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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AACS	Area Advisory Committees
ACRWC	African Convention on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AG	Attorney General
AGM	Annual General Meeting
BOM	Board of Management
CHVs	Community Health Workers
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CREAW	Centre for Rights Education and Awareness
CUC	Court Users Committee
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender Based Violence
IASC	Interagency Standing Committee
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KDHS	Kenya Demographic and Household Survey
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KNPS	Kenya National Police Service
LVCT	Liverpool Voluntary Counselling and Testing Centre
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Medical Officer of Health
NGEC	National Gender and Equality Commission
P3	Police Form 3
PRC	Post Rape Care Form
PTA	Parents-Teachers Association
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
UN	United Nations
VAW	Violence Against Women

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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The participation and dedication of the various respondents interviewed gave content and form to this assessment. Their invaluable contribution of ideas, their time and the eagerness to share their experiences makes for a great foundation on which the recommendations of this assessment will be implemented within the County, in collaboration with various actors.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Center for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW) undertook a rapid multi-sectoral assessment of Gender based violence (GBV) in Kitui and Nyeri Counties in August and September 2019. This report brings out structural, systemic and environmental challenges limiting effective implementation of GBV laws in Nyeri County and reflects on ways in which women are included or excluded in various decisions geared towards addressing gender based violence from the grassroots to the County Headquarters. The report further outlines how the community at large is involved in addressing GBV and provides a discussion on community perceptions on the accountability of public authorities in implementing GBV laws and policies. The main content of the report covers the background context of Nyeri County in regard to GBV prevention and response, key findings, conclusions and recommendations.

In Nyeri County, violence against women (mainly wife battering) and neglect of children and what appears to be a calamitous case of absentee fathers stick out as significantly rampant forms and contributors to gender based violence in Nyeri County. The assessment revealed a vibrant multi-sectoral gender-based violence working group at the County headquarter level, but also a clear gap in reporting and documenting of GBV cases especially in the interior parts of the County. This poses a challenge in determining the prevalence and impact of gender based violence in its various forms as well as appreciating existing mechanisms for GBV prevention and response. A majority of women interviewed were not conversant with the laws and policies for prevention and response to various forms of GBV. While Nyeri County has been on the receiving end of negative press depicting women as the main perpetrators of intimate partner violence, especially at the domestic front, in comparison to other Counties in Kenya<sup>1</sup>, interviews with both law enforcement agents and the community members, revealed that women continue to suffer disproportionately in the hands of their male partners both at home and in social places. Most respondents were confident that educating women and supporting them to cascade the knowledge to the villages would greatly facilitate the much needed awareness on GBV prevention and response in the community. Further, mobilizing a multi-sectoral forum that convenes regularly at both the county and sub-county levels could go a long way in ensuring and holistic prevention of and response to GBV. Placing women at the centre

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, a story reported in the Daily Nation on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2012 of a man called Simon Kiguta who had allegedly been attacked by his wife, Julia Wairimu, turned out that the attack was perpetrated by other people and not his wife. While there was a lot of media coverage on the arrest and prosecution of Julia, her acquittal did not receive much media attention, hence maintaining the initial wrong impression that she had attacked him.

of this kind of structure and other initiatives, will not only increase their knowledge on GBV response legal and policy provisions, but will also empower them to hold various duty bearers accountable. Opportunities such as the presence of women in the council of elders, religious institutions and within the *nyumba kumi*<sup>2</sup> structure serve as entry points to both community education and action that ensures that gender crimes are processed through the legal system. These recommendation came up from virtually all the key informant interviewed and focus group discussions. Working with the National Police service to implement the provisions on the SoPs for prevention and response to GBV will also go a long way in addressing complexities around reporting, prosecution and protection of survivors of gender crimes.

## **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN KENYA**

Whether in education, employment, land rights or seeking health, women tend to be disadvantaged in development across many societies. This kind of generalized discrimination against women and girls produces inequality, denial of rights and quite often gender based violence in various forms. According to the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender based violence is,

'an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e. gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private'<sup>3</sup>

This report adopted the definition of GBV applied by the UN General Assembly Resolution on the Elimination of Domestic Violence Against Women,

'...any act...that results in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life' ...also includes economic deprivation and isolation which may cause eminent harm to safety, health and well-being'<sup>4</sup>.

Gender based violence is classified as one of the most prevalent forms of violation of human rights in the world, undermining the rights and dignity of many women because many cultural beliefs and social institutions normalize violence against women. The National Gender and

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<sup>2</sup> This is a community security/policing structure embedded within the County Commissioner's Office

<sup>3</sup> [https://gbvguidelines.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015-IASC-Gender-based-Violence-Guidelines\\_lo-res.pdf](https://gbvguidelines.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015-IASC-Gender-based-Violence-Guidelines_lo-res.pdf). Pg.

<sup>4</sup>

Equality Commission (NGEC), cites poor education and economic dependency on men as factors that put women more at risk of Gender Based Violence across the world (NGEC, 2015).

Despite the existence of global and regional protocols, laws and policies, GBV remains significantly high in most African Countries. For instance, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, sexual violence has been reported as a war crime with over 200,000 cases occurring since 1996 while in Malawi, at least 50% of school-going children were sexually harassed in school (IRC, 2014). According to the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (2014) 45% of women aged 15 to 59 years have experiences some form of gender based violence while 21% of Kenyan women have been sexually abused. Most of the perpetrators are family members and most cases of violence towards women being committed by their intimate partners. Gender based violence in Kenya, like in other parts of the world, is rooted on the power imbalance between men and women.

Children continue to bear a heavy brunt neglect and exploitation with sexual abuse against girls being the most common form. According to experts, child sexual abuse in Kenya is perceived to be influenced by among other things, developmental issues, economic, social and gender inequities which are exacerbated by peer pressure, drug and substance abuse, orphanhood, poverty, social media influence a culture of silence on sexual matters and huge gender disparities. While debates about age-appropriate<sup>5</sup> comprehensive sexuality education for out-of-school and in-school adolescents remain inconclusive, many children face enormous risks of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) which contravenes both national child protection normative frameworks as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the African Convention on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC).<sup>6</sup> Reporting and redress on gender based violence against children largely depends on adults who are guardians of the minors at home and in institutions such as schools, religious setting, children's home and/or orphanages and so on.

