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# ROOT CAUSES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN NAKURU, KENYA

A FIELD STUDY UNPACKING NORMS, PERSONAL BELIEFS AND SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES





**DIGNITY** PUBLICATION SERIES ON TORTURE AND ORGANISED VIOLENCE

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AND SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES

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Photo credit: Leonard Githae

## ABBREVIATIONS

AJS	Alternative Justice System
AP	Administrative Police
CHV	Community Health Volunteer
Covid – 19	Coronavirus Disease
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DIGNITY	Danish Institute Against Torture
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HURINET	Human Rights Network
KNBS	Kenyan National Bureau of Statistics
IEA	Institute of Economic Affairs
LGBTQ+	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transexual Queer
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
NGEC	National Gender and Equality Commission
PM+	Problem Management Plus
PWD	Person(s) With Disabilities
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UN	United Nations
VOA	Voice of America

## PROJECT PARTNERS

**DIGNITY** – Danish Institute Against Torture; since 1982, DIGNITY has worked towards a world free from torture and organised violence. DIGNITY is a self-governing independent institute and an acknowledged national centre specializing in the treatment of severely traumatized refugees. DIGNITY distinguishes itself by undertaking both rehabilitation, research, and international development activities. DIGNITY is present in more than 20 countries worldwide where we collaborate with local governments and organizations. DIGNITY’s interventions are aimed at preventing torture and helping victims and their families restore their well-being and functioning thus creating healthier families and stronger communities.

**MIDRIFT HURINET** – Initially known as MIDRIFT Human Rights Network; since 2008 MIDRIFT HURINET has worked towards a prosperous society that enjoys Human Rights, Good Governance, Peace, and Security in Kenya. MIDRIFT HURINET is a Non-Governmental organization that was instituted to empower communities in Kenya with the aim of ensuring the safety and security of the vulnerable in society. MIDRIFT promotes the protection and respect of the rights of all through advocacy, conflict resolution programmes, human rights education and research. We also seek to empower citizens, the state and non-state actors to inculcate a culture of Human Rights, Good Governance, Peace, and Security in Kenya.

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# Study at a glance

Root Causes of Gender-based Violence in Informal Settlements in Nakuru, Kenya: A field study unpacking norms, personal beliefs and systemic challenges

## Context and Methodology

Study conducted in three informal settlements in Nakuru County, Kenya.

- Kaptembwo (Nakuru Town West)
- Bondeni (Nakuru Town East)
- Karagita (Naivasha)



Survey: 411 respondents

315 females

96 males



20 Key Informant Interviews



3 Stakeholder workshops

## Key Findings



The term gender-based violence is recognized and participants estimated it as high.



Some acceptance of violence in the informal settlements.



Participants recognized that physical and sexual violence against children happen in the settlements.



A deviation from gender norms and roles would in some cases be considered gender-based violence.



Gender stereotypes and violence are interlinked in the informal settlements.



Gendered stigmatization affects opportunities for reporting gender-based violence.



Traditional values play a major role in handling gender-based violence. Often conflict resolution is at the household level.



Marginalised groups such as LGBTQ+ persons, sex workers and people with disabilities are especially vulnerable to discrimination and violence.



Systemic barriers hinder survivors' access to medical support and justice.

## Recommendations



Transform attitudes, beliefs and social norms through awareness raising.



Ensure an intersectional approach in responses to gender-based violence.



Raise awareness of MHPSS services for survivors and strengthen referral networks.



Advocate for the decriminalization of sex work and LGBTQ+ persons.



Address financial and service barriers for survivors of gender-based violence.



Promote comprehensive sexuality education.



Advocate for the use of the Alternative Justice System by courts.



Enhance the opportunity for collaboration between sectors.



Support safe spaces for reporting gender-based violence.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Kenya, 39-45% of women experience physical and/or sexual violence at-least once in their lifetime (KNBS, 2015). Though research in this area is limited, studies from Kenyan informal settlements demonstrate that violence against women was more widespread compared to the general population in Kenya (Corburn & Hildebrand, 2015; Swart, 2012; Winter et al., 2020). Findings from an earlier study conducted by DIGNITY and MIDRIFT, demonstrated high rates of violence against women in Nakuru County's informal settlements (Lambert & Michael, 2020). During the Covid-19 pandemic, violence against women and girls increased significantly.

This study was conducted in the informal settlements of Nakuru County in Kenya to understand root causes of gender-based violence. Gender-based violence is defined as any form of violence conducted because of one's gender, and may include physical, sexual, and psychological violence (Andersson, Cockcroft, & Shea, 2008; KNBS, 2010). A root cause can be understood as an underlying condition that can affect a chain of factors and lead to violence. The study aimed to unpack the harmful norms, attitudes, and beliefs of gender-based violence as a root cause.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the three informal settlements of Kaptembwo (Nakuru Town West), Bondeni (Nakuru Town East) and Karagita (Naivasha). Through systematic random sampling, a survey was carried out with a total of 411 respondents, 76.6 % female (N = 315) and 23.4% male (N = 96). Most of the participants were between 18 and 34 years (57.2 %), married (58.2%) and home makers (35%). 20 Key Informant Interviews were held with stakeholders including police, human-rights defenders, social workers, chiefs, religious leaders, activists for the rights of LGBTQ+, sex workers and PWDs. Finally, stakeholder workshops with some of the key informants were hosted to discuss preliminary study findings for feedback and reflection.

## KEY FINDINGS

### 1. The term gender-based violence is recognized and participants estimated it as high.

The study shows that community members in the informal settlements often hear the term gender-based violence and report high estimates for physical and sexual violence. Informants also describe how cases of gender-based violence have increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. The rise in cases is attributed to gendered power imbalance but worsened due to the loss of jobs and financial instability during the pandemic.

## **2. Some acceptance of violence in the informal settlements.**

Social norms around gender-based violence in the settlements are presented as more negative when compared to survey respondents' personal beliefs. The study showed that survey respondents' personal beliefs did not accept intimate partner violence, while 25% of the survey respondents said there was a social norm in the community that it is okay for the husband to beat the wife to discipline her (only, 6.6 % said there was a social norm in the community for a wife to beat her husband). In interviews, violence such as a slap was described to be accepted and explained with references to expectations of masculinity and exertion of violence. Also, stakeholders indicated that emotional violence is normalized and is mostly perpetrated by women but not considered serious.

## **3. Participants recognized that physical and sexual violence against children happen.**

In the survey, 30% of the respondents estimated that 1 in 4 children in the settlement has experienced physical or sexual violence. The community stakeholders expected violence against children to be even higher. Community representatives explained that children often undergo physical violence from stepparents, and that it was often worse for the boys. Additionally, they highlighted how traditional cultural practices can involve beating and neglect. Stakeholders indicated that children do not want to report or disclose due to the stigma that comes with reporting, and the fear that the process may interfere with their access to education. Overall, sexual consent is described to be difficult to understand for particularly adolescents. Adolescents who are sexually violated, often believe they gave consent.

## **4. A deviation from gender norms and roles would in some cases be considered gender-based violence**

We found a wider concept of what is seen and called gender-based violence. Gender-based violence was in some situations seen as a deviation from gender norms and roles e.g. men not fulfilling their role of providing for the family was mentioned as a type of gender-based violence. Similarly, neglect by either spouse, adultery, disinheritance, and tribal profiling were mentioned.

## **5. Gender stereotypes and violence are interlinked.**

The study demonstrates how gender stereotypes and violence are interlinked. Intimate partner violence is seen by the informants as a way to assert masculinity and violence was described as contributing to an overall social expectation in the community that accepts the male gender as dominant. Expectations of women were to be submissive, passive, reinforcing women as dependent on men. Findings from the key informant interviews show that women's dependence on men not only play a role in how gender roles are upheld in the informal settlements, but also affects women's opportunity to break with harmful norms and violence. Also, retrogressive cultural beliefs such as female genital mutilation, forced pregnancy, early and arranged marriage are mentioned in the interviews as something that happens in the settlements.

## **6. Gendered stigmatization affects opportunities for reporting gender-based violence**

We find that women and girls are repeatedly blamed if they experience sexual violence. Often 'inappropriate dressing' or 'staying out late' are given as the causes for why they experienced the violence. When attempting to report cases of sexual violence, women and girls are stigmatized, and their family reputation hurt. Furthermore, almost half of the survey respondents said that no men in the informal settlements experience sexual violence and only 1 in 4 men experience physical violence. Reporting gender-based violence was explained to be difficult for men due to stigma and norms of masculinity.

## **7. Traditional values play a major role in handling gender-based violence. Often conflict resolution happens at the household level.**

Traditional values play a major role in handling gender-based violence in the settlements. Gender-based violence within the family is often resolved at the household level. This is due to a community focus on preservation of the family unit and a wish to keep information within the family. Such processes often conclude that the survivor should forgive the perpetrator and with only limited recognition of psychosocial needs.

## **8. Marginalised groups such as LGBTQ+ persons, sex workers and people with disabilities are especially vulnerable to discrimination and violence.**

The study showed discrimination and violence of marginalised groups such as LGBTQ+ persons, sex workers and people with disabilities from authorities and community members. Both religion, limited understanding, and lack of legal protection affected how people in the settlements perceived these three groups and their possibilities of reporting incidents to the police.

## **9. Systemic barriers hinder for survivors' access to medical support and justice.**

Substantial systemic barriers interfere with survivors' ability to get the needed medical support, opportunity to report gender-based violence and pursue a case. Limited access to medical assessments and MHPSS as well as corruption were explained to delay both treatment and reporting for survivors. Equally, a tedious and expensive reporting processes with lack of information on reporting procedures also contribute to uphold the barriers. Service providers explained that cases may not reach the legal justice system due to the reliance on referrals, police's resistance to support and the delay in court cases.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **1. Transform attitudes, beliefs and social norms through awareness raising.**

Our findings point to a need for dialogue around gender-based violence in the informal settlement, including acceptance of violence, clarification of values and information about consequences of gender-based violence. This also means an inclusive approach supporting the rights of LGBTQ+ persons and other marginalized groups, addressing harmful understandings of masculinity and intimate violence against men.

### **2. Raise awareness of MHPSS services for survivors and strengthen referral networks.**

The study indicated how often cases of gender-based violence in the informal settlements are resolved but level with limited recognition of needs for mental health and psychosocial support services. It is recommended to sensitize community leaders and others engaged in resolving cases at household level about mental health consequences and opportunities within the existing referral network in Nakuru. Moreover, consistent help-seeking information should also be provided to survivors to ensure they are informed about reporting and legal aid.

### **3. Address financial and service barriers for survivors of gender-based violence.**

The cost of accessing services for survivors of gender-based violence was found to be a barrier to reporting and caused delay. Waiver services are provided at the facilities especially for gender-based violence cases though there are limited awareness hereof. Hence, there is a need for awareness creation on the availability of these services for survivors. Delay in reporting has also been linked to limited administrative availability and support for survivors e.g., often doctors examining survivors are only available two days a week. There is a need for administrative changes that enable access to medical assessment for survivors and time effective reporting of cases.

### **4. Advocate for use of the Alternative Justice System by courts.**

It is recommended to advocate for the use of the Alternative Justice System (AJS) which is available at the grassroots level to resolve cases in the community. The employees at the AJS are trained and deployed by the government to hear cases at the community level and reduce case backlog in the formal judicial system.

