



POWER TO YOU(TH) - KENYA

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVES AND DECISION-MAKING REGARDING HARMFUL PRACTICES, SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

Results of baseline study (2021), conducted in Homa Bay, Kajiado, Migori
and Siaya counties, Kenya



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PREFACE

KIT Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), in collaboration with in-country research partners, is presenting this baseline study as one of seven baseline studies conducted for the Power to You(th) programme in Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Senegal and Uganda. The programme has a specific focus on harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting, child marriage, sexual and gender-based violence and unintended pregnancy. These are persistent 'key issues' where insufficient progress has been made over the years.

The Power to You(th) programme emphasises the power of young people, especially adolescent girls and young women, to be meaningfully included in discussions and decisions. The aim of the baseline studies is, therefore, to provide an understanding of adolescents' and young people's perspectives regarding harmful practices, sexual and gender-based violence and unintended pregnancy, and their role in decision-making processes regarding these key issues. The studies also provide data on young people's voice, agency and decision-making power, and how social and state actors (through laws and policies) are contributing to positive change. Youth-friendly research methods such as 'photovoice' have been employed to actively engage young people and reinforce their voice. Finally, the studies also provide information about the civic space and the role of the media in social change processes on the key issues. The baseline studies were conducted in areas where the Power to You(th) programme will conduct intervention activities. The main study respondents of these baseline studies were young people aged 15–24 years.

The Power to You(th) programme (2021–2025) was developed and is being implemented by a consortium of Amref Flying Doctors, Rutgers, Sonke Gender Justice and its country partners, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The consortium strives to foster ownership at country level, with locally formed coalitions and representation of beneficiaries in its governance. KIT and Choice for Youth and Sexuality are the consortium's technical partners. KIT, as the research partner, collaborated with in-country research partners to conduct the baseline studies.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
Amref	African Medical Research Foundation
CSO	Civil society organisation
FGD	Focus group discussion
FGM/C	Female genital mutilation/cutting
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDI	In-depth interview
KII	Key informant interview
KIT	KIT Royal Tropical Institute
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence

KEY DEFINITIONS

Adolescents	Those aged 10–19 years
Child marriage	Any legal or customary union involving a girl or boy below the age of 18
FGM/C	All procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons
SGBV	Any act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships. It encompasses threats of violence and coercion. It can be physical, emotional, psychological or sexual in nature and can also take the form of a denial of resources or access to services. It inflicts harm on women, girls, men and boys (UNHCR, 2020).
Teenage pregnancy	All pregnancies before the age of 20
Young adults	Those aged 20–24 years
Young people	Those aged 10–24 years
Youth	All females and males within the age range 15–24 years

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Harmful practices such as child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and unintended pregnancy are human rights violations. They are manifestations of gender inequality deeply rooted in social norms, limited economic prospects, and a lack of access to adolescent sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and education. Child marriage and unintended pregnancy have comparable impacts on the health and education of young girls and, therefore, on economic opportunities, decision-making, and their agency. For example, there is a sense of normalcy of teenage pregnancy among the Maasai community in Kenya, and the practice of FGM/C is a precursor to womanhood and sexual activity (Olenja et al., 2019). FGM/C also has a negative influence on girls' agency and empowerment. While the impact of these issues on young people's lives is well documented (Starrs et al., 2018; Olenja et al., 2019; Olenja et al., 2020), young people are often excluded from related decision-making, and political and civic spaces around the world (Kaleidos Research and ICRH, 2016). The exclusion of young people from decision-making restricts their ability to make informed choices, enjoy their sexuality and live free from harmful practices.

Goal and Purpose of the Power to You(th) Programme

Power to You(th) is a five-year programme (2021–2025) that aims to ensure that young people (aged under 35) are meaningfully included in discussions and decisions, particularly those related to the SRHR of adolescent girls and young women. By increasing the participation of young people from a range of backgrounds in political and civic space, the programme aims to improve youth-led and focused advocacy and accountability. This is in relation to unintended pregnancy, SGBV, and harmful practices such as child marriage and FGM/C in Kenya. The purpose of the baseline study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of adolescents' and young people's perspectives (knowledge, attitudes, priorities, and demands) regarding harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy, and their role in decision-making processes regarding these issues in four study counties in Kenya: Homa Bay, Kajiado, Migori and Siaya. The situational analysis of this baseline study will inform the design and/or adaptation of the Power to You(th) programme to be implemented in Kenya.

Specific objectives of the baseline study

- To establish adolescents' and young people's perspectives on harmful practices, SGBV, and unintended pregnancy, and whether and how they take action to prevent these practices.

- To assess the (meaningful) engagement of adolescents and young people in lobbying and advocacy, policymaking, and community activities on harmful practices, SGBV, and unintended pregnancy.
- To explore the norms and attitudes of community members to the rights of young people, harmful practices, SGBV, and unintended pregnancy, and to what extent they take action to prevent these practices.
- To examine the development and implementation of laws and policies addressing harmful practices, SGBV, and unintended pregnancy and ensuring young people's rights.
- To assess the civic space available to influence decision-making around harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy, the media trends, and the use of evidence in related lobbying and advocacy.

Methodology

The baseline study applied a mixed-methods approach employing both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data was generated from a youth baseline survey of 834 respondents distributed in four study counties (Kajiado, Siaya, Migori, and Homa Bay). In addition, an online civic space survey was also conducted among 25 respondents representing civil society of youth-serving organizations. Qualitative data was collected from the four sites using semi-structured interviews (in-depth interviews (IDIs), Key Informant Interviews (KII), focus group discussions (FGDs), and photovoice. These methods are further detailed in Section 2.3 of this report.

Findings

In the quantitative survey, young women made up 51% (427) of the total sample, and young men 49% (415), while 0.12% (1) identified as non-binary. As a proportion of the total sample, 25.7% of respondents (217) were in Homa Bay, 24.7% (208) in Kajiado, 26.0% (219) in Migori, and 23.6% (199) in Siaya. The average age of the baseline survey respondents was 19.4 years. Most respondents were never married (77.25%), with Siaya reporting the highest proportion (83%) and Kajiado the lowest (70%) of never married. In terms of school attendance, the proportion of respondents currently attending school in each study county was 70% in Migori, 65% in Homa Bay, 64% in Siaya and 45% in Kajiado. An average of 20% of the respondents were currently working. The lowest employment rate was in Siaya (7%), and the highest was in Kajiado (30%). Access to mobile phones was high across the 4 counties (87%): the highest being in Siaya (97%), and the lowest in Kajiado (75%).

A summary of the findings is presented under the four program pathways. **Under Pathway 1**, the baseline study aimed at exploring adolescents' and youths' perspectives and actions relating to harmful practices, SGBV, and unintended pregnancy, and their ability to demand accountability. The results show that although young people are affected by these issues, they have very limited decision-making power, as this is vested in men and, especially, community elders. From the survey and qualitative data, many of the young people knew that these practices were illegal and did not want them to continue, but adherence to social norms and cultural practices was a major barrier to the abandonment of these practices.

Girls and women have a particularly insignificant role in household decision-making especially in Kuria and Kajiado, where FGM/C is practiced. However, in instances where youth have formal education, they (including girls) have a relative leeway to assert themselves and oppose or refuse to undergo harmful practices such as marrying a spouse selected for them by their parents or deciding not to undergo FGM/C. SGBV is common in all four study counties although very few young people agreed that SGBV was acceptable. Around 4 in 10 respondents knew someone who had been sexually abused. In Migori, fewer youth reported knowing someone who had been sexually abused (27%), compared to Homa Bay (35%) and Siaya (35%), and 48% in Kajiado (48%). One of the major factors that make young girls vulnerable to SGBV is poverty, and this has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The majority of respondents (81%) could name at least one modern method to prevent pregnancy. Overall, youth (aged 20–24) were more knowledgeable about modern contraceptive methods than adolescents (aged 15–19 years).

In terms of communication and agency, both quantitative and qualitative results show that youth are generally constrained in expressing themselves, particularly on topics relating to reproductive health and relationships. This is attributed to culture and socialisation, where communication between parents and young people is inhibited to the extent that they are constrained to speak openly. The good news is that young people are able to identify potential safe spaces where they can express themselves, such as schools, where the majority of youth spend most of their time, social networks such as youth-led organisations and, to some extent, the church. It is evident that young girls aged 20–24 can make their own decisions and demonstrate positive reproductive health-seeking behaviour. Similarly, young boys exhibit better knowledge of contraception. It is therefore important to leverage this agency to use both girls and boys to champion SRHR issues and as homegrown agents of change.

Under Pathway 2, the baseline study aimed to assess the meaningful engagement of adolescents and young people in lobbying and advocacy, policymaking, and

community activities on harmful practices, SGBV, and unintended pregnancy. Overall, one in four female respondents and one in five male respondents reported ever participating in activities to prevent child marriage. The most common activity or action respondents participated in to prevent marriage was educating girls (63%), rallying the wider community to stand up for girls' rights (40%) and empowering girls (35%). In Migori, 39% of respondents had been active to prevent FGM/C, compared to 38% in Kajiado, where more female and older respondents (44% and 44%, respectively) than male and younger respondents (32% and 33%, respectively) had ever participated in activities or taken action to prevent FGM/C. The most common type of activities in Migori and Kajiado was educating girls on their rights, challenging the reasons for FGM/C and speaking out about the risks and realities of the practice. Differences in participation could be observed between female and male respondents. Overall, one in five respondents have ever participated in any activities or taken action to prevent SGBV.

The results show that generally young people are not meaningfully engaged in activities carried out by CSOs in the four study sites. However, Siaya is an exception where there were reports of youth engagement. This could be attributed to the existence of networks such as Siaya Muungano Youth Network and the Youth Parliament which provides a platform for youth to identify issues that affect them through community dialogue forums and demand action from duty-bearers and leadership at the county level. CSOs have the potential to organise and provide spaces for young people to express themselves and champion their rights through representation in the county government policymaking process. For example, the Youth Parliament lobby group in Siaya seems to be a good platform to replicate in other study counties. A major constraint is that these CSOs have limited coverage due to limited resources and therefore, are unable to address all the needs of young people in their area of operation or ensure that policies are implemented in the absence of commitment from duty-bearers such as the county government.

Under Pathway 3, the baseline study aimed to explore the norms and attitudes of community members to the rights of young people, harmful practices, SGBV, and unintended pregnancy, and the extent to which they take actions to prevent these practices. Results show that overall, most young people are aware of the legal status of FGM/C (91%) and would not want to perform it on their daughters (96%). In addition, most young people (92%) think that SGBV is not acceptable. Despite this high level of awareness, the practices are still prevalent. Social norms are still a hindrance to the promotion and protection of the rights of young people. Social norms influence the continuation of FGM/C in Kajiado and Migori, and early marriage and SGBV in all four counties. Widow inheritance takes place predominantly in Homa Bay and Siaya, and to a lesser extent in Migori and Kajiado. Positive changes in

social norms that could contribute to a reduction in harmful practices revolve around embracing formal education for both boys and girls, the return to school policy for pregnant girls, and a change in perception that pregnant girls should get married even if underage.

Societal actors play a key role in addressing harmful practices by reporting cases of early marriage, SGBV, unintended pregnancy and FGM/C to the local leaders such as chiefs, village elders, community health volunteers, representatives of community-based organisations, NGOs, the police, the Children's Department, teachers, and SGBV desks at health facilities. The media was identified as an important lobbying and advocacy tool for issues affecting youth. Their role in highlighting the issues and bringing them to the attention of the public and the law was seen as a positive element in the abandonment of harmful practices.

Under Pathway 4, the baseline study aimed to examine the development and implementation of laws and policies addressing FGM/C, SGBV, and unintended pregnancy and ensuring young people's rights are protected. This study shows that there are laws and policies in Kenya around FGM/C, SGBV, and early and child marriage, and the return to school policy for cases of teenage pregnancy. However, the main challenge is in the enforcement of these laws.

Some counties have domesticated or are in the process of domesticating the national laws and policies to enhance implementation and accountability at the local level. The domestication process enables counties to allocate resources and budgets for implementation. For example, Kajiado has an anti-FGM/C policy, and Siaya has a county action plan in response to teenage pregnancy and is in the process of developing a county SGBV policy and domesticating the national youth policy. However, there were no reports of policy domestication in Homa Bay or Migori. Despite the existence of a favourable policy and legal environment, implementation of these policies and laws remains a challenge. Concerns were raised about people in positions of responsibility failing to enforce laws, on the one hand, and community interference, on the other.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the baseline results confirm the main problem as stated in the theory of change: although young people know about harmful practices, including unintended pregnancy, they have limited agency to demand their rights and question the social norms that are entrenched in their culture. Social norms and gender inequality persist in the four study sites and affect girls and women more than boys and men. Similarly, SGBV affects girls and women more than boys and men. Although there are policies

and legal instruments regarding the SRHR of young people, there are challenges to enforcement.

Poverty and societal norms are key drivers of harmful practices such as teenage pregnancy, early marriage and FGM/C. Poverty keeps young people—especially girls—out of school, hence increasing their vulnerability to harmful practices. Investment in education with concomitant programmes that provide avenues for employment is critical for the empowerment of young people, which would then allow them to demand their rights. This is related to the results of this study that shows that meaningful youth engagement is limited and could be related to their lack of economic power.

CSOs have the potential for lobbying and advocacy and have legitimacy and trust among members of the community; however, some of them have limited resources to undertake advocacy work and convene meetings with relevant stakeholders to address issues affecting young people. CSOs need to be part of a cohesive stakeholder network that works together, drawing on their various synergies to comprehensively build the capacity of young people to address issues that affect them. To some extent, there are community members who are taking the initiative as citizens to lead the sensitisation of the community, a positive proposition of initiating change from within the community. This approach increases buy-in, as it is driven by one of their own, thus increasing acceptability based on legitimacy and trust.

Recommendations

Pathway 1: Young people demand accountability and responsiveness on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies

- There is a need to use a targeted approach to addressing harmful practices and SGBV in the four counties. For Siaya and Homa Bay, the focus should be on teenage pregnancy and SGBV. For Kajiado and Migori, the focus should be on FGM/C and early marriage. Young people are not homogeneous, and this needs to be taken into consideration during intervention design. There is a need to have specific interventions for girls and for boys, and they should also be county-specific.
- In-school interventions targeting young people aged 10–17 should be prioritised. This could also include the provision of sanitary towels.
- In terms of approach, there is a need for a multi-component approach that builds youth programmes around economic enterprises that can use the skills young people already have so that they are socially and economically engaged as part of their desire and vision for a better and productive future.
- There is a need to sensitise all community members, including girls and boys,

men and women, to address SRHR issues holistically in the form of community dialogues.

- Youth empowerment programmes should have a component to support education, especially for girls who are escaping early marriage and FGM/C. There is a need to support formal education for both boys and girls so that no one is left behind—recognising that education is an equaliser in terms of the empowerment that comes with it—to increase participation in decision-making and assertiveness. Keeping girls in school in Kajiado and Migori has been lauded as saving the girls from FGM/C and early marriage.

Pathway 2: CSOs amplify young people's voices to claim, protect and expand civic space

- The programme should use local role models and champions to illustrate the possibilities from within and also create forums for community dialogue. In the FGD, it was highlighted that using outsiders would not have the same effect.
- Engage the local administration, teachers/schools and church leaders more aggressively, given their legitimacy and trusted position in the community.
- Strengthen male involvement in programmes.
- Use youth networks and leverage other working practices such as the youth parliament in Siaya, the Siaya Muungano Network, to replicate in other counties.
- There is a need to ensure that CSOs the programme will engage have the capacity to address and deliver effective interventions, and are accountable to the community. This may involve strengthening the capacity of CSOs and developing leadership skills for young people for effective advocacy and community engagement.
- In Kajiado and Migori, there is a need to strengthen the programme's links with other projects/programmes, especially around rescue centres, for leverage. This could include the provision of basic reproductive health needs for girls and educational support such as paying school fees.

Pathway 3: Societal actors support and promote youth rights and progressive social norms

- There is a need to embrace partnerships with different stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, civil society, law enforcement agencies, the Ministry of Youth, Gender and Social Services, the local administration and the police.
- Elders in the community have been singled out as wielding the power, including traditional culture and social norms. It is, therefore, imperative that they are brought on board so that they can support the changes identified to improve the lives of

young people in the community. This was stressed for Migori and Kajiado counties, where elders are powerful with regard to promoting FGM/C.

- Engage boda-boda riders and sand harvesters as key stakeholders in preventing unintended pregnancy.
- Communities need to be educated about the reporting and referral systems within counties, to increase their awareness of the systems.
- There is a need to focus efforts especially on mainstream media. In addition, Power to You(th) needs to strengthen engagement with local medial channels, especially vernacular local radio stations, to create wider reach.
- There is a need to leverage social media to reach young people with information and collaborate on online engagement.

Pathway 4: State actors improve policymaking, budgeting and implementation at the local, national, regional and global levels on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies

- The results of this baseline report should be shared with the county government and other stakeholders at the county level. This will enable all stakeholders to adopt a common approach to addressing the concerns of young people in the community. This will also be an opportunity to share the programme's theory of change.
- Contribute to operationalising policies and action plans that have been domesticated by the county governments to respond appropriately to the needs of youth at the community level. Examples are the anti-FGM/C policy in Kajiado, and the SGBV policy and teenage pregnancy response plan in Siaya.
- Convene the stakeholders in the study sites and agree on the areas of focus and approach so that the community is dealing with a working team.
- Capacity-building for stakeholders and regular feedback on the focus areas are needed.

1. INTRODUCTION

Harmful practices such as child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and unintended pregnancy are human rights violations. They are manifestations of gender inequality deeply rooted in social norms, limited economic prospects, and a lack of access to adolescent sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and education. Child marriage and unintended pregnancy have comparable impacts on the health and education of young girls and, therefore, on economic opportunities, decision-making and their agency. For example, there is a sense of normalcy of teenage pregnancy among the Maasai community in Kenya, and the practice of FGM/C is a precursor to womanhood and sexual activity (Olenja et al., 2019). FGM/C also has a negative influence on girls' agency and empowerment. Besides sharing common causes and consequences, these three issues can be mutually reinforcing: child marriage increases the likelihood of teenage pregnancy, and vice versa (Karumbi, Gathara and Muteshi, 2017; Williamson, 2012). FGM/C and child marriage are directly linked to each other: in many areas where FGM/C is practised, it is a prerequisite for marriage (World Vision, 2014).