Gender based violence in its various forms impacts on the health and well – being of survivors, especially women in significantly severe ways. For instance, across the world, UNFPA (2008) reports that more women die as a result of GBV than cancer, and physical violence leads to poor health and lowers participation of women in the economic front. Sexual abuse leads to

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<sup>5</sup> The national adolescent sexual and reproductive health policy (2015) recognises children's right to information on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and states that it shall support the provision of age-appropriate adolescent SRH information,

<sup>6</sup> C K Wangamati et al. Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters 2019;27(1):1–13 Sexualised violence against children: a review of laws and policies in Kenya

infections, unwanted pregnancies and even death. In some health facilities, reproductive health programs for young people usually assume that sexual activity was a voluntary engagement and therefore turn a blind eye to sexual violations. Even some health professionals fail to recognize the health consequences of GBV and they view these cases as a social problem rather than a health one that requires comprehensive medical attention.

The Inter-agency Steering Committee(IASC) recommends a multi-sectoral approach to GBV that ensures the active involvement of all members of affected communities; including the leadership and meaningful participation of women and girls —alongside men and boys— in all preparedness, design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation activities.

### **Gender based violence: The Legal and policy framework in Kenya<sup>7</sup>**

According to the National Gender and Equality Commission(NGEC), Kenya has made significant progress in putting in place legal and policy frameworks, that are either specific to or speak to some dimensions of gender-based violence. Kenya has ratified international instruments on the protection and advancement of women rights. At the national level the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 has a very progressive Bill of Rights (Chapter 4) which prohibits discrimination of any person on any ground including sex, race, pregnancy, marital status, health status, ethnic or social origin, color, age, disability, religion. Aside from the provisions in the constitution there are other legislations such as the Children’s Act (2001), Sexual Offenses Act (2006), the Matrimonial Property Act (2013) and the Protection against Domestic Violence Act (PADV, 2015) among others that define and criminalize various forms of GBV. Furthermore, there are specific programs on Human Rights, Gender based Violence and violence against women (VAW) being implemented by various organizations across the country.

Kenya is also a signatory to various sub-regional, regional, and international instruments that address Gender based violence. Whereas civil society lobby groups have advocated for revising criminal procedures to make it easier to prosecute offenders, law enforcement institutions suffer numerous challenges such as lack of proper funding, corruption, poor coordination all of conspire to make it difficult for them to enforce criminal law more effectively. Communities and survivors are also mostly unaware of the law or they face societal barriers that make it near impossible for them to exercise their rights and access justice.

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<sup>7</sup> A comprehensive list of the laws and policies on GBV is can be found under annex 1 of this report.



Through the vision 2030 and Medium Term Plans (MTPs), Kenya also aspires to put up legal frameworks that are geared towards elimination of GBV and establish programmes for gender equality. Additionally, Kenya subscribes to the Sustainable Development Goals, and Goal 5, entails promotion of gender equality and women empowerment (which include addressing all forms of GBV). A Gender Based Violence Prevention and response Policy launched in 2014, several hotlines launched by various stakeholders, mainly in Nairobi, do not seem to have much impact, due to their limited coverage and disjointed dissemination. Perhaps one of the most practical frameworks so far, is the National Police Service (NPS) Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) launched in January 2019<sup>8</sup>. A comprehensive set of principles for handling GBV such as safety, respect, confidentiality, ethics and integrity are outlined. These SoPs, borrowed heavily from previous multi-sectoral SoPs formulated by a Task Force set up by the Attorney General as per the provisions of Section 47 of the Sexual Offences Act (SOA).

This inundation of laws and policies does not seem to change the situation significantly for GBV survivors in Kenya. NGEC reports reveal huge monetary and psychological burdens that individuals and families have to contend with in addressing medical related complications with the least cost estimated at Ksh, 16,464 (\$160) to the family or the victim of GBV<sup>9</sup>.

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) undertook a campaign dubbed *Keeping the Promise; End GBV* across various counties in Kenya. The aim of the campaign was to ‘seek opportunities for strengthening GBV prevention and response strategies, interrogating the capacity of various actors to effectively deal with GBV in all its manifestations....’<sup>10</sup> NGEC has further provided prototype frameworks for drafting GBV prevention and response laws at the County level, aimed at increasing the capacities for counties to fulfil their mandate to their citizenry in this regard.

While the steps we have taken are significant, we still have a long road to walk... All forms of violence against women must stop -- from the use of rape as a weapon of war to the use of violence by a husband to terrorize his wife within her own home. UN Deputy Secretary General Asha-Rose Migiro

Many questions still remain unanswered in regard to effective implementation of GBV prevention and response policies and laws; are these laws, policies and programs having an impact in protecting women and other survivors from violence while at the same time

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<sup>8</sup> World Bank, Kenya GBV Service Gap Analysis at the County Level

<sup>9</sup> NGEC(2016) Gender-Based Violence in Kenya: The Cost of Providing Service; A projection based on Selected Service Delivery

<sup>10</sup> NGEC(2015) Keeping the Promise; End GBV, Duty Bearer’s Handbook

guaranteeing justice for those who have been violated? What are the gaps, both at the National and County government levels that need to be addressed? Do the public and policy makers appreciate GBV as a major problem, which has negative implications on national development? Are there sufficient institutions and mechanisms in place to address the vice? While this rapid assessment addressed only some of these questions, many others remain as ‘enterprise-wide’ reflections that Gender Based Violence responders have to bear in mind at all times.

## METHODOLOGY

The assessment was undertaken in a participatory and inclusive way, using mainly qualitative methods and quantitative methods to a minimal extent. Purposive sampling procedure was employed in the selection of respondents, who included both individuals and institutions to be visited/interviewed under the various services offered for GBV Response as shown below:

Type of interview	Entity	Respondents
2 FGDs	Women only	20
1 FGD	Cultural/Religious Leaders	15
1 FGD	Police Officers	7
<b>Total FGD Respondents</b>		<b>42</b>
Key Informant Interviews	Children’s Officer	1
	County Speaker	1
	County Commissioner	1
	Judiciary	1
	MoH	1
	NCPWD Official	1
	Probation Officer	1
	TSC Official	
<b>Total KII interviews</b>		<b>7</b>
<b>Total interviews</b>		<b>11</b>

Table 1: List of Respondents

Key questions asked aimed at assessing GBV knowledge and perception (including the implementation of policies and normative framework applicable in the county), available GBV services and needs, opportunities for inclusion of women in decision-making as well as mechanisms for redress and accountability in GBV cases. Information relating to the structural and contextual reality in each county was gathered through **review of literature** and

corroborated with community leaders (female and male) who had more hands-on experience with GBV situation within their communities.

**Collection of both quantitative and qualitative data** was undertaken through face-to-face interviews. Notes, pictures and some FGDs recordings were done and observations made during the interactions.

The main tools used were semi-structured questionnaires which guided Key Informant for the selected respondents and FGD guides for each of the groups involved in the discussion (see annexed samples). **Focus Group Discussions** were undertaken for various community groups (ensuring single-sex FGDs to ensure effective participation. The key FGDs included women Group representatives, representatives from police gender desks and a group of cultural/religious leaders.