### **5. Support safe spaces for reporting gender-based violence.**

Police structures should promote safe reporting for survivors in a manner that does not stigmatize nor infringe on rights of privacy. We recommend establishing gender-sensitive spaces for reporting, such as having the gender desk in a room to promote privacy and confidentiality, having more genders represented at the reporting desk, as well as sensitization and dialogue with the officers on the harmful norms and stigma towards especially minority groups.

## **6. Ensure an intersectional approach in responses to gender-based violence.**

Any response to gender-based violence should ensure an intersectional approach which considers community members' different vulnerabilities, including but not limited to, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, class, civil status, and ethnicity.

## **7. Advocate for the decriminalization of sex work and LGBTQ+ persons.**

Central stakeholders must advocate for the inclusion and protection of marginalized groups not protected in the current framework. CSOs and other leaders can support the amendment bill through lobbying.

## **8. Promote comprehensive sexuality education.**

Strengthening and promoting access to comprehensive sexuality education programs in schools and in the community are key for ensuring awareness and empowerment of children and young people while destigmatizing sex. Comprehensive sexuality education should be made mandatory, comprehensive, accurate, and taught throughout student's school years, just like math.

## **9. Enhance the opportunity for collaboration between sectors.**

To ensure effective responses to gender-based violence there is a need for collaborations between sectors. Poverty was found to be a factor for not leaving violent relationships, therefore opportunities for livelihood and education as part of any response to gender-based violence is central. Empowerment programmes targeting women's groups can also be key for ensuring community support and for diversity in leadership.

## BACKGROUND

The study was a collaboration between MIDRIFT HURINET and DIGNITY – Danish Institute Against Torture. In partnership with DIGNITY, MIDRIFT has been implementing the project *Strengthening Access to Community Based Mental Health and Psychosocial support (MHPSS)*. The project is based in Nakuru County in Kenya and focused on building multi-sectoral linkages including referral networks to address mental health consequences of gender-based violence in informal settlements and build capacity within the health system. The overall purpose of this study was to learn about and examine root causes of gender-based violence in informal settlements in Nakuru. This is to gain a deeper understanding of gender-based violence and ensure project development is informed by research from the community where we work.

### GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN KENYA

Gender-based violence is defined as any form of violence conducted because of one's gender, which may include physical, sexual, and/or psychological violence such as deprivation or neglect (Andersson, Cockcroft, & Shea, 2008; KNBS, 2010). 39-45% of women in Kenya experience physical and/or sexual violence at-least once in their lifetime (KNBS, 2015). Though research in this area is limited, studies from Kenyan informal settlements demonstrate that violence against women was more widespread compared to the general population in Kenya (Corburn & Hildebrand, 2015; Swart, 2012; Winter et al., 2020). Findings from a previous study carried out by DIGNITY and MIDRIFT, demonstrated high rates of violence against women in Nakuru County's informal settlements. For example, a majority (61.8%) of women reported at least one type of physical violence from their husbands (Lambert & Michael, 2020). During the Covid-19 pandemic, violence against women and girls increased significantly. Human Right Watch (HRW) referred to at least a 30% increase, through forms of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and child marriage (HRW, 2021).

Survivors of gender-based violence face increased morbidity through physical injuries, sexually transmitted infections, reproductive health problems, and psychological trauma (Al Gasseer, Dresden, Keeney, & Warren, 2004; Pavlish & Ho, 2009; Stark et al., 2011; Wirtz et al., 2013, KNBS, 2019). Nevertheless, research also shows that women, more often than men, justify gender-based violence among intimate partners. In a Kenyan study 66% of women respondents justified intimate partner violence, as a mistake but also as a social expectation (Lawoko, 2008). Other studies demonstrate how sexual relationships are heavily influenced by gender norms within societies (Fry et al., 2019).

The Kenyan government has passed legislation including the 2015 Protection Against Domestic Violence Act, the 2011 Female Genital Mutilation Act, and the 2006 Sexual Offences Act, to address forms of gender-based violence. Guidelines have also been developed on how cases of gender-based violence should be managed and survivors supported by the police, specialized medical staff, and judicial officials. Kenya has ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) and several international treaties that obligate the Kenyan state to protect, especially women and girls, from discrimination and gender-based violence. Regardless, little implementation hereof has been documented (HRW, 2021).

Despite women and girls disproportionately experiencing gender-based violence, men and boys are also at risk in Kenya (Bosibori, 2022). Marginalized groups including LGBTQ+ persons and sex workers are often overlooked in responses to gender-based violence (Samuels, George, Dweyer, Mireku, & Rivett, 2021). There is still limited protection for marginalized groups, as the Kenyan law criminalises sex work and same sex conduct, and there is also no legal gender recognition of trans people (Stonewall, 2018). Moreover, anecdotal evidence points to the Covid-19 restrictions increasing attacks on the Kenyan LGBTQ+ community (Ombuor, 2020).

## ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES

In this study, we aimed to understand and learn about root causes of gender-based violence. We understand a root cause as an:

Initiating phenomena in a chain of causation. They may initiate that chain in a manner which is intended or unintended, manifest, or hidden, recent or longstanding, but, whatever their precise dynamics, they are to be understood as the basis on which a given circumstance rests. They are often considered also to mark the level at which an intervention would be effective. If you don't address root causes, we hear, you cannot hope to bring about significant change and lasting change. (Marks, 2011, p.60)

In matters of gender-based violence, a root cause can be understood as an underlying condition that can affect a chain of factors and lead to violence. It is well documented that violence is often rooted in discrimination and inequality (UN Women, 2020b; Choup, 2016; Jayachandran, 2015). It is supported by negative individual attitudes, beliefs and practices, harmful social norms around gender and violence as well as systems and structures that codify inequality and discrimination (UN Women, 2020b). The investigation of root causes does not only explore why violence happens; it also sheds light on *who* is most at risk for experiencing violence. Therefore, a study of the root causes of gender-based violence can also reveal vulnerable groups central to be included in targeted interventions (World Organisation Against Torture, 2006).

To understand and learn about root causes in the informal settlements, we approached the research from two different angles. First through attitudes and norms affecting gender-based violence to learn about the social and cultural context. Second, we approached the structural context by learning about the systems meant to protect people in the settlements and support survivors of gender-based violence.

## PURPOSE

To understand what root causes, mean in the context of gender-based violence in Nakuru County's informal settlements, we proposed the following questions that can address the social, cultural, and structural context:

- What are the personal beliefs and social norms of gender-based violence in the informal settlements?
- What are the systems and structures that influence gender-based violence in the informal settlements?
- What makes community members vulnerable to gender-based violence?



# METHODOLOGY

## STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

We carried out the study in three separate parts using mixed methods and engaging different community groups in Nakuru. First, a survey was carried out amongst community members in informal settlements in Nakuru and Naivasha community. Then, semi-structured interviews were conducted with stakeholders working in Nakuru County. Finally, a stakeholder workshop was hosted to discuss preliminary study findings for feedback and reflection.

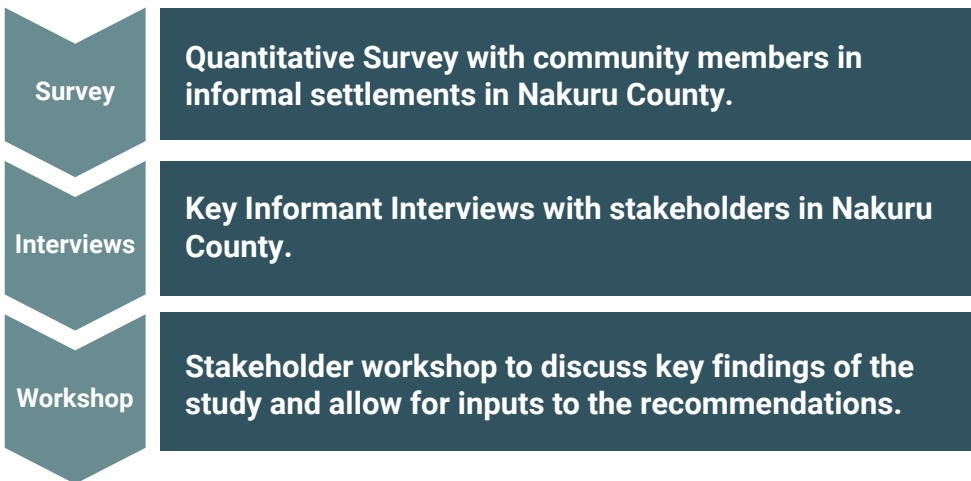


Figure 1: Structure of the study

## STUDY AREA AND SAMPLING

The survey was carried out in Nakuru County in the informal settlements of: Kaptembwo (Nakuru Town West Constituency), Bondeni (Nakuru Town East Constituency) and Karagita (Naivasha Constituency). The study sites are distributed into smaller administrative units or villages found within the informal settlements. The sites are listed below:

- **Kaptembwo**; Jasho, Ponda Mali, Gikomba, Kware and Market
- **Bondeni**; Kivumbini, Kaloleni, Maduke, Kisulisuli, Konatatu, Mithonge, Msalaba, Manyani, Namba Moja and Shauri yako
- **Karagita**; Karagita slums main and Kangoe, Mosque, Site A and Site B



Map 1: Map of Kenya



Map 2: Map of Nakuru County

The company Geointel was contracted to conduct the quantitative survey together with MIDRIFT staff. Geointel trained MIDRIFT enumerators ahead of the data collection. Systematic random sampling was used for the survey with 411 respondents participating from the three informal settlements. The enumerators started at the boarder of each village, then moved anti-clockwise, counting five houses, and knocked on the sixth house. If the respondents met the age criteria of being above the age of 18 (the legal age in Kenya) and consented to participate, the enumerator commenced with the survey. In cases where community members declined participation, did not meet the selection criteria, or there was no one answering the door, the enumerator proceeded to the next house.

The following part of the study included key informant interviews. Purposive sampling was used for the 20 informants participating in the study. Informants were recruited from the national and county government gender departments, police gender desks, provincial administration, religious leaders, and non-governmental organizations working with survivors of gender-based violence and LGBTQ+ rights. We re-invited some of these stakeholders to take part in the stakeholder workshop discussing the findings together with stakeholders that have not contributed to the study.

## DEVELOPMENT OF STUDY TOOLS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

**The survey tool** was inspired by Perrin et al. (2019) scale on Social Norms and Beliefs about Gender-Based Violence. The questionnaire covered stereotyped statements on gender-based violence both capturing perceptions of social norms as well as personal beliefs. The scale included three subscales on Response to Sexual Violence, Protecting Family Honour and Husband's Right to Use Violence. Each subscale included specific questions and were repeated, first with the estimation of how many people whose opinion matters most to you, would agree with the statement. Then, own personal belief on that statement and if the respondent was comfortable with voicing their opinion. We included additional questions to support a broader perspective of gender-based violence e.g. violence as a normal part of

a romantic relationship, and violence experienced by men. Additionally, overall questions about the term gender-based violence and knowledge of existing violence in the community were also included. We did not ask about personal experiences of violence, due to ethical considerations. Before the survey was initiated, each participant was provided with information about the purpose of the study, the structure of the survey and consented to participate. Ahead of the data collection, the survey tool was approved through DIGNITY's Ethics Committee.