While the impact of these issues on young people's lives is well documented (Starrs et al., 2018; Olenja et al., 2019; Olenja et al., 2020), young people are often excluded from related decision-making, and political and civic spaces around the world (Kaleidos Research and ICRH, 2016). This is the case even though young people represent a large and growing segment of society in many countries, particularly in many low- and middle-income countries. There is clear evidence that meaningful participation of young people in decision-making processes benefits society, has positive effects on young people's development, and is key to achieving improvements in sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) outcomes.

The exclusion of young people from decision-making restricts their ability to make informed choices, enjoy their sexuality and live free from harmful practices. This is despite the view that meaningful youth participation is a right possessed by all young people, according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention states that young people have the fundamental right to participate in and access information related to decision-making processes that affect their lives and well-being.

1.1 CONTEXTUALISING HARMFUL PRACTICES, SGBV AND UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

The Kenyan population is growing fast. More than 76% of the population are under 35 years, with 33% aged between 10 and 24 (UNDP and SAPD, 2019). Nearly two thirds (60%) of the population live in rural areas. The level of educational attainment is low, with only 15.7% having completed secondary school. The maternal mortality

ratio in Kenya is 362 per 100,000 live births, and highest among women aged 25–39 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics et al., 2015). In this group, up to 17% of deaths may be associated with induced abortion (Say et al., 2014). Additionally, adolescents aged 15–19 years account for 45% of severe abortion-related complications (Le Mat and Chatterjee, 2020). Access to and use of contraceptives in Kenya is relatively high compared to other countries in the region. However, there are large differences by county, socio-economic status and age group (Izugbara et al., 2018).

1.1.1 CHILD MARRIAGE

Although the legal age for marriage in Kenya is 18, the country's prevalence of child marriage is one of the highest in the world. Among women aged 20–24, 23% were married before the age of 18, and 4.4% before the age of 15. Among men aged 20–24, 2.5% were married before the age of 18, and 0.3% before the age of 15 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics et al., 2015). The median age of first marriage increases with increasing education. Women with at least some secondary education marry on average 5 years later than those with no education. Child marriage is practised most in rural areas as part of customary practices. In Kenya, the median age of first marriage among women is lowest in Migori, Tana River and Homa Bay counties (17.1, 17.3 and 17.5, respectively, among women aged 25–49) (ibid.). Within pastoral communities, such as the Samburu, Maasai and Pokot, early marriage is used to increase family wealth by using cattle as bride price (Warria, 2019), and as an economic safety net, worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic (Le Mat and Chatterjee, 2020).

1.1.2 FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION/CUTTING

Despite the decline in the national prevalence of FGM/C from 32% in 2003 to 21% in 2014, there are large differences in the practice of FGM/C between different ethnic groups and regions in Kenya (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics et al., 2015; Kandala et al., 2017; Shell-Duncan et al., 2017). Prevalence remains high among the Somali (94%), Samburu (86%), Kuria (84%), Kisii (84%) and Maasai (78%) (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics et al., 2015). Some perform FGM/C immediately after birth, while others do so at age 7, or even during adolescence as a transition from childhood into adulthood (ibid.; UNICEF, 2020). FGM/C is often seen as a prerequisite for marriage (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics et al., 2015; Gitau et al., 2018; Karumbi and Gathara, 2020). Among the Maasai and Samburu, there are strong indications that FGM/C is practised in secret, at younger ages and in less severe forms due to the criminalisation of the practice (Olenja, 2019). The rates of both child marriage and FGM/C have been observed to increase as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, due to the closure of schools, the absence of safe spaces and less control by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Masago et al., 2020).

1.1.3 SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

In Kenya, women are often taught to tolerate domestic and other violence against women and to keep silent when it happens (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics et al., 2015). Intimate partner violence is, therefore, the most prevalent form of violence committed by men against women. It is deeply rooted and culturally accepted in most African communities and religions (Memiah et al., 2018). The 2014 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey found that 47% of women and 45% of men had experienced physical or sexual violence during their lifetime. Risk factors include, among others, poverty, transactional sex, early sexual debut (under 18 years) and the conviction that their partners are justified in beating them (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics et al., 2015; Memiah et al., 2018). In fact, 42% of women in the survey believed that wife beating was justified for at least one specified reason (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics et al., 2015).

Additionally, women married before age 18 are more likely than those married later to experience physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence (Grose et al., 2021). A recent study among class 6 students in the Nairobi area showed that almost half of the reported lifetime rapes among this group occurred within romantic relationships (Baicocchi et al., 2019). This study is quite exceptional, as it investigates intimate partner violence among adolescents below the age of 15. Little is known about SGBV in this age group, given that most studies focus on adolescent girls and young women from the age of 15 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics et al., 2015; Memiah et al., 2018; Grose et al., 2021). This may be due to the legal context in Kenya which criminalises sex between minors, even if both persons consent to sexual activity. Furthermore, there is limited evidence on the consequences of experiencing gender-based violence as a child or adolescent for their SRH later in life.

SGBV in Kenya has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. There has been an increase in the number of reported cases, a disruption to interventions and safe spaces such as schools and community-based SRH programmes, and a delay in accessing justice (Kok et al., 2021). Adolescent girls and sex workers have been affected most (John et al., 2021). This is reflected in the increased media coverage and advocacy approaches on domestic and sexual violence since the first detected case of COVID-19 in Kenya (Masago et al., 2020; Broekaert et al., 2021; John et al., 2021). This increase in SGBV has already also led to a rise in the number of mental health complaints such as depression and trauma (Masago et al., 2020).

1.1.4 UNINTENDED AND TEENAGE PREGNANCIES

The 2014 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey found that around 15% of women aged 20–49 had their first sexual intercourse by age 15, 50% by age 18, and 71% by age 20. Early sexual debut increases the risk of unintended and teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections when contraception is not commonly used. One in four women (25%) in Kenya have given birth before age 18, and almost half (47%) by age 20. The proportion of women aged 15–19 who have begun childbearing is highest in Narok, Homa Bay and West Pokot counties (40%, 33% and 29%, respectively) (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics et al., 2015).

Nearly two thirds (63%) of pregnancies among adolescents in Kenya are reported to be unintended, and 35% of those unintended pregnancies end in abortion (Guttmacher Institute, 2019). Unintended pregnancy is closely linked to the unmet need for contraceptives. While the unmet need among married adolescents aged 15–19 is 23%, it declines to 16% among young people aged 30–34 years. Access to SRH services for adolescents is low, leading to a low prevalence of modern contraceptive use among married adolescent females (36.8% for those aged 15–19 years) and sexually active unmarried adolescents (49.3%) (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics et al., 2015). Reasons for unintended pregnancy among adolescents (aged 15–19) stated by the adolescent girls themselves included the desire to maintain a relationship, poor contraceptive knowledge, misinformation about contraceptive side effects, and the lack of trusted mentors (Olenja et al. 2019; Ajayi et al., 2021).

Like child marriage, FGM/C and SGBV, teenage and unintended pregnancies have risen because of the COVID-19 pandemic and its related stay-at-home measures. This is closely connected to the increasing number of forced marriages and sexual abuse. At the same time, unintended teenage pregnancy could be due to a lack of access to SRH services during the pandemic, with medical resources being reallocated to COVID-19 care (Beutel, 2020; Partridge-Hicks, 2020). Furthermore, the increasing number of unintended teenage pregnancies has been linked to an increase in transactional sex to cover family expenses that have increased due to school closures and job losses (Beutel, 2020).

1.2 POWER TO YOU(TH) IN KENYA

Power to You(th) is a five-year programme (2021–2025) that aims to ensure that young people (aged under 35) are meaningfully included in discussions and decisions, particularly those related to the SRHR of adolescent girls and young women. By increasing the participation of young people from a range of backgrounds and groups

in political and civic space, the programme aims to improve youth-led and focused advocacy and accountability. This is in relation to unintended pregnancy, SGBV and harmful practices such as child marriage and FGM/C in Kenya.

The programme is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and will be implemented in seven countries: Uganda, Kenya, Senegal, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi and Indonesia. Globally the programme is coordinated by three partners: Amref Flying Doctors, Rutgers and Gender Justice (Sonke). In Kenya, the programme is being implemented in four counties (Homa Bay, Kajiado, Migori and Siaya) led by a consortium of five organisations: Amref Health Africa, the Network for Adolescent and Youth for Africa (NAYA), Siaya Muungano network (SIMUN), Ujamaa Africa (Migori) and Wanawake Wavuvi (WA-WA) (Homa Bay and Kajiado).

The project envisages more adolescent girls and young women from underserved communities making informed choices, enjoying their sexuality, and being free from harmful practices in a gender-equitable society.

The five strategic goals in the Power to You(th) theory of change

- Pathway 1** Young people demand accountability and responsiveness on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy
- Pathway 2** Civil society organisations amplify young people's voices to claim, protect and expand civic space
- Pathway 3** Societal actors support and promote youth rights and progressive social norms
- Pathway 4** State actors improve policymaking, budgeting and implementation at the local, national, regional and global level on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the baseline study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of adolescents' and young people's perspectives (knowledge, attitudes, priorities and demands) regarding harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy, and their role in decision-making processes regarding these issues in the four study counties in Kenya: Homa Bay, Kajiado, Migori and Siaya. The situational analysis of this baseline study will inform the design and/or adaptation of the Power to You(th) programme to be implemented in Kenya.

Specific objectives of the research

- To establish adolescents' and young people's perspectives on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy, and whether and how they take action to prevent these practices.
- To assess the (meaningful) engagement of adolescents and young people in lobbying and advocacy, policymaking and community activities on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy.
- To explore the norms and attitudes of community members to the rights of young people, harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy, and to what extent they take action to prevent these practices.
- To examine the development and implementation of laws and policies addressing harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy and ensuring young people's rights.
- To assess the civic space available to influence decision-making around harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy, the media trends and use of evidence in related lobbying and advocacy.

1.4 RESEARCH SCOPE

Findings of this study are limited in terms of generalisation, since the scope of the study focuses on the intervention areas of the Power to You(th) programme in Kenya. The study is designed to inform the start-up of the project and is not intended as a robust baseline assessment.

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is organised in seven chapters. The introduction (Chapter 1) contextualises the research in Kenya and the three Power to You(th) focus areas (harmful traditional practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy), leading to an overview of the study objectives and the methods used. Chapter 2 details the methods undertaken to conduct, analyse and write up this baseline study. Chapters 3 through 7 present an analysis of the findings. These chapters provide an insight into the knowledge and opinions of youth on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy. They examine the ability of young people to make decisions and speak up about these topics at the individual, household and community level. After focusing on youth perspectives and experiences, the report discusses the types of organisations working on these issues, and whether youth are meaningfully engaged in addressing these issues. Lastly, findings related to the enabling environment, including the role of social norms, laws, policies and political will, are explored. This is further contextualised with findings on the civic space available for organisations and youth to express their opinions and work to counter the adverse effects of harmful practices, SGBV

and unintended pregnancy. Future opportunities for lobbying and advocacy are also considered. Subsequently, in Chapter 8, the discussion reflects on the agency of youth and the structure of the enabling environment around them. Chapter 9 presents recommendations for the Power to You(th) programme in Kenya.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 MIXED- METHODS APPROACH

The baseline study, conducted in September to October 2021, used a mixed-methods approach which essentially applies a “well-defined and pre-specified research design that articulates purposely and prospectively, qualitative and quantitative components to generate an integrated set of evidence addressing a single research question” (Regnault and Willgross et al., 2017). Box 1 presents an overview of the mixed methods used to collect and analyse both *quantitative* (youth baseline survey and online civic space survey) and *qualitative* (from in-depth interviews (IDIs), semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs) and photovoice) data. These methods are further detailed in Section 2.3.

Box 1: Overview of the mixed methods used in the baseline study

Quantitative

- **Youth baseline survey**, using Open Data Kit, of adolescents (15–19) and young people (20–24) registered in youth structures.
- **Online civic space survey**, self-administered, with CSOs linked to the Power to You(th) programme involved in advocacy or lobbying.

Qualitative

- **FGDs** with adolescent girls/boys (15–19), young women/young men (20–24) and parents/caregivers.
- **In-depth interviews** (semi-structured interviews and KIIs) with caregivers, societal actors and state actors.
- **Photovoice** with young people engaged and not engaged in youth programmes (age 15–24) and only girls (age 10–14).

2.2. STUDY COUNTIES/SITES

The baseline study was conducted in four counties in Kenya: Homa Bay, Kajiado, Migori and Siaya (see Figure 1). These study counties have the highest burden of teenage pregnancy, harmful practices and SGBV. Specifically, the prevalence of FGM/C and early marriage is highest in Kajiado and Migori.

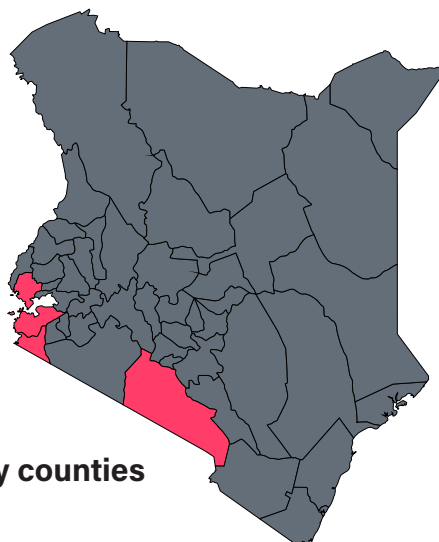


Figure 1: Map of Kenya and the four study counties (Kajiado, Homa Bay, Migori and Siaya)

2.3 DESCRIPTION OF METHOD, SAMPLING AND RECRUITMENT

2.3.1 QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT

Youth baseline survey

The main aim of the baseline survey was to generate quantitative indicators on how adolescents and young people rate their current level of engagement and decision-making around initiatives to prevent harmful practices (child marriage and FGM/C), SGBV and unintended pregnancy, to inform programme objectives of making adolescent and youth engagement more meaningful. For this, a quantitative baseline survey, mounted on an Open Data Kit using electronic tablet computers, was conducted with adolescent girls and boys (15–19) and young women and men (20–24) who are engaged with registered youth structures (including civil society organisations (CSOs), youth clubs and in-school youth groups) working on the focus areas of the Power to You(th) programme in the study counties. This survey was developed based on validated tools such as the Global Early Adolescents Study (GEAS) (WHO, 2014; Mmari et al., 2017), attitudes to gender norms (GEM) scales developed by MEASURE Evaluation (Promundo, 2003), and previous surveys from related programmes such as ‘Yes I Do’ and ‘Get Up, Speak Out.’

To conduct the baseline survey, the plan was to interview 200 young people in each county, bringing the total to 800 respondents across the four study counties. This number was not based on a sample size calculation but was considered a reasonable number for each county based on the available budget and would give an indication of the status of the social issues to be addressed by the programme. In the end, the four counties yielded 843 respondents aged 15–24 years (Figure 2). These respondents were selected from participating CSOs or other registered youth structures (e.g. youth clubs or schools) identified by the African Medical Research Foundation (Amref), the Network for Adolescent and Youth for Africa, and lead CSOs implementing the Kenya Power to You(th) programme in each county.

Baseline survey respondents’ key demographic characteristics

Young women made up 51% (427) of the total sample, and young men 49% (415), while 0.12% (1) identified as non-binary. As a proportion of the total sample, 25.7% of respondents (217) were in Homa Bay, 24.7% (208) in Kajiado, 26.0% (219) in Migori, and 23.6% (199) in Siaya (see Table 2). The average age of the baseline survey respondents was 19.4 years. The majority of respondents were never married (77.25%), with Siaya reporting the highest proportion (83%) and Kajiado the lowest (70%) never

married. As for parental status, 75.5% of the respondents do not have children. The highest proportion who do not was in Migori (79%), and the lowest was in Homa Bay (72%). The majority of respondents are Christians (98%), and the highest proportion of Muslims was found in Kajiado (5%). The respondents have a diverse ethnicity: Luo were found in Homa Bay and Siaya, Kuria were found in Migori, and Maasai were found in Kajiado. More specifically, in Homa Bay, 99% were Luo and 1% Kalenjin, Luhya or Maasai. In Migori, 94% were Kuria, 4% Kisii, 1% Luo, and 1% Kuria, Luhya or Kikuyu. In Kajiado, 83% were Maasai, 6% Kamba, 5% Kikuyu, 1% Luo, 1% Luhya, 1% Somalis, 1% other, and 1% Meru or Kalenjin. In Siaya, 99% were Luo, 3% Luhya, 1% Kalenjin, and 1% Kisii.

In terms of school attendance, the proportion of respondents *currently attending school* in each study county was 70% in Migori, 65% in Homa Bay, 64% in Siaya and 45% in Kajiado. However, in terms of those who had completed their education in each study county, the highest was in Kajiado (40%), followed by 28% in Siaya, 16% in Migori and 15% in Homa Bay. On average, school drop-out among respondents was 13%, with the highest rate found in Homa Bay (20%), and the lowest in Siaya (8%).