Women-only FGD with a section of women in Nyeri town. Photo by Joshua/CREAW:

## FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the survey as shown in the FGDs and KII interviews. It highlights the views and experiences of the respondents and their interaction with different institutions that handle GBV in Nyeri County. It also presents the knowledge, awareness and responsibilities of different County and National government officials and their efforts to manage GBV. The findings show that whereas devolution has opened up Nyeri County's potential for development, GBV is still rampant in several areas and culture still plays a key role in failure to access to justice for survivors of GBV in this county.

## Overview of Nyeri County

According to the projections by KNBS, 2018, Nyeri County has a population of 845,863 (male - 49% and female - 51%). Majority of the people living in Nyeri County are from the Kikuyu Community and the main economic activities are farming, both for subsistence and cash crops, such as growing tea and coffee maize, beans and assorted vegetables and tubers. The County is divided into eight administrative sub counties namely; Kieni East, Kieni West, Mathira East, Mathira West, Nyeri Central, Mukurweini, Tetu and Nyeri South, and further subdivided into 21 divisions, 69 locations and 256 sub-locations<sup>5</sup>



Fig.1: Map of Nyeri County (Source: CREAM)

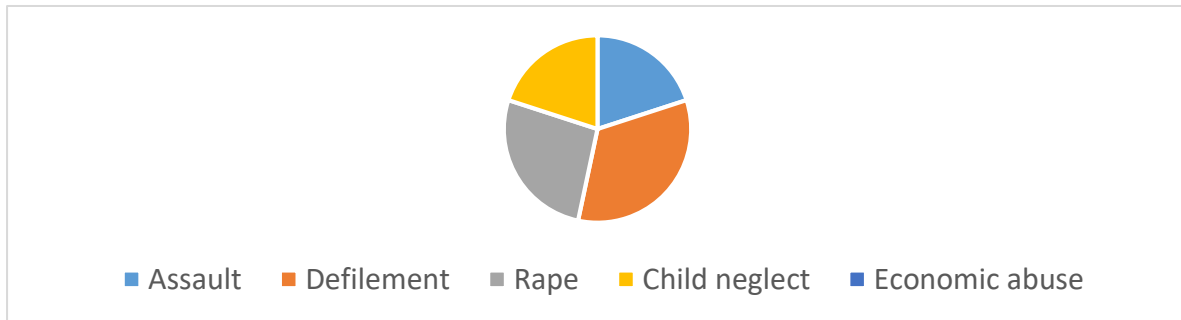
In its current County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP 2018-2022)) Nyeri acknowledges that *'improving equity in gender issues and reducing gender disparities will benefit all sectors and thus contribute to sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction and social injustices'* but does not mention violence or gender-based violence either as a challenge or an issue that needs to be addressed.

## Gender- Based Violence in Nyeri County

Whereas cases of child neglect were reported to be the most prevalent forms of GBV in Nyeri County, there were reports of defilement, rape, assault and economic abuse of women. There were also reports of deaths as a result of GBV assaults where women have been reported to be killed by their husbands. Unlike what is commonly reported in the media that men are the majority of the victims of GBV in Nyeri County (as portrayed by the picture below), it emerged that women and girls take the biggest brunt of GBV as compared to men and boys. Although

there are many offices that work towards prevention and management of GBV in Nyeri County, the institutions that directly deal with survivors are ill-equipped. For instance, only the Nyeri Provincial Referral Hospital has a gender response unit. Other low level hospitals are not equipped to deal with GBV cases. These hospitals and the police that conduct investigations also lack forensic equipment that can enable them to adequately conduct investigations on GBV cases.

Diagram 1: Prevalence of GBV by sample responses



While gender based violence cases are reportedly on the rise in Nyeri County, the assessment reveals a serious dearth of key GBV response services including rescue centres and safe houses where survivors can get refuge. There are also few support organizations that can provide psychosocial support to survivors and the assessment did not find any helplines/hotlines that GBV survivors can call for help. Enforcement of laws to curb gender crimes still faces numerous challenges of resources and attitudes (among community members and laws enforcers). Many cases go unreported due to socio-cultural factors and lack of understanding of the legal mechanism of handling GBV. Poverty is also a driver of poor reporting of cases while informal resolution mechanisms are also used in many parts such as Tetu and Narumoru. At times there are complications during arrest and gathering evidence which slow down the process of prosecution of perpetrators.

A positive recent development is the setting up a well resources Children’s Court in the county which handles crimes against children in a timely manner. The existence of a functional children’s services offices also seemed to serve the county well, considering the rampant nature of child neglect and crimes against children. The multi-sectoral GBV working group is a structure that can catalyse a more holistic GBV response in the county.

## Drivers of GBV in Nyeri County

A Section of Nyeri Town. Photo by Joshua/CREAW



### Socio-cultural drivers

In Nyeri, like other parts of Kenya, women are viewed as subordinate to men and there are culturally expected behaviours of a woman, and more so, a wife. These expectations are passed across generations and emphasised during marriage processes such as dowry payment. For instance, the FGD with the religious and cultural leaders clearly brought the manner in which a woman is categorically reminded that they shall *'have their grey hair shaved'*<sup>11</sup> at their matrimonial home, and even given the gift of a bed that symbolises the end of her accommodation in the home where she was brought up. The Kikuyu word for a woman, *mutumia*, also implies, *the one who does not speak* (about family secrets). Under such an arrangement, many women suffer in silence, and some end up killed by their abusive spouses and/or intimate partners. There is also the tendency to opt for informal resolution of GBV cases, when situations get aggravated. This is also common in cases of child abuse, where the perpetrators are relatives and it was considered a shame to take them to court. Examples given showed that in Tetu and Narumoru, this practice is quite common and perpetrators have the choice to decide on what compensation to give to the survivors' families. In such cases where perpetrators are family members, witnesses are often unwilling to give evidence for fear of known and unknown reprisals. Settlement of cases out of court was also reported to be a common practice especially if a perpetrator offers some 'compensation' often in the form of cash or livestock. This option is considered more attractive given the fact that even if the perpetrators is found guilty, he or she could be jailed but there no compensation to survivors unless they file a civil suit seeking reparation.

Cases that are reported to the police sometimes either take too long to before prosecution or end up being dismissed by the court for lack of evidence and the perpetrators get acquitted, due to incomplete investigations. This contributes to an overreliance on cultural and religious elders to address even criminal GBV cases such as sexual violations, which is against the law.

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<sup>11</sup> This signifies that the woman must maintain her marriage till old age, at all costs.

