision of integral education that aims to open the eyes of the community, especially women, for their rights. The goal is to ensure that we reach further within the district of Siha, especially for those Maasai tribes because they are the victims of gender-based violence.

[00:16:32] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Thank you so much, Daniel. And I can personally attest through the project that we are doing here within this district that you are doing incredible work. Thank you for being here. Betty, please do tell us about yourself.

[00:16:45] **Elizabeth:** Hello and welcome to Kilimanjaro. I am Elizabeth Moshi, the Legal Human Rights and Gender Coordinator.

[00:16:53] **Elizabeth:** Today, I want to share with you my passion for the ambition of this FNF project which I am [00:17:00] involved. For the past 12 years, I've been working at the Kilimanjaro Women Information Exchange Community Organisation. As I am a lawyer, my role has evolved into that of being a facilitator due to extensive engagement with the various stakeholders.

[00:17:23] **Elizabeth:** KWIEKO, with its 35 years of experience, focuses on legal, human rights, and gender, and economic empowerment for marginalised groups, particularly women, children, and other special groups. Since 2017, I've been working closely with the FNF Project, undertaking numerous activities. Our commitment and confidence in protecting human rights and combating gender-based violence in Siha district have grown.[00:18:00]

[00:18:00] **Elizabeth:** Currently, I'm leading the project titled Advancing Legal Human Rights, Gender Equality, and Women's Economic Rights to Fight Sexual Abuse, Girls Deny Education, and Women's Economic Poverty in Siha District at Kilimanjaro.

[00:18:21] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** That is quite a piece, Betty, and thank you to you too. Through the work and partnership with KWIEKO and FNF, we definitely look forward to this conversation today with both of you.

[00:18:30] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Thank you. Let's begin by speaking directly to context. Daniel, what would you say are the women's issues in the Maasai community of the Kilimanjaro region in Tanzania? What are examples of some of these stories which have surfaced?

[00:18:49] **Daniel:** Maasai women in the Kilimanjaro region still face gender balance violence to a large extent, though there is a great role that is played [00:19:00] by different organizations, different religions, the government, and also through making laws for those who violate women, there is still a very large percentage of women who are abused, and this is due to the procedure that has been placed in the society.

[00:19:18] **Daniel:** For example, Maasai women are still facing a number of problems. They are not allowed to own the land. They do not have the freedom to choose who will be their partners. They do not have freedom of speech in front of men. They can't argue what men agree in their family and the whole community. They are not allowed to be leaders in the society.

[00:19:48] **Daniel:** These are some of that I'm trying to show on how this gender is suffering from.

[00:19:55] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Speaking directly to these issues, how many of them would you say, [00:20:00] Daniel, as we think about where the



conversation is currently, please take us through what your experience has been with working within these community and having these courageous conversations on the cut in this particular case. Let's talk about FGM.

[00:20:18] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** I would also like to bring to light the question of you being a male figure within the Maasai community. How has that impacted in your personal capacity and working on these issues in such a traditional society?

[00:20:33] **Daniel:** generally, I'm only, I'm not only a Maasai man, but also I'm the father of one child and I'm playing a great role in providing the education and to justify for those who are practising FGM and to educate them that there is no any advantage.

[00:20:59] **Daniel:** for [00:21:00] that. And not only an advantage, but it also has a disadvantage for those who are cutting those small children. I'm telling them that it is not good to cut those children because they will get a lot of stuff in their life. So I'm trying to give them a lot of education about that are the men of one child.

[00:21:26] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** And would you say, with these conversations, especially to your male counterparts, are they receptive?

[00:21:35] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Yes. They definitely do take it on. Elizabeth, considering what Daniel's response has been, one, speaking to what are the issues within the community and also around this creating the platform for having open discourse. If you were to temperature gauge the environment, specifically around, as I said, the awareness, the conversation, bringing an end to FGM.[00:22:00]

[00:22:01] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Are the young girls and women, in particular, comfortable and safe speaking directly about these issues?