An average of 20% of the respondents were *currently working*. The lowest employment rate was in Siaya (7%), and the highest was in Kajiado (30%). In terms of what type of work, the majority of those currently working were engaged in casual or daily labour (e.g. 'sand harvesting' in Siaya and Homa Bay), with the exception of Migori, where the majority (33%) were engaged in farming or fishing. With an average of 87%, access to a mobile phone was high across all four study counties: the highest being in Siaya (97%), and the lowest in Kajiado (75%). Table 1 provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the baseline survey.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the youth baseline survey

	Migori	Homa Bay	Siaya	Kajiado	Total
Gender					
Girl/woman	51.6%	49.3%	54.3%	47.6%	50.7%
Boy/man	48.4%	50.7%	45.2%	52.4%	49.2%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.1%
Age group					
15–19	63.0%	51.2%	51.8%	50.0%	54.1%
20–24	37.0%	48.9%	48.2%	50.0%	45.9%
Religion					
Christianity	99.5%	99.5%	99.0%	94.2%	98.1%
Islam	0.5%	0.0%	0.5%	5.3%	1.5%

Traditional/indigenous religion	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Atheism/none	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.1%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.1%
Ethnic Group					
Kikuyu	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%	1.4%
Luhya	0.5%	0.5%	3.0%	1.0%	1.2%
Kalenijn	0.0%	0.5%	1.0%	0.5%	0.5%
Luo	1.4%	98.6%	95.5%	1.0%	48.5%
Kamba	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	1.5%
Somalis	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.2%
Kisii	3.7%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	1.1%
Meru	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.1%
Maasai	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	83.2%	20.6%
Kuria	93.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	24.3%
Other	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	0.5%
Marital or relationship status					
Married	18.3%	19.4%	12.1%	19.7%	17.4%
Divorced/separated	0.9%	0.5%	0.0%	1.0%	0.6%
Living together	0.0%	1.8%	0.5%	1.0%	0.8%
Has a partner but not living together	0.5%	2.3%	4.5%	2.9%	2.5%
Single, never married	80.4%	76.5%	83.4%	69.7%	77.5%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	6.7%	1.8%
Do you have children?					
No	79.0%	72.4%	78.4%	73.1%	75.7%
Yes	21.0%	27.6%	21.6%	26.0%	24.1%
Prefer not to answer	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.2%
Education level					
I have never attended school	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	1.1%
Not completed any level	2.3%	8.8%	0.0%	1.9%	3.3%
Primary school	33.3%	57.6%	34.2%	26.4%	38.1%
Secondary school	53.4%	25.8%	43.7%	49.0%	42.9%
Vocational/technical training	2.3%	2.3%	6.5%	1.9%	3.2%
Tertiary education (college and university)	7.3%	5.5%	15.8%	17.8%	11.4%
Occupational status					
Not working	82.7%	76.0%	91.0%	69.7%	79.7%
Unpaid work (e.g. homemaker)	1.4%	0.0%	101.0%	1.4%	1.0%
Subsistence farming/fishing	5.5%	5.5%	1.5%	1.4%	3.6%
Informal trading	2.3%	2.3%	0.5%	0.5%	1.4%
Casual, daily labour	3.2%	7.8%	3.0%	12.0%	6.5%
Contract work	0.0%	2.3%	1.0%	3.9%	1.8%
Self-employed	4.6%	6.9%	2.0%	11.1%	6.2%
Part-time permanent salaried employment	0.9%	0.0%	0.5%	1.9%	0.8%

Full-time permanent salaried employment	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	1.0%	0.4%
Other	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%	1.0%	0.5%
Total	219	217	199	208	843

Online civic space survey

A self-administered online civic space survey was conducted among CSOs connected to the Kenya Power to You(th) programme using the SurveyMonkey platform. The participants were individuals in the study counties who were affiliated with youth-led and/or youth-serving CSOs and involved in lobbying and/or advocacy. The objective of the survey was to gain a broad understanding of the level of civic space in the study counties regarding issues of SRHR, particularly on the topics addressed by the programme. It aimed to gain insights into the enabling environment for advocacy, such as the perceived level of civic space, media preferences and availability of evidence. These individuals were reached via email with a request to fill in the survey. Reminders were sent, and a total of 25 respondents engaged in advocacy on youth activities in the study counties completed the online survey. Of these 25 respondents, 16 were male, 7 female and 1 non-binary, while 1 chose the 'other' category. The mean age of the respondents was 36.4 years (+10.3 years). Only six respondents were under the age of 35 years.

2.3.2 QUALITATIVE COMPONENT

Focus group discussions

A total of eight FDGs were conducted in Homa Bay, Kajiado, Migori and Siaya. The FDGs were divided by age and gender, with adolescent girls and boys (15-19 years), young women and men (20-24 years), and parents or caregivers (see Table 2). The information collected provided insights into views on child marriage, FGM/C, SGBV and unintended pregnancy, as well as their roles and rights, decision-making and action taken, and the community norms and values on these topics.

In-depth interviews

A total of 48 IDIs were conducted in the four study counties (see Table 2). This included 25 semi-structured interviews with societal actors—community leaders (traditional or religious elders), health care workers, teachers and youth advocates—as well as identified girls and boys (15-24). It also included 11 semi-structured interviews with state actors: CSO or NGO and government representatives, lawmakers or implementers, local authorities, policymakers and youth advocates. The information collected provided insights into social norms around the three Power to You(th) focus

areas, youth engagement in decision-making, the views of local authorities, policy- and lawmakers and implementers at different levels, the level of civic space, and the role of the media.

Photovoice

A total of 11 individuals purposefully sampled (Table 2) were involved in the photovoice activity, which is an empowering, creative and participatory method (Nykiforuk, 2021). The aim was to explore young people's perspectives on the three Power to You(th) focus areas and their voice in decision-making on issues that matter to them. The research team identified potential participants, who were asked to take photos in their daily life over three days that captured: (i) things that mattered and were important to them; (ii) people who asked for or valued their opinion; and (iii) places in the home or community where they felt safe expressing themselves. When participants were ready with their photos, the researcher carried out an IDI to gain insights into the meanings of the photos, and together they selected potential photos for use in the report.

Table 2: Overview of qualitative data: participants interviewed in the four study counties

	Migori	Homa Bay	Siaya	Kajiado	Total
FGDs (8 participants each)					
	Female 15–19 (1)	Male 15–19 (1)	Female 20–24 (1)	Male 20–24 (1)	4
	Fathers (1)	Mothers (1)	Mothers (1)	Fathers (1)	4
Total	2	2	2	2	8
Semi-structured interviews / IDIs with societal actors					
Boys 15–24	1	1	1	1	4
Girls 15–24	1	1	1	1	4
Community leaders/ elders	1	1	1	2	4
Health care workers	1	1	1	1	4
Teachers	1	1	1	1	5
Youth advocates	2	1	2	1	6
Total	7	6	7	7	25
Semi-structured interviews / KIIs with state actors					
CSO or NGO representative	2	1	1	1	5
Government representative		1			1
Lawmaker or implementer				1	1
Local authorities		1	1		2

Policymakers			1		1
Total	2	3	3	2	12
Photovoice					
Engaged in youth programme	Female 15–19 (1)	Male 15–19 (1)	Female 20–24 (1)	Male 20–24 (1)	4
Not engaged youth programme	Male 20–24 (1)	Female 20–24 (1)	Male 15–19 (1)	Female 15–19 (1)	4
Adolescents	Female (10–14)		Female (10–14)	Female (10–14)	3
Total	3	2	3	3	11
Total participants					56

Overall, study participants were purposively sampled and mobilised in close collaboration with Amref, the Network for Adolescent and Youth for Africa and lead CSOs in each county during training, pre-testing and data collection. The qualitative topic guides and quantitative surveys were translated into Kiswahili, Luo, Kuria and Maasai. With the consent of the participants, qualitative interviews were tape-recorded. These were later transcribed verbatim in English.

2.4. DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data were collected using Open Data Kit and sent to the KIT data server to be processed and analysed using SPSS 14. Descriptive statistics were used to interpret the survey and present the results, disaggregated by gender and age, of the main variables most in line with the Power to You(th) programme's monitoring and evaluation framework indicators. Qualitative data were processed using Nvivo 12 along with an adaptable coding framework based on the theory of change and research objectives. They were analysed using a thematic matrix, and emerging themes were added to this matrix during coding of the transcripts.

Data from both components were assessed by a multidisciplinary research team from KIT and the University of Nairobi. During this time, online meetings were held with the Power to You(th) implementing partners to validate the results. On 2 December 2021, researchers presented the study results and recommendations in a Zoom online validation meeting with the partners. Based on this, the partners carried out in-country consultations to reflect on the implications for the programme and provided feedback asynchronously in a shared Google Drive document. Subsequently, on 14 December 2021, a follow-up validation meeting was held to discuss emerging recommendations and jointly translate findings into recommendations for programme implementation along the four pathways. This process allowed strong data triangulation.

2.5 QUALITY ASSURANCE

The research was conducted using a process that guaranteed that the data collected were of good quality. The research data collection tools were developed based on existing and partly validated tools. The study's principal investigator led the overall data collection and monitored for quality during the whole process. To enable data triangulation, a wide variety of study participants were selected. Where appropriate, discussions and interviews were conducted in the local language, to ensure maximum participation. During the training of the researchers, key terms were translated into the selected local languages and translated back to confirm that they were understood in the same way. The data collection tools were pre-tested before data collection begun. To ensure the validity and reliability of research findings, research assistants were trained in both quantitative and qualitative sampling, data collection, data capture and reporting skills. They were also trained on ethical issues to ensure that guidance on ethical conduct was clearly understood and implemented.

2.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

On 23 August 2021, ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Amref Ethics and Research Committee. This is an accredited national ethics and research committee registered in Kenya. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants were given the opportunity to ask questions about the discussion prior to giving consent. All individuals (researchers and the field team) participating in the baseline undertook research ethics training as part of the field research training.

2.7 STUDY LIMITATIONS

One limitation of this study was that study participants were identified by the lead CSOs in each county, which is likely to cause a selection bias and depict a picture of a high level of knowledge. The study was conducted during the rainy season, which meant that some roads became impassable. This led to an increase in transport costs. This was much more pronounced in Kajiado county, where the distances are vast. Where roads were impassable, we enlisted the use of motorbikes or rescheduled appointments.

Adolescent SRHR is regarded as a sensitive social and cultural issue. Young people tend to give socially desirable answers. However, we used a variety of approaches to ensure that the respondents felt comfortable and free to express what they genuinely believed; the researchers focused on eliciting in-depth responses to questions. The research assistants were trained to be good listeners and observers, so as not to display any judgemental attitude towards information received from the participants.

This study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, when curfew restrictions were in force. To observe the COVID-19 protocol of social distancing, FGDs were limited to eight participants. The research team provided masks and hand sanitiser for the respondents. Most interviews were also conducted outdoors to minimise the risk of COVID-19 infection.

3. FINDINGS: ADOLESCENTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVES AND ACTIONS RELATED TO HARMFUL PRACTICES, SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

Across the four study counties, young people (male and female) expressed their aspirations for good lives in the future; to be successful, financially independent and give back to the community. They aspire to achieve this by completing formal education and establishing careers that would allow them to be gainfully employed in business as professionals, accountants, company managing directors, teachers and nurses:

"To me, being a young person means, being able to understand what is good for me in the future, in the earliest time possible, and also helping other youth in my community as well as being in a position to get education that is good for my life and my community in the coming days." (IDI, girl, 24 years, Kajiado)

"Of course, everyone has dreams for their life, you know. So I also have dreams. And since I am a youth, I hustle for myself. I have a business here in Kehancha, though I would love to be a big businessman in this town as I continue to grow—my dream is to be a big businessman in this town in the years to come from now." (IDI, boy, 22 years, Migori)

Despite these aspirations, young people are faced with challenging realities. This chapter discusses the perspectives and actions of young people and adolescents regarding child marriage, FGM/C, SGBV and unintended pregnancy.

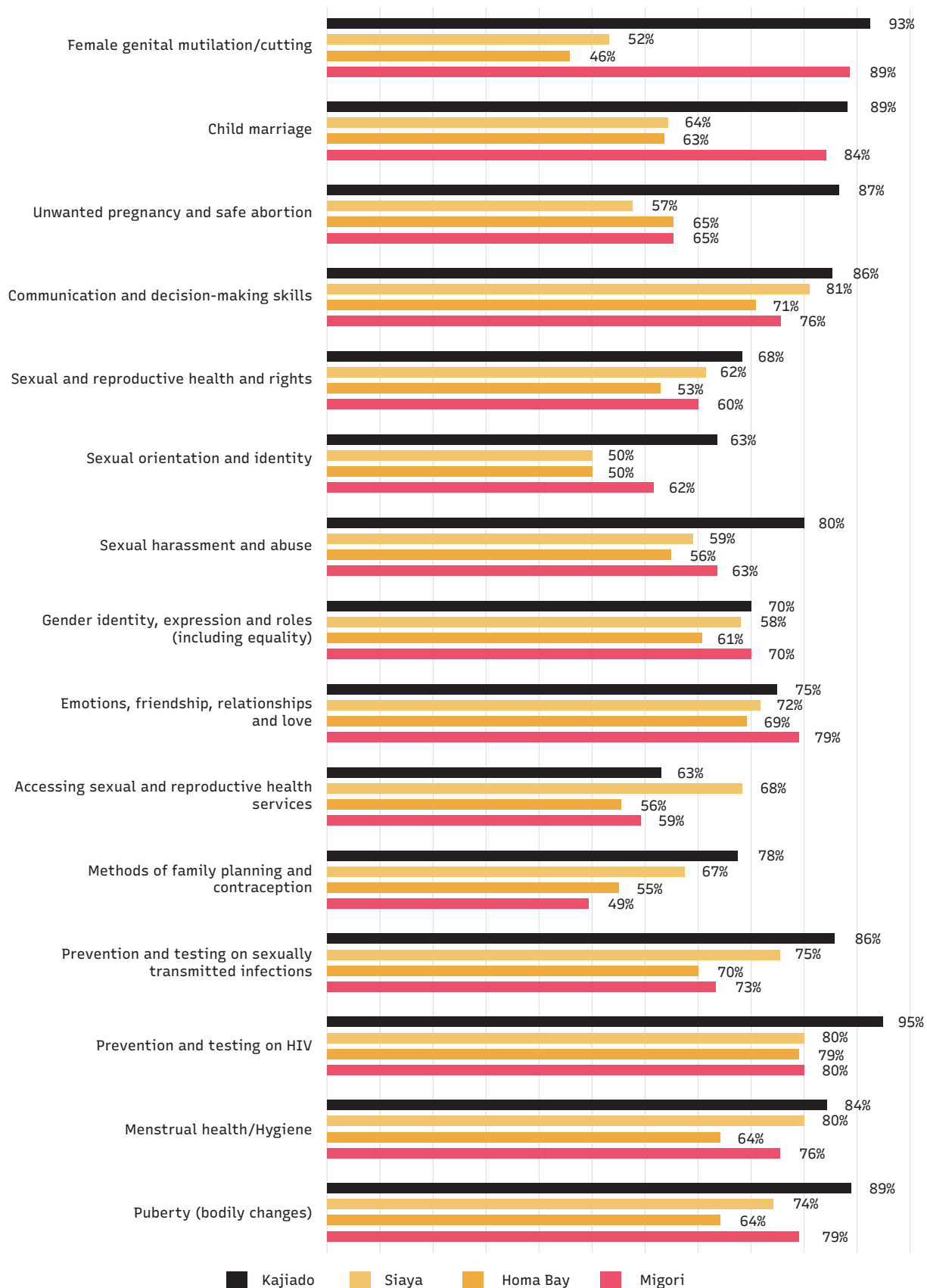
3.1 KNOWLEDGE AND OPINIONS RELATING TO HARMFUL PRACTICES, SGBV AND UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

Figure 3 shows how informed youth feel about various SRHR topics. Respondents from Kajiado generally felt most informed about SRHR topics, especially the prevention and testing of HIV (95%), FGM/C (93%) and puberty (89%) and felt least informed about sexual orientation and identity (63%), accessing SRH services (63%) and SRHR (68%). Many development programmes in these counties have focused on the prevention and treatment of HIV, which would explain these results. In Siaya, respondents felt most informed about communication and decision-making skills (81%), menstrual health/hygiene (80%) and prevention and testing of HIV (80%). They felt least informed about sexual orientation and identity (50%), FGM/C (52%), and unwanted pregnancy and safe abortion (57%). In Homa Bay, respondents felt most informed about prevention and testing of HIV (79%), communication and decision-

making skills (71%), and prevention and testing of sexually transmitted infections (70%) and felt least informed about FGM/C (46%), sexual orientation and identity (50%), and SRHR (53%). In Migori, respondents felt most informed about FGM/C (89%), child marriage (84%), and prevention and testing of HIV (80%). They felt least informed about family planning and contraception methods (49%), sexual orientation and identity (50%), and accessing SRH services (59%).

Sexual orientation and identity was the topic respondents felt least informed about, ranging from 50% in Homa Bay and Migori to 63% in Kajiado. Additionally, respondents in Siaya and Homa Bay did not feel well informed about FGM/C, with 52% and 46%, respectively, indicating they felt averagely or very informed about it. The gender difference in awareness of FGM/C could be attributed to men having more exposure to information, especially to media where these issues may be discussed.

Figure 3: Adolescents and youth who feel averagely or very informed about the different SRHR topics



The main source of SRHR information was schoolteachers and mothers, although in Siaya, social media and the Internet were mentioned as the main source (22%). As for preferred sources of SRHR information, in Migori 24% of the respondents mentioned nurses and health care workers, while only 16% indicated that they were their main source of information. In Siaya, mothers were the preferred source of information (24%), despite being identified as the main source of information by only 14% of respondents.

Female respondents do not seem to talk to their fathers about SRHR, while—especially in Migori—15% of male respondents indicated that their father was their preferred source of SRHR information. Additionally, in all counties more male and adolescent respondents receive SRHR information through schoolteachers than their female and older counterparts. In Migori, Homa Bay and Kajiado, social media were used more by male than female respondents as the main source of SRHR information (7% vs. 4% in Migori, 15% vs. 9% in Homa Bay, and 19% vs. 15% in Kajiado), while in Siaya the opposite could be observed.

3.1.1 CHILD MARRIAGE

Across the study counties, child marriage was reported to be common, mainly due to unintended pregnancy, school drop-out and general poverty. In both Migori and Kajiado there was the added cause related to the cultural practice of FGM/C which allowed girls to engage in sex by virtue of having graduated to adulthood. In these two communities, girls are expected to marry after undergoing FGM/C, irrespective of age:

“In most cases, when a Maasai girl is circumcised, irrespective of the age she has, she is ripe for marriage, unless she is in school. Also, when a girl happens to complete primary school and probably there is no money to take her to school, she is ready for marriage. When she completes form four and there is no money to go to college, they believe that the girl is ready to be married. So in short, they do not give time to girls, unlike what is happening to the boys, who even after staying for a number of years at home, they can still be given a chance to go to school.” (IDI, girl, 24 years, Kajiado)

“I can say it is because of poverty and maybe someone sees that if young girls get married, this person will be able to earn some money from some cows. When a parent sees they have 10 to 15 children, and you are not able to feed them, you see it's like a burden, so you are trying to push out this girl to get out and get married earlier, so sometimes it is a burden relief.” (IDI, male youth advocate, 23 years, Migori)

Overall, less than half (48%) of the respondents knew the correct legal minimum age for marriage for girls, which is 18 years in Kenya. In all four counties, more male

than female respondents knew this. Across all counties, fewer respondents knew the correct legal minimum age for marriage for boys, but again male respondents were better informed. In Migori, 41% of female and 58% of male respondents knew the correct legal age for marriage, compared to 26% and 48%, respectively, in Homa Bay, 26% and 46%, respectively, in Siaya, and 15% and 19%, respectively, in Kajiado. Overall, none of the respondents thought it was legal to marry below the age of 18 (see Table 3).