There were reports of a serious drug and alcohol abuse problem throughout the County, which have contributed to an increase in cases of GBV, with reports that some men sexually abuse their daughters and viciously attack their wives. Given the societal expectation to submit to their husbands and sustain marriages at all costs, some women were reported to have suffered mental breakdowns and/or turned violent (onto their husbands/partners) following many years of perseverance abuse. The rampant neglect of children also increases their vulnerability to GBV both at home and in institutions such as schools, religions places and market.

### **Economic Drivers**

While the main economic activity in Nyeri County is agriculture, complemented by trading, women do not have equal access and control of land even though they contribute the largest portion of farm labour. Most married women do not own land which impacts of their options to access credit for businesses. Due to the high incidences of alcohol and drug abuse mainly among (young) men in Nyeri County, women appear to shoulder a disproportionate burden of economic sustenance of families. Some respondents narrated incidences in which young men waylay women returning from farms and snatch their wages (or rob then violently), or husbands who threaten their wives and force them to surrender their earnings, often, leaving very little or nothing for the family's sustenance, which further drives the families deeper into poverty, increasing the numbers of neglected children in many parts of the County.

### **Legal pathways of addressing GBV in Nyeri County**

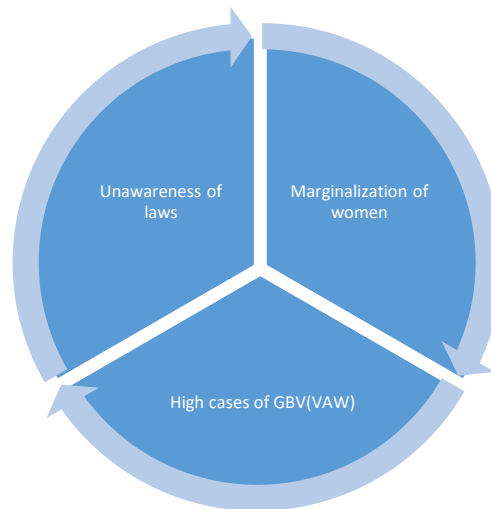
The assessment revealed that in Nyeri, like many other communities, gender crimes are addressed in an uncoordinated manner. Asked if they are aware of any laws on prevention and management of GBV most respondents seemed to know something about the Sexual Offences Act (2006)<sup>12</sup> and the Children's Act (2001). The most important duty bearers were identified as the chiefs (all the way to the county commissioner's office), the police, the judiciary, the children's officer, teachers as well as religious leaders. Many respondents expressed the need for the police officers assigned to the Gender (crimes) desks in various police stations, to improve on how they handle GBV cases especially in regard to carrying out thorough investigations. Delays in prosecution of GBV cases was cited as a major challenge which dampens the community's confidence in the legal system to address GBV in the county.

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<sup>12</sup> Some female respondents were under the impression that this law provides for castration of sexual offenders, which they seemed impressed with.

## Challenges in implementation of GBV laws and policies in Nyeri County

Diagram 2: Summary of Key issues



In regard to the high number of GBV cases, the assessment found various structural, technical as well as personal barriers to effective implementation of policies and laws that address gender based violence in Nyeri as outlined below:

### a) Family-Related challenges

Owing to the cultural norms and beliefs that still regard women as inferior to men, the casual manner in which the community often handles GBV cases further constrains women and girls and puts pressure on them not to report violations to authorities. This is more likely to happen in situations where the perpetrator is the husband or father, considered as the head of the family and the ultimate decision maker. Moreover, reporting these cases often means that survivors will still come back and live with their perpetrators in the same households and this puts their lives at further risks. There are no well-resourced rescue facilities in most areas, which would offer safe shelter to survivors who chose to report violations and pursue justice.

The assessment revealed that where families have broken or are dysfunctional, women may leave their young children behind, which predisposes them to further neglect and possible abuse.

*'Some fathers turn against their young children, especially girls and sexually abuse them and threaten them into silence. One such case happened in Nyeri town where a ten-year old girl was repeatedly defiled by their farm hand and when she reported to the father, he also defiled her, leaving her with a fractured hip. This case was reported to the police but the girl was threatened and coached by the father to change her statement and there was no arrest that was made. A female respondent in Nyeri Town FGD.'*



Girls who are brought into their step-fathers' homes when their mothers get married are also likely to suffer sexual abuse in the hands of either the step fathers or other male relatives. The assessment found this to be a common form of abuse against girls in Nyeri County with many mothers failing to take any action to protect the affected children. Some women were even reported to have turned against their abused daughters accusing them of seducing their fathers into having affairs with them.

The assessment also revealed that poverty within the family, complicates the reporting process especially in remote areas where the resources available have to be split between family sustenance and paying for commuting to the nearest police station and/or hospital. Where an affected family has to also facilitate law enforcement agents to make arrests, the motivation to report is further reduced. With these challenges, many survivors end up suffering the impact of the violation in silence as the perpetrators go scot-free, which ends up emboldens them and sustains a cycle of violence and impunity in the communities.

#### **b. Schools and other institutions**

While the assessment did not cover schools, the Teacher's Service Commission and other responds confirmed that abuse cases (mainly sexual abuse against girls) were reported in institutions of learning with perpetrator being fellow students, teachers and other non-teaching staff. Whereas teachers report some of these cases to the authorities, many others go unreported especially if a teachers is the perpetrator, who often threatens and warns the survivor against reporting. Furthermore, school- going children may not know whom to report to when they are being abused, especially if the family environment is not conducive. In cases where children attend schools that are far from home, parents may hire the services of motorcycle riders to take their children to and from school. It emerged that some of these motorcycle riders sometimes sexually abuse children entrusted to them. There were also reports of rape cases in the universities (Karatina and Dedan Kimathi Universities) and other institutions like children's homes.

Fear of reprisal, limited knowledge on the reporting mechanisms, and the stigma associated with sexual abuse, stood out as key impediments to seeking legal redress for most survivors of gender based violence.

#### **c. The Kenya Police Service**

The Police Service is also not adequately resourced to facilitate robust GBV prevention and response actions according to their Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) launched early

2019. For instance, some of the officers assigned at the gender crimes offices are not fully equipped to handle GBV cases effectively and some sub counties have one police van that may not fully serve police movement in response to various crimes reported. Supply of stationery and important documents such as the P3 forms is inadequate leading to situations where individual Officers on duty have to pay for photocopying services to produce forms for survivors. Oftentimes, survivors may lack the money for transport or lunch so they rely on the Police Officers to facilitate them. There are also cases of survivors of defilement who need accommodation and the Police Officers are forced to take these children to female cells so that they can temporarily stay with inmates as they wait for them to get alternative accommodation to keep them away from the perpetrators. These circumstances combined significantly infringe on a survivor's safety dignity and access to justice.