**The key informant interview guides** were structured around thematic areas on: Understanding of gender-based violence and its existence in the community, Origin of violence and harmful norms, Your role and the legal protection framework, Enforcement of Legal Protection Framework, and Consequences of Covid-19. This was to learn about stakeholders' understanding of gender-based violence, its existence in Nakuru County's informal settlements, and how stakeholders encountered and addressed gender-based violence as part of their daily work. All stakeholder interviews were pseudonymized. We left out specific locations mentioned and only included overall perspectives on the community as part of the analysis. All participants in the interviews provided oral consent ahead of the interview, after being informed about the study purpose and use hereof.

**The stakeholder workshop guides** were structured around key findings from the quantitative survey and the key informant interviews. Stakeholders were separated into three groups: duty bearers, community leaders and minority groups representatives. The main purpose of the workshops was to get feedback and additional insights on the key findings. Consent was obtained from all stakeholders.

All collected information was kept private and confidential.



## RESULTS FROM SURVEY

The demographic data from the survey is summarized in Table 1 below. A total of 411 respondents participated in the survey, comprising of 76.6% female (N = 315) and 23.4% male (N = 96)<sup>1</sup>. The respondents are proportionally distributed in the different areas, with Bondeni informal settlements at 24.6% (N = 101 respondents), Kaptembwo informal settlements at 36.5% (N = 150 respondents) and Karagita at 38.9% (N = 160 respondents).

The age group 18 – 34 years represented more than half of the respondents (57.2%), with the age group of 65-80-year-old only accounting for around 2%. More than half of the respondents were in a relationship (58.2% married and 5.6% cohabiting). 23% of the respondents were unemployed while 19.7% were working, 14.1% were self-employed and 3.9% were casual labourers. The respondents who listed their occupations as 'other' said they were volunteers, looking for employment, artists, doing different jobs, farming, or not working due to injury or health reasons. 42.3% of the respondents indicated to have attended primary school and 35.5% secondary school. Only 2% had no level of formal education and around 20% had a higher education.

The survey findings showed low levels of income and poverty for most of the households in the target population. In total 83.2% responded that they found it hard to pay for basic needs (34.8% found it *very hard*, 24.8% found it *hard* and 23.6% *somewhat hard*). Women were more likely to find it hard to pay for basic needs when compared to men.

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1 None of the participants identified their gender as other than male or female.

**Table 1:** Summary of background information (N = 411)

	Men (N= 96)	Women (N=315)	Total (N =411)
	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)
<b>Age</b>			
18-34	53 (55.2)	182 (57.8)	235 (57.1)
35-50	31 (32.3)	109 (34.6)	140 (34.1)
51-64	10 (10.4)	17 (5.4)	27 (6.6)
65-80	2 (2.1)	7 (2.2)	9 (2.2)
<b>Marital status</b>			
Married	54 (56.4)	185 (58.7)	239 (58.2)
Separated	8 (8.3)	39 (12.4)	47 (14.6)
Divorced	3 (3.1)	11 (3.5)	14 (11.4)
Widowed	1 (1.0)	22 (7.0)	23 (6.1)
Cohabiting	1 (1.0)	24 (7.6)	25 (5.6)
Single Never Married	29 (30.2)	31 (9.8)	60 (3.4)
Other*	0 (0.0)	3 (1.0)	3 (0.7)
<b>Occupation</b>			
Unemployed	4 (4.1)	54 (17.1)	58 (14.1)
Working	17 (17.7)	35 (11.1)	52 (12.6)
Self-Employment	9 (9.4)	5 (1.6)	14 (3.4)
Retired	8 (8.3)	5 (1.6)	13 (3.2)
Student	2 (2.1)	14 (4.4)	16 (3.9)
Home Maker	28 (29.2)	116 (36.8)	144(35.0)
Casual labourer	23 (24.0)	58 (18.4)	81 (19.7)
Other	5 (5.2)	28 (8.9)	33 (8.0)

\*Indicating they were legally married but separated, others were in a relationship but widowed.

Level of education			
Primary	17 (17.7)	129 (41.0)	146(35.5)
Secondary	46 (47.9)	128 (40.6)	174(42.3)
Higher	33 (34.4)	51 (16.2)	84 (20.4)
No formal education	0 (0.0)	7 (2.2)	7 (1.7)
Disability			
Yes	6 (6.2)	22 (7.0)	28 (6.8)
No	90 (93.8)	293 (93.0)	383 (93.2)
Pay for basic needs			
Very Hard	31 (32.3)	112 (35.5)	143 (34.8)
Hard	21 (21.9)	81 (25.7)	102 (24.8)
Somewhat Hard	24 (25.0)	73 (23.2)	97 (23.6)
Not very hard	11 (11.4)	21 (6.7)	32 (7.8)
Not Hard	9 (9.4)	28 (8.9)	37 (9.0)
Number of Children			
0-1	46 (47.9)	79 (25.1)	125(30.4)
2-3	36 (37.5)	162 (51.4)	198(48.2)
4-5	6 (6.3)	59 (18.7)	65(15.8)
6-7	5 (5.2)	10(3.2)	15(3.6)
8-10	3 (3.1)	5(1.6)	8(1.9)

## KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

We asked about the respondents' knowledge of the term gender-based violence, perspectives on who can be a victim hereof and occurrence of sexual and physical violence in the community. We found that only 16.1% of the respondents were not familiar with the term gender-based violence, with an almost equal distribution between men and women, see Table 2. Almost half of the respondents (48.9%) would often hear the term gender-based violence.

**Table 2:** The term gender-based violence (N = 411)

	Men N = 96	Women N = 315	Total N = 411
Are you familiar with the term gender-based violence?	N (% of men)	N (% of women)	N (% of total)
Yes	79 (82.3)	266 (84.4)	345 (83.9)
No	17 (17.7)	49 (15.6)	66 (16.1)
How often do you hear the term gender-based violence?			
Never	0 (0.0)	2 (0.6)	2 (0.5)
Seldom	11 (11.4)	35 (11.1)	46 (11.2)
Sometimes	23 (24.0)	73 (23.2)	96 (23.3)
Often	45 (46.9)	156 (49.5)	201 (48.9)
I don't know the term	17 (17.7)	49 (15.6)	66 (16.1)

We included an open-ended question about who can be a victim of gender-based violence, see Table 3. No response categories were read out loud, but we noted the different groups that were mentioned in the answer. Most respondents (83%) stated that women can be victims, with fewer noting girls (47.2%), men (22.9%) and then boys (20.9%). The respondents also mentioned specific categories including youth, elderly, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, and single mothers listed as other.

We also asked what types of violence that the concept of gender-based violence involves. Most respondents mentioned physical violence (84.4% of men and 77.8% of women). This was followed by sexual violence and more than 40% mentioned emotional violence.



The responses on types of violence also highlighted that a deviation from expected gender norms and roles would in some cases be considered gender-based violence. The respondents referred to 'adultery', 'denial of conjugal rights', and 'verbal abuse' as forms of gender-based violence. 'Economic violence' was also mentioned; referred to men who do not fulfil their role of providing for the family, while additional forms of violence also included 'neglect by a spouse', 'disinheritance', and 'tribal profiling'<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 3:** Victims of gender-based violence and types of violence (N = 411)

Who can be a victim of gender-based violence?	Men N =96	Women N =315	Total number of respondents agreeing with each category
	N (% of men)	N (% of women)	
Women	76 (79.2)	265 (84.1)	341 (82.9)
Girls	45 (46.9)	149 (47.3)	194 (47.2)
Men	37 (38.5)	57 (18.1)	94 (22.9)
Boys	29 (30.2)	57 (18.1)	86 (20.9)
Other	21 (21.9)	46 (14.6)	67 (16.3)
What types of violence does gender-based violence involve?			
Physical	81 (84.4)	245 (77.8)	326 (79.3)
Emotional	35 (36.5)	139 (44.1)	174 (42.3)
Sexual	44 (45.8)	154 (48.9)	198 (48.2)
Other	28 (29.2)	81 (25.7)	109 (26.5)

We asked the respondents to estimate how common they think different types of violence are in the community. Table 4 is based on the respondents' perceptions of how many people experience different types of violence in the community.

The majority estimated women to be more likely to experience sexual and physical violence compared to men and children. 17% of the respondents estimated that *nearly all* women experience physical violence while 34.8% said 3 in 4 women experience physical violence in the community. 27% said 3 in 4 women experience sexual violence.

2 With 'tribal profiling' the respondents referred to the harmful stereotypes of different tribes in Kenya (Nyanchwani, 2014; Stamp, 1991).

In the response to men, 29.7% said 1 in 4 men in the community had experienced sexual violence.

For children, there were similar estimates for both physical and sexual violence. Around 30% of the respondents estimated that 1 in 4 children experience sexual and physical violence, while 24.1% estimated 3 in 4 children experience sexual violence and 17.8% estimated 3 in 4 children experience physical violence.

**Table 4:** Estimates of different types of violence in the community (N = 411)

Estimate how common you think different types of violence occur in your community	None 0% N(%)	25% (1 in 4) N(%)	50% (about half) N(%)	75% (3 in 4) N(%)	100% (Nearly all) N(%)	Do not Know N (%)	Refused to answer N (%)
Sexual violence* against women	58 (14.1)	110 (26.8)	68 (16.5)	111 (27.0)	25 (6.1)	35 (8.5)	4 (1.0)
Physical violence** against women	18 (4.4)	86 (20.9)	74 (18.0)	143 (34.8)	70 (17.0)	17 (4.1)	3 (0.7)
Sexual violence against men	193 (47.0)	122 (29.7)	32 (7.78)	10 (2.4)	2 (0.5)	52 (12.7)	0 (0)
Physical violence against men	93 (22.6)	189 (46.0)	48 (11.7)	38 (9.2)	8 (1.9)	35 (8.5)	0 (0.0)
Sexual violence against children	65 (15.8)	118 (28.7)	68 (16.5)	99 (24.1)	26 (6.3)	34 (8.3)	1 (0.2)
Physical violence against children	77 (18.7)	126 (30.7)	69 (16.8)	73 (17.8)	27 (6.6)	38 (9.2)	1 (0.2)

\* Sexual violence = Unwanted sexual contact or rape, \*\* Physical violence = Pushing, hitting, slapping, punching

## SOCIAL NORMS AND PERSONAL BELIEFS

In the final part of the survey, we used the scale on 'Social Norms and Personal Beliefs about Gender-Based Violence' (Perrin et al., 2019). For the analysis of the scale, we relied on the factor analysis Perrin et al. (2019) carried out. We then tested the reliability of internal consistency of the subscales. Two of the personal belief responses of sexual violence and family honour were outside the criteria for the Cronbach Alpha test of 0.70. The subscales that met the Cronbach Alpha criteria are listed in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Descriptive subscales of social norms, n = 411

	Min	Max	Mean	St Dev.
Social norms				
Response to Sexual Violence	1.00	4.20	2.28	0.78
Protecting Family Honour	1.00	5.00	2.51	0.924
Husband's Right to Use Violence	1.00	5.00	2.35	0.924
Social Norm Response Scale: 1 – None of them, 2 – A few of them, 3 – About half of them, 4 – Most of them, 5 – All of them				
Personal beliefs				
Response to Sexual Violence	NA	NA	NA	NA
Protecting Family Honour	NA	NA	NA	NA
Husband's Right to Use Violence	1.00	4.00	3.47	0.757
Personal Beliefs Response Scale: 1 – Agree with this statement, 2 – I am not sure if I agree or disagree with this statement, 3 – I disagree but am not ready to tell others, 4 – I am telling others that this is wrong				

## PERSONAL BELIEF OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

For personal beliefs, the descriptive analysis showed that overall, the respondents disagreed with the stereotyped statements which were supporting gender-based violence and a normalization of gender-based violence in the informal settlements, Table 6.