[00:22:09] **Elizabeth:** It is very, very true now. Currently, young girls and women are capable and able to speak about FGM in front of the community, in front of the clan leaders, in front of the children, and in front of everywhere.

[00:22:26] **Elizabeth:** Why are they comfortable and able to speak about those issues related to FGM? It's because KWIEKO and FNF have the capacity to protect their children from FGM that they understand FGM is one of the violations that is strictly prohibited in our country and even the laws stipulate that FGM is an offence.

[00:22:54] **Elizabeth:** That's why after we raise awareness on the consequences of FGM, [00:23:00] people have now gotten aware and see that FGM is really not something that is good. That's why they are now able to talk about the FGM and go against the FGM. They are ambassadors of talking about FGM and those matters.

[00:23:15] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Sounds very progressive, Betty, and it really does sound that the work already and the inroads which are being done are definitely building traction.

[00:23:24] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** And that is what we want to see the change makers and the multipliers. And that's wonderful to see that happening through both of you and your work. I do want to take the conversation, speaking again and sticking to the partnerships, through FNF and the extensive work and engagement that you are doing in the community.

[00:23:45] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** We appreciate what it takes to arrive at this point of work, garnering and acquiring the trust and respect specifically in a traditional society where you still have chieftaincies, doing a lot of decision-making and, and, and being really the [00:24:00] leadership in the community. Uh, we're talking elders and the various other stakeholders who are invested in the practice.

[00:24:07] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** How has the experience of the Coordinated Approaches, now directly speaking to leadership, the Chieftaincy, and your organisations been? And I want to just touch base on the excerpt that we read from. The international, regional, and national collaborations around bringing an end to FGM. There is a story that made headlines in a Kenyan newspaper from Kadiadu South County, where they are reporting that girls now from, or young ladies and girls, from Kadiadu South Region, are now entering Tanzania into Kilimanjaro Region to have the cut done.

[00:24:51] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Because the fight is being won more within Kenya, but now it seems in Tanzania, it's [00:25:00] taking a different course.

[00:25:02] **Elizabeth:** Before we just started with the FGM, we had previous activities that we were doing till it led us to the issue. One of the things that we had, we created awareness among the children regarding their rights and responsibilities.

[00:25:21] **Elizabeth:** And one of the issues raised during the clubs, it was one of the children's for us, you, you, you give us the training that we should, our parents should not doing for us FGM. But when we go back to the home, a lot of, uh, the parents force us to do the FGM. And one of the debates was regarding the FGM.

[00:25:50] **Elizabeth:** And when it comes to, it was raised up, one of the children said that we really wish to talk to our clan leaders on the [00:26:00] issues of FGM. So what we did, was we had the training to the clan leaders. As we know the Maasai, the clan leaders are the top leaders and if they say something to the community all of the community must obey what the clan leaders say.

[00:26:18] **Elizabeth:** So we had the training for the clan leaders. We advocate for us and we give them the skills on how to stop FGM FGM is not a good thing in the community because it is against the law and, they really appreciate on that. After the



training, we came up with a way forward that the Maasai contact the clan leaders and they give out that they should not do it again.

[00:26:47] **Elizabeth:** And when we go back to the community, we also create bylaws at the community level. Uh, and we had the bylaws from the four villages. that we had the bylaws [00:27:00] and the response of the community was very positive and people stopped doing the FGM. But there are others who are doing it in a secret way. We find a baby is born in two days or five weeks, they are doing the FGM to them, but very secretly.

[00:27:22] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Do you think you could speak to this incident, which has been reported, as I mentioned, around the traffic coming from Kenya into now Kilimanjaro region, um, are the authorities here in Kilimanjaro region aware of some of these, as you say, backdoor FGM consultants, for lack of a better word, who still continue the practice, even though it is illegal, as you say?

[00:27:47] **Elizabeth:** Yes, they are aware. They are aware. And that's why, even with our government, they've tried their level best to keep some rules or some, uh, some wants to be followed. So anything that happened to [00:28:00] FGM, people can go there and seek help. That's why you might find each like we are at high district.