In situations where prosecution has commenced and the court grants the perpetrator bail, they may disappear leaving the investigating officer with the tough task of tracing them to be able to make progress on the case. This contributes to significant delays of the case and frustration to the survivors and witnesses.

The assessment also revealed challenges that arise during the process of investigation and gathering of evidence if survivors change their narrative or they drop the cases entirely. Witnesses sometimes opt out of for fear of being victimized by the perpetrators or even the community that perceive legal sanctions too harsh for gender crimes such as wife battering. There are also instances where perpetrators threaten or compromise police officers investigating certain cases, which further obstructs justice for survivors. Some GBV cases are settled informally forcing the police to abandon the prosecution process as was reported by respondents from Tetu and Narumoru. Transfers of investigating officers to other stations also often derail the investigation and prosecution of gender crimes.

#### **d. Hospitals and health facilities**

One of the biggest challenges health facilities face is a lack of comprehensive gender violence recovery services, especially in lower level hospitals. At the time of the assessment, the only gender violence recovery centre available was at the Nyeri County Referral Hospital. This makes it difficult for survivors who live far away from the vicinity of the referral hospital. The personnel handling GBV cases are also often overwhelmed because, as it emerged, apart from

attending to survivors of GBV, they also have to fill in both the PRC and P3 forms<sup>13</sup> and go to court to testify when needed. Given the fact that there is no calendar for specific days to go to court, the medical personnel are unable to schedule their workload efficiently.

There are also limited services for psychosocial support within the health facilities and this impacts negatively on the survivors, though there are mechanisms for referral to other service providers outside the health facilities. This general lack of a one-stop service provision facility can be emotionally draining because survivors have to give account of their experience to different people over and over again. It was also reported that most of the women admitted in the mental facility at the hospital had a long history of suffering domestic violence. While this assessment could not ascertain the extent of the psychological impact of GBV, burden of care that a majority of the women in Nyeri face as survivors of domestic violence /discrimination, while also shouldering family responsibilities, can take a toll on their mental health.

Some community members reported that sometimes the health facility reports (on P3 or PRC) do not always match and the witness testimonies, which posed challenges of coherence in the prosecution process.

#### **e. The Judiciary**

Except for matters of sexual assault against children, a lot of other gender based violence cases are not brought to court. The court handled many cases of assault as shown in the table below, though further analysis would be necessary to identify gender crimes processed through the courts.

Some of the reasons for not opting for the court process include fear of known and unknown repercussions as well as the stigma and ridicule that survivors and witnesses face. Sometimes investigations may also be weak or inconclusive making it hard to sustain as successful prosecution. There is also lack of privacy in the process of prosecution and survivors may shy away because they fear publicity from the public and the media. In Nyeri, there is a vibrant Court Users Committee, open to any institution that has an interest in court business, which creates an opportunity for actors in GBV response to take an active part in following up how the cases are being handled.

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<sup>13</sup> The Post Rape Care(PRC) form is expected to be adequate on its own in regard to Sexual violations but most health providers still fill in both the PRC and P3 forms, which creates more work and could delay the pursuit of justice for survivors.

## **The place of women in the implementation of GBV laws and policies**

Whereas the law recognises inclusion of marginalised groups such as women, PWDs, children and youth in decision making processes, there is little effort by policy and law makers to involve women in these processes. There are 12 women nominated into the Nyeri County Assembly and the office of the Woman Representative provides an avenue for women to address issues that affect them. Women are therefore, generally not key in the processes of making laws and decisions most institutions, unless in their official capacities, and even then, attention on GBV legislation was not prioritized by these women leaders. There is no specific caucus for women leaders on the issue of GBV and most respondents were not aware of any resources that are allocated for them by the county government, nor are they cognizant of channels that they can use to get any assistance for GBV cases.

Ordinarily, due to cultural beliefs, women may not have a voice at the household level and they are expected to be subordinate to their husbands and abide by the decisions that the husbands make as household heads. The multiple roles that women play in the productive, reproductive and community management activities often limit the amount of time they would have to partake in decision making on issues of gender violence and development in general.

Gender power relations also limit the woman's participation because the men spearhead most meetings and the time scheduling often does not necessarily consider the needs of women, including choosing venues and time schedules that would encourage more women to participate. Inadequate knowledge on their rights and *'how things work'* also makes many women shy away from actively participation discussions even when they happen to be present in decision making forums. Coercion and threats against women, often by their spouses, also inhibits their participation in decision making on gender violence. The assessment revealed that unmarried women and those involved in sex work were even more unlikely to be approached or invited into decision-making fora.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Conclusion**

Addressing gender based violence effectively in Nyeri County will greatly rely on mobilization of actors at all levels of the society including grassroots women's groups, other non-state actors, and various sections of both the national and county governments. The assessment identified some key challenges in awareness of GBV policies and laws and their application as well as coordination of actors to effectively address gender based violence, in all its

manifestations, at all times. While Gender Based Violence, especially wife battering is rampant in Nyeri County, it has not been acknowledged as a significant impediment to the well-being of survivors and to the economic development of the county. This leads to not just normalization of the problem, but also delayed or even denied action, which often has enormous negative impacts on the survivors.

This rapid multi-sectoral assessment provides a vivid picture of not only the absence of systematic initiatives for GBV prevention and response but also a serious dearth of coordination between the various public and private actors mandated to provide services at different levels in this area. Essential services required to effectively provide post-GBV care at health facilities are quite weak outside of the main referral facilities. Social services such as those tasked with safeguarding children and vulnerable people such as persons with disabilities, are under resourced and mainly concentrated in major towns.

While the **National Police Service** has been seeking to improve the manner in which GBV cases are handled, as evidenced by the launch of the SoPs, there are major constraints resources such as vehicles, stationery and investigation equipment/technology, personnel and poor coordination with other actors. All these impact negatively on the effectiveness with which they dispense their mandate on gender crimes prevention and response. While police stations have designated offices or desks where matters of gender are reported, most the officers posted to work at this gender offices are quite young and do not necessarily receive any special training on handling gender based crimes. From the interviews carried out during the assessment some officers were not fully conversant with specific laws addressing GBV such as Matrimonial Property, Protection Against Domestic Violence (PADV) Act etc.

**Women's engagement** was found to be inconsistent and scattered, often based on the individual interests or strengths and not as organized entities. Low engagement of women at grassroots level often lead to poor handling of the GBV cases and personal risks/exposure of those who volunteer to offer support to survivors consequently impacting future reporting. At the community level, cultural beliefs and practices especially around marriage and gender division of labour hold a significant place how women are treated and gender based crimes are generally normalized. Male dominance and oppression is a big stumbling block to women's acquisition and ownership of land and cases of property disinheritance against women are quite common. There is also ignorance of the law and people generally do not clearly understand how they can claim their rights. Many GBV cases are resolved informally and this denies survivors access to justice.