Around 70% of the respondents disagreed with the fact that violence is a part of a romantic relationship, and more than 60% would be comfortable to voice their opinion to others about this disagreement. What is notable is that around 17% still agreed with violence as a normal part of a romantic relationship as well as it is okay for a husband to beat his wife to discipline her (17.5%). This indicated that almost 1/5 of the respondents accepted some forms of violence.

We examined age and gender differences around acceptance of violence in Table 7. Within the group of respondents that disagree with acceptance of violence, age seemed to determine how likely the respondents were to disagree. Within the youngest age group (18-34 years), more than 70% disagreed with the statement compared to around 65% in the following age-group (35-50 years). In the 51-80 years age group, there was only 36 respondents, but more than 75% disagreed with 'violence being part of a romantic relationship'. The X<sup>2</sup> test was significant for this correlation. For gender, more than 71.4% of women disagreed with the statement and 67.7% of men. Here the X<sup>2</sup> test was not significant.

The stereotyped statement which most respondents agreed with (almost 40%), was '24.a Violence between spouses should be handled within the family and not reported to authorities'. Here 26% 'did not know if they disagreed or agreed', see Table 6. This result could be linked to reputation and family dignity, as almost 20% agreed that 'Violence between spouses should not be reported to protect the family dignity'.

We mapped the items in the Personal Belief section from Table 6 where at least 20% of the respondents had agreed with the stereotyped statements. It was noticed that all items were around the reluctance to report gender-based violence, see Table 8.

**Table 6:** Personal beliefs with the statement and your willingness to tell others about your belief (n=411)

	Agree with this statement n (%)	Not sure if I agree or disagree n (%)	I disagree but am not ready to tell others n (%)	I disagree and am telling others n (%)
16. Husbands should abandon/reject/divorce their wife if she reports that she has been raped	19 (4.6)	33 (8.0)	57 (13.9)	302 (73.5)
17. A man should have the right to demand sex from a woman or girl even if he is not married to her	22 (5.4)	26 (6.3)	55 (13.4)	308 (74.9)
18. A woman/girl would be stigmatized if she were to report sexual violence	82 (20.0)	26 (6.3)	52 (12.67)	251 (61.1)
19. A woman/girl should be blamed when she has been raped	41 (10.0)	75 (18.2)	31 (7.5)	264 (64.2)
20. Sexual violence against women and girls should be accepted as a normal part of life	12 (2.9)	18 (4.4)	55 (13.4)	326 (79.3)
21. Families should ignore/ reject a daughter if she reports that she has been raped	2 (0.5)	4 (1.0)	51 (12.4)	354 (86.1)
22. Women/girls should not report rape to protect the family dignity	18 (4.4)	30 (7.3)	37 (9.0)	326 (79.3)
22(a). Violence between spouses should not be reported to protect the family dignity	80 (19.5)	88 (21.4)	34 (8.2)	209 (50.9)
23. A woman/girl's reputation will be damaged if she reports sexual violence to the authorities	93 (22.6)	40 (9.7)	45 (10.9)	233 (56.7)

24. Sexual violence should be handled within the family and not reported to authorities	46 (11.2)	56 (13.6)	34 (8.3)	275 (66.9)
24(a). Violence between spouses should be handled within the family and not reported to authorities	159 (38.7)	107 (26.0)	31 (7.5)	114 (27.7)
25. A husband or father should retaliate against the alleged perpetrators of sexual violence	72 (17.5)	38 (9.2)	36 (8.8)	265 (64.5)
26. Women and girls should only report sexual violence if they have serious physical injuries	49 (11.9)	37 (9.0)	42 (10.2)	283 (68.9)
27. When a man beats his wife, he is showing his love for her	16 (3.9)	41 (10.0)	40 (9.7)	314 (76.4)
28. A man has the right to beat/punish his wife	35 (8.5)	31 (7.5)	38 (9.2)	307 (74.7)
29. It is okay for a husband to beat his wife to discipline her	72 (17.5)	25 (6.1)	26 (6.3)	288 (70.1)
30. A husband should force his wife to have sex when she does not want to	31 (7.5)	38 (9.2)	40 (9.7)	302 (73.5)
Think violence is a normal part of a romantic relationship	69 (16.8)	52 (12.6)	29 (7.1)	261 (63.5)
Think it is okay for a wife to beat her husband in some circumstances (for example if he can't support the family)	10 (2.4)	27 (6.6)	41 (10.0)	333 (81.0)

**Table 7:** Personal Belief on 'Think violence is a normal part of a romantic relationship'

Age group	Agree with this statement n (%)	Not sure if I agree or disagree n (%)	I disagree but am not ready to tell others n (%)	I disagree and am telling others n (%)	Total of all respondents n(%)	Distribution of all the respondents who disagree, n(%) n=290	% within the age group that disagree
18 - 34 years	45 (10.9)	20 (4.9)	23 (5.6)	147 (35.8)	235 (57.2)	170 (58.6)	72.4
35 – 50 years	20 (4.9)	28 (6.8)	4 (1.0)	88 (21.4)	140 (34.1)	92 (31.7)	65.8
51 – 80 years <sup>3</sup>	4 (0.9)	4 (1)	2 (0.4)	26 (6.3)	36 (8.8)	28 (9.7)	77.8
					411 (100)	290 (100)	
<b>X<sup>2</sup>: 20,013 DF: 9 Sig: 0.018</b>							
Gender	Agree with this statement n (%)	Not sure if I agree or disagree n (%)	I disagree but am not ready to tell others n (%)	I disagree and am telling others n (%)	Total of all respondents n(%)	Distribution of all the respondents who disagree, n(%) n=290	% that disagree divided by gender
Men	15 (3.6)	16 (3.9)	8 (1.9)	57 (13.9)	96 (23.4)	65 (15.8)	67.7
Women	54 (13.1)	36 (8.8)	21 (5.1)	204 (49.6)	315 (76.6)	225 (54.7)	71.4
Other	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
					411 (100)	290 (100)	
<b>X<sup>2</sup>: 2,322 DF: 3 Sig: 0.508</b>							

**Table 8:** Statements in Personal Beliefs where at least 20% agreed with the stereotype, n=411

Items	No (%) agreed
18. A woman/girl would be stigmatized if she were to report sexual violence	82 (20)
22(a). Violence between spouses should not be reported to protect the family dignity	80 (19.5 ~ 20)
23. A woman/girl's reputation will be damaged if she reports sexual violence to the authorities	93 (22.6)
24(a). Violence between spouses should be handled within the family and not reported to authorities	159 (38.7)

## SOCIAL NORMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

We unpacked social norms in the informal settlements by posing stereotyped statements and asking 'how many of the people whose opinion matters most to the respondents' would agree with the stereotype, Table 9.

Almost 50% of the respondents said that **half to all people** (12.7% said half of them, 30.9% said most of them, 3.6% said all of them) think violence is a normal part of a romantic relationship. On sexual violence around 17% said that **most of them to all**, accepts sexual violence against women and girls as a normal part of life. Around 25% said that **most of them to all of them** think it is okay for a husband to beat his wife to discipline her and 6.6% think it is okay for a wife to beat her husband in some circumstances. Thus, there seems to be a gender difference in the social norms around who can carry out physical violence in the home.

As observed on personal norms Table 8, similar trends on reporting gender-based violence was seen for social norms. 53.5% said that **most to all of people** 'expect physical violence between spouses to be handled within the family and not reported to the authorities'. In terms of sexual violence only 26.5% said the same. When looking at the items addressing stigma, 39.4% said that **most of them to all of them** fear stigma if they were to report sexual violence, and similarly 39.5% fear stigma if they were to report physical violence from a spouse.

We listed social norms in table 10, where at least 30% said **most to all** would agree with the stereotype. 30% of the respondents said there was a social norm for a husband to abandon his wife if she reports that she has been raped, 37.9% said there was a social norm to blame girls/women when they are raped and 53.5% said that physical violence between spouses should be handled within the family and not reported to authorities.



**Table 9:** Social norms – ‘how many of the people whose opinion matters most to you’, n=411

	None of them n (%)	Few of them n (%)	About half of them n (%)	Most of them n (%)	All of them n (%)
1. Expect a husband to abandon his wife if she reports that she has been raped	118 (28.7)	110 (26.8)	60 (14.6)	113 (27.5)	10 (2.4)
2. Expect the family to ignore/reject a daughter if she reports that she has been raped	199 (48.4)	127 (30.9)	37 (9.0)	47 (11.4)	1 (0.2)
3. Accept sexual violence against women and girls a normal part of life	181 (44.0)	130 (31.6)	30 (7.3)	66 (16.1)	4 (1.0)
4. Blame women/girls when they are raped	76 (18.5)	101 (24.6)	78 (19.0)	147 (35.8)	9 (2.2)
5. Think that a man should have the right to demand sex from a woman or girl even if he is not married to her	142 (34.5)	118 (28.7)	46 (11.2)	98 (23.8)	7 (1.7)
6. Expect women/girls to not report rape to protect the family dignity	117 (28.5)	145 (35.3)	52 (12.7)	95 (23.1)	2 (0.4)
7. Expect that a woman/girl's reputation will be damaged, if she reports sexual violence to the authorities or elders	99 (24.1)	123 (29.9)	54 (13.1)	128 (31.1)	7 (1.7)
8. Fear stigma if they were to report sexual violence	90 (21.9)	100 (24.3)	59 (14.4)	153 (37.2)	9 (2.2)
8a. Fear stigma if they were to report physical violence from a spouse	69 (16.8)	124 (30.2)	56 (13.6)	156 (38.0)	6 (1.4)
9. Expect sexual violence to be handled within the family and not reported to authorities	93 (22.6)	158 (38.4)	51 (12.4)	106 (25.8)	3 (0.7)

9a. Expect physical violence between spouses to be handled within the family and not reported to the authorities	58 (14.1)	85 (20.7)	48 (11.7)	195 (47.4)	25 (6.1)
10. Expect a husband or father to retaliate against the alleged perpetrators of sexual violence	87 (21.2)	159 (38.7)	58 (14.1)	98 (23.8)	9 (2.2)
11. Expect women and girls to only report sexual violence if they have serious physical injuries	84 (20.4)	131 (31.9)	80 (19.5)	110 (26.8)	6 (1.4)
11a. Expect someone only to report physical violence from a spouse if they have serious injuries	59 (14.4)	121 (29.4)	53 (12.9)	162 (39.4)	16 (3.9)
12. Think that when a man beats his wife, he is showing his love for her	147 (35.8)	133 (32.4)	47 (11.4)	79 (19.2)	5 (1.2)
13. Think that a man has the right to beat/punish his wife	133 (32.4)	137 (33.3)	56 (13.6)	79 (19.2)	6 (1.5)
14. Think it is okay for a husband to beat his wife to discipline her	115 (28.0)	130 (31.6)	62 (15.1)	95 (23.1)	9 (2.2)
15. Expect a husband to force his wife to have sex when she does not want to	102 (24.8)	121 (29.4)	50 (12.2)	122 (29.7)	16 (3.9)
Think violence is a normal part of a romantic relationship	94 (22.9)	123 (29.9)	52 (12.7)	127 (30.9)	15 (3.6)
Think it is okay for a wife to beat her husband in some circumstances (for example if he can't support the family)	188 (45.7)	160 (38.9)	36 (8.8)	25 (6.1)	2 (0.5)

**Table 10:** Statements on social norms where at least 30% agreed with the stereotype to be a social norm, n=411

Items	N (%) Most to all of people whose opinion matter most to you
1.Expect a husband to abandon his wife if she reports that she has been raped	123 (29.9)
4.Blame women/girls when they are raped	156 (37.9)
8.Fear stigma if they were to report sexual violence	162(39.4)
8 a. Fear stigma if they were to report physical violence from a spouse	162 (39.4)
9a. Expect physical violence between spouses to be handled within the family and not reported to the authorities	220 (53.5)

## RESULTS FROM INTERVIEWS

20 semi-structured interviews were carried out with stakeholders working in the informal settlements and in its surrounding communities. A thematic analysis of the interviews was carried out using Braun and Clarke (2006)'s approach. The approach allowed us to have a description of the interview data and include interpretations of the identified codes that were merged into themes.

