



**SAFARI  
DOCTORS**

# SAFARI DOCTORS YOUTH HEALTH AMBASSADORS

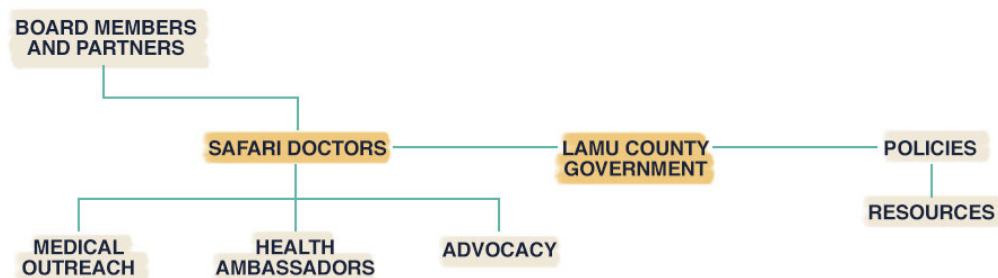


## ABOUT SAFARI DOCTORS

Safari Doctors was registered as a community-based organization in Lamu, Kenya in 2015. The dedicated team of 9 staff and medical volunteers work tirelessly to provide healthcare services where otherwise there would be none.

The indigenous Aweer and Bajuni communities number around 20,000 people and live within the archipelago and on the mainland near the border with Somalia. Neglect and insecurity continue to impede their right to access healthcare.

## NODEL OF OUR WORK



Each month, the team sets sail in a boat loaded with medicines and conducts mobile clinics across at least 8 villages. Together with regular outreach work, the team reaches up to 800 patients a month. In these communities, child immunizations are up, skin conditions are down, communicable diseases have halved, double the number of expectant mothers are attending antenatal appointments, and demand for family planning has tripled.

Safari Doctors' mission is to provide affordable and appropriate healthcare to marginalized communities in Lamu County. The vision is to have thriving communities in remote settings, with adequate access to affordable health solutions and improved livelihoods. Join our journey for change!

In 2017, the UN in Kenya awarded the Safari Doctors team the United Nations Person of the Year award, "for the outstanding efforts and commendable work providing medical care to marginalized communities in the far reaching areas of Lamu."

## CONTEXT



In Kenya, nearly all women and men engage in sex at least once before age 25, with 95% and 93.4, respectively, reporting having had sex at least once by age 24. The 12-14 age range is a critical period for the onset of sexual activity. Other risky behaviors of alcohol, drugs and sex without condoms also begin to rise at this time, which also coincides with the first wave of youth dropping out of the school system. Of youth ages 12-14 who have had sex, 72.1% of have done so without a condom, and 70.5% never use a condom. Furthermore recent research shows that the adolescent brain is particularly sensitive to violence, marginalization, and isolation, and that traumatic experiences as an adolescent, if untreated, can lead to debilitating struggles with depression and anxiety that last for years. (Kenya AIDS Indicator Survey 2012).

In Lamu specifically, the youth are caught in a throughway that straddles drugs, poverty, promiscuity and radicalization. In the absence of a right of passage for its youth, the Lamu community has an increasing number of young men moving into adulthood with minimal foresight. The county's education standards are among the lowest in the country, and many families live below the poverty line, leaving little room to strategize on how to target vulnerable populations. A lack of strategy currently leaves young men, the cornerstones of Lamu's community, susceptible to dangerous sexual health choices, substance abuse, school drop-out, and radicalization.

There is very little and outdated data that captures the full magnitude of this conundrum. As we dive into the modern times with modern challenges, we have a generation that is trapped in conservative frames with limited outlets that address these issues. The role of health cannot be underestimated in poverty alleviation and the pursuit of self- actualization.

## SAFARI DOCTORS YOUTH HEALTH AMBASSADORS PROGRAM



The Safari Doctors youth Health Ambassador program maps and mentors youth on health and well-being to foster community resilience. Safari Doctors currently has a cohort of 10 male and female Health Ambassadors across 9 villages covering Lamu East. The Health Ambassadors are qualified by their respective communities and are all aged 18-25. The program offers a support system through peer-to-peer mentorship and capacity building through monthly trainings on a tailored curriculum that includes but is not limited to:

- First Aid Training
- Harm Reduction
- Reproductive Health
- Health and Sanitation
- Leadership
- Good Citizenry

## ACTIVITIES



Mapping of youths on health practices and lifestyle choices

Peer-to-peer mentorship training

Interactive workshops for youth on health related topics

Using direct health talks with community elders and teachers

Partnering with established youth groups in promoting well-being using sports

Establishing safe spaces and discussion forums

Using social media to inform the target population on well-being and primary healthcare

Creating a hotline for sexual health and harm reduction information

Using print and visual media to inform and engage the youth



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