**Poor coordination between the various actors** was quite evident as it emerged that whereas some actors such as the Provincial Referral Hospital and the Judiciary were trying as much as possible to manage and prevent GBV, they are mostly working as stand-alone entities and their efforts to work with other actors are not coordinated.

From the assessment, it is evident that GBV in Nyeri County is as complex as it is in other parts of Kenya and in Africa at large, based on gender inequalities that are complicated by cultural beliefs that subjugate and demean women and girls, perpetuate GBV and protect perpetrators in Nyeri County. The role of religious leaders and the family in promoting informal resolution mechanisms goes to show how casually gender based crimes are handled in this County.

Effective prevention and response to GBV needs a well-planned, coordinated and multi-sectoral effort among stakeholders. This can be achieved through effective collaboration among all stakeholders working in the region including civil society organizations, national government and the County government. The interviews with various stakeholders revealed a good degree of interest from various technical offices and political good to support which such initiatives.

## **2. Recommendations**

Various respondents indicated a high interest in addressing the problem of gender discrimination and violence in their spaces. It is important to utilize this political and social goodwill to undertake interventions that strengthen various structures that have the potential to sustain GBV prevention and response in the County.

### **a) Training and capacity building**

There is need for **training and awareness creation** to increasing knowledge, skills, and abilities to address gender-based violence in the community. This can be done by convening meetings with women, groups, religious and cultural groups and other community – based groups. A good starting point can be through the Village Elders, Chiefs, County Ward officials and representatives of woman groups. Women should also be educated on their rights and civic duties such as public participation on budgeting processes to ensure GBV response is given attention in the county and national governments. **Linking women to economic empowerment opportunities** to reduce their vulnerability to abuse and oppression (and give them options if faced with violations is also necessary. To address the challenges women face

in regard to inheritance and property rights, there a need to a team of paralegal train women on the legal provisions that can safeguard their rights on property acquisition and ownership. There is need for deliberate efforts to reach younger women with both training and economic linkages.

**b) Robust engagement with women leaders as champions**

Catalyse the formation of **women caucuses** through engaging women in the County Assembly and the office of the Woman Representative are also engaged in civic education on the rights of women on their rights including the right to vie for political office to influence policy and law-making processes. Ensure effective public participation by women at all levels in both in policy formulation and budgeting processes.

**c) Preventive action in schools and institutions of learning**

Work with schools and other learning institutions to enhance implementation of policies that address gender based violence. These may include setting up the requisite infrastructure and facilities that promote the safety of girls such as providing safe latrines for girls and hiring more female teachers and counselling professionals in all schools; as well as implementing age-appropriate education for both boys and girls on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights with a view to nurturing and culture of dignity and zero-tolerance to gender based discrimination and violence in the institutions.

**d) Multi – sectoral meetings**

Facilitate regular multi-sectoral fora to enhance planning, coordination and mapping next steps in addressing GBV issues (this can be either a Technical Working Group or any other structure that is women-led or includes women as key actors. These meetings can also be the spaces for community dialogue that brings together single gender dialogue groups to encourage constructive discussions and then mixed groups later for feedback sharing on accountability on gender based violence.

**e) Public Awareness Raising to enhance action**

This will help community members, survivors and their families to have information on laws and policies as well as reporting channels, including any helplines for GBV response. This level of awareness will also assure the public that service delivery will be efficient and there

will be confidentiality, professionalism and protection of witnesses when they report cases, which enhances confidence.

**f) Strengthening collaboration across sectors and functions**

- *Include various government offices*(Kenya Police Service, Judiciary, Gender officers, County Commissioners, health practitioner, including counsellors, Civil Society) in public awareness and sensitization campaigns/events so that the public can be educated on the legal frameworks for handling GBV and the process they can follow to seek justice. This includes law enforcement agents, the judiciary as well as medical practitioners. This interaction can also enhance accountability as members of the public can ask questions and receive answers.
- **Liaise with the judiciary to Support regular Court Users Committee meetings** and recommend addressing progress in ‘Gender Based Violence Cases’ as a standing agenda in such meetings, held at county and sub-county levels.
- Work with the County Assembly to propose **policy and legislation** that ensures proper budgetary allocation specific for gender programs and projects, especially on GBV, to compliment the work being done by other stakeholders. This should include facilities such as safe homes or temporary rescue shelters where survivors such as women, girls and children who may need protection and safety can find refuge.
- **Incorporate guidance and counselling** in institutions of learning, churches, mosques and vocational institutions to empower young people and engage them positively.
- Provide financial support to survivors and a waiver costs of medication, P3 forms and other needs.
- Foster partnerships with Village Elders and *nyumba kumi* leaders as champions for GBV-free neighbourhood and promote training and awareness that includes men as advocates and champions of GBV Prevention and Response.
- **Men as partners in GBV prevention:** The implementation process will also need to identifying and collaborating with other Civil Society Organizations, especially that work on male engagement such as the Masculinity Institute (MAIN) and work with the Office of the County Commissioner to address the problem of alcohol and substance abuse as an integral measure to addressing GBV in Nyeri County, during public awareness.
- Train journalists on sensitive and professional report on gender based violence.



This rapid multi-sectoral did not fully explore other related issues of interest such as young women's voice and agency in prevention of GBV, the connection between violence against women and what appears to be a rising number of women seeking treatment for mental illness as well as efforts to engage men as partners and not just as perpetrators of gender-based violence. While the Kenya has various **digital helplines for GBV** reporting, it will be useful to explore how technology can be leveraged to strengthen prevention and response to gender crimes.

