

Tool Eight:

Days of Praise of Grandmothers

DIFFICULTY: ●●○○○

FOR: ORGANIZATIONS

Days of Praise of Grandmothers is a powerful community engagement tool used within the Grandmother Project's (GMP) Change through Culture's Girls' Holistic Development (GHD) program in Senegal. It serves as a means to celebrate and recognize the pivotal role of grandmothers and senior women in shaping social norms related to girls' education and well-being. This tool is powerful because it harnesses cultural respect for elders and their influence to catalyze positive change within communities. Combining a cultural ritual with a learning activity is a core component of GMP's Change through Culture approach, and it can be easily adapted to other cultural contexts, making it a versatile and effective tool for community development and social change worldwide.

BASICS:

When: Days of Praise of Grandmothers are typically organized periodically throughout the program, depending on community preferences and schedules. These events are usually held during daylight hours.

Time Needed: The duration of each Days of Praise of Grandmothers can vary but typically lasts for one full day, including various activities and ceremonies.

Materials: Traditional instruments (drums, flutes, etc.), community gathering space, decorative materials (flowers, banners, etc.), and writing materials for documenting discussions and agreements.

Objective: The objective of Days of Praise of Grandmothers is to celebrate and honor the role of grandmothers and senior women in the community. It serves as a platform for recognizing their authority, wisdom, and cultural significance. Simultaneously, it creates an opportunity for intergenerational dialogue, consensus-building, and the initiation of positive change related to girls' education and well-being.

STEPS:

1. Preparation:

- * Identify a suitable date and time for the event in consultation with the community.
- * Gather traditional instruments, decorative materials, and any necessary logistics.
- * Invite community members, including grandmothers, senior women, traditional leaders, local musicians, elected officials, and teachers.

2. Opening Ceremony:

- * Start with a formal opening ceremony, which may include speeches, traditional songs, and rituals to honor grandmothers.
- * Emphasize the importance of the event and the role of grandmothers in the community.

3. Songs of Praise:

- * Local musicians and community members perform songs dedicated to grandmothers, celebrating their wisdom and contributions.

4. Community Dialogue:

- * Facilitate open discussions on issues related to girls' education, child marriage, teen pregnancy, and other cultural practices (like female circumcision/cutting).
- * Encourage grandmothers, community leaders, and others to share their perspectives and experiences.
- * Highlight the need for collective consensus and action.

5. Recommendations and Agreements:

- * Formulate recommendations and agreements based on the discussions.
- * Identify specific actions to be taken by families, community leaders, teachers, and NGO partners to support girls' well-being.

6. Closing Ceremony:

- * Conclude the event with a closing ceremony, reaffirming the importance of

grandmothers and their commitment to positive change.

- * Document key agreements and action items.

7. Follow-up:

- * After the event, ensure that the agreed-upon actions are implemented.
- * Continue to engage with the community and monitor progress.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

Ensure that the event respects and values cultural traditions and norms.

Foster an atmosphere of respect and open dialogue during discussions.

Encourage active participation from all community members, regardless of age or gender.

Document the event's outcomes and agreements for future reference and accountability.

Use local musicians and cultural elements to make the event engaging and enjoyable.

Maintain ongoing communication and support for the agreed-upon actions to ensure lasting change in the community.

[Source: Days of Praise of Grandmothers is an integral part of the Girls Holistic Development program at the Grandmother Project \(GMP\) in Senegal.](#)