[00:28:08] **Elizabeth:** We have a one-stop centre, for anything that happened for the violation regarding and violation on FGM on rape on sodomy. And once you want to report, people come to the One Stop Center and you might find there is a doctor, there is a social welfare, and there is a police officer who can assist you there.

[00:28:29] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** That's very much coordinated. The interventions are there. Yes, and of course, I think law enforcement does do its work and, you know, human nature is what it is. Exactly. It's commendable to see those interventions take place.

[00:28:43] **Elizabeth:** And in addition to what you have asked me, we have, the government has launched the National Action Plan against GBV, especially for women and children.

[00:28:52] **Elizabeth:** At least it can, it's one of the semantic areas that the government is trying to do so, so that [00:29:00] the FGM can still reduce. That is one of the initiatives the government has done for the community.

[00:29:07] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** And very importantly, as we also enter a period which is recognised as 16 days of activism, it's wonderful to see that as an initiative through the government and working directly with the community.

[00:29:18] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Thank you, Betty. Betty, take us through a day of activities at Kwieco. Perhaps give our listeners a take on who KWIEKO is, where they're situated, and a day in the life of Betty at the office.

[00:29:31] **Elizabeth:** The long term of at the office. is Kilimanjaro Women, Information, Exchange and Community Organisation. Specifically, it's a legal aid organisation.

[00:29:43] **Elizabeth:** And we have 35 years currently doing legal aid to the community, especially the marginalised women and children. We are situated in Kilimanjaro, but we also work at Njombe and Mbea. [00:30:00] The main objective of KWIEKO is the human rights respected. We have several programs that we are focused on, and those programs are the ones which we use to work daily.

[00:30:12] **Elizabeth:** First of all, KWIEKO has legal aid provision, as I said, but we have a program for awareness of human rights, gender issues, and different laws in the community. With that program, we used to raise awareness to the community, to the stakeholders, and to the different beneficiaries, so that they can understand their rights.

[00:30:37] **Elizabeth:** After understanding their rights, they come to demand their rights in our office. We have also the Department for Legal Counseling. After people raise awareness in the community, people come and look for different ideas regarding legal issues. And we used to have the cases like [00:31:00] matrimonial issues, cases like land, cases like probate.

[00:31:04] **Elizabeth:** So once they come there, we listen to them and we really advise them on how to do it. After we raised with the legal counselling, most of the women and children don't have money or don't have support or doesn't have, uh, educating on how to draft the legal document. We also used to have also litigation department.

[00:31:27] **Elizabeth:** We assist women on how to draft the legal document. And also we used to represent women to court who were very marginalised and they are not aware of court issues. So we used to help them. them. After that, we used to have a shelter house that was the safe house for the GBV survivors. As we know with the project of FNF there at Donomuro, we managed on, it was last year, we managed to rescue four children.

[00:31:59] **Elizabeth:** We rescued [00:32:00] them from their early marriage and FGM. They were Maasai children, and we took them to our shelter for some time, and we called their parents. We assisted with their social welfare, and we went to the gender desk. The case was held on to the court. Finally, we won the case, and the children went back home, and they are now safe.

[00:32:23] **Elizabeth:** From the early marriage and from the FGM. That's how KWIEKO works and that's how I work with KWIEKO.

[00:32:31] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Incredible work indeed. And, um, one hopes that this can continue. And it's so wonderful to hear you even speak about the fact that you go to the gender desk, and the social welfare department is involved.

[00:32:43] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** So definitely the coordination, uh, in terms of all of these different agencies working together, as this is an ongoing issue. So it's wonderful to see this and to hear it. Um, that is something that is, is worked on together, but he's still staying with you. There's a lot of work, which [00:33:00] you do at Quieco around leadership and access to education and opportunities.

[00:33:05] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** You mentioned earlier, um, the Ngariba, which are the women who, uh, do the practice of the cut. They are the cutters themselves. You mentioned that now. As you think about encouraging them to leave this one main income stream because we do have to admit it is an income stream in some communities, and you encourage them through your programs to look at other areas of interest that can generate income for them and skills.