The participating stakeholders were pseudonymized. Their role and associated institution of work are listed in Table 11 demonstrating the variation within their background. The key thematic findings from the interviews are summarized below.

**Table 11:** List of key informants

Number	Role of key informant	Institution of work
#1	Chief	Local administration
#2	Chief	Local administration
#3	Gender-based violence case manager	Gender-based violence recovery centre
#4	Police officer	Gender desk
#5	Religious leader	Catholic church
#6	State Officer	Gender office
#7	Independent activist	LGBTQ+ Community
#8	Nurse	Local Hospital
#9	Religious leader	Muslim Association
#10	Social worker	Women rescue centre
#11	State officer	Department of Gender
#12	Nursing officer	County hospital
#13	Human rights defender	Reproductive health centre
#14	Programme officer	Centre for rights education awareness
#15	Social Worker	County Hospital

#16	Advocate	Kenya Women Parliamentary association
#17	Religious leader	Inter-religious council of Kenya
#18	Psychologist	County Hospital
#19	Police Officer	Department in the police service that responds to sexual and gender-based violence cases.
#20	Religious leader	Organizations of Africa Institute of Churches

## GENDER NORMS AND POWER IMBALANCE

Informants were asked about the existence of gender-based violence within the informal settlements. They explained common types of violence in the community included physical, emotional, and economic violence and highlighted intimate partner violence as persistent in the informal settlements.

Many stakeholders referred to violence as an issue of power-imbalance between genders. 'Women come second to men, so men would be the majority of perpetrators (#6)'. The exertion of violence was described to be happening because often the cis-male gender has certain privileges and a position of power in the community. Most of the examples given by the stakeholders referred to heterosexual relationships in domestic settings, where men would use violence as a way to show dominance.

(...) it [violence] is a form of fire [power] transmitted to a particular sex or group basically, because of power imbalances. (#6)

Someone abusing another person's rights, particularly another gender abusing another individual's rights from that agenda and using their power. (#10)

The power imbalance between genders was also exemplified through differentiated cultural expectations for men and women, and opportunity for decisions making within the household. The stakeholders highlighted a link between women's economic dependence on men as bread winners and staying in a violent relationship.

So, these informal settlements are in urban centres, but you cannot compare, such a lady [woman in informal settlement] to someone living in the estate [more privileged area to live]. The norms are a bit different. Because you have money, you can easily leave, you're able to leave, and not really need that other person. Then the risk of violence, of course, or rather, more violence is deduced as opposed to a survivor in the slums who has no option at all and cannot leave. (#14)

Sometimes when violence erupts in the home, the woman is kicked out together with the children and the man does not make follow ups on the wellbeing of the children and this forces some women to persevere. (#1)

Patriarchy within the community was highlighted by informants as a barrier for women's societal opportunities, where men hold power and women are often excluded from it. It was explained how women's dependence on men not only played a role in how gender roles are upheld in the informal settlements, but also described to affect women's opportunity to break with harmful norms and violence. This was explained to restrict women's equal opportunity to make decisions for themselves.

They [men] tend to be superior to women and it is hard to listen to women's opinions. Culturally, women tend to obey, to be obedient to the husband so at times you find the husband become arrogant so he might push his agenda to be carried out and wouldn't like to listen to the other partner's opinion. (#9)

(...) women are getting physically assaulted by their husbands simply because they are not bringing something on the table. And then there is also the issue of women being denied opportunities to make their own decisions and choices on their own health and even on their own needs. So that's also causing gender-based violence and then there is also patriarchy, the way the communities are not involving women in decision making processes, especially at the community level. (#13)

The dependence was also indicated to be based on rights and position within society. Some stakeholders spoke to the change in law on inheritance and land rights which was described to be part of changing the view of women's access to property and position in society. Yet, informants explained how any societal change in norms and culture is slow.

Gendered social norms around family and marriage were seen to make girls vulnerable to gender-based violence, and violence and sexual violence within the family was described to be tied to shame. It meant a family could urge a survivor not to file a case against another family member.

Yes, then another problem is incest, incest especially, especially girls who have been born out of marriage, maybe somebody is married when she has a child and that the husband will not.... The spouse will not consider the girl as one of his children, so, those children ended up being defiled by the stepfather. (#13)

For the defilement by a family member, it could be shame and we have had victims and survivors being told by family members to drop the cases because whoever committed that is also a family member. It could also be that this is your husband, you still have to go back to, they are the father of your children and etc. (#14)

Many informants described how they have seen cases of gender-based violence to increase during the Covid-19 pandemic. They explained that a rise in cases was attributed to the mentioned power imbalance but exacerbated by to the loss of jobs and financial instability during the pandemic.

It [gender-based violence] increased a lot - when it came to physical violence, you know with COVID there was lock down and most people lost their job. So that having a man and a woman in the house not having money to provide food brought a lot of chaos and there was so much physical violence in the house. (#15)

In this way, the informants described a complex relationship between norms in the informal settlement and gender to be part of the root causes of gender-based violence.

## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND ACCEPTANCE OF VIOLENCE

Informants highlighted some retrogressive cultural beliefs to intersect with gender-based violence. Retrogressive cultural beliefs and practices were understood to include female genital mutilation, forced pregnancy, early and arranged marriage (referred to as 'beading' in the interviews). It was expressed how some retrogressive cultural practices can be gendered with differentiated implications for children.

Yeah. So they have something called beading. And this beading is that, you know, like a boy, a moran (warrior) boy would see a girl, nine or eight years of age. And the boy or the boy's family takes the beads to the girl, meaning they've booked her. This is an eight-year-old girl, an eight-year-old baby actually. Once you've beaded them, and you're ready with your dowry price, you can take that girl at any time. It doesn't happen, to boys, it only happens to girls - So women and girls are very vulnerable, and women and girls actually need the protection from the law, from the authorities, from the families, from everyone. Because we [women and girls] are now the ones who suffer the most when it comes to gender-based violence. (#16, Edited)

Retrogressive culture was also tied to women's limited opportunity for decision making. Culture and societal expectations were described to have strong importance for how decisions were made.

Harmful traditional practices are another form of violence, and it has some issues to do with the retrogressive culture that deny women and girls opportunities to be able to make decisions of their own. (#13, Edited)

Society expects people to behave in a certain way. People keep on following each other. You may go to a club to seek services and get stigmatized. In some churches you are not allowed to enter depending on how you are dressed. (# 7)

The importance of culture and norms for many people in the community was highlighted by another informant stressing the difficulties of addressing a retrogressive culture.

Actually, when you go to a place like Kericho<sup>4</sup>, because we implement [advocacy projects on the rights of LGBTQ+] up to Kericho, there is a lot of stigma and discrimination for the key population, of which no matter how much pressure we put in terms of human rights defence and all that, there is still that aspect of culture and cultural norms that push back. (#7)

Can't deny the local citizen is very, very much still you know following the culture and religion and sometimes people misinterpret these things as we have come to learn, but of course, they will blame it on that, on the basis of that, that is what they will, they will use to say and again, the victims or survivors will stay on the basis of defend religion or not support. So, it is a huge aspect and people carry on because no matter where you are in Nakuru or Wajir, you will still practice your religion, your culture and that will take a long, long, long time, before we are over that. (#14)

The informants' perspectives on cultural belief and norms around gender and violence were also linked to a normalization of violence through the expectation that violence happens within the informal settlement.

We have this intimate partner violence which is very difficult because you cannot go to households and you know that problem is going to come... and you need it and then and we also have these problem of abandonment, as I said it is difficult to address it [intimate partner violence] to stop it because of the retrogressive cultural practices that we are having in some communities that actually perpetuates [violence] instead of addressing, they are actually perpetrating. (#6, Edited)

Socialisation, meaning the environment in which one was brought up, and the way violence was normalised. It could be like a man who grows knowing a woman should be disciplined, You know they say a woman can't speak to you like that. Even today, there is someone who has told me 'a woman should not talk to a man like that', so I said to him. 'a woman should also not be spoken to in a rude way. So there is that socialisation, there are cultures that contribute to issues of violence. (#11, Edited)

Another informant explained that some types of violence such as emotional and some forms of physical violence were perceived not to be serious forms of violence and they would not qualify for reporting to the authorities.

When they [police] resolve these domestic violence cases, some even ask to solve these matters in the home... you know that is where we give direction, there are those cases that we have to report like defilement and rape cases, but there are those not very serious domestic ones that you will allow them to go and resolve at home. (#2)

Thus, some cultural practices were explained to be harmful and gendered promoting violence, while a socialization of violence in the settlement and police diminishing emotional violence were explained to also be part of root causes of violence.

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4 Kericho is a town in the western Rift valley of Kenya. Kericho county is mostly rural with a few slum areas surrounding Kericho town. The population in the area is pre-dominantly the Kalenjin community who are very conservative.



## MARGINALIZED GROUPS AND VULNERABILITY TO VIOLENCE

Most informants would refer to gender-based violence as happening between men and women, however, during the interviews informants elaborated on this view by broadening their understanding of who is vulnerable to experience gender-based violence. In the informal settlements, they highlighted LGBTQ+ persons, sex workers and people with disabilities to be particularly vulnerable.

### LGBTQ+ persons

Informants explained how the LGBTQ+ community experienced gender-based violence due to limited understandings of sexual minorities and gender identity as well as little to no legal protection as homosexuality is illegal in Kenya.