Table 3: Knowledge among young people about the legal age for marriage for girls

	Homa Bay	Kajiado	Migori	Siaya	Total
Females	35.5% (38)	36.4% (36)	56.6% (64)	34.3% (37)	41.0% (175)
Males	62.7% (69)	37.6% (41)	65.1% (69)	54.4% (49)	54.9% (228)
Other				100% (1)	100% (1)
Total	49.3% (107)	37.0% (77)	60.7% (133)	43.7% (87)	47.9% (404)

3.1.2 FGM/C

FGM/C is practised in two of the four study counties: Kajiado and Migori (Kuria East and Kuria West sub-counties). It is not practised in Homa Bay or Siaya. Even so, 91% of the respondents knew that FGM/C was not legal in Kenya; generally, more females than males knew this (see Table 4). Only 60% and 69% of adolescents and youth in Homa Bay and Siaya, respectively, had heard about FGM/C. In these two counties, more youth than adolescents have heard about it (67% vs. 54% in Homa Bay, and 80% vs. 58% in Siaya). Most boys and girls in Siaya were surprised that FGM/C happened in some counties.

Table 4: Knowledge among young people about the legal status of FGM/C

	Homa Bay	Kajiado	Migori	Siaya	Total
Females	96.7% (58)	92.8% (89)	91.4% (95)	90.9% (70)	92.3% (312)
Males	93.0% (66)	84.8% (89)	85.7% (84)	96.6% (57)	88.9% (296)
Other				100% (1)	100% (1)
Total	94.7% (124)	88.1% (178)	88.6% (179)	93.4% (128)	90.6% (609)

When asked whether youth intend to have their future daughters undergo FGM/C, 96% of the respondents said no. In Migori, 75% of respondents thought that young people did not want FGM/C to continue. However, more youth than adolescents

indicated that they intended to circumcise or cut their daughters, although this was statistically significant only in Kajiado. In Migori, considerably more male than female respondents indicated their intention to perform FGM/C (8% vs. 2%). The majority of respondents (84%) did not see any benefit to FGM/C. Migori had the highest number of people seeing benefits, with 15% indicating that social acceptance was a benefit, and 10% indicating better marriage prospects. The responses to the benefits for girls if they did not undergo FGM/C were more diverse between counties, but in Migori, Homa Bay and Siaya, still one in three respondents did not see any benefit to not undergoing FGM/C. In Kajiado, however, only 7% agreed with this statement, while 65% of respondents reported fewer medical problems to be a benefit of not undergoing FGM/C, followed by the possible continuation of girls' education (39%) and avoiding pain (39%). The main reasons named for the continuation of FGM/C were social acceptance (71% in Migori) and the fact that FGM/C is seen as a rite of passage into adulthood (57% in Migori).

Box 2: Photovoice, girl, 10–14 years, Kajiado

This is my photo. I'm holding a razor blade. It's used to perform FGM/C, which is an assassination of my career.

If you go through the FGM/C, you will be commissioned that you are now a woman. When one is told so, she tends to take herself like a woman, and start performing practices done by women, like freely mingling with men. The same practice will expose you to men, and they will not fear approaching you for sex. This will lead to unintended pregnancy, which is superseded by early marriage, and one will not make to her vision.

However, I have made an agreement with my mother, that I will have to complete my education before such practices find me, and I am happy she is not for the FGM practice any more.

As a Maasai girl, I have no voice over a number of things that happen to me. These include FGM, marriage and sometimes education.



In Kajiado, the FGD with boys showed they are aware that FGM/C is done in secret, that it is a cultural practice commissioned by their forefathers and that it is an abomination for a young girl not to undergo it. However, these boys agreed to discourage young girls (their girlfriends) from undergoing it, and to refuse to marry them if they do.

"[FGM/C] is done with a lot of secrecy, and even if you try to find out on whether a girl is circumcised, you may end up not getting the fact on where and when the malpractice took place because some of the community members have come with a trick of hiding when doing FGM/C." (FGD with boys, 20–24 years, Kajiado)

3.1.3 SGBV

SGBV was reported to be prevalent in all the counties by all the participants. Only a few youth (strongly) agreed that SGBV was acceptable (see Table 5). In Kajiado, more youth agreed that SGBV was acceptable in some cases. Around 1 in 10 respondents in Kajiado thought it was okay to force your husband or wife to have sex (9% and 8%, respectively). Around 4 in 10 respondents knew someone who had been sexually abused. In Migori, fewer youth reported knowing someone who had been sexually abused (27%), compared to 35% in Homa Bay and Siaya, and 48% in Kajiado. When asked about the most effective way to prevent sexual abuse, the most commonly mentioned strategy was educating people so that they do not abuse others (59% in Migori, 43% in Homa Bay, 61% in Siaya and 64% in Kajiado).

Table 5: Young people who (strongly) agree that sexual abuse is acceptable

	Homa Bay	Kajiado	Migori	Siaya	Total
Females	8.4% (9)	13.1% (13)	7.1% (8)	2.8 (3)	7.7% (33)
Males	10.0% (11)	6.4% (7)	12.3%(13)	1.1% (1)	7.7% (32)
Other				100% (1)	100% (1)
Total	9.2% (20)	9.6% (20)	9.6% (21)	2.5% (5)	7.8% (66)

Additionally, not travelling by yourself (or at night) and being careful if someone is physically close were seen as effective ways to prevent sexual abuse. Still, 23% adolescents and youth in Homa Bay did not know how to prevent sexual abuse. This figure was lower in Siaya (17%), Migori (9%) and Kajiado (9%).

According to the participants, SGBV includes domestic/physical violence, rape and defilement. It was attributed to various issues within the household and community, including disagreements over a lack of resources at home, unemployment, excessive

use of alcohol and drug abuse. In a few instances it was explained that it was also due to girls' ways of dressing. Although there are laws that outlaw SGBV, enforcement is a major problem. In some instances, the offence is watered down, and there is a preference to deal with it at the community level, partly due to stigma, the observation that there are few convictions, and that often too much is demanded of the victim and family.

*"FGM/C... maybe I can say is physical harassment, and also sexual harassment, and I have heard also about raping someone, another thing is early marriage, that's a harmful thing and early pregnancies and so many others... when you let a young girl like someone who is 10 years undergo a cut or FGM/C, that is sexual harassment and also **it is like you have raped that person**, you have abused her physically, it is a lot." (ID1, youth advocate, 23 years, Migori)*

"...mostly when a lady is raped at the university, they will first of all ask you how you were dressed. My question is when we go to the market and see tomatoes and onions, who said that when you see a tomato you just take it without the owner's permission. This is what these people are trying to bring out: they will ask you how you were dressed. When asked that question you say I was dressed in such a dress code, they will tell you, you wanted that. They judge you the way you were dressed." (R7, FGD, Homa Bay)

There are barriers to dealing with cases of SGBV. The demands on survivors and guardians are such that the community tends to ignore pursuing the case when they cannot afford the costs:

"...then again what makes the community quiet, maybe you find a defiled child, or a woman who has been beaten. The first thing the police will ask for is money. Imagine if you go to hospital the p3 form to fill is one thousand shillings. This one thousand maybe the whole month you have not touched with your hand. Imagine someone beats you and tells you, you are going to use your money if you report this case. So you will just keep quiet because you don't have money." (R1, FGD, Homa Bay)

Girls from the FGD in Siaya also reported that girls are raped by boys out of spite or revenge. For example, if a girl has refused the advances of a certain boy and the boy feels that the girl is being proud and showing off, he will go and rape her. This may not have anything to do with the girl's way of dressing:

"...it is because maybe you have refused a boy, maybe you always wear clothes that are long and you have denied a boy's request, they plot against you the time you come from the church they will just rape you. It is not because of the dressing code; it is just

because you didn't consent to them...so that he destroys your image and name." (R1 and R3, FGD with girls, 15–19 years, Siaya)

3.1.4 UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

The majority of respondents (81%) could name at least one modern method to prevent pregnancy (see Table 6). The male condom was mentioned the most by both female and male respondents (71% and 81%, respectively). A third (32%) of female respondents were familiar with oral birth control pills, compared to only 21% of male respondents. Similarly, injectables and implants were more frequently mentioned by female than male respondents (43% vs. 34%, and 34% vs. 16%, respectively). Overall, youth (aged 20–24) were more knowledgeable about modern contraceptive methods than adolescents (aged 15–19 years): 94% of youth could name at least one modern contraceptive method, compared to 71% of adolescents.

Table 6: Young people who have knowledge of at least one modern contraceptive method

	Homa Bay	Kajiado	Migori	Siaya	Total
Females	79.4% (85)	87.9% (87)	79.7% (90)	75.9% (82)	80.6% (344)
Males	84.5% (93)	86.2% (94)	82.1% (87)	73.3% (66)	81.9% (340)
Other				100% (1)	100% (1)
Total	82.0% (178)	87.0% (181)	80.8% (177)	74.9% (149)	81.3% (685)

Unintended pregnancy was reported to be a major problem in all four study counties. This was largely attributed to cultural practices such as FGM/C (in Kajiado and Migori) and poverty in all study counties 'pushing' young girls to search for 'sponsors' to meet their needs. Poverty created an opportunity for boda-boda riders (scooters used as public transport) to take advantage of young girls:

"They lack guiding and counselling or some may lack fees, or those boys [such as boda-boda riders] can pay for them their fees so they get in a relationship which results to that." (R4, FGD with boys, 15–19 years, Homa Bay)

"I have two main reasons for [unintended] teenage pregnancy. One is that the teenagers having sex without protection (e.g. without use of condoms). Secondly, some parents don't have something to give their children. These girls are given too much freedom by their parents to loiter around. For example, attending to church functions like seminars for days without coming back home on time or visiting the market anyhow." (R4, FGD with boys, 15–19 years, Kajiado)

This was a serious concern expressed by all study participants. They explained that it was a result of the lack of guidance and counselling for youth, peer pressure and poverty (e.g. a lack of money to meet basic needs such as sanitary towels, clothes and toiletries), especially in the communities where children had been orphaned by the HIV epidemic in Siaya and Homa Bay. Another explanation given was that youth who were troubled by poverty were subjected to early unprotected sexual activity. For example, in Homa Bay, participants reported that girls were getting pregnant, almost deliberately, to take advantage of the social protection programmes available in the community run by NGOs that support young girls by giving them KSh3,000 (US\$30) per month to take care of their basic (reproductive) needs.

This was compounded by social media and mobile phones, which are common among young people:

"The other reason [for unintended pregnancy] is peer pressure. With peer pressure you do something because you want to know what will happen next. For example, we might be friends with this guy and maybe because he did something 'lazima atakuja kuniambia' [he must come to inform me] how the feeling was. Now because he is my friend, so when I also do the same and maybe unprotected sex then there comes teenage pregnancy. ...With the phone even if the parents are monitoring you strictly but you have a phone, like now you find a class 6 pupil with a phone. With a phone, even if your homestead is fenced whichever way, it is very easy to meet with someone and connect via text, like 'mama ametoka' [my mother has gone/is not around]. By that you can meet and do what you want." (R5, FGD with boys, 15–19, Kajiado)

"You know when I have no school fees, I will remain at home, just roaming within the community. In this case, I will be idle. I will not be busy since normally when I am in school, I cannot get any distraction from men, as opposed to when I am at home. Therefore, when I am free at home, I can interact with men, and this will bring about early pregnancy." (IDI, girl, 24 years, Kajiado)

Young people mentioned abstinence and the use of contraceptives, including condoms, injectables and implants, as ways of preventing unintended pregnancy. However, there were concerns with regards to accessing contraceptives. For example, boys in Kajiado reported that condoms should be made available in places where young people do not feel ashamed collecting them. Other preventive measures mentioned by young people were ensuring that girls are provided with the basic needs such as sanitary towels by their parents or the government.

3.2 VOICE AND AGENCY IN RELATION TO ISSUES THAT MATTER TO YOUNG PEOPLE

It became clear from the qualitative interviews that cultural norms greatly inhibit young people when expressing themselves about relationships and love, and where and to whom they can freely express these feelings.

Nearly three quarters (72%) of respondents felt that they could express their opinions about relationships, love, puberty and pregnancy in their community (see Table 7). No differences were observed between female and male respondents. Regarding age groups, adolescents and youth felt similarly able to express themselves in Migori, Homa Bay and Kajiado. In Siaya, however, adolescents felt less able to express themselves than their older counterparts (69% vs. 90%).

Table 7: Youth who feel they can express their opinions about relationships, love, puberty and pregnancy in their community

	Homa Bay	Kajiado	Migori	Siaya	Total
Females	81.3% (87)	68.7% (68)	55.8% (63)	79.6% (86)	71.2% (304)
Males	85.5% (94)	70.6% (77)	60.4% (64)	77.8% (70)	73.5% (305)
Other				100% (1)	100% (1)
Total	83.4% (181)	69.7% (145)	58.0% (127)	78.9% (157)	72.4% (610)

The main reasons mentioned by adolescents and youth for not being able to speak up about these issues were feeling too embarrassed to ask or worried what other people might think of them and being afraid that other members of the community would not listen to them. Participants said that it was not common or easy to find a parent sitting down with their children and discussing matters concerning sexuality and challenges affecting them. For example, a teacher in Migori said that a father could not speak openly with his daughter on matters relating to relationships, menstruation or body changes during puberty, especially when the girl was nearing the age of FGM/C or after FGM/C had been performed. In addition, a girl could not even mention the word boyfriend to her mother; girls were silenced if they wanted to speak out. This deterred girls from speaking up openly.

"You'll find in our family set-up, like the Luos, it's not easy. The mother sits her child down and teaches the various challenges she undergoes." (KII, CSO, Homa Bay)

However, it is different for most fathers:

"[...] a father cannot talk openly to his girl on issues like touching, relationships, menstruation, bodily changes. So, there is that distance a father keeps from his daughter from age 10, 12; the age near FGM/C or after FGM/C. So that closeness and frequent contact is not acceptable ... makes most girls get lost." (KII, teacher, Migori)

Yet some youth felt safe sharing their concerns about relationships with their mothers. They explained that it was because mothers had had similar experiences and were likely to identify with the challenges girls go through. In an FGD with boys in Kajiado, the boys said that sometimes they consulted their mothers and felt listened to:

"Let's say I have relationship issues. Okay I mostly share with my mum, if there's a problem between me and my girlfriend or in my relationship most of the time, I tell my mum because I can't just go and have a talk with my dad. Mum is the one who understands in such issues she will tell me to do this and this or that... I and mum are very close compared to how close I am with dad... your mother knows this is my son, yeah, she will keep that secret, but friends if you're not in good terms they will spread and say you know this guy is sick what... so that's why I like going to mum." (IDI, boy, 22 years, Migori)

Participants said that if they did not voice their concerns to mothers, then to other female family members. For example:

"...if my mother is not around, I will always go to my grandmother because she knows me, she was once my age, so any challenges I go through she understands." (FGD with girls, 15–19 years, Siaya)

"...I'm staying with my brother's wife, not with my mum for a long time, so now I am too close to my brother's wife. I can tell her anything; she will listen. Any problem I tell her she can solve it." (FGD with girls, 15–19 years, Siaya)

The majority of respondents indicated that they could sometimes or often can speak up or ask adults for help when they needed it. Additionally, 8 of 10 respondents agreed that their parents or guardians sometimes or often asked for their opinion on things. Similarly, most adolescents and youth felt safe to express themselves in front of other adolescents, young people and adults in the community. Despite having the confidence to speak up in front of other people, on average 56% of adolescents and youth feared that people would make fun of them or tease them in the community. Just over half of the respondents (51%) were afraid that other adolescents, young people or peers would harm or injure them. In Homa Bay, more adolescent girls and young

women (44%) than their male counterparts (33%) feared being injured or harmed. In both Homa Bay and Siaya, adolescents were more afraid than youth of being harmed or injured by other adolescents or young people (48% and 73%, respectively, vs. 28% and 56%, respectively).

Box 3: This is my aunt, my mother, who rescued me. I trust her.

"This is my aunt who is my mother now at this home, and I am seated outside our kitchen. I took a photo with her, since she is the first person who values me and my opinions.

Before I came here, I used to stay with my elder sister, since we didn't have a mother. While we were staying in her house, she gave birth to twins, and I was told to help her, and I could not go to school. One day my sister fell sick together with her twins, and she was taken to hospital, but unfortunately she passed on, and relatives came and took the babies to Tanzania. I was left alone in that house, and Anastacia who is my mother in this home came and rescued me, took me to school, and allowed me to stay in her house. That is why I trust her." (Photovoice, girl, 10–14 years)



The qualitative data revealed varying opinions from adolescents and youth participants from the different study counties on how their opinions were valued by different people, such as family members and other members of the community. Some young people reported being consulted within the family, while others reported that they were not consulted, but only informed when a decision had already been made. Young people with a higher level of education said that their opinions were sought to some extent, as community members believed that educated young people were more knowledgeable.

"To me my father may ask something and after sharing my opinion, but on many occasions, he does things his way. So, I don't know whether he decides after I share with him what I think or he decides before asking for my opinion." (R5, FGD with boys, 20–24 years, Kajiado)

"They are never given space unless they come from a family that is into church, or where people are enlightened and they are employed outside the community hence they have interacted with other tribes, such people are the ones who give their youths a space to express themselves. But those with high level of illiteracy cannot make decisions on their own." (FGD with mothers, Migori)

"...I also express my opinions. In the Maasai community they believe that when a person is educated, he or she is powerful therefore their opinions are heard. This means that whenever I have a concern, they listen to me. Nothing hinders my participation because both adults and youth listen to what I say... I have more voice when I talk to the youth about education and also about drugs and their effects." (IDI, boy, 24 years, Kajiado)

Young people identified seminars organised by health care workers as spaces where they could express their opinions. They said they were able to ask questions at seminars organised by NGOs, in church, in school (SRH education, the environment and economic empowerment), in the family, at the mosque, in social networks such as youth clubs, at health facilities, and at sporting venues and activities.