[00:33:32] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** You spoke about entrepreneurship, and I would like to know, with entrepreneurship, what are the other programs that stand out, that make impressions, either on the victims or the cutters themselves?

[00:33:47] **Elizabeth:** Okay, regarding the Ngariba, as I told you, we had a training and one of the issues that arose from the training, was they said they cannot stop doing FGM because FGM, [00:34:00] it gives them a source of income.

[00:34:03] **Elizabeth:** So, we advocate them and we give them skills on how to stop FGM and We started to, uh, to, to train them on how to keep their saving, doing the small business activities, uh, how to do the business plan, how to do the, the entrepreneurship. So all those skills they got, the Ngaribas were from. After they see that the skills for entrepreneurship are something that is good, they, go back to their home and start formulating

[00:34:40] **Elizabeth:** economic groups, and we have like, from Donya Muruwa, we have five groups, and each group contains 30 women, and those 30 women are, well, they're Garibas, but currently, we don't call them Garibas, but we call them the influential women who are [00:35:00] trying to, to, to, to raise awareness, to stop the FGM and engage themselves on the different activities so they can have the source of income from the legal sources rather than the FGM.

[00:35:15] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Daniel, I would like to hear from you as we speak about someone who is a former Ngariba turned influencer within the community as Betty fondly mentions. What has it been like working with incredible people such as Esther Joseph? And how has the partnership through both of you mutually been an asset to both your work and how you go about your work?

[00:35:42] **Daniel:** First of all, they are, they acting, she acting as the bridge between me and the young girls and the elders, I mean mothers. This we are trying to [00:36:00] take the secret information about FGM that is continuing. In society, but for sacred it takes to us and we just make a conference between me and her on how

to educate those who are practising to live with and also she acted as a bridge between me.

[00:36:26] **Daniel:** And those mothers who are cutting that we call Garba, that we, we can go with her to talk with Garbas. That what is, what, what is the problem? We are continuing with this and uh, and you know that the government and different organisations are prohibiting this and this is not, we already know that this is not good today, society.

[00:36:54] **Daniel:** So when we, we receive, we receive their problems, means economic, [00:37:00] if it is economic problem, we decided to make another, another alternative way. Just we give them education on how we can go to the farm and how they, they go to buy some animals and do what, and, and, and get what they breed, means they breed.

[00:37:21] **Daniel:** What they can end instead of goes to cut to cut those children and get something that he can get their daily bread. So I'm proud to work with this mother and I'm proud. She is a bridge between me and society as I am the human rights defender. So I get a lot of things from her for those who are very, very secret.

[00:37:49] **Daniel:** And sometimes some of them, don't like to discuss their issues in public. So when I [00:38:00] have Mama Ester. And me at the chairman, we can go and talk with, with them on how they get problem and also on how this one who violate her, if it is a child, a small, a small girl, or if it is a mother and make them with a conference because they are sacred.

[00:38:22] **Daniel:** But when we are, we are only four people. Me, Mama Ester, and two of them, we can solve it easily. So I'm proud to be with Mama Ester as a bridge.

[00:38:34] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** And she certainly is a bridge. We were lucky enough to actually spend some time with her as a team. And, um, it would be great to see even the day that all the Ngaribas come together to actually have their own activism.

[00:38:46] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** To all saying no to the cut, we definitely look forward to a time. when that will happen. Daniel, I'd like to stay with you. In closing, I would like you please to share with us why this work is important to you.  
[00:39:00] Um, every day for the whole year, for many years, you work on this very important issue in your community and you're very passionate about it.

[00:39:09] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** As you mentioned, you're also a father. What are the hopes that you want to see for this community and what does freedom of right to self for young girls to make their own decisions around their own bodies and their future look like?

[00:39:27] **Daniel:** Now we are going to challenge cultural norms and encourage a supportive system through Maasai leaders.

[00:39:35] **Daniel:** Uh, the second one, it contributed to fostering a safer environment for individuals. The third one, empowering victims to speak out and facilitating community-wide change toward gender equality. It opened dialogue with the community supporting initiatives that empower Maasai youth to combat gender [00:40:00] violence and discrimination.