## ANNEXES

### *Annex 1: Summary of legislative and policy framework for addressing elements of SGBV in Kenya*

<b>Statute</b>	<b>Summary</b>
The Constitution 2010	Provides that every person has right to freedom and security of their person which includes the right not to be subject to any form of violence from either public or private sources, any form of torture whether physical or psychological or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The right to security means that the Constitutions safeguards women's right against SGBV and any other related form of gender-based violence.
Employment Act, 2007	The Act prohibits discrimination and harassment of employees on the basis of sex, guaranteeing equal remuneration for work of equal value.
HIV & AIDS Prevention and Control Act 2006	Prohibits deliberate transmission of HIV/AIDS and outlaws discriminatory acts and policies based on one's HIV/AIDS status in all places and safe guards rights and dignity of those already affected
Marriage Act, 2014	Provides for the minimum age in marriage and types of marriages. The Act guarantees parties to a marriage, equal rights at the time of the marriage, during the marriage and at the dissolution of the marriage.
Matrimonial Property Act, 2013	Provides for the rights and responsibilities of spouses in relation to matrimonial property.
The Penal Code Cap 63 Laws of Kenya	Other than bigamy which is provided for under section 171, there are no provisions for such forms of SGBV as marital rape, wife or husband battery, domestic violence etc. Some of these offences are only derivative of main offences such as assault under section 250 and 251. The Children Act, 2001 Provides for a child care, administration institutions, and sets the age of marriage at 18 years in line with Convention on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
Counter Trafficking in Persons Act, 2010	Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children.
Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2011	Prohibits the practice of Female Genital Mutilation and safeguards against violation of a person's mental or physical integrity
The Land Act, 2012	Secures rights of women to matrimonial property
The Land Registration Act, 2012	Requires spousal consent in any dealing with matrimonial property
The Protection Against Domestic Violence (PADV) Act, 2015	Provides for the protection and relief of members of a family from domestic violence.

National Gender and Development Policy (2000)	Makes recommendations on diverse issues on violence including: amendments of SGBV laws, more so the Penal Code to include gender related crimes; privacy in conducting SGBV hearings; SGBV tailored trainings on agents in the judicial system; setting up safe shelters for victims of domestic violence; and ensuring access to information.
Kenya Adolescent Reproductive Health Policy (2003)	Which recommends development of safety nets and rehabilitation and rescue mechanisms for victims of sexual abuse and violence and enhancing measures to protect young people in penal institutions from sexual abuse
National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy (2015)	It provides for mechanisms for addressing adolescents' sexual and reproductive health (SRH) needs. It recommends multifaceted approaches to adolescent SRH issue which provides for mitigation of risk factors and puts in place a safety net for early detection and prevention of SRH challenge.
The National Children Policy (2010)	It provides that all children deserve quality, relevant, accessible, affordable and child friendly education in secure and safe environment.
Vision 2030 Second Medium Term Plan (2013—17)	Emphasizes the need for establishment of integrated one stop SGBV response centres in all healthcare facilities in Kenya and undertaking public awareness campaign against FGM, early and forced marriages.
The National Reproductive Health Strategy (2009-2015)	Provides for the implementation of Post-Rape Care Services ensures the inclusion of sexual violence as a key issue within the Reproductive Health Strategy and sets the development of standards for post rape care service delivery.
National Guidelines on the Management of Sexual Violence (2014)	Is a guiding policy framework on procedures and services for management of survivors of sexual violence and explicitly recognizes sexual violence as a serious human rights and health issue which calls for imperative attention by all concerned.  Provides elemental information on management of sexual violence in a multi-pronged manner.  Gives medical practitioners information on steps to be taken when treating a survivor of sexual violence, preservation of evidence for court use, issues of psycho-social support and other ethical issues related to the management of health related problems of sexual violence
The Education Gender Policy (2007)	Addresses prevention and response to school related gender based violence.

It recommends mainstreaming of policies that address GBV at all education levels; establishing modalities for dealing with SGBV including harassment; and developing and implementing clear anti-sexual harassment and anti-gender based violence policies at all levels in the Ministry of Education and all educational institutions.
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***Annex 2: Terms of Reference for the Rapid Assessment Assignment (shorter version)***

The Center for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW), under the 2 years Embassy of Sweden through Forum Syd funded Haki Mashinani Project, seeks to strengthen accountability and implementation of national laws and policies on Gender Based Violence (GBV) in order to better prevent and respond to GBV among women and men in Nyeri and Kitui Counties. This will be realized by improving the capacity and action by women led accountability groups and Community Based Organizations to advocate for stronger accountability and implementation of GBV laws and policies and by Increasing gender sensitivity, responsiveness and coordination of GBV services by public authorities in Nyeri and Kitui counties by 2021.

Strategies employed by the project include skills building and capacity strengthening as well as public policy advocacy by women led accountability groups; public awareness campaigns, to address citizen apathy and increase demand for accountability of public authorities on implementation of laws and policies that address violence against women and girls; coalition and partnership building with state and non-state traditional actors; monitoring reflection and learning forums as well as documentation and dissemination of best practices.

**The assessment seeks to:**

- I. Outline structural, systemic and environmental challenges limiting effective implementation of gender-based violence laws in the two counties.
- II. Identify the levels of inclusion of women in decision making around addressing gender based violence.
- III. Outline extent of community apathy in addressing Gender based violence
- IV. Provide comparative data on community perceptions on accountability by public authorities implementing Gender Based Violence laws and policies.

*Annex 3a: Focus Group Discussion Guide*

**THE CENTER FOR RIGHTS EDUCATION AND AWARENESS (CREAW)**  
**MULTISECTORAL RAPID ASSESSMENT IN KITUI AND NYERI COUNTIES**

INTERVIEW WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF WOMEN GROUPS ON AUGUST 19<sup>TH</sup> 2019  
IN NYERI

**INTRODUCTION**

The Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW) is a national feminist women's right Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) whose focus has consistently set women and girl's rights at the centre of everything they do. CREAW is carrying out a Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment to provide preliminary understanding to strengthen accountability and implementation of national laws and policies on Gender Based Violence (GBV) in order to better prevent and respond to GBV among women and men in Nyeri and ` Counties. This will be realized by improving the capacity and action by women - led accountability groups and Community Based Organizations to advocate for stronger accountability and implementation of GBV laws and policies and by increasing gender sensitivity, responsiveness and coordination of GBV services by public authorities in Nyeri and Kitui counties by 2021. The information will enable CREAW identify the exact conditions existing at the start of the project and enable us measure the degree and quality of change during project implementation in line with the project's outcome journal.

**INFORMED CONSENT**

Thank you for coming to this Focus Group Discussion today. I am here representing CREAW and we are currently carrying out a Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment to provide preliminary understanding to strengthen accountability and implementation of national laws and policies on Gender Based Violence (GBV) in order to better prevent and respond to GBV among women and men in Nyeri County. The reason for doing this is to improve the capacity of women- led groups in advocating for accountability and implementing GBV laws.

Participation in this interview is voluntary and if there is any particular question you may not wish to answer, you have the right not to answer it and I will go on to the next question; you also have the right to terminate the entire interview at any time. As you can see we plan to conduct this interview in a safe and private space. If you feel that any of the questions are too risky or if you do not feel comfortable for any reason, there is no pressure to answer questions.

If you would like to speak to anyone about how you feel, or if you are feeling emotional during or after the interview, we can help you get additional support. There is no reward or direct benefits for you from being in the interview today.