Most of the study participants also identified school as the space for discussing confidential issues. For example:

"...in school, they have a good space to discuss such topics, they are given opportunity to get information about their sexuality, may be from teachers, peer educators invited to school by the head teacher and other teachers, and these information gives them knowledge to make informed decisions." (KII, teacher, Kajiado)

"I do express my opinions. Mostly I like consulting the adults before I raise any concern to the people who are around me. This is because adults who are in my community are not educated but they are very wise. In matters about education, I can freely express my opinions without fear urging the students to go to school and study hard. Most of them listen to me because I am their role model." (IDI, boy, 15–24 years, Kajiado)

"In my family, they really listen to what I say because I really respect them." (IDI, boy, 24 years, Kajiado)

"For me, the decision I make, I try to bring them together by doing counselling and guidance. I call them and counsel them, and sometimes I organise sports, like football or volleyball, which attracts many even those who are afraid of coming to church. There are those in church but those who don't come, when I organise the games, they come. When we finish, we must have some time to talk about those issues. I advise them that if they start having sex before age, it will be negatively affect their marriage life. When

they reach the age of marriage, you will find that you will not be able to stay with one husband because you are used to having many men. And you can get diseases, so I try to give them advice.” (KII, religious leader, Migori)

Other participants identified sports activities or churches as spaces for expressing their concerns. For example:

“...I think the ways through which young people can engage and express themselves are things like sports activities. Through sports we get these young men and young girls together to do the sporting activities then after the sport they can seat together and discuss I think through that they can be together.” (FGD with fathers, Siaya)

3.3 DECISION-MAKING IN RELATION TO ISSUES THAT MATTER TO YOUTH

The study revealed a gendered difference in decision-making capacity among young people. Gender differences defined by cultural norms and values were also reported to influence decision-making in the allocation of resources to boys and girls in the homestead. In an FGD with girls in Siaya it was reported that girls and women had limited roles in decision-making; when they were sometimes asked to make decisions, they were not acted upon. This was also said to be influenced by traditional culture, which restricts women's opportunity to make decisions. For example:

“...culture has contributed to youths being denied their rights given that parents are the key decision makers for example you can find that two youth who are male and female have done exams but you will find that the male is given more privilege to continue with education even though the female is the one who performed better.” (FGD with mothers, Migori)

Young people said that decision-making varied depending on the situation. Generally, both girls and boys said that if they were 18 years old, they should be able to make decisions regarding relationships, education and marriage by themselves. A 22-year-old male in Migori reported that he made decisions for himself, including those about relationships. However, this was a young man who ran a business and lived alone and, therefore, had a certain level of economic independence.

“...you definitely would not like it if people make decisions for you, so I prefer making decisions myself. Actually, I don't like people making decisions for me regarding my relationship. You know out here there are parents who will come and tell you not to marry a certain girl from a certain place, and you find that that's the one you love, so I like making decisions in my relationship.” (IDI, boy, 22 years, Migori)

Girls in Siaya said that they could make decisions about education in particular and noted that they could go to school without being forced and could also seek advice on reproductive health issues without consultation. But the latter was dependent on age, in that such a decision could be made by those who were over 18 years, which is constitutionally the age of consent:

"I think issues of sex once you reach 18 years, you cannot have interference from your parents or peers. You just decide for yourself you want to do this because I think as an adult you are allowed to do such things." (R1, FGD with girls, 15–19 years, Siaya)

"Like, you can decide to go to the hospital or maybe a health centre just to know your health status, it is not a must that you tell your parents or your guardians that you are going to test your health status, you can just go alone." (R8, FGD with girls, 15–19 years, Siaya)

"Issues like circumcision, it is us who will decide for ourselves." (R2, FGD with boys, 15–19 years, Siaya)

"Many people in my community like sand harvesting. That is a decision I make myself." (R3, FGD with boys, 15–19 years, Siaya)

In Homa Bay, boys said they could make decisions about being circumcised (because this is not a community where boys/men would ordinarily undergo circumcision) and engaging in income-generating activities. However, boys in FGDs in Homa Bay did not discuss decision-making around sexual health, even after probing.

Many of the young women mentioned that they would like to have more space to raise their voice and also act on their ideas:

"We are not satisfied with the space we have because despite what the theory is saying, that women are given that space but practically it is not there, because from the culture, there are some decisions that women are not supposed to make, like in your family you find that your mother cannot make some decisions." (FGD with girls, 15–24 years, Siaya)

"We have a voice on education, we have a voice on health and social life, social economic life but we don't have a voice on leadership, although nowadays it is being embraced in the community, maybe because of these NGOs that have come like YWCA that has come to empower women leadership, to make the girls and women feel like they are living a fulfilling life in the society." (FGD with girls, 15–24 years, Siaya)

"Women should also have their voices like in Kuria community you can find that it is only men who talk, it is just that we did not mention other policies like in some houses women are not supposed to eat some meat that it is only meant for men, so women should have voices on the things they feel should be done. So women should be given voices to do the things which they can do." (FGD with mothers, Migori)

Similar comments that confirm the gender differences were made by young men from Kajiado, who said that their wives had to consult them on all matters.

"My wife cannot do anything without consulting me. She must ask for my opinion, and she adheres to what I say most times. At times she even consults me on the type of food to be cooked at home." (FGD with boys, 20–24 years, Kajiado)

"I'm also married, and my wife rarely consults me. She consults me on tough issues, like when seeking permission to go somewhere far from home that she may not come back home the same day. But on issues to do with her domestic chores, no." (FGD with boys, 20–24 years, Kajiado)

Culture still plays a key role in decision-making, especially when it comes to marriage for both boys and girls. However, for the boys, the father is more important because he must meet the dowry cost on behalf of the son. For the girl, it is easy for the father to accept a decision because he will be benefiting, as he will be the recipient. This was confirmed by the teachers who stated that fathers had the final say.

Similar statements were made by participants in Siaya, where it was reported that young people were unable to make decisions because of a lack of information, failure to take up the challenge of contributing to decision-making, or the decision-making authority in policy matters resting with government or other experienced officials. A youth advocate in Siaya reported that his voice had been heard in the policymaking process. However, he is older and has much more voice and agency.

"Culture factor is there. For example, you also know that in our Maasai culture, there is a saying that goes, 'meino olayioni eishu menye' [a man is not a man as long as his biological father is alive]. Also meaning that a boy cannot make decisions so long as his father lives. For example, if I hustle and buy a goat, I cannot sell the goat when I have a problem without consulting my father. Another thing is that maybe I had fallen in love with a woman whom I want to marry, then I come and inform him, then my dad can say that I don't want her in our home. So, making decisions in our culture is a challenge." (FGD with boys, 20–24 years, Kajiado)

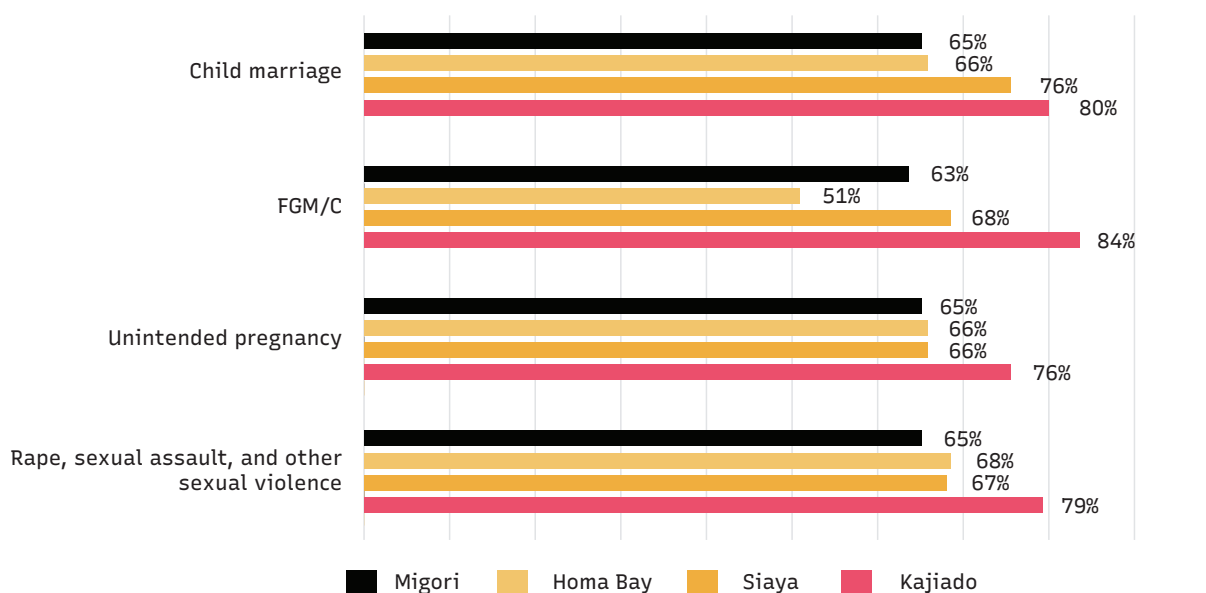
"I think in this community, the adults, specifically the fathers, have the final say. Even though the mothers too have a say, their decision will mainly rely on the father. In scenarios they have to make their own decisions as youth, they still need to make a lot of consultations, as opposed to other communities where the youths have a final say on issues related to their private life." (KII, teacher, Kajiado)

"I try as much as possible to make sure that my voice has been heard during decision making. This is engagement with duty bearers and policy makers. And I think my voice has been heard in more than one forum during the adolescent policy, that is AYP that is 2019. The Siaya AYP policy. My voice was heard and documented. I participated in that policy. I have also participated in budget formation cycles and some adjustments have been done. My voice has also been heard when the community was championing for Bondo maternity wing and Kambajo, my voice have been in a position to influence community members to voice their views in opening and improving the 15 facilities in Bondo. Yes, so I feel like my voice is being heard and being influential." (KII, youth advocate, Siaya)

3.4 VOICE AND AGENCY IN RELATION TO HARMFUL PRACTICES, UNINTENDED PREGNANCY AND SGBV

Among those respondents who use social media, those in Kajiado felt most comfortable expressing themselves about the Power to You(th) core issues on social media.

Figure 5: Youth who feel comfortable or very comfortable expressing themselves on social media about Power to You(th) core issues



When young people were asked to identify issues around SGBV, unintended pregnancy and child marriage that they could speak up about, most talked about issues that concerned them generally, such as poverty, peer pressure, lack of parental guidance, lack of jobs, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual harassment, rape, and dropping out of school due to unintended pregnancy:

"Young people here lack employment, that's why they engage in bad things. Parents should also take counselling as a responsibility. They stop parenting once their child hits 18 years. The youth engage in nuisance because they don't have work. You find a youth needs money and they don't have work. This will make them look for money in any way possible be they boys or girls. If it is a girl, they will look for older men, so that they get money to help themselves. You may find a parent has 8 children who have different needs, so when a girl child hits 15 years they get into misbehaviour. Now that's the major challenge young people are going through." (R3, FGD with mothers, Homa Bay)

"Alcoholism also comes about due to idleness and once they start, they become affected. For girls because they have too many needs... They want sanitary towels, they want shoes, so you find a young girl having sex with a 50-year-old man. They tell them they will buy for them a variety of things, and if they don't protect themselves, they get pregnant and thus leave school." (R3, FGD with mothers, Homa Bay)

Transactional sexual activities were also mentioned, especially for poor young people doing something bad to get what they want:

"...she was trying to say that those sponsors, the big men [rich sugar daddies] who have vehicles, businessmen, teachers, they have money, doctors, they have money. So if I'm a girl who has finished school and I am just there walking and someone comes and says, 'Hey, beautiful, how are you? You are walking, and I'm here and I have a vehicle?' At the moment, he talks to her, and the girl just imagines back in her mind and she remembers she doesn't have anything, she says, 'Let me just go...'" (FGD with girls, 20–24 years, Migori)

Overall, 49% of the respondents reported that adults involved young people (under age 24) in decisions regarding practices such as child marriage and FGM/C (see Table 8). There were, however, large differences between the four counties included in this baseline study. In Migori, only 25% of adolescents and youth agreed that adults involved young people, with a slightly higher proportion of females (27%) than males (24%), and youth (30%) than adolescents (22%). Due to the small number of respondents, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Table 8: Youth who reported that adults involve young people (under age 24) in decisions regarding practices such as child marriage and FGM/C

	Homa Bay	Kajiado	Migori	Siaya	Total
Females	52.3% (56)	49.5% (49)	26.5% (30)	64.8% (70)	48.0% (205)
Males	61.8% (68)	54.1% (59)	23.6% (25)	58.9% (53)	49.4% (205)
Other				0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Total	57.1% (124)	51.9% (108)	25.1% (55)	61.8% (123)	48.6% (410)

Nine out of 10 respondents said that they would refuse if their parents told them that they had found a good person for them to marry. In Kajiado, adolescents and youth also indicated that they would try to influence their parents to make their own choice on whom to marry (12.5% of females and 8.4% of males). In the event that their parents continued to pressure them to marry the person after they refused, adolescents and youth indicated they would fall back on the local administration (37%) or the police (28%).

On average, 27% said that they would run away from the community. This response was more common among female respondents than male respondents in all four counties. The three main reasons given by adolescents and youth for refusing the marriage were their age ('I'm too young'), their education ('I want to study more') and freedom of choice ('I want to marry someone of my own choice'). The first two answers were more prevalent among adolescents (aged 15–19 years), while freedom of choice was especially important to youth (aged 20–24 years).

In all four counties, respondents said that they would report sexual abuse to community leaders or social welfare if they witnessed it. Two thirds of respondents indicated they would report the incident to community leaders or assembly men, while one third would report it to social welfare. In Homa Bay, male and older respondents (70% and 67%, respectively) were more likely to report such incidents to community leaders or assembly men than their female and younger counterparts (53% and 57%, respectively) (see Table 9).

Table 9: Youth reactions to SGBV

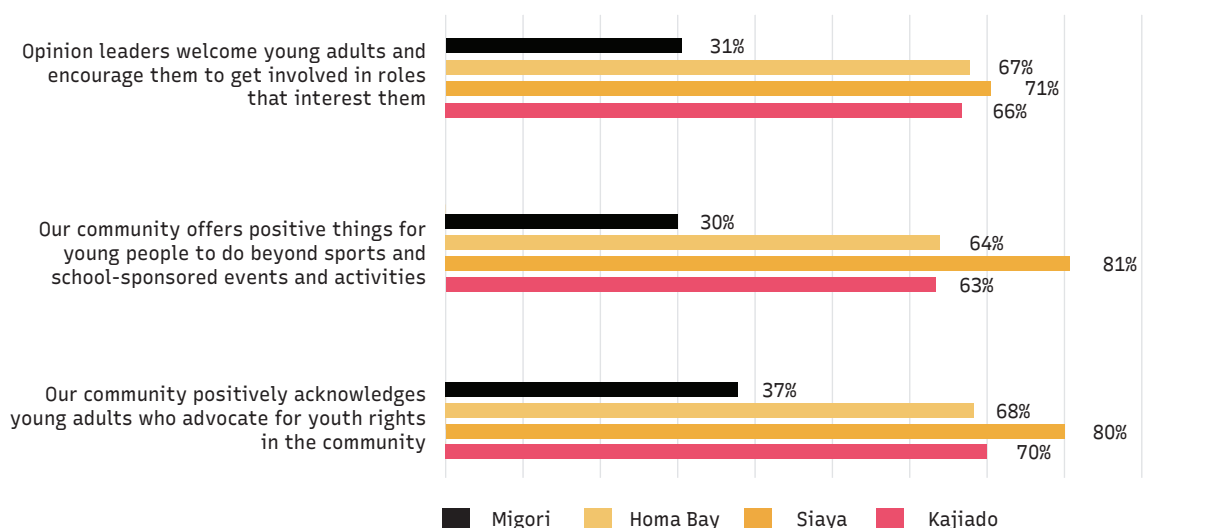
	Homa Bay		Kajiado		Migori		Siaya		Total
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	
What would you do if you witnessed or suspected sexual abuse against someone in your community in the future?									
Report it to community leader	66.4% (75)	66.0% (70)	53.3% (57)	70.0% (77)	64.8% (70)	71.1% (64)	77.8% (77)	79.8% (87)	68.6% (578)
Report it to social welfare	35.4% (40)	33.0% (35)	16.8% (18)	19.1% (21)	39.8% (43)	41.1% (37)	47.5% (47)	55.1% (60)	35.8% (302)

Proportion (and number) of youth who felt confident that if they reported a case of sexual abuse to the police, a community leader, teacher, parent or other authority, they would receive appropriate support and protection					
	Homa Bay	Kajiado	Migori	Siaya	Total
Females	54.0% (61)	86.9% (93)	82.4% (89)	90.9% (90)	78.0% (333)
Males	46.2% (49)	84.5% (93)	81.1% (73)	83.5% (91)	73.7% (306)
Other			0.0% (0)		0.0% (0)
Total	50.2% (110)	85.7% (162)	81.4% (162)	87.0% (181)	75.8% (639)

3.5 ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES ON HARMFUL PRACTICES, SGBV AND UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

Figure 6 shows the percentage of adolescents and youth who agreed that the three statements were happening sometimes, often or all the time. In Migori, one in three respondents indicated that their community was positively acknowledging young adults who advocated for youth rights in the community (37%) and offered positive things for young people to do beyond sports and school-sponsored events and activities (30%), and that opinion leaders welcomed and encouraged young adults to get involved in roles that interested them (31%). These proportions were much higher in the other three counties studied (ranging from 62% to 81%).

Figure 6: Youth participation space in the community



In the FGDs and IDIs, young people were asked to indicate the role they played in advocacy for their rights and in relation to harmful practices. The general feeling from young participants was that young people should speak up to articulate issues that affect them. One participant in Kajiado explained that youth should be involved in sharing information that is useful to develop skills, including understanding their rights and the ability to face challenges in the community. This participant was actively engaged in creating awareness among girls about harmful practices and also provided education about menstrual hygiene, how to cope and the need to proceed with formal education. This role was echoed by girls in an FGD in Siaya, who observed that girls could be provided with education on the need to avoid early marriages due to the negative consequences that come with it. They could also be encouraged to engage in productive activities, making reference to the programmes under IMPACT and DREAMS. One boy in Kajiado said that he would start an initiative specifically to provide education to the community. Similarly, girls who have finished secondary school and have undergone training in seminars or have graduated from alternative rites of passage have become ambassadors of the anti-FGM/C/SGBV campaigns.

