



Il Ngwesi Youth Empowerment Camp

Date: 7th–13th August 2026

Venue: CHUMVI COPREHENSIVE SCHOOL



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mukogodo Girls Empowerment Program (MGEP) conducted a seven-day Il Ngwesi Youth Empowerment Camp from 7th to 13th August 2026. The camp brought together 247 young people from 11 villages within Laikipia north. The intensive residential programme focused on leadership, career development, health and wellbeing, gender equality, prevention of harmful practices, substance abuse, environmental conservation and cultural identity.

The camp was organized as part of activities to commemorate International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples and International Youth Day. It provided a safe and supportive space where young people could learn, share experiences, ask questions, interact with professionals and community leaders, and develop practical knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions about their lives and futures.

The programme brought together a range of partners and resource persons, including community alumnae, cultural leaders and elders, the Ministry of Health, Pathways, Days for Girls Chumvi, the National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA), the Mazingira Yetu team from Borana Conservancy among others.

Objectives

1. Empower young people with knowledge and skills necessary for personal development and leadership.
2. Support youth to make informed decisions about education, careers and their future.
3. Create awareness on sexual and reproductive health and rights, sexually transmitted infections and menstrual hygiene.
4. Sensitize young people on gender-based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage.
5. Increase awareness of the dangers of drug and substance abuse.
6. Promote environmental conservation and awareness of climate change.
7. Celebrate and strengthen appreciation of indigenous culture, identity and knowledge.
8. Provide a platform for young people to interact with mentors, professionals, community leaders and partner organizations.
9. Encourage young people to pursue their dreams and contribute positively to their communities.

Activities

Day One: Arrival, Registration and Orientation

The first day was the reporting Day. Upon arrival at the camp, participants were welcomed and registered. An orientation of the residential area was conducted to familiarize the young people with the camping environment, facilities and general arrangements. Participants were also provided with camping kits and received guidance on accommodation, safety, cleanliness and other expectations during the residential programme. The orientation helped create a sense of belonging and prepared participants for the activities ahead.

Day Two: Introductions, Expectations, Career Choices and Leadership

The second day began with registration and introductions. Participants had an opportunity to introduce themselves, interact with one another and share their expectations for the camp.

The community alumnae then took over the day's sessions. They engaged the young people on **career choices, leadership and decision-making**. The discussions encouraged participants to think critically about their interests, talents and aspirations and to understand the importance of making informed decisions about education and career pathways.

The alumnae also served as positive role models, demonstrating that young people from the community can overcome challenges, pursue education and take up leadership roles.



Indigenous Peoples' Day and Cultural Celebration

A subsequent session began with prayers and meditation, giving participants an opportunity for reflection, gratitude and spiritual preparation. The camp then marked the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples through a special cultural celebration. Cultural leaders facilitated discussions and shared knowledge on indigenous identity, culture, traditions and the importance of preserving indigenous knowledge for future generations. The session provided an important opportunity for young people to appreciate their cultural heritage while reflecting on their role in protecting and promoting their identity. The celebration concluded with a **traditional blessing by community elders**, symbolizing the support, guidance and goodwill of the older generation towards the youth.



Health and Wellbeing Sessions

The camp subsequently focused on health and wellbeing. A team from the **Ministry of Health** facilitated a session on **sexual and reproductive health**, providing young people with an opportunity to receive accurate information and discuss issues affecting their health and wellbeing. This was followed by a session on **sexually transmitted infections (STIs)** facilitated by **Pathways**. Participants were sensitized on STI prevention, the importance of seeking appropriate health services and the need to make responsible and informed decisions. Days for Girls Chumvi facilitated a session on **menstrual hygiene management**. The session addressed menstrual health and hygiene and encouraged young people to approach menstruation as a normal health issue without shame or stigma. The health sessions created an open environment where participants could ask questions and gain practical information that they can apply in their daily lives.



Drug and Substance Abuse

The National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (**NACADA**) facilitated a session on drug and substance abuse. The session enabled participants to understand the risks associated with substance use and its potential effects on health, education, relationships, personal development and future opportunities. Participants were encouraged to make responsible choices and to seek support when faced with challenges related to substance use.

Environmental Conservation and Climate Change

In the afternoon, the **Mazingira Yetu team from Borana Conservancy** facilitated a session on **environmental conservation and climate change**.

The session highlighted the relationship between young people, their communities and the environment. Participants discussed the importance of protecting natural resources, conserving biodiversity and responding to the effects of climate change. The session encouraged the youth to recognize their role as custodians of the environment and to participate in practical conservation initiatives within their communities.

International Youth Day Celebration

A major highlight of the camp was the celebration of **International Youth Day**, which brought together the different partners and stakeholders involved in the camp.

The occasion provided a platform for partners and invited speakers to interact directly with the young people. Speaker after speaker encouraged the youth to work hard, remain focused and pursue their dreams despite the challenges they may encounter. The speakers emphasized the importance of education, discipline, resilience, leadership, positive decision-making and personal responsibility. The celebration also reinforced the message that young people are important agents of change and have an essential role to play in shaping the future of their families and communities.

4. Key Outcomes

The Il Ngwesi Youth Empowerment Camp achieved several important outcomes:

- Young people gained increased knowledge on leadership, career choices and decision-making.
- Participants received information on sexual and reproductive health, STIs and menstrual hygiene.
- Awareness was increased on **GBV, FGM and child marriage** and their impact on young people.
- Participants learned about the risks and consequences of drug and substance abuse.
- The youth gained greater awareness of environmental conservation and climate change.
- The Indigenous Peoples' Day celebration strengthened appreciation of indigenous culture, identity and traditional knowledge.
- Participants had an opportunity to interact with elders, cultural leaders, alumnae, health professionals and partner organizations.
- The camp strengthened networks and collaboration among organizations working to support and empower young people.
- The youth were encouraged to develop a positive attitude towards their future, work hard and remain committed to achieving their dreams.

Participation and Engagement

The residential nature of the camp created an enabling environment for meaningful interaction among participants. Beyond the formal sessions, the young people had opportunities to build friendships, exchange experiences and learn from one another.

The involvement of community alumnae and elders was particularly important because it connected young people with positive role models and local knowledge. Similarly, the participation of government agencies and partner organizations ensured that participants received information from people with relevant expertise.

Lessons Learned

The camp demonstrated that youth empowerment is most effective when young people are given opportunities to learn from multiple perspectives. Combining community knowledge, cultural leadership, professional expertise and peer interaction made the sessions relevant and engaging. The camp also demonstrated the importance of creating safe spaces where young people can openly discuss sensitive issues such as sexual and reproductive health, GBV, FGM, child marriage and substance abuse. The participation of partners further demonstrated the value of collaboration in addressing the different challenges affecting young people.

Conclusion

The **Il Ngwesi Youth Empowerment Camp**, organized by Mukogodo Girls Empowerment Program from **7th to 13th August 2026**, provided a valuable platform for young people to learn, reflect, interact and develop skills that can contribute to their personal growth and community development.

Through sessions on leadership, careers, health, gender-based violence, harmful practices, substance abuse, environmental conservation and indigenous culture, participants were equipped with knowledge and encouraged to make positive and informed choices.

The celebrations of the **International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples and International Youth Day** added significance to the programme by reinforcing the importance of culture, identity, youth participation and leadership.

MGEP appreciates all the partners(ICA UK, local consevancies, MOH and others) facilitators, cultural leaders, elders, alumnae and participants who contributed to the success of the camp. Continued investment in similar youth programmes will be important in nurturing confident, informed and empowered young people who can become positive change-makers in their communities.