All the information we get from you will be treated as confidential and only the researchers and those who work for this project will have access to it. Your name will not be included in any report or anything about you that would allow someone to identify you.

The interview will take approximately one and a half hours. I would like to record the interview so that I can make sure that I capture all of your information accurately. This conversation is very informal; you can talk about anything that you think is important for us to know in regard to the topic of gender-based violence.

Do you have any questions for me at this point? Or is there anything you would like me to explain in more detail? [Answer any questions regarding the interview and before you start the FDG].

**THE FGD QUESTIONS/GUIDES** (Probing questions will be asked to ensure the intended meaning is brought out)

**A. Challenges limiting implementation of Gender-Based Violence laws at county level**

1. What is your understanding of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)?
2. What forms of GBV are common in this community?
  - ✚ Who are the most common victims of VAW in this community?
  - ✚ Who are the most likely perpetrators of VAW? (*without mentioning of names*)
3. Please describe how a case of Gender-Based Violence is handled in this community?
4. Are you aware of any GBV laws in the county? Please mention them
5. Who are involved in making these laws?
6. Tell me about how some of these laws are implemented to prevent or respond to Gender-Based Violence.
7. Are you aware of any challenges that (may) hinder implementation of these laws?
8. Which public office is mainly responsible for ensuring full implementation of these GBV policies and laws? Explain why you consider them responsible.
9. What do you consider to be the missing link in handling Gender Based Violence?
10. What can be done to ensure better implementation of the policies and laws on GBV prevention and response in your community?

**B. Decision making process in addressing GBV**

1. Who makes decisions on how Gender-Based Violence is addressed in this community?
2. Are women involved in making these decisions? If so how?
3. Are there some women who are more involved than others? Please explain
4. If women are not involved in decision on Gender-Based Violence response, why is this the case?
5. Who are the other stakeholders involved in making decisions on Gender-Based Violence?
6. What can be done to get more women involved in the implementation of Gender-Based laws/policies in this Community?

**C. Community involvement in addressing GBV**

1. How is the community involved in addressing on Gender-Based Violence?
2. Are there any challenges that community members face in addressing on Gender-Based Violence? Please list them.
3. What motivates community members to report cases of Gender Based Violence?
4. What are the reasons why community members may fail to report cases of Gender Based Violence?
5. Who is responsible for implementation of laws and policies on Gender Based Violence prevention and response in this community?
6. What can be done to improve the way in which Gender based violence cases are handled in this community?
7. What role do the following offices play in the implementation of laws and policies on Gender Based Violence prevention and response in this community?

**a) The office of the County Commissioner (including chiefs):**

What questions would you ask a chief/DC or County Commissioner about Gender Based violence in this community?

**b) Judiciary(courts of law):**

What questions would you ask a judge/magistrate about Gender Based violence in this community?

**c) The police department:**

What questions would you ask a police officer about Gender Based violence in this community?

**d) The Teachers Service Commission (TSC)**

What questions would you ask a representative of the Teachers Service Commission about Gender Based violence in this community?

**e) Medical Personnel/Medical Officer of Health (MOH)**

What questions would you ask Medical Officer of Health (MoH) about Gender Based violence in this community?

**f) County Executive Officers (which one in particular)**

What questions would you ask the responsible county executive about Gender Based violence in this community?

**g) County Director of Gender**

What questions would you ask the county director of gender about Gender Based violence in this community?

**h) Gender Mainstreaming Officer**

What questions would you ask the gender mainstreaming officer about Gender Based violence in this community?

**i) Legislative Assembly**

What questions would you ask a member of the county assembly about Gender Based violence in this community?

**j) Religious and cultural leaders**

What questions would you ask a religious or cultural leader about Gender Based violence in this community?

8. Is there anything else you would like to say or ask about Gender Based Violence prevention and response in this community?

Thank you for your time and active participation in this Focus Group Discussion.

-THE END-



*Annex 3b: Key Informant Interview Guide*

**THE CENTER FOR RIGHTS EDUCATION AND AWARENESS (CREAW)**  
**MULTISECTORAL RAPID ASSESSMENT IN KITUI AND NYERI COUNTIES**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW) is a national feminist women's right Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) whose focus has consistently set women and girl's rights at the centre of everything we do. Through consultants, CREAW is carrying out a Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment to provide preliminary understanding to strengthen accountability and implementation of national laws and policies on Gender Based Violence (GBV) in order to better prevent and respond to GBV among women and men in Nyeri and Kitui Counties. This will be realized by improving the capacity and action by women - led accountability groups and Community Based Organizations to advocate for stronger accountability and implementation of GBV laws and policies and by Increasing gender sensitivity, responsiveness and coordination of GBV services by public authorities in Nyeri and Kitui counties by 2021. The information will enable CREAW identify the exact conditions existing at the start of the project and enable us measure the degree and quality of change during project implementation in line with the project's outcome journal.

**INFORMED CONSENT**

Thank you so much for meeting with me today. My name is [Name]. I am here representing CREAW and we are currently carrying out a Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment to provide preliminary understanding to strengthen accountability and implementation of national laws and policies on Gender Based Violence (GBV) in order to better prevent and respond to GBV among women and men in Nyeri and Kitui Counties. The reason for doing this is to improve the capacity of women- led groups in advocating for accountability and implementing GBV laws.

You do not have to take part if you do not want to. It is up to you to decide whether or not you would like to participate. If you decide to talk to me today you may stop the interview at any time and without giving a reason. If you don't want to take part or decide to stop the interview at any time, the services you can use and the way the service treats you will not be affected.

There is no reward or direct benefits for you from being in the interview today. We cannot promise that the study will help you personally. As you can see we plan to conduct this interview in a safe and private space. If you feel that any of the questions are too risky or if you do not feel comfortable for any reason, there is no pressure to answer questions. If you would like to speak to anyone about how you feel, or if you are feeling emotional during or after the interview, we can help you get additional support.

All the information we get from you will be locked away and only the researchers will have access to it. Your name will not be included in any report or anything about you that would allow someone to identify you.

If you agree to take part, the interview will take approximately one hour. I would like to record the interview so that I can make sure that I capture all of your information accurately. This conversation is very informal; you can talk about anything that you think is important for us to know.

Do you have any questions for me at this point? Or is there anything you would like me to explain in more detail? [Answer any questions regarding the interview].

Now that you have some more information, are you interested in taking part or not?

If YES, continue. If NO, end interview and thank the respondent.

Before we get started, I just want to remind you again that everything we discuss today is confidential. No one except those who work for this project will know what you say. If at any time you'd like to stop, or if there are any questions you'd rather not answer, just let me know. Is that alright with you?

If YES, continue. If NO, end interview and thank the respondent.

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