They [LGBTQ+ persons] are at risk of you know, being physically assaulted and again, and again, when they get their opponents who want to do that act without the consent of the other, then it is also not good. (...) Yeah, they are vulnerable also, because once the community are aware that you are one of them, then you will be discriminated within the community. And then in terms of access to services, they also not being given services equally. (#13)

This is also a another very vulnerable group [LGBTQ+ persons]. And again, like I said, it's about exerting power (...), power comes into play, 'how are you going to report me because you are snitching, you know, you're part of the LGBTQ+', which is somehow considered illegal. (...) So, these guys [perpetrators of violence] are coming, of course, from a position of power. So yeah, they are really, really vulnerable, basically, in all aspects and completely not protected within our frameworks and even within our laws, actually, and to some extent the Constitution. (#14)

One informant also explained how a broader resistance to Western culture could be influencing how LGBTQ+ persons are treated in the community, while religious beliefs and practices were also perceived as contributing to the discrimination of the LGBTQ+ persons.

I'm saying..... some of those things, traditionally, were not spoken of, they were believed and seen as a curse....and so to some people, they are even today. So even when we hear about them, there is a quick judgment that this is Western trying to make us buy to their waywardness, you know, the wrongs they have started to the evil that they are doing.... So that we can be like them. (#20)

(...) also pastors discriminate us a lot, you see like key populations, its God who have put you that way. Some pastors keep on quoting verses that... there are also therapies, key populations [the LGBTQ+ persons] are taken for therapies to be prayed for since they are perceived as being possessed by demons. (#7)

Besides 'prayer therapies', another informant also pointed to an existing issue of corrective rape where rape can be seen to change a person's sexual orientation.

They also get assaulted especially, by people who do not understand them, like a woman in any way, okay? The men that find out that they're lesbians, they just want to rape her because they want to maybe to prove to her, whatever you think is your sexuality is not, but whatever they do to them is wrong. (#15)

When LGBTQ+ persons experience violence and discrimination, the informants expressed how negative attitudes of police served as a barrier for them to seek help and report cases.

The authorities are not taking these cases seriously or the authorities ridiculing these people for example the LGBTQ+ when they go to report those cases no one even wants to enter your incidence on the occurrence book, they will just laugh, and they will tear you apart worse than how you got there and you will just leave there feeling like you just want to die. (#16)

## Sex workers

Another group experiencing limited protection from authorities and vulnerable to gender-based violence were sex workers in the informal settlement. One informant described how some clients will not pay sex workers for their services, and often resort to violence when the sex worker demands for their pay. Sex workers are often raped by their clients, including refusal to use protection. In this situation, the informants again stressed the element of power imbalance. Sex work is illegal under the Kenyan Constitution which places sex workers in a vulnerable position without legal protection.

Of course, they are at a bigger risk. I mean, they're working like this, like I mentioned, when gender-based violence is an exertion of power. So already, you know, you want the law, this person is not protected by the law so much also they are not at a powerful position because a person is economically depending on you. (#14)

They also are also at risk because when somebody is violated at night, the perpetrator normally ends up not being arrested and that denies the commercial sex worker to get justice. (#13)

Even the police at night harass them! You know! Verbal abuse, even the neighbours discriminate that she is engaged in a dirty job Yes, even their children sometimes become traumatized. (#11)

Sex workers that have experienced attacks will not report to the police as they fear of being arrested on the grounds of sex work. This created a double vulnerability from not just their clients but also the police. Though, when attempting to report incidences, they were described to be harassed e.g. through verbal abuse, by the police as well as the surrounding community including their neighbours.

You will find that most do not report and there are very few organizations that actually support them [sex workers] but no they did not report to the police...the other police station then they are seen as criminals. Yeah. And it's very hard even as us ourselves to take up that matter legally. (#14)

Many informants were of the opinion that a solution to end the violence sex workers experienced was for them to leave their work. Only one mentioned the drafting of a Penal Code Amendment Bill 2022 to protect sex workers and ensure recognition of sex work as work.

## People with Disabilities

Informants explained how people living with disabilities were also seen to be vulnerable to gender-based violence. Especially, persons with intellectual disabilities are more at risk.

You'll find that persons with disabilities are even more vulnerable. Not even twice, way more than that, more vulnerable, you know, than the average woman, boy or girl. And so and so it's unfortunate. (#14)

Environmental barriers to accessing facilities were also described to affect persons with disabilities, while others described them as often isolated in the house with risks of neglect.

You know, lack of ramps even for them to accessing such centres whether police stations, AP [Administration police], health centres and etc. So yeah, I think that they are the most vulnerable and ourselves as a country, we've failed them in terms of the current accessibility frameworks do not support them. (#14, Edited)

## COMMUNITY RESPONSES AND BARRIERS TO ADDRESS CASES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The informants listed barriers for survivors of gender-based violence to resolve and report the case of violence. Informants explained that there was a preference within the community, including the police, for resolving cases of intimate partner violence at household level. Family breakups were seen to be highly discouraged within the community, and effort was emphasized on perseverance, particularly by women and girls. In some cases, it was observed that women were blamed for the violence they experience and told not to provoke their husband. In other cases, women in the community were blamed for sexual violence due to the way they dress, while marriage could be seen as a solution of resolving sexual violence.

There are people who are discouraged by neighbours and friends, that if they take the husband to court, it will be interpreted that they have separated. So the cases are taken to the community leaders or the parents and actually there are many that are not known to us that are solved by parents. (#1)

Women used to go to the police-station, and they were never received. 'You've been beaten by your husband? Just go and plead with him' such things do happen at times you find the woman is really beaten and when the man is summoned to the police station, he might refuse to come, and the police will tell the woman 'go back and talk to your husband or talk to your parents and sort it out by yourself'. (#9)

I remember just the other day when a girl was defiled in our village, the father knew the perpetrator very well and they discussed for the man to marry the girl and pay a fine to the father. (...) the police allowed them to settle the matter in the rural home and the father got Ksh. 3000 from the perpetrator, so imagine the father was negotiating for access to justice for this girl with the money mindset. You know money exchanging hands between men and the girl is told to forgive him, it will not happen again. (#5)

Incidences of gender-based violence from specifically the police, were also described to have increased during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic. The police brutality was expressed to be worse for women and could constitute a larger barrier for reporting.

(...) also with the curfew, so many people suffered, especially. Okay we even had survivors coming in having been raped by police, the police find them outside during curfew hours- maybe they [the police] pretend to take them home they end up raping them, they demand for some cash and these survivors don't have money and they end up raping them. We had such cases a lot. (#15)

For men that experience intimate partner violence, the informants described shame and ridicule of the survivors by authorities.

There are men are battered by their wives and they don't come out as much as women do because of the issue, of course, again embarrassment, fear and what would people say, for example, what would people say nimechapwa na bibi (that I have been beaten by my wife), So they shy away. Some, get the, you know, they're bold enough to actually report these cases, but our local administration, including the police our authorities, should also you know, aid in such cases, because as a man, you do not want to go to police station to report because they the ridicule, you will get, you will not go back (#16)

The police explained that cases of sexual and gender-based violence make up most cases reported at the police station but very few are taken to court. The police tend to avoid court matters and the 'trouble' these may bring.

I think its laziness in the police, they do not want to be involved in the affairs of the court. So you see, they avoid matters of court all the time, so they prefer to be settled at the chief to avoid a lot of issues. (#1)

As Poly-care team, checking the stations we were shocked, despite that the data tells us 90% are cases reported here are sexual and gender-based violence cases. We always find less than 3 or 4 taken to court. (#19)

When cases do reach the court, they are often delayed. Some go on for years in court and with significant delays due to limited evidence and witness interference. Informants also highlighted how stigma of sex and sexuality, particularly also for adolescents, also influence what evidence is collected for a case.

These cases are prolonged very much in the courts, you can find cases from 2017 backwards are yet to begin. You find even a child who has been violated if they were in secondary school, by the time the case is heard you go to look for them they are already adults and they do not want to be involved anymore. To remind them or have them remember what happened is revisiting old wounds and they become traumatized. (#4)

Lack of evidence has actually made so many cases to collapse in courts and there is no evidence you know in cases of rape people do not know you go you shower you will talk about it days later there is no evidence and also the authorities are not taking these cases seriously or the authorities ridiculing these people. (#16)

The way we tell our children ooh don't touch your private part or whatever, when the case goes to court and a child forced to report that they have been defiled so the judge or the magistrate will ask: "so what happened?" so the child goes to narrate (...). It could be maybe a minor who may not know, but that is what we are told to. Now we need to tell our children, call these things by their names. the vagina or the penis is just another part of your body like your hands, nose or eyes. (#16)

The court granting bail to suspects of gender-based violence was described as a barrier for reporting to the authorities. It was also linked to witness interference and shaming of victims' families by the perpetrator.

They also come out on bail, and they still come and flee. You understand? Now society has realized no, what's the use and what the need of us blowing the whistle, take these people to jail and when they are given bail... they are outside here; molesting and also interfering with... you know, and then the case just... you know, the case is gone. And that is greatly affecting the need to access justice like what we were saying. It's also making it for perpetrators to see the people walking free. So definitely even me I can commit the crime and... yes... (#3)

(...) because of fear of the witnesses, when we say our family will be confronted and shamed, then definitely, they have made it now possible for any other man to rape and that case will go nowhere. (#3)

Informants also expressed how corruption by police and the courts was considered a barrier. Bribery of police officers by rich and connected perpetrators was observed as another barrier to make it difficult for cases to reach the courts.

Corruption is the key thing that has made the Kenyans not to get justice.... because most of the people who do these cases are people with money or are employed people. Some are poor girls who are in school or maybe college girls, so they don't feel they.... don't get justice because these guys come and are able to bribe the police officer, and then the case is just wiped out, they are not even booked they are not even on boarded until now the cases are withdrawn. (#19)

The power imbalance in access to financial resources also impacted reporting of gender-based violence. Some survivors are unable to afford the requisite documents and pay for legal representation.

In domestic violence cases, sometimes we have a challenge with P3<sup>5</sup> or witnesses. They can't afford the Ksh.1000, which is paid at the hospital, so they do not fill the P3. For rape and sexual offences, the P3 is given for free but for assault, you have to pay and sometimes the poor victims are unable to afford, the P3 form also has to be purchased at a cybercafé at Ksh.20 (#4)

There are those who do not have access to the criminal justice maybe they are told to bring a lawyer and this person may be unable to pay for the lawyer you find now it becomes a challenge to access the criminal justice system and the right to get justice becomes hard (#2)

Often women prefer to withdraw a case or proceed to Kangaroo courts<sup>6</sup> if there is a possibility of incarceration of their spouse and therefore the loss of this income. The economic inequality for women in society was reiterated as women feared becoming single mothers.

There are these kangaroo courts that people use a lot. So, the survivor and the perpetrators, they just agree outside court and the case is thrown out. And another one now when it comes to physical violence, this case can go to court, Yeah, but this woman feels like okay, when the father of my children goes to court, what am I going to tell my children? Or now, he is the provider where how will we survive if he goes to jail? So those cases are thrown out mostly. (#15)

Finally, the importance of supporting survivors with psychosocial support was highlighted as an essential part of addressing gender-based violence. As described, the reporting, assessment and process of a case have many implications. 'Sometimes survivors need psychosocial support before they can take the legal steps' (#14). Nevertheless, the recognition of mental health trauma of survivors was not considered in many of the examples given when cases are solved at household level, at a police station or at the Kangaroo courts.

5 P3 is a legal document produced for court cases of assault and/or rape. The form is filled by a police officer and later, a registered Government doctor after examining the complainant to determine the cause and extent of the injuries.

6 Refers to an unofficial court held by a group of people in the community. The process does often not include evidence and may ignore due process and come to a predetermined conclusion.