"As young people, you can have a role like you meet sometimes not only for laughter, sometimes you can talk sense like, 'You know if you do this and this it can lead us into the right way', so like us young people we can advise each other on what to do and on what not to do." (R3, FGD with girls, 15–19 years, Siaya)

"Yeah, they should speak up and they should talk for them to know what is happening to them because right now you are silent and when you are silent, I can't know what is happening between you and me, I can never know." (IDI, girl, 15–19 years, Homa Bay)

“Information like understanding one’s rights, importance of education, and how to identify your skills at a younger age, to know their roles and responsibilities as youth in the community, to understand the challenges youth are going through and how to overcome them.” (IDI, girl, 20–24 years, Kajiado)

Participants were further asked what support was in place for the activities they undertook. Whereas one group in Homa Bay (Aluora Makare CSO) reported some initial resistance from the community, reports from other counties pointed to some support. The support included writing proposals to NGOs and requesting both financial and material support, as was the case in Kajiado. For example:

“...forced marriages, early marriages, some of them when they are reported to FIDA they may follow to see that this person that is being molested can be assisted.” (R6, FGD with fathers, Siaya)

Support was also reported to come from church-based organisations. In Siaya, a youth advocate stated that his organisation supported youth spiritually, providing counselling on reproductive health. FIDA- Kenya, an organisation of female lawyers, was reported to be supportive, especially regarding early marriage. The Kenya Anglican Youth Organisation’s mandate is to give psycho-spiritual support to young people both in the church context and outside the church:

“I call it psycho-spiritual because it is not entirely spiritual things, but we also interact with young people at a counselling level to counsel them about life issues, about decisions, about businesses and of late issues of gender-based violence by also supporting people to deal with life challenges and find how to help each other.” (KII, youth advocate, Siaya)

3.5.1 CHILD MARRIAGE

Overall, one in four female respondents and one in five male respondents have ever participated in activities to prevent child marriage. Among the respondents, the most common type of activity or action respondents participated in to prevent marriage was educating girls (mentioned by 63% of respondents), followed by rallying the wider community to stand up for girls’ rights (40%) and empowering girls (35%). In Siaya, more male respondents had participated in these types of activities than female respondents. Rallying the wider community was mentioned more often by adolescent boys and young men than their female counterparts (see Table 10).

Table 10: Youth participation in community activities to prevent child marriage

	Homa Bay	Kajiado	Migori	Siaya	Total
Proportion (and number) of youth who have ever participated in any activities or have taken action to prevent child marriage.					
Females	16.8% (18)	27.3% (27)	24.8% (28)	25.0% (27)	23.4% (100)
Males	20.0% (22)	22.0% (24)	17.0% (18)	21.1% (19)	20.0% (83)
Other				100.0% (1)	100.0% (1)
Total	18.4% (40)	24.5% (51)	21.0% (46)	23.6% (47)	21.8% (184)

	Homa Bay		Kajiado		Migori		Siaya		Total
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	
Most common type of activities/action to prevent child marriage in which they participated									
Educating girls	60.7% (17)	72.2% (13)	61.1% (11)	50.0% (11)	55.6% (15)	73.7% (14)	59.3% (16)	70.8% (17)	62.5% (115)
Empowering girls	39.3% (11)	27.8% (5)	22.2% (4)	18.2% (4)	40.7% (11)	57.9% (11)	33.3% (9)	33.3% (8)	34.8% (64)
Rallying wider community to stand up for girls' rights	28.6% (8)	55.6% (10)	11.1% (2)	18.2% (4)	37.0% (10)	47.4% (9)	44.4% (12)	75.0% (18)	40.2% (74)

The problem of early/child marriage is experienced in all four study counties. Participants were asked to name some of the actions that were being taken in the community to address child marriage. They stated that because of the government's return to school policy girls who were pregnant were dissuaded from getting married. Instead, they were encouraged to go back to school after delivery. This was well articulated by a teacher in a KII, who connected a reduction in the number of early marriages to the government policy. Cases of early marriage are detected through schools and reported to the administration—the chief—who follows up.

"...a student knows that when you have done standard eight you must go to secondary school. It is a must they have to protect themselves for the future. During those early days you get pregnant and maybe decide to get married, from there nobody will bother. But because of government policy now they are under check, they have been told you must go to secondary school. At least this will make them not get early pregnancies."
(KII, teacher, Homa Bay)

"They make a follow-up like, if there is an early marriage like there is a case we had, the parent came to school and I gave him a letter to take to the chief, the chief assisted him." (KII, teacher, Homa Bay)

The stakeholders involved in addressing issues of child marriage are schools, the local administration and parents. Schools provide information through guidance and counselling and work together with the local administration and parents to locate and rescue girls who may have disappeared from school to get married. In Migori, similar comments were made to the effect that teachers and local chiefs collaborate to get girls out of early marriage:

"Mostly the schools we have to monitor, like right now we can talk about the ministry of education. Those are the ones telling us that in case a student disappears from school we must raise their whereabouts through the provincial administration." (KII, teacher, Homa Bay)

"We identify children who may decide to get into pregnancies at an early stage, we usually talk to their parents and the children on the dangers of getting married before going to school or before reaching age 18, number 2 not to engage in sex before marriage that may lead them to get some other diseases like sexually related diseases like HIV/AIDS." (KII, chief, Homa Bay)

Community leaders were identified as a potential group that would play a key role in advocating for the end of harmful practices, including early marriage. But it was also noted that this role was not always executed to the levels expected, much to the frustration of the youth involved. This was expressed by a youth advocate in Kajiado:

*"I: What can you say about the leaders taking actions against these harmful practices?
P: Generally, I think our leaders are doing quite well but they still need to do more, they still need to push for more because actions speak louder than words. So, what I would urge them to do is to let them continue advocating more and come against these strong norms that are affecting our community today."* (IDI, youth advocate, 25 years, Kajiado)

"I: Who are the main persons/institutions you see that take action against these harmful practices in your community?"

R: I think the local administration, that is the chief and his local administration. When they learn that a certain girl has dropped out of school and is being married, they promptly take action and they rescue the girl. They can even follow up until they prosecute the culprit." (KII, teacher, Kajiado)

However, in an FGD, mothers from Migori expressed a contrary view and felt that the government was not doing enough to address the plight of young girls who ended up in early marriage. This situation was heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic:

"There's nothing the government is helping because right now there's a high number of school drop-outs, many girls are married off yet they are underage. There's that time of coronavirus where so many girls got married, and they were worried that they will be arrested, but nothing happened, so they end up just living as husband and wife." (FGD with mothers, Migori)

Role of young people and support against child marriage

The role of young people is demonstrated by some of the groups they have established in the community where they have an opportunity to share information. In Homa Bay, a youth organisation called OMEGA Foundation is working through the local health facility to reach other youth:

"When we were with YFS, I used to gather youth at Chuoyo dispensary, where I used to meet up with them every Thursday afternoon; we used to meet in a room which was allocated for youths only. So I was their leader, and we used to teach ourselves about the negative effects of having a boyfriend at an early age, and that brought drastic improvement. The girls were there, and even issues concerning early pregnancies went down at that time." (KII, social actor)

The organisation has also reached out to other stakeholders to support the girls so that they can focus on education:

"There is that empowerment that we have been doing in our organisation. We support the girl child in schools with sanitary towels. The deputy CEC in Kisumu is really in support of girl child education and growth. So, all those challenges, she has really helped a lot of girls. We wanted to bring her on board because she is also from around here, instead of bringing somebody from far away." (KII, social actor)

Young people are beginning to form youth groups where they can share common issues and find solutions regarding harmful practices, including early marriage:

"...yes, just like I have said, in the formation of these groups they have a voice of an enlightened and enabled community where young girls are enlightened and can make decisions of their own because most of these girls who are being married off are from age 14. When you enlighten a 14-year-old girl she can make a decision of going to report in case of early marriage she can be in a position to demand for her rights not to be married off early." (IDI, youth advocate, 27 years, Siaya)

The chief of Homa Bay reported that sometimes young boys and girls were also engaged in the arrests of the perpetrators of child or early marriage. In Siaya, it was reported that perpetrators as well as the parents who might be in support of early marriage for their daughter were reported, arrested and, in some instances, jailed, to act as a deterrent to potential perpetrators:

"Yes, there are actions taken. And the actions are mostly done to the perpetrators... there are few instances where you find a parent has been apprehended... yes there was in 2019 which we followed with the police officer where a father had married his two young girls [allowed them to be married off] and chased the mother. The father was apprehended and taken to Bondo, and KMET took over." (IDI, youth advocate, 27 years, Siaya)

In Migori, the focus was on rescuing girls who were in danger of early marriage. These girls were taken to rescue centres or orphanages, where they could receive protection but also go to school. This was done largely through CSOs, while the support from the local administration was reported to be minimal:

"When you report a case of a girl maybe early marriage or teen pregnancies, unintended pregnancies, that man [from the community-based organisation] will be able to help you and to get you to the right office where you will be assisted and also when you get maybe a girl who has no parents or someone who can look after her, Mr. xxx will be able to connect you with the orphanage home to take care of that girl. And when we come back to our village, I cannot talk so much about chiefs and sub-chiefs because they don't do anything." (IDI, youth advocate, 23 years, Migori)

Across the board the action of providing education for girls protects them against child marriage. In Kajiado, a participant in an IDI stated that not taking girls to school exposed them to early marriage:

"Even FGM/C has gone down, due to the laws that are protecting the girl child. However, child marriage is still there, because when the parent decided not to educate me and there are no rescue centres in my locality, then I will have to accept because I have nowhere to go." (IDI, girl, Kajiado)

3.5.2 FGM/C

In Homa Bay and Siaya, only very few respondents had participated in activities or taken action to prevent FGM/C. This is not surprising, since FGM/C is generally not practised in these counties. In Migori, 39% of respondents had been active to prevent FGM/C, compared to 38% in Kajiado, where more female and older respondents

(44% and 44%, respectively) than male and younger respondents (32% and 33%, respectively) had ever participated in activities or taken action to prevent FGM/C. The most common type of activities in Migori and Kajiado were educating girls on their rights, challenging the reasons for FGM/C and speaking out about the risks and realities of the practice. Differences in participation could be observed between female and male respondents. While in Migori, adolescent girls and young women seemed to be more engaged in challenging the reasons for FGM/C (49%) than their male counterparts (29%), adolescent boys and young men were more involved in speaking out about the risks and realities of the practice (45%) than their female counterparts (32%). In Kajiado, however, female respondents were more engaged in all of the types of activities than male respondents, perhaps because there are more NGO programmes focusing on women and girls.

Table 11: Youth participation in community activities to prevent FGM/C

	Homa Bay	Kajiado	Migori	Siaya	Total
Proportion (and number) of adolescents and young people who have ever participated in any activities or taken action to prevent FGM/C					
Females	39.4% (41)	5.0% (3)	1.3% (1)	44.3% (43)	26.0% (88)
Males	38.8% (38)	8.5% (6)	5.1% (3)	32.4% (34)	24.3% (81)
Other			0.0% (0)		0.0% (0)
Total	39.1% (79)	6.9% (9)	2.9% (4)	38.1% (77)	25.2% (169)

	Homa Bay		Kajiado		Migori		Siaya		Total
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	
Most common type of activities/action to prevent FGM/C participated in									
Educating girls on their rights	68.3% (28)	84.2% (32)	0.0% (0)	50.0% (3)	100.0% (1)	66.7% (2)	72.1% (31)	64.7% (22)	70.4% (119)
Challenging the reasons for female circumcision	48.8% (20)	29.0% (11)	0.0% (0)	16.7% (1)	100.0% (1)	33.3% (1)	62.8% (27)	44.1% (15)	45.0% (76)
Speaking out about the risks and realities of the practice	31.7% (13)	44.7% (17)	100.0% (3)	50.0% (3)	100.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	51.2% (22)	32.4% (11)	41.4% (70)

Action and activities to prevent FGM/C

Half of the respondents indicated having been involved in action or activities to prevent FGM/C. Within this group, 71% indicated that the activities were youth-led, and 78% felt meaningfully engaged.

A girl interviewed in Kajiado stated that FGM/C had decreased due to the laws protecting the girl child. When these laws were violated, it was reported that the perpetrators were arrested. It was also observed that local leaders were playing a key role in trying to enforce the law, as stated in the FGD with fathers and an IDI with a youth advocate. Participants were also quick to add that perpetrators were rarely punished, and that there was a need to do more:

"The local area chiefs are taking responsibilities on FGM/C. Children or the parents engaging in FGM/C are held accountable of the same. The other thing is the Nyumba Kumi Initiative brought by the government is really helping a lot because people are getting to understand their neighbours more and people are then becoming afraid to do some practices that will hold them accountable." (IDI, youth advocate, Kajiado)

"When you encounter such negative practices, you can report to the lobby group, like one for women in this community, and they will take action." (FGD with fathers, Kajiado)

Participants noted that there were individuals and CSOs within the community who were taking action to address the problem of FGM/C. In Kajiado, these individuals and CSOs were identified by their activities:

"There is a lady, she is really fighting FGM/C, but you still have people doing the act very secretly." (FGD with boys, 15–19 years, Kajiado)

In an FGD with mothers in Migori, it was reported that the church had been vocal in condemning FGM/C and advocating for girls' education as a way of enhancing development in the community. The church had also been instrumental in providing a rescue centre where girls running away from FGM/C could find shelter. Support had also been provided by NGOs such as ADRA, World Vision and Amref, and Sanja women's group, a local CSO. Activista, a local community-based organisation, was also reported to be prominent in rescuing girls from FGM/C in Kuria community. For example:

"...the church is against FGM/C, since it is the reason why our community is backward, so they advocate that girls should not undergo FGM/C, but they should continue with their education. Sometimes girls escape and go to the pastor in their churches, and we

have a rescue centre where girls stay and are housed. Also, we have a building which was built with the help of women representative, it was built at Kwiriba, it was built intentionally for the girls' rescue, but until now it is not yet complete or functional, so it's not a rescue centre yet." (FGD with mothers, Migori)

"You know, these people or these organisations have been trying really to come, and they could just come and see those girls who are not willing to undergo FGM/C, the girls who have also gotten pregnant at earlier age and some of them have lost hope of going back to school. I have like three cases where the activist assisted, also TUNAWEZA youth group and NIGE." (IDI, youth advocate, 23 years, Migori)

In terms of youth engagement regarding the abandonment of FGM/C, there are efforts not just to rescue the girls but also ensure that they stay in school and that they receive life skills that build their confidence. This is illustrated by the work of one of the girls in Kajiado, who is determined to change the course of FGM/C in her sub-county.

"The fact that we are survivors of FGM/C and we managed to school up to the tertiary levels, and we are doing well in our families, they tend to listen to us and embrace what we are telling them. Remember, if they see your successes, and relate with your track records, they will believe that you are hard working. I decided that the harmful practices that we underwent when there was no one to fight for us, should not be faced by my younger siblings and others in the community. Am happy that the girls are making use of it and the majority have received support from these organisations. We normally take a few girls from different locations across the Kajiado south and make them part of the initiative. We are doing so because we have an objective of eradicating FGM/C in the whole of Kajiado South, hence we decided to bring girls on board, so that they can be ambassadors of their communities. We are hoping that in the coming years, it will end." (IDI, girl, Kajiado)

The Kajiado County Youth Alliance has the potential to influence the abandonment of FGM/C by providing information through its networks within the county and its link to the county government.

3.5.3 SGBV

Overall, one in five respondents have ever participated in any activities or taken action to prevent SGBV. In Homa Bay, more male than female respondents have ever been engaged, whereas the opposite was found in Siaya. The most common type of activity was educating girls on their rights. In all counties except Migori, more female than male respondents have participated in this activity. In Homa Bay, speaking out about the risks and realities of SGBV was the activity most respondents had participated

in, with more female than male respondents having been engaged (63% and 46%, respectively). In Siaya, spreading understanding that it is not manly to abuse girls or women was the most common type of action taken to prevent SGBV, with more male than female respondents having been engaged (80% vs. 56%) (Table 12).

Table 12: Youth participation in community activities to prevent SGBV

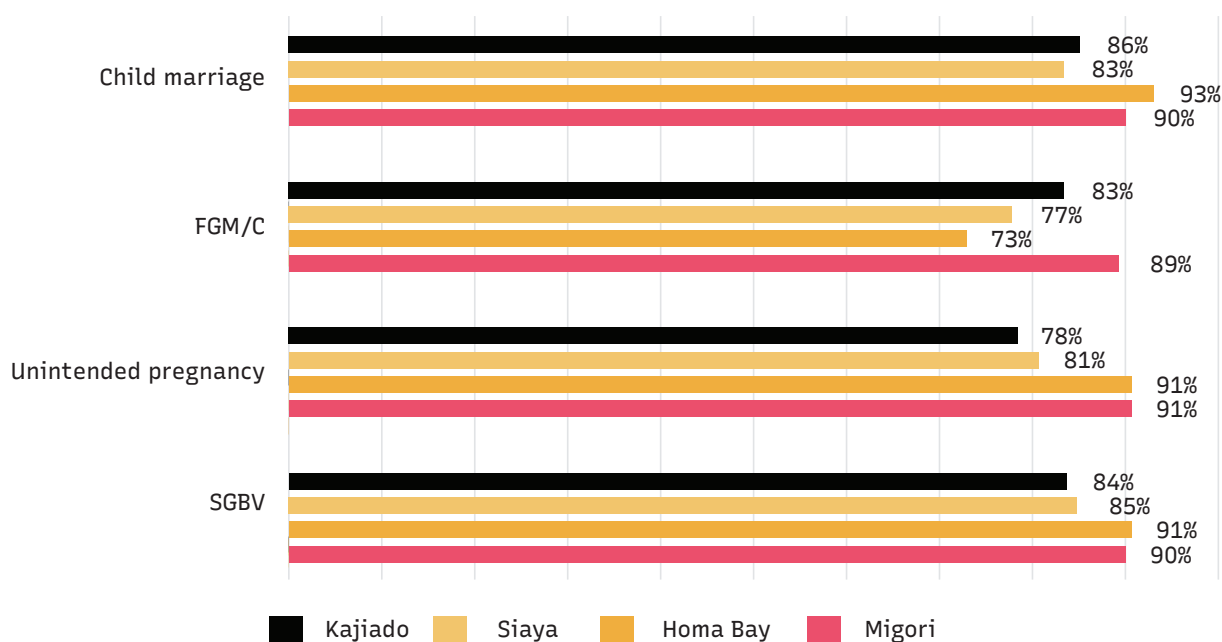
Homa Bay		Kajiado		Migori		Siaya		Total	
Proportion of adolescents and young people who have ever participated in any activities or taken action to prevent SGBV									
Females	18.6% (21)		15.0% (16)		23.1% (21)		21.2% (21)		19.4% (83)
Males	18.9% (20)		25.5% (28)		16.7% (15)		22.9% (25)		21.2% (88)
Other					100.0% (1)				100.0% (1)
Total	18.7% (41)		20.3% (44)		20.6% (41)		22.1% (46)		20.4% (172)
Homa Bay		Kajiado		Migori		Siaya		Total	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	
Most common type of activities/action to prevent FGM/C participated in									
Most common type of activities/ action to prevent SGBV participated in	57.1% (12)	70.0% (14)	43.8% (7)	17.9% (5)	56.0% (14)	26.7% (4)	71.4% (15)	40.0% (10)	47.7% (82)
Speak out about the risks and realities of the practice	28.6% (6)	20.0% (4)	62.5% (10)	46.4% (13)	52.0% (13)	53.3% (8)	33.3% (7)	36.0% (9)	41.3% (71)
Spread understanding that it is not manly to abuse girls/ women	14.3% (3)	25.0% (5)	0.0% (0)	25.0% (7)	56.0% (14)	80.0% (12)	23.8% (5)	30.0% (10)	33.1% (57)

Youth participation in activities to prevent FGM/C, child marriage and SGBV
In Siaya and Kajiado, the majority of activities respondents had participated in to prevent child marriage, FGM/C and/or SGBV were youth-led (91% and 68%, respectively). In Migori, around half of the activities were youth-led (53%), and in Homa Bay, only 38% of the activities were youth-led. Additionally, in Homa Bay, more males than females participated in youth-led activities (43% vs. 30%). The same

respondents were asked whether they felt meaningfully engaged in these activities. The majority agreed in Homa Bay (71%), Siaya (87%) and Kajiado (79%), whereas in Migori, less than half (47%) felt meaningfully engaged in the activities (see Table 17 in the annex).

In line with these results, 8 out of 10 respondents to the survey were (very) willing to participate in activities to address SGBV, unintended pregnancy, FGM/C and child marriage (Figure 7). The level of willingness was quite consistent across all four counties, with Migori and Homa Bay showing the most willingness (9 of 10 respondents).

Figure 7: Adolescents and youth who are (very) willing to participate in activities (e.g. raising awareness, community dialogues, peer education etc.) to address SGBV, unintended pregnancy, FGM/C and child marriage



Actions taken to address SGBV and harmful practices

Respondents from all the study counties reported that actions taken to address harmful practices included reporting cases to the chiefs, village elders and the police. However, there were concerns that the justice system did not work well, as the police and chiefs often took bribes from the perpetrators so that their cases would not proceed. It was said that very few cases resulted in convictions.

In an FGD, girls from Siaya mentioned that when in school they could report cases of SGBV to the school principal and also talk to the guidance and counselling teacher,

who was expected to treat the information you gave him as confidential. Men from Siaya mentioned that such cases were also reported to the Children's Department, the chief and the police.

Mothers in Migori reported the need to have a rescue centre nearby that the girls could easily reach when in need. They also reported that teachers worked in close collaboration with the chiefs to identify girls who had not gone to school (due to getting married and/or early pregnancy), and ensure that they went back to school. There are also programmes for youth and women in churches; women who have undergone SGBV go to the church, where they are assisted to get treatment and help in preparation of documentation for reporting the case to the court. Respondents in Migori and Kajiado reported that fathers who circumcised their girls had been arrested.

Community health volunteers go round the households and identify pregnant girls, especially during the lockdown necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The CSO reported having school education programmes in schools which educate young girls and boys on the consequences of early sex, teenage pregnancy and adolescent sexuality. It was also noted that some hospitals had SGBV desks where people could report incidents and receive assistance.

The chief in Homa Bay reported that their role is to maintain law and order, ensure parents take their girls and boys to school, and organise Barazas where young people are informed and educated, including during church functions and funerals (burial ceremonies). They also mentioned going to fishing areas, arresting people who have molested girls, and going to schools to talk to girls about early marriage. They also reported using spiritual leaders to talk to community members, and that this had reduced cases of SGBV. At times the chiefs solve the cases locally. For example:

"...sometimes we go to the church leaders. The second one, if you are in school you can report to the head teacher or principal based on where you are. Then number three you go to the police station." (R1, FGD with girls, 15–19 years, Siaya)

"Like if the place you are, if you can access any guiding and counselling sessions, you can go to the place you are sure your problem or information is safe; it won't be disclosed." (R3, FGD with girls, 15–19 years, Siaya)

"...we have procedures of reporting the violence, some people are apprehended but it is a very small portion that goes up to court and the verdict given. The county is trying to set up institutions in public hospitals like Bondo and Usigu. Some of the facilities have SGBV desks where you can report and the youth groups around also support. We also have some organisations which offer pro bono lawyers who can assist such issues. We

have organisations like Mild-May Kenya, CHS [Centre for Health Solutions], Ministry of Health. We also have a youth group which is trying to set up an SGBV desk in Kambajo chief's office by the reproductive accountability response Kenya." (KII, youth advocate, Siaya)

With regards to the stakeholders mentioned to be taking action to prevent harmful practices and SGBV, these included elders, chiefs, the police, the church, community-based organisations and NGOs, and women in Homa Bay also mentioned judicial officers. Government departments were also reported to be active, such as the Children's Department, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, paralegals, the administrators such as chiefs etc.

4. FINDINGS: (MEANINGFUL) ENGAGEMENT OF ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH IN ADDRESSING HARMFUL PRACTICES, SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

4.1 OVERVIEW OF ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOS AND STATE ACTORS

Overall, around one in five respondents were engaged with a CSO either as a volunteer, member or participant in activities. Engagement was highest in Migori (29%) and lowest in Homa Bay (15%). Most of these adolescents and youth stated that they were engaged with a youth-led organisation, followed by NGOs and other community-based organisations. The majority indicated having been engaged in awareness-raising in the community (87%). Most of the respondents indicated being engaged with the CSO at least once a month (33%), but in Siaya, 70% of respondents even said they were engaged at least once a week.

Table 13: Adolescent and youth engagement with CSOs in Migori, Homa Bay, Siaya and Kajiado

	Homa Bay	Kajiado	Migori	Siaya	Total
Proportion (and number) of youth engaged with a CSO that carries out specific activities with young people					
Females	32.7% (37)	12.1% (13)	21.3% (23)	22.2% (22)	22.3% (95)
Males	25.5% (27)	17.3% (19)	25.6% (23)	22.0% (24)	22.4% (93)
Other			100.0% (1)		100.0% (1)
Total	29.2% (64)	14.8% (32)	23.6% (47)	22.1% (46)	22.4% (189)
Type of CSOs these adolescents and youth (all genders) are engaged with					
Youth-led organisations or groups	46.9% (30)	65.6% (21)	72.3% (34)	73.9% (34)	63.0% (119)
Women's organisations	15.6% (10)	3.1% (1)	6.4% (3)	2.2% (1)	7.9% (15)
Faith-based organisations	23.4% (15)	9.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	10.9% (5)	12.2% (23)
NGOs	25.0% (16)	21.9% (7)	27.7% (13)	2.2% (1)	19.6% (37)
Other community-based organisations	4.7% (3)	28.1% (9)	14.9% (7)	21.7% (10)	15.3% (29)
Other	6.3% (4)	3.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	6.5% (3)	4.2% (8)

Type of activities in which these adolescents and youth (all genders) are engaged					
Awareness-raising in the community	88.3% (53)	80.6% (25)	93.6% (44)	81.8% (36)	86.8% (158)
Media and campaigning	3.3% (2)	3.2% (1)	29.8% (14)	9.1% (4)	11.5% (21)
Direct action (street protests, demonstrations)	1.7% (1)	3.2% (1)	8.5% (4)	0.0% (0)	3.3% (6)
Input to policies and laws	3.3% (2)	9.7% (3)	8.5% (4)	11.4% (5)	7.7% (14)
Other	13.3% (8)	25.8% (8)	14.9% (7)	43.2% (19)	23.1% (42)

Understanding of youth rights

Some of the rights youth reported being aware of included the right to education, the right to return to school after early pregnancy and childbirth, and the right to accessing health services. Young girls from Homa Bay said there was a lack of enforcement of the laws protecting children's rights due to the responsible persons such as chiefs and the police taking bribes and hence causing delays in prosecution. A boy from Homa Bay said that he did not believe that youth in the county had any rights, especially access to employment. For example, even after graduating from universities and colleges, the majority were unemployed and had resorted to working as boda-boda riders or as sand harvesters. The same was said by the chief, who noted that youth lack employment. A youth advocate from Kajiado reported that youth had a right to access sexuality and equality education and also employment.

"I think the rights are not that stable and there is no one that you can go to because if you report this person to the chief's office, he bribes the chief and then you are left there hanging because you don't have someone that has a high moral value that you can approach." (IDI, girl, 15–19 years, Homa Bay)

"I don't see as if youth have rights here. If youths had rights, I don't think someone like [an elderly political leader] would have been given the seat again. We study but we are not sure that we will find jobs. We will not find it. I told you I have seen graduates riding motorcycles and they are earning 300 shillings per day. And they go and dig up sand to get 200 shillings to feed their people. Look at Kenya a while ago, people used to get work after studying. Even at home they will hear you have a job. Youth don't have rights these days." (IDI, boy, 15–24 years, Homa Bay)

"The problem is the county government. They have not been able to put proper things in place to make sure that the youth are being taken care of fully because there is lack of employment when the youth leave school. So the issue of idleness, they do not know where to start or to go. The county government has not organised a forum where they can be able to put the youth together to see that the youth have something to do." (KII, chief, Homa Bay)

"We need to do capacity-building on the youth on topics such as sex and sexuality, equality, youth involvement in matters the county government, adolescents' drug and substance abuse. And we also need to address the issue of unemployment among the youth." (KII, youth advocate, Kajiado)

The CSO leaders in Siaya said that although young people's rights were in place, young people's understanding of these rights was still very low:

"...in as much as young people or youths understand their rights, still there is much more to be done as far as their understanding and participation or fulfilment of their rights is concerned, so still the country is not doing much in terms of engaging the young people to understand their rights and to exercise, what their rights entail." (KII, CSO, Siaya)

Efforts and contributions made to increase youth engagement

Young people can be engaged in raising awareness about harmful practices in the community. Efforts made to increase young people's engagement include having activities or interventions that specifically target young people. For example, in Homa Bay and Siaya, there are interventions that directly benefit girls, such as the DREAMS programme that sponsors education for vulnerable girls and also provides them with sanitary towels to keep them in school.

CSOs working with young people engaged them in advocacy activities as well as activities related to economic empowerment—for example, agribusiness. They give the young people an opportunity to voice their needs. The churches also create a platform for the young people. For example, after the worship service, with prior arrangement, a young person may be given an opportunity to address other young people in the congregation. CSOs that have school-based activities divide the students into different age groups so that they can increase their participation. In an IDI with a girl from Kajiado, she reported that they were engaged in encouraging other young girls to complete their education and also acted as community role models.

In Siaya, girls reported that they should be given an opportunity to express themselves and that the elders should also listen to them. The youth advocate in Siaya said that they had a youth network known as Siaya Muungano where they identified issues through community dialogue forums and voiced their opinions and demanded action from the duty-bearers by drafting memos and sharing them with the community and county leaders.

"Apart from that we should continue with our advocacy and there is also that aspect of empowerment and capacity-building and engaging our youth in activities that prevent them from doing bad activities... We have projects pertaining to the environment so we can do agribusiness that help us. Education too, young people should go to school, be empowered to get education... despite going to school, we have the mentality that after school you have a white-collar job... yet there is another activity that is much better involving and healthy than sitting in an office; so we should at least practice what we have learned in school back to our community." (KII, youth advocate, Homa Bay)

"I am engaged in youth initiatives, like currently we are having an umbrella of a youth network which is called Siaya Muungano Network which is working across Siaya county and different sub-counties and villages. We always identify an issue, and we voice, we force the duty-bearers to act on them... We dialogue, we come up with memos, and then we submit the memos." (KII, youth advocate, Siaya)

"I can broadly congratulate us, because we started very small but for now, we have handled several issues that we didn't know we could do. For instance, FGM/C was obvious, but we fought it and they accept it. Issues like education, it was not a priority, but when we sensitise them, they embrace it and they make it a must, unless cases where the family is unable to raise school fees, and where we are helping them to get sponsorship." (IDI, girl, 24 years, Kajiado)

Space or forums made available for young people

Participants were asked to identify spaces available for young people to express themselves. The following were mentioned: schools, seminars organised by health care workers, CSOs and community-based organisations, and places of worship, as detailed in Box 4.

Box 4: Spaces available for young people

County	Space or forums available for young people
Siaya	In the FGD with girls in Siaya, they reported that there were CSOs and NGOs such as Amref in the county that gave advice to young people on how to protect themselves and provided them with condoms. The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) was also mentioned by girls in Siaya. The CSO in Siaya talked about having created a parent–youth dialogue forum where young people could have discussions with their parents on matters related to SRH. This was necessitated by the fact that in the Luo culture parents do not talk freely with their children on matters to do with sexuality.
Homa Bay	<p>Schools: Young people can be given an opportunity to have discussions on the issues affecting girls and boys.</p> <p>Parents can give young people an opportunity to express themselves, and also because of unemployment, they can be given an opportunity to start a business (e.g. being given land to start agribusiness).</p> <p>Churches: Pastors could create a forum where they can speak to girls to improve their spirituality.</p> <p>Health care workers organise seminars and talk to young people about the consequences of SGBV. Young girls in Homa Bay said that they were engaged in community activities with the Red Cross where they distributed sanitary towels to girls, and they were also engaged in environmental activities such as planting trees, food distribution during floods, educating young girls and inspiring them not to engage in early sex, and emphasising pregnancy prevention, The boy in Homa Bay reported that he was an assistant church leader.</p> <p>Barazas are community gatherings organised by the village administrators (chiefs). Although there is no proper structure for engaging young people, the chief in Homa Bay reported that sometimes during school holidays, young people were given an opportunity to talk to their fellow youth regarding SGBV and preventing teenage pregnancy.</p>

Migori	The boy in Migori reported that young people did not have a space but, after further probing, mentioned that there were schools that 'hide' girls from early marriage and FGM/C. The boy was also not sure about any existing youth groups in the community. Young community members also mentioned Tunaweza Empowerment organisation as one of the CSOs they were engaged in to address FGM/C and child marriage
Kajiado	The youth advocate in Kajiado reported that youth should be given an opportunity to speak during community consultations (<i>Barazas</i>).

Roles available for young people

Respondents in all the study counties reported that young people could take on various roles as part of youth engagement. These included being advocates on SRH issues in the community, being role models, mentors and ambassadors for young people, taking part in economic empowerment initiatives in the community for income generation, and actively taking part in sporting activities. Working with CSOs, a few young people are also involved in school education programmes and voicing their opinions to community leaders and policymakers. Girls in Homa Bay said that their role should be to speak up, and that young people should also take leadership roles in the church. For example:

"...I think the role that they should do is that they should speak up. They should speak up and they should talk for people to know what is happening to them because right now you are silent and when you are silent, I can't know what is happening between you and me. I can never know." (IDI, girl, 15–19 years, Homa Bay)

The boy in Kajiado reported that he was not a member of a youth group but was planning to form his own youth group:

"...planning to have one youth group for teaching youth in my area on the importance of education because many people here are not educated." (IDI, boy, 24 years, Kajiado)

As shown in Figure 8, In Siaya and Kajiado, the majority of respondents rated the overall quality of young people's participation in the CSOs as good or excellent (66% and 59%, respectively). In Homa Bay and Migori, only 31% and 22% did so. In Migori, the most respondents rated the quality of their participation as bad, but the lowest scores were found in Homa Bay, where 9% said the quality was even very bad.

