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## Background on Agnes Pareyio 2005 United Nations in Kenya Person of the Year



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### For her outstanding contribution to the national efforts to eradicate FGM and under-age marriage

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Ms. Agnes Pareyio born in Narok District. She has a long history of sensitizing her community on the need to eradicate FGC and early marriage. In the 1980s, she was the Maendeleo ya Wanawake Narok District Coordinator as well as a nominated councilor to the Narok County Council, a position she still holds to date. She has been invited by both electronic and print media houses to discuss her work.

Agnes is the coordinator of Tasaru Ntomonok Initiative (TNI), a Community Based Organization in Narok District, which facilitates the design of sustainable mechanisms for eliminating Female Genital Cutting (FGC), provides rehabilitation for victims of FGC and sensitizes and mobilizes religious/community leaders to advocate for the elimination of FGC. TNI also promotes the education of the girl child, basic reproductive health services and HIV/AIDS prevention campaign.

Agnes greatest contribution to her community is to save girls escaping FGC and early marriage in a community where such practices are deep-rooted. One of the latest and saddest cases of early marriage is of a 9-year-old girl to a 45-year-old man. Agnes was tipped about the wedding and alerted the Provincial Administration, who arrested the girl's father soon after the wedding. The man has since then been prosecuted and jailed.

Tasaru Rescue Center currently has over 40 girls in primary and secondary schools. In collaboration with the relevant authorities, TNI reconciles the girls with their families and facilitates their re-integration into communities. TNI has so far reconciled 88 girls and continues to cater for their school fees. She has initiated income generating activities which partly support the center.

Agnes has advocated for the Alternative Rites of Passage, and over 350 girls have graduated from childhood to womanhood with the blessings from parents and elders. She has initiated income-generating activities, which partly support the center. She has also worked with reformed circumcisers and has helped them to join women groups.

Single handedly, Agnes has brought the rescue center and the issues on FGC and early marriage to the attention of partners outside Kenya. She made a presentation on FGC and early marriage in an international forum in September this year.

In selecting Agnes as the UN Person of the Year, UN will recognize her consistent and fruitful endeavors to end gender inequality.