## SUMMARY OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

From the survey responses and the key informant interviews, we collated the sections into key findings listed below:

- The term gender-based violence is well-known and estimated by community members to be widespread in the settlement.
- Some acceptance of violence in the informal settlements.
- A deviation from gender norms and roles could in some cases be linked to gender-based violence.
- Gender stereotypes and violence are interlinked and can reinforce each other in the informal settlements.
- Traditional values play a major role in handling gender-based violence.
- Gendered stigmatization affects opportunities for reporting of gender-based violence.
- Reporting gender-based violence, especially emotional violence, is difficult for male survivors.
- Marginalised groups such as LGBTQ+ persons, sex workers and people with disabilities are especially vulnerable for discrimination and violence.
- Children were highlighted as at risk of experiencing gender-based violence.
- Systemic barriers interfere with survivors' ability to get the needed medical support, opportunity to report gender-based violence, and to pursue a case.



# DIALOGUE WORKSHOPS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Dialogue workshops with stakeholder were held to bring key findings to different representatives of the community and allow for feedback, reflections as well as inputs for the study recommendations. We reinvited representative of the stakeholders from the key informant interviews with other stakeholders new to the research to ensure different insights. All stakeholders were from the research areas of Karagita, Bondeni and Kaptembwo in Nakuru County invited, see Table 12.

**Table 12:** Groups engaged in the dialogue workshops

Group	Description
Group 1: Community representatives	Community leaders (youth and women), community health volunteers
Group 2: Duty bearers	Rescue centres, Chief, police religious leaders, human rights defenders
Group 3: Minority groups	Civil society organizations representing minority groups of LGBTQ+, Sex workers, People living with disability

Stakeholders were separated into three different groups associated with their work, to ensure sensitive topics could be discussed with respect to confidentiality. From the survey and the interviews, we brought the key findings to the dialogue workshops. The following sections summarize reflections from the stakeholders during the workshop discussions.

## UNDERSTANDINGS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE, CONSENT, AND BLAME

The finding on *A deviation from gender norms and roles could in some cases be linked to gender-based violence*, was verified by the stakeholders but led to further reflection on sexual violence. Reflections from duty bearers included varied understandings of what constitutes sexual violence and who is to blame. They explained that women and girls would often be blamed for dressing inappropriately or staying out late if they experienced sexual violence. The religious leaders and representatives from the minority groups participating in the workshop described how religious texts do not recognize marital rape as rape or sexual violence. Women are expected to submit and respect conjugal rights. Denial of such 'rights' can escalate violence. Religious texts addressing forgiveness and perceived duties as a wife, were described to be used as arguments for women to continue in violent relationships. Stakeholders also explained that violence against sex workers can be justifiable, while cases of corrective rape against lesbians were explained to be common in the community organized by male relatives in the household. An incidence from Karatine, a town in Central Kenya, was highlighted as a lesbian woman was gang raped and killed here. Overall, sexual consent was described to be difficult to understand for particularly adolescents. Adolescents who are sexually violated, often believe they gave consent. Discussions around sex and sexuality were found to be a taboo.

## MASCULINITY AND ACCEPTANCE OF VIOLENCE

*Gender stereotypes and violence are interlinked and can reinforce each other in the informal settlements.* Stakeholders elaborated on the finding by referring to a complex context of how norms of masculinity and violence were interlinked. They described that intimate partner violence was seen as a way to assert masculinity. The introduction of Kenyan laws on violence and discrimination against women and girls, was explained to 'criminalize' this assertion of masculinity. Stakeholders indicated that the introduction of the law did have an impact. It was described that violent behaviour in the home changed to avoid a charge with a criminal offence. Nevertheless, men often find ways to continue some forms of violent behaviour e.g. a slap which was not seen as a form of violence. The example of a slap was described as a way to fulfil an expectation of exerting masculinity. During the Covid-19 pandemic many men lost their jobs, which had an impact on their role as providers in the family. Stakeholders explained that this contributed to tensions within households and increased the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence.

From the survey, we found that respondents' personal beliefs did not find violence to be a normal part of a romantic relationship in the community. Stakeholders indicated that what is considered normal depends on which form of violence is experienced. They explained that physical and sexual violence is not normalized in romantic relationships, but emotional violence is normalized and is mostly perpetrated by women. Emotional violence referred to verbal abuse, cheating, and were referred to as not serious in the interviews.

## CHILDREN AND VIOLENCE

*Children were highlighted as in risk of experiencing gender-based violence.* From the survey, 30% of the respondents estimated that 1 in 4 children in the settlements has experienced physical and sexual violence. When presented with these results, all stakeholder groups reflected to expect violence against children to be even higher. They highlighted situations of poverty where adolescent girls are forced to engage in transactional sex for sanitary towels. Stakeholders further explained that children often undergo physical violence from stepparents, and that it was often worse for the boys. Girls who are victims of rape are often from single female headed households. Additionally, they highlighted that traditional cultural practices can involve beating and neglect e.g. the rite of passage ceremony from childhood to adulthood for boys. Stakeholders indicated that it is difficult to know when children experience violence. Often, they do not want to report or disclose due to the stigma that comes with reporting, and the fear that the process may interfere with their access to education.

## PROTECTING FAMILY VALUES BY RESOLVING CASES AT HOME

*Traditional values play a major role in handling gender-based violence.* Stakeholders reiterated a community preference to resolve gender-based violence cases at the household level. This was due to several reasons; to maintain the family dignity and keep information within the family, especially incest cases, and to ensure financial stability in the home if a perpetrator is the bread winner of the family. It was explained

that when gender-based violence cases are resolved at the household level, it is often concluded that the survivor should forgive the perpetrator. As an example, mothers will explain to their daughters that intimate partner violence can be a part of marriage and women have persevered in such relationships for generations. Stakeholders indicated that most of the violence cases that are resolved at the household level are non-conclusive and with a high risk of the re-occurrence of violence. In some cases, this was explained to have fatal consequences. Moreover, the stakeholders reiterated how resolving cases of gender-based violence at home also often meant that the mental health of the survivor was not considered. Due to the community focus on preservation of the family unit, attention is drawn on forgiveness and reconciliation rather than the mental wellbeing of the survivor and referral.

## LIMITED ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

*Systemic barriers interfere with survivors' ability to get the needed medical support, opportunity to report gender-based violence and to pursue a case.* On this finding, community health volunteers, part of the group of community representatives, and staff from rescue centres highlighted how medical assessments for physical and sexual violence in Nakuru County, is limited to only happen every Tuesdays and Thursdays. This was explained to delay both treatment and reporting for survivors. Stakeholders also explained that limited reporting could be explained by the tedious reporting process and the lack of information on reporting procedures from the police, hospitals, and the courts. Service providers explained that sometimes, the cases may not reach the legal justice system due to the reliance on referrals and the delay in court cases.

Often alternative dispute resolution meetings organized to handle cases of gender-based violence are dominated by male representatives. This was described to impact the outcome, often siding with the male perpetrator. Women leaders who participate in these meetings are a minority, and their views are often dismissed. Stakeholders indicated that pro-active and vocal female leaders are viewed as non-conforming, presumptuous and impolite hence not a representation of the ideal traditional woman. Views from religious leaders on women's role and expectations in the community were explained in reference to religious texts. Authority and leadership mostly lie with men hence women are expected to submit to this authority in the church, mosque, the family, and the community.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND STIGMA OF REPORTING VIOLENCE

*Gendered stigmatization and prejudices affect opportunity for reporting of gender-based violence.* Stakeholders repeated the existence of stigma in cases of reporting both physical violence from a spouse and sexual violence. Moreover, they highlighted social norms around husbands leaving their spouse if she reports being raped. They also pointed out the blame and shame linked to violence and explained a perceived community pressure on men to dissociate themselves from their spouse if she reported rape. It was highlighted by the group of community representatives how crucial it was that incidences of violence were kept confidential from the surrounding

community. The risk of compromising privacy was linked to a hesitation in reporting cases of violence. The gender desks at police stations were introduced in Kenya to enhance reporting for survivors, however, stakeholders explained that survivors attempting to report were met with limited confidentiality and privacy as well as negative attitudes from the officers.

*Reporting gender-based violence is difficult for male survivors.* Across all stakeholder groups this finding was highlighted and further explained with an expectation of men as the stronger gender. The police and chiefs explained that men cannot report emotional forms of violence, because it is not socially and culturally acceptable for men to experience violence and these forms of violence are sometimes not even considered violence. For persons with disabilities, stakeholders explained that the community has limited understanding of their needs, especially persons with intellectual disabilities. Accessibility barriers were also described to impact the number of cases being reported of gender-based violence by persons with disabilities. Stakeholders described how access to police stations is a challenge especially for persons with physical disabilities and wheelchair users. When attempting to report cases of gender-based violence, harmful and stereotypical attitudes of the police or chiefs were often experienced. Representatives from minority groups explained how people with disabilities are not expected to engage in any sexual activity, either forced or consensual, which makes any claim of sexual violence dismissed by the police. Similar issues were presented for LGBTQ+ persons.

## THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY AND TRADITIONAL FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

*Marginalised groups such as LGBTQ+ persons, sex workers and people with disabilities are especially vulnerable for discrimination and violence.* On this key finding, representatives from minority groups further unpacked how traditional gender roles of men and women in the household often fuels the discrimination and negative prejudice of LGBTQ+ persons. LGBTQ+ persons were perceived to go against prescribed norms in society. All stakeholders gave examples that LGBTQ+ persons are openly harassed because of their sexual orientation which can force them to hide their sexuality. When LGBTQ+ experience gender-based violence, it is difficult for them to report.

LGBTQ+ persons feel isolated and discriminated against by some religious leaders who openly preach against their identity and sexuality and deny them opportunities to participate in church and community activities. Religious teaching that condemns homosexuality, also affects parents whose children are members of the LGBTQ+ community. The minority groups further explained that parents experience stigma and discrimination from the community, and often are encouraged to call pastors and witchdoctors to intervene. Often parents encourage children to hide their sexual orientation to preserve the family's dignity. It was also highlighted how some even prefer home-schooling their children to avoid stigma and discrimination from the school, the church, and the community. They also pressure young adults who are homosexuals to get married to the opposite gender and have children to conceal their sexuality.



## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Results of the study showed that community members in the informal settlements often heard the term gender-based violence and reported high estimates for physical and sexual violence against different groups. Around 70% assessed that 'about half to nearly all' of women in the informal settlements experience physical violence and almost 50% assessed that 'about half to nearly all' of women in the community experience sexual violence. According to WHO (2021), the global estimate of women that experience sexual or physical violence is 1 in 3. Thus, the respondents' estimate levels are much higher than the global average which indicates an understanding of violence as common in the settlement.

We found that a deviation from gender norms and roles could in some cases be considered gender-based violence. Economic violence was highlighted but referred to as situations where men do not fulfil their role of providing for the family. Neglect by either spouse, adultery, disinheritance, and tribal profiling were also mentioned. These forms of violence were all related to social and cultural norms supporting a close link between gendered responsibility and violence. Other studies found similar misinterpretations of violence described as neglect from a spouse not to cook and saying no to marital sex (Aisyah & Parker, 2017; Houweling, 2016; Amadiume, 2015).

For sexual violence, we found a complex link between blame and gendered societal norms. Almost 40% of the survey respondents agreed there was a social norm to blame women and girls for rape, while religious leaders mentioned inappropriate clothing for women and LGBTQ+ persons as an acceptable reason for violence. Other studies have also described harmful societal norms of how it is women's and girls' responsibility to change their behaviour to prevent assault (Perrin et al., 2019).

We saw how gender norms can socialize men as powerful, strong, dominant and to assert power, sometimes through violence. It was described to contribute to an overall social expectation in the community that accepts men as the dominant gender. Expectations of women were to be submissive, passive, reinforcing women as dependent on men. Research has also demonstrated specific gender norms and responsibilities to be assigned to women and men (Ellemers, 2018; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Sanchez et al., 2010). A socialization of men and women within these roles, has been found to reinforce unequal power dynamic between men and women (Cislaghi & Heise, 2019). Other studies have affirmed how masculinity and socialized gender roles are part of the assertion of power over women's bodies and how violence can be part of this assertion through intimate partner violence (Fleming et al., 2015; McCloskey et al., 2016). These findings combined could point to an acceptance that sexual violence is common, and misunderstandings exist about what and who is to blame.

From the survey, respondents' personal beliefs were not acceptant of intimate partner violence. Only 1/5 accepted some forms of violence. Through the interviews, we saw an acceptance of softer violence e.g. a slap, explained with expectations of masculinity and harmful gender roles. Other studies have demonstrated similar findings on intimate partner violence in Kenya and links it to traditional gender roles, while they also pointed to limited implementation of and lack of gender-sensitivity within the current law (Aura, 2014; Mbote, 2000).

We found that almost half of the respondents said that no men in the informal settlements experience sexual violence and only 1 in 4 men experience physical violence. Reporting gender-based violence was explained to be difficult for men due to stigma and norms of masculinity. Research on men's experience of intimate partner violence is scarce, and when men are included in studies they are often focused on as perpetrators (Kigaya, 2021). Only one national survey in Kenya included men as survivors of domestic violence, and concluded a rate similar to that of women (NGEC, 2016). Another study found that intimate partner violence against men was treated more as a social issue than a legal matter (Comas-d'Argemir's, 2015), while other studies, confirmed stigma, loss of status and additional violence by police and surrounding community when reporting violence in communities with gendered stereotypes of men (Ayodele, 2017; Mongare et al., 2018; Obegi et al., 2017; Melchiorre et al., 2016; McCarrick et al., 2016; Clark et al., 2014; Rakovec-Felser, 2014; Drijber et al., 2013).

The study showed discrimination and violence of marginalised groups from authorities and community members. Similar findings have been documented from Kenya and the African region and the vulnerability of these marginalised groups has been associated with the legal criminalisation of sex work and same-sex activity (Woensdregt, 2022, Semugoma et al. 2012). Cases of corrective rape against lesbians was found through several studies (Gault, 2015; Currier, George 2017). A 'social' criminalisation in terms of stigmatization and ostracization from the community, have been described as a risk of even further marginalization (Woensdregt, 2022). We found religion to play a central part in how LGBTQ+ persons are perceived, while other studies also confirmed religious leaders' influence on harmful public perceptions (HRW, 2015).

Limited trust in the established social structures and systems for help-seeking was highlighted. The survey respondents feared that girls and women would be stigmatized by the community and their reputation damaged when reporting sexual and physical violence. Some families prefer the privacy of resolving cases of violence internally, while the police often also push for cases to be handled at household level. The establishment of the gender police in Kenyan police stations was aimed at promoting privacy and confidentiality of reporting (Ombwori, 2009), however, we found limited opportunity for survivors to have their privacy ensured. The limited level of trust in social structures combined with the social and financial cost of seeking support indicated a large barrier for survivors of gender-based violence.

## LIMITATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

The findings should be reflected on with certain limitations to the study. For the survey the data collection was done during the day which can have affected the data in terms of who was home to meet the numerator. There was a large overweight of women which challenged the comparison of male and female perspectives. The youngest age group of 18-34 years was in accordance with Article 26 of the Kenyan Constitutional definition of youth. We could have separated the age group into smaller intervals as there are great differences regarding education, work experience and relationships between young people within the age bracket.

The survey respondents reported the social norms amongst people whose opinion matter to them as more negative than their own personal beliefs. There is a risk of the survey data being biased due to self-censorship, as the interviewees may not have felt comfortable disclosing information to the enumerators about their opinion if it was perceived as negative.

The tool was developed for the context of gender-based violence against women and girls in low resource and complex humanitarian settings (Perrin et al., 2019). Even though the tool was adapted to include statements of gender-based violence towards men and minority groups, it maintained a focus on domestic heteronormative relationships and the harmful norms that can sustain gender-based violence against women and girls.

Limited community-based research has been conducted in the informal settlements of Nakuru. This also meant, the format of the stakeholder workshop was unknown to many of the participants. For some this created confusion as some were not interested in discussing the findings and provide their perspective, but only to hear the key findings. Moreover, some findings were found to be controversial which led to intense arguments from particularly the group of duty bearers.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Through this study we have unpacked root causes of gender-based violence in the informal settlements in Nakuru County. Overall, there is a growing body of evidence supporting different strategies for reducing gender-based violence through a focus on root causes (UN Women, 2020b). The findings from this study highlight extensive recommendations for actions within the informal settlements and recommendations for wider programming on addressing gender-based violence through access to services and advocacy initiatives. Based on the study findings the following recommendations are proposed.

### TRANSFORM ATTITUDES, BELIEFS AND SOCIAL NORMS THROUGH AWARENESS RAISING

We found negative social norms, stereotyped gender roles and misinformation about gender-based violence. According to Cislighi & Heise (2019) addressing harmful gender norms is central for prevention work as they can take part in defining actions. Studies have shown that partner violence and non-partner sexual violence can be addressed through transforming attitudes, beliefs and social norms around gender roles, control of women's bodies, and the acceptability of violence (UN Women, 2020a; Cislighi & Heise, 2019). Our findings point to a need for dialogue around gender-based violence in the informal settlement, including acceptance of violence, clarification of values and information about consequences of gender-based violence. This also means an inclusive approach supporting the rights of LGBTQ+ persons and other marginalized groups, addressing harmful understandings of masculinity and intimate violence against men.

### RAISE AWARENESS OF MHPSS SERVICE FOR SURVIVORS AND STRENGTHEN REFERRAL NETWORKS

The study indicated how often cases of gender-based violence in the informal settlements are resolved at the household or community level. The focus was on reconciling the family, with limited recognition of needs for mental health and psychosocial support services. It is recommended to sensitize community leaders and others engaged in resolving cases at household level about mental health consequences and opportunities within the existing referral network for MHPSS. This is to ensure that survivors receive the support they need and to avoid retraumatization. Moreover, consistent help-seeking information should also be provided to survivors to ensure they are informed about reporting and legal aid.

## ADDRESS FINANCIAL AND SERVICE BARRIERS FOR SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The cost of accessing services for survivors of gender-based violence was found to be a barrier to reporting and caused delay. Waiver services are provided at the facilities especially for gender-based violence cases though there are limited awareness hereof. There is a need for awareness creation on the availability of these services for survivors of gender-based violence. Delay in reporting has also been linked to limited administrative availability and support for survivors e.g. often doctors examining survivors are only available two days a weeks. As also highlighted by the duty bearers and representatives of minority groups in the workshops, there is a need for administrative changes that enable access to medical assessment for survivors and time effective reporting of cases.

## ADVOCATE FOR THE USE OF THE ALTERNATIVE JUSTICE SYSTEM BY COURTS

Survivors of violence experience barriers when seeking help, they also receive conflicting information at every stage of reporting and repeated trauma when delayed and forced to repeat their trauma at several referral points; the police station, court and health facility. Strengthening may involve streamlined documentation system for survivors of gender-based violence. It is also recommended to advocate for the use of the Alternative Justice System (AJS) by the courts. The AJS is available at the grassroots level to resolve all cases in the community (Alternative Justice System Policy, 2014). Alternative Justice Practitioners are trained and deployed by the government to hear cases at the community level and reduce case backlog in the formal judicial system.

## SUPPORT SAFE SPACES FOR REPORTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Stigma and lack of privacy and confidentiality was found as a barrier to reporting violence with the police. Police structures should promote safe reporting for survivors in a manner that does not stigmatize nor infringe on rights of privacy. We recommend establishing gender-sensitive spaces for reporting, such as having the gender desk in a room to promote privacy and confidentiality of the information shared, having more genders represented at the reporting desk, as well as sensitization and dialogue with the officers on the harmful norms and stigma towards especially minority groups.

## ENSURE AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH IN RESPONSES TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

We found that marginalised groups were vulnerable to experiencing gender-based violence due to stigma and limited protection from authorities. In line with the representatives of the minority groups, we recommend that any response to gender-based violence in the informal settlement, should ensure an intersectional approach. Such approach considers how factors such as disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, class, civil status, and ethnicity are central for how gender-based violence is experienced and addressed e.g. gender-based violence responses for LGBTQ+ persons should differ from heterosexual survivors of domestic violence.

## ADVOCATE FOR THE DECRIMINALIZATION OF SEX WORK AND LGBTQ+ PERSONS

Marginalised groups face harassment by the Police and discrimination by the community. Sex work is criminalized in Kenya under the Penal Code, prescribing jail time of up to three years. Section 182 of the Kenyan penal code prescribes the offences of 'idling and disorderly persons' and is often used to harass sex workers.

Stakeholders should advocate for the inclusion and protection of marginalized groups not protected in the current framework. Civil society organisations and other community leaders can support the Kenyan bill on sex workers rights through advocacy. Another study has shown that introduction and enforcement of legal protection frameworks on violence can lead to a decline in violence particularly in partner violence (Modi et al., 2014). For LGBTQ+ groups the advocacy can be guided by the landmark resolution passed by the African Commission on Human and People's Rights in 2013, which called on member states to 'end all acts of violence and abuse, whether committed by State or non-state actors' against individuals based on their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity (HRW, 2015).

## PROMOTE COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

The stigma and taboo of sex and sexuality in the settlements were associated with the attitudes, norms, and misinformation around sexual and gender-based violence. Strengthening and promoting access to comprehensive sexuality education programs in schools and in the community are key for ensuring awareness and empowerment of children and young people while destigmatizing sex. In Kenyan schools, comprehensive sexuality education programs are often treated as extracurricular activities, limiting the access to information for children and young people. Therefore, comprehensive sexuality education should be made mandatory and taught throughout student's school years - just like math.

## ENHANCE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR COLLABORATION BETWEEN SECTORS

To ensure effective responses to gender-based violence there is a need for collaborations between sectors. This does not only include health professionals and authorities. Poverty was found to be a factor for not leaving violent relationships, therefore opportunities for livelihood and education as part of any response to gender-based violence is central. Empowerment programmes targeting women's groups can also be key for ensuring community support and for diversity in leadership. With the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic such collaborations are needed at a larger scale. Through such collaboration, counter narratives that challenge harmful norms of gender-based violence should always be integrated.

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**Root Causes of Gender-based Violence in Informal Settlements in Nakuru, Kenya**

By Elise Denis-Ramirez, Leslie C. Rono & Elizabeth Anyango

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