Figure 8: Quality of youth role and participation in CSOs

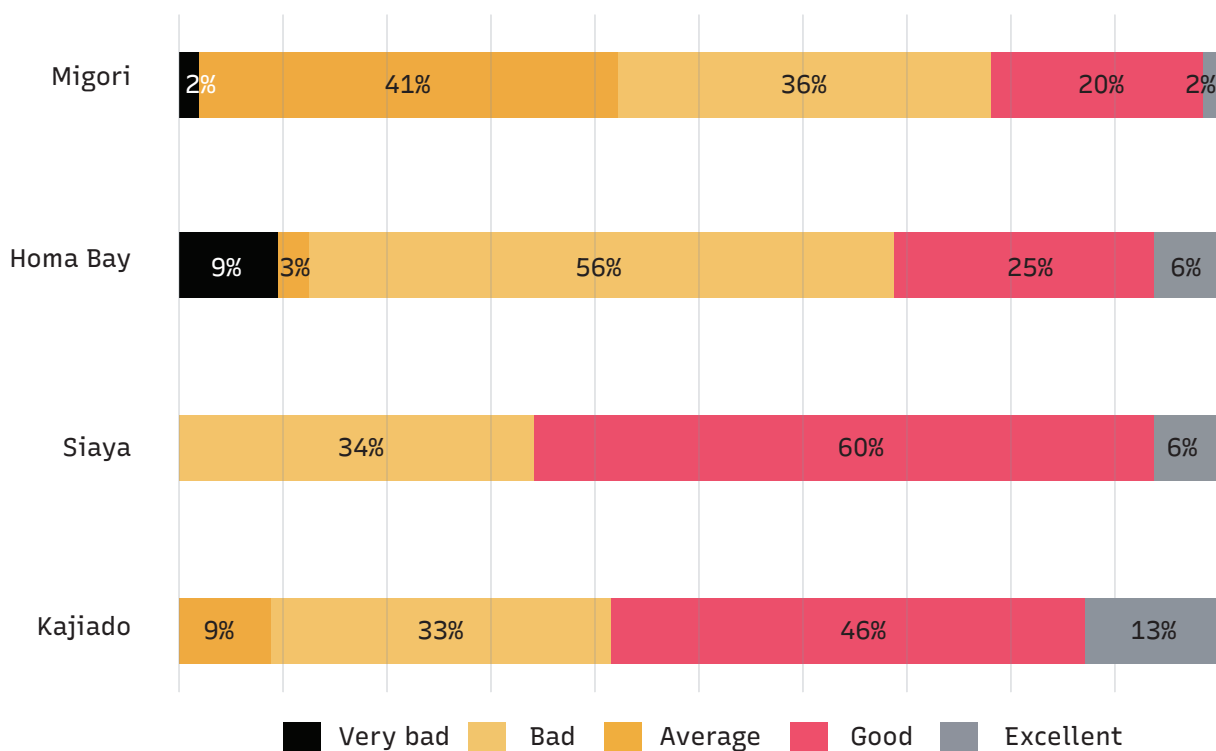
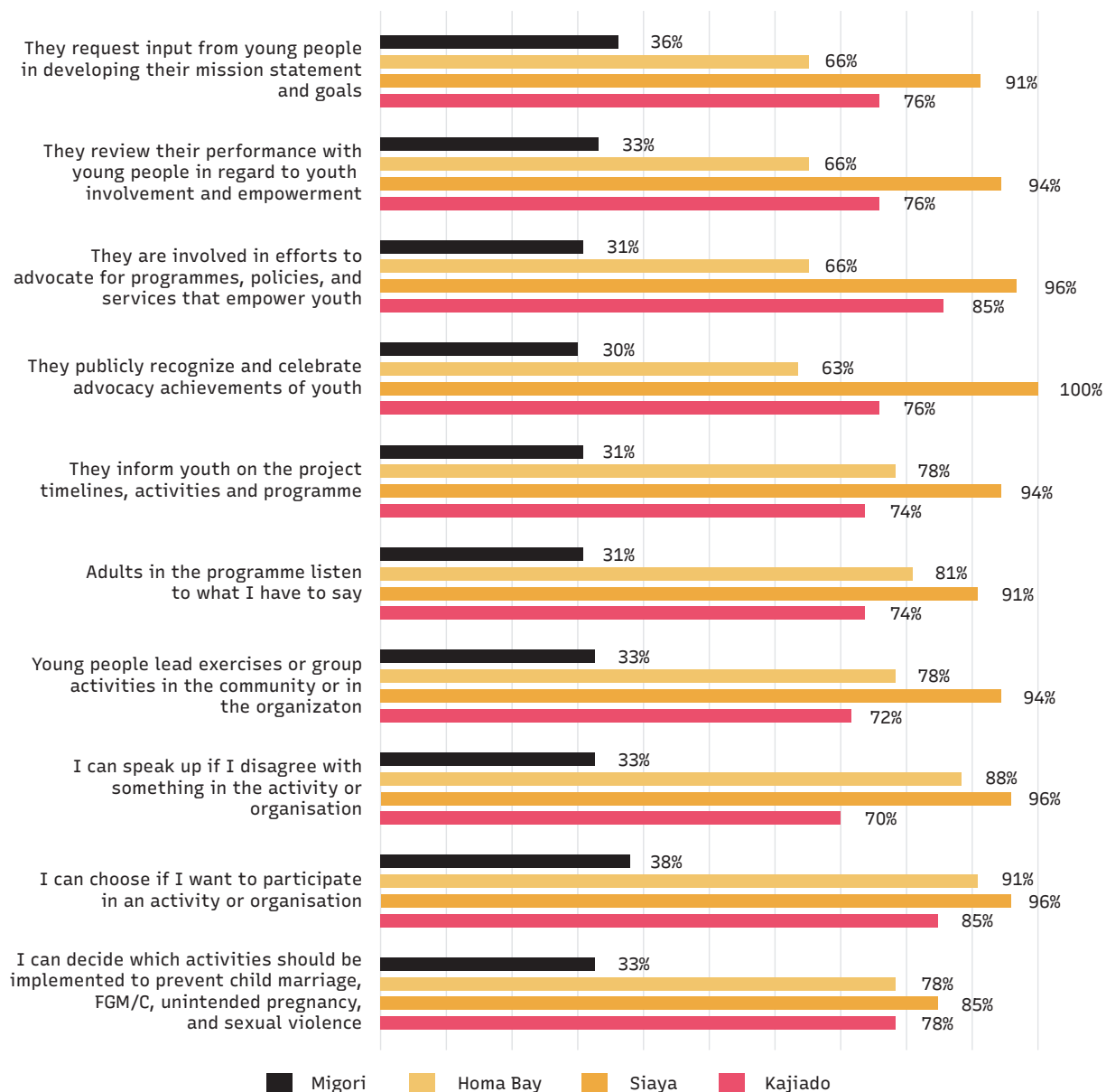


Figure 9 shows the respondents who reported that the statements indicated happened sometimes, a lot or all the time in the CSOs with which they were engaged. In Migori, an average of only one in three adolescents and youth agreed with the statements. Adolescents and youth seemed to be most meaningfully engaged in Siaya, followed by Kajiado and Homa Bay.

Figure 9: Role of adolescents and youth in the CSOs with which they are engaged in Migori, Homa Bay, Siaya and Kajiado



Meaningful youth engagement practices: the 'vision bearers'

In the qualitative interviews participants were asked to talk about meaningful youth engagement practices in their communities. Engagement was explained from the perspective of state and community leaders, parents and young people. From the local leadership perspective, youth have the opportunity to engage in development initiatives supported by government policy provisions such as the youth fund and engagement in income-generating activities that would provide them with income to meet their daily needs. In Homa Bay, some of the youth are engaged in profitable

irrigation farming. According to one of the key informants, the onus is on young people to seize these opportunities to influence their future, but they are not always open to taking advantage of these opportunities:

"I also challenge our youth, there are some of the good opportunities which are available around like the youth fund, the women fund, some of them do not bother to go and check on how they can get them but the social department has even come to the location levels to sensitise the youths on the availability and how to access these funds. So there is also some laxity among the youths themselves because with me once you've gone to school, you just go to school to acquire survival skills on how you can live not just to get a white collar job and ends it there, that skill or that knowledge you acquired in the classroom, how are you applying it in your real life situation? That is for survival, so let us once again remind our youth; you have to roll down your sleeves and work." (KII, CSO state actor, Homa Bay)

In Kajiado, an FGD with fathers highlighted the view that meaningful youth engagement can come through agribusiness, which will allow young people to afford the things they need; and this is for both boys and girls in the community. But this was also pegged to young people going to school and acquiring the necessary skills that would enable them to engage in productive activities:

"According to me, it will start by the young person going to school, which is the right of every child, and it should be given by parents, and after completing the studies, some of them get jobs, others don't, and to me as a parent, we should give them support to do businesses, so that they can get their needs, since if they do not get for themselves, they will overburden you, as a parent. As they do these businesses, it is for all the young people, being girls or boys." (R8, FGD with fathers, Kajiado)

Youth have also taken the initiative to organise themselves to support each other through motivational talks, games and activities that are appealing to them. It is in these forums that they are able to provide or share information and resources. In Siaya, this was through organised football tournaments and talks from youth who already had careers they could talk about and encourage youth that might be losing hope.

"...normally they do the sensitisation thing, they organise tournaments then we have sometimes we sit down then we talk, people share. Career-wise is like it's just a general talk of people with different careers, people with different experiences so they normally come then we just share and through sharing I can say at least it has reduced some of the problems though not all. It has also helped to encourage some of the youth who are almost giving up going to school. Some of them have tried and re-joined school, some

of them have also gotten something meaningful to do like you know through sports some of them have been identified [as professional local players]—they are just youth and people from the village who have just organised themselves in some groups—they call themselves ‘vision bearers.’ They support and help like during the tournaments they also give ladies sanitary pads.” (R5, FGD with fathers, Siaya)

Although certain policies and support from the government were identified, there was also dissatisfaction in the way that young people are engaged. For example, although the UWEZO fund is in place as a government policy, this was reported not to have been well articulated to young people, and some of them were not even aware of its existence. Those who were aware said it was out of reach. A discussion with fathers in Siaya pointed to dissatisfaction with this service:

“After they have been taught and they have been instructed to make small groups then they can access the uwezo fund, they go and now practise whatever activity they want to do such that they will now be having an income directly that can help them. Such a situation I think will keep them busy and they will not engage in these other bad social practices. So I think to some extent the office of the women representative is not doing the actual work that she is supposed to do to help the community more so that uwezo fund we hear about, it is discussed we hear it has been disbursed but I have never heard any organisation that is being assisted with that money.” (R6, FGD with fathers, Siaya)

A youth advocate in Siaya observed that at some level young people could influence service delivery. He gave an example of what he had been able to accomplish at the health facility level:

“In terms of health, I have raised my voice the way I mentioned in the first time that I have made sure that at least 15 health facilities in Bondo where standards were uplifted, we have raised voices in health on budget allocation, we have also raised voices in youth friendly services... We discuss how they can access services like any other person. The way they can find free space where they can associate and share, we also discuss how they can voice for their rights to avoid stigma and discrimination.” (KII, youth advocate, Siaya)

In Kajiado, a lack of information was also cited as one of the reasons hampering meaningful youth participation in addressing harmful practices. A youth had this to say in an IDI:

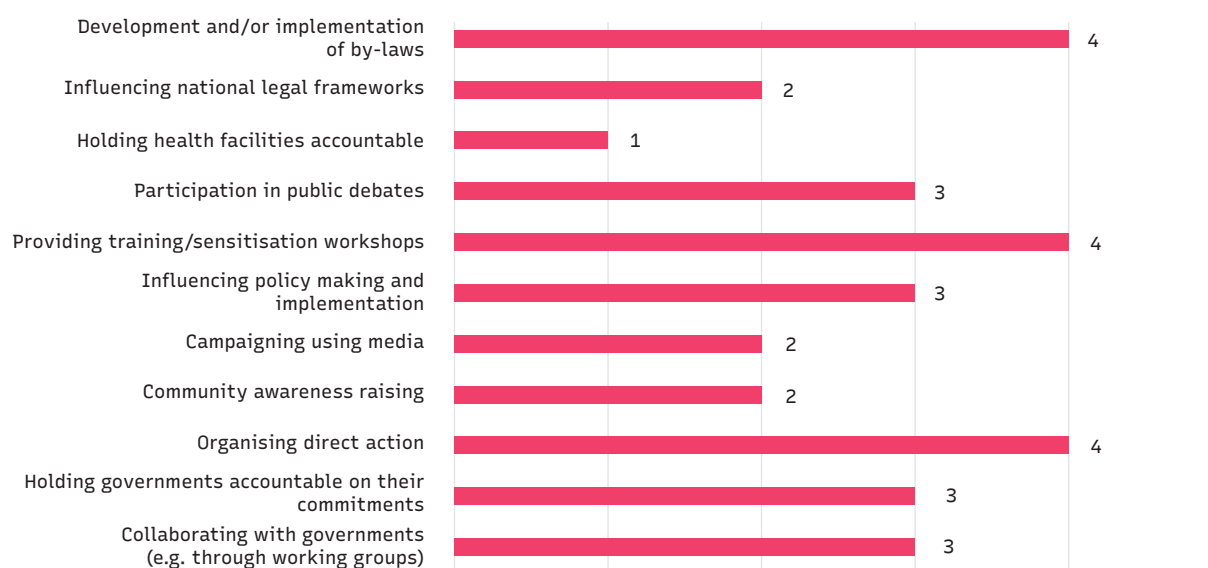
“The young people do not express themselves regarding these issues. This is because their voice is not heard and also they lack information about effects on these issues. In

Kimana ward (Namelok) they don't practise FGM/C, but in my village, Engume, they really practise it. This is because the parents and the young people lack information about these issues and also there are no people advocating against these practices in my village. The young people are not participating in any action addressing this issue because they lack information about it, and also most of them are not educated." (IDI, boy, Kajiado)

4.2 OVERVIEW OF YOUNG ADVOCATES' ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOS

During the online civic space survey, six youth advocates were interviewed. They were aged between 20 and 35 years. They were from youth-led organisations (3), community-based organisations (2) and NGOs (1). One youth advocate was operating at regional level, and five at county and community level (Table 17 in the annex).

Figure 10: Youth and CSO advocates' (under 35) participation in lobbying and advocacy activities within CSOs (n=5)



4.3 (MEANINGFUL) ENGAGEMENT OF YOUTH ADVOCATES

The youth advocates reported that their engagement and participation in lobbying and advocacy activities were satisfactory (2), good (2) or very good (2) (Figure 11). Most of the youth advocates reported that they were able to participate in CSO activities such as being invited to give input, to decide which activities to be implemented to reduce harmful practices, or to lead group activities in the community (Figure 12).

Figure 11: Youth advocates' (aged under 35) satisfaction with the quality of their participation in lobbying and advocacy activities (n=6)

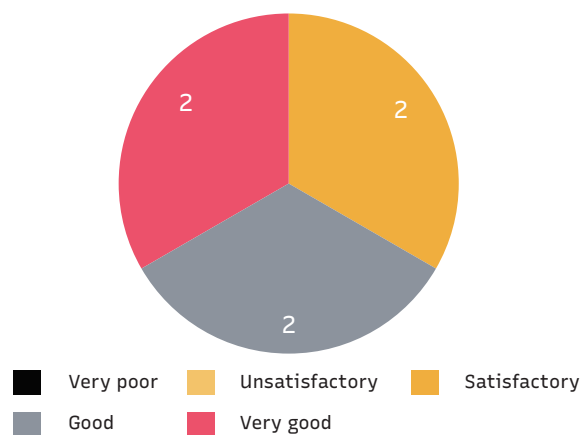
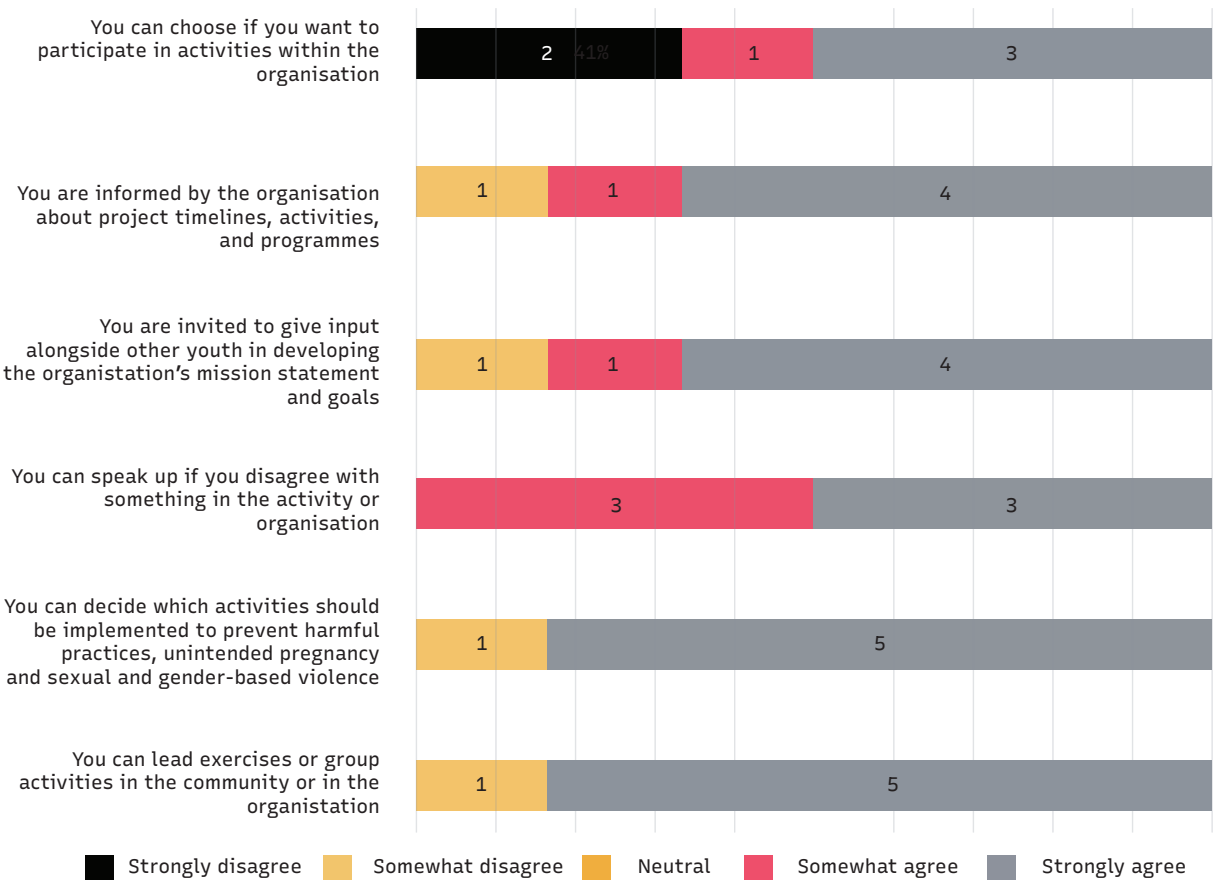


Figure 12: Youth advocates' (under 35) participation and engagement in various aspects of CSO activities (n=6)



4.4 YOUNG PEOPLE'S INSIGHTS INTO AND EXPERIENCE WITH POWER AND DECISION- MAKING

4.4.1 UNDERSTANDING OF POWER DYNAMICS AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Youth advocates (under 35 years) who participated in the civic online survey were asked whether they were actively involved in decision-making or approached by the government for meaningful consultation on policies relating to child marriage, FGM/C, SGBV and unintended pregnancy. Four of the five respondents said that they were, while one did not know. The youth advocates said that CSOs were invited to comment on draft policy documents, and that they attended policy consultation meetings and helped to organise activities at the local level.

The youth advocates were asked to identify the main challenges experienced by CSOs in securing public support, recognition and acceptance on SRH issues. All five said that they lacked financial support. Two of the five said that politicians opposed them to gain easy votes, two said that parents were afraid that the CSOs were promoting sexual activities, two said that traditions that uphold gender inequality were important to the community, three said that the public believed that CSOs were imposing a Western agenda, and two mentioned the conservative political climate.

The youth advocates were asked to identify barriers to CSO engagement in policy formulation and implementation processes. All of them said that CSO staff did not have sufficient knowledge about policy processes, and that CSOs did not have enough funds. Three out of five said that CSO staff did not have sufficient technical capacity/skills, that policy processes were not open to CSO engagement, and that policymakers did not regard evidence from these organisations as credible. Further, two of the youth advocates said that policymakers did not have the same values/ vision as these organisations, while one said that CSO staff do not have enough time.

5. FINDINGS: (ENABLING) ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S RIGHTS AND ADDRESSING HARMFUL PRACTICES, SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

5.1 GENDER AND SOCIAL NORMS AMONG COMMUNITY-LEVEL SOCIAL ACTORS

Social norms are constructions of culture and the belief system of communities that define behavioural expectations and gender roles. Social norms also underlie cultural practices at the community. In the study counties certain cultural practices were identified, such as FGM/C in Kajiado and Migori, early marriage in all four counties, and widow inheritance predominantly in Homa Bay and Siaya and, to a lesser extent, in Migori and Kajiado. SGBV is tolerated in the four study counties, and it is linked to the unequal perception and power relations between men and women. Culturally, women are perceived and treated as property and, therefore, an asset for family sustenance.

Most norms do not favour girls or women—for example, the norm relating to early marriage and FGM/C and the fact that once a girl has undergone FGM/C she is regarded as an adult and society allows her to get married (as culture takes precedence over any existing laws). According to the Kuria culture, if a girl is married to a family and has not been circumcised, there are some valuable household chores that she will not be allowed to perform or