[00:40:02] **Daniel:** The last one, encouraging equal opportunity for both genders. And the challenging, harmful stereotypes, which are crucial steps toward creating a more inclusive and equitable society. My hope is to create an inclusive society that has gender equality through the provision of education to youth, who are the backbone of the mass society and the ancestors, and leaders.

[00:40:31] **Daniel:** In the guardians of the coming generation, the second to make a platform, which helps you to meet and discuss their issues without anybody to interrupt them. Freedom to express oneself is crucial to youth. In the community, well-being because youth freely express ideas without fear and enable [00:41:00] collaborative problem solving, promoting a culture of inclusivity in this context, the right to self-expression should be respected, ensuring everyone has a voice in shaping the community's future.

[00:41:16] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Thank you. Thank you, Daniel. Betty, your thoughts, please. Your closing final remarks.

[00:41:23] **Elizabeth:** By empowering girls with education and raising awareness about the harmful consequences of FGM, we are breaking the barriers that hinder their development and ensuring that they have equal opportunities in the community.

[00:41:41] **Elizabeth:** This work has been instrumental in creating a brighter future for girls where their rights are respected and protected. This project has provided us with a remarkable opportunity to collaborate with the support youth who are [00:42:00] the agents of change in their community. Their passion, dedication, and leadership have been instrumental in driving progress. Impact working alongside this young community changes has been an inspiring and rewarding experience.

[00:42:21] **Elizabeth:** for our beliefs in the power of youth for a better world.

[00:42:26] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** And thank you so much to both of you for those very, very strong insights and for sharing what your experiences are within the community. I think we commend both of you, uh, not just here through this interview, but I can assure you that through the listeners, um, they can.

[00:42:43] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Have a sense of appreciation, uh, continuing this very important conversation and combating arriving at a point where

young girls and women have the right to self and that we do ultimately in the end.  
[00:43:00]

[00:43:00] **Elizabeth:** Thank you very much. Thank you.

[00:43:09] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Some things that stood out for me in this episode are that everyone has a part to play. Listening to the clips from previous seasons and then having this conversation, it's so clear to me that we need survivors, local organizations, funding partners, lawyers, lawmakers, community members, men and women alike, as well as the custodians of the practice, to come together to ultimately bring an end to FGM and child marriages.

[00:43:44] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** It's essential to remember that girls and young women in these communities have dreams like anyone else. And do you know what they want to do with their lives and so should have the freedom and agency to [00:44:00] direct their destinies. And with that, I sign out. Thank you for letting me into your audio space.

[00:44:10] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Thank you for being part of this journey together through our continent and frankly, to talk about human rights. My right, your right, our rights. Humanity will and continues always to be for us all. It is up to all of us.

[00:44:35] **Barbie Kyagulanyi:** But speaking up also is okay, and we want them to have that freedom, not only to make choices but to speak up and say or tell the world what they want as girls, how do they want to be treated.

[00:44:49] **Elizabeth:** What do they want?

[00:44:51] **Barbie Kyagulanyi:** Uh, uh, how do they want to be supported? Because I think they are bold and beautiful, and they can always aspire to be anything they want [00:45:00] to be.

[00:45:05] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** This has been the fifth and final episode, season 4 of "Let's Talk Human Rights – the FNF Africa podcast exploring various human rights issues". I have certainly enjoyed your company on the airwaves. Please continue to hit the subscribe button in order to enjoy the library episodes from Seasons 1 to 4.

[00:45:28] **Masehaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** The Friedrich Naumann Foundation sub-Saharan Africa (FNF) is an independent German organisation that is committed to promoting liberal ideals and politics in Africa such as human rights, the rule of law, democracy, innovation, digitization, and free trade. By conducting campaigns, media events, seminars, workshops, study tours, cultural happenings, and training courses the foundation promotes human rights including freedom of expression, freedom of



the press, children's rights, and LGBTQIA+ rights, and engages against violence targeting women and capital punishments.

[00:46:21] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** If you are interested in our activities, follow us on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Simply check for "Friedrich Naumann Foundation Africa", the links are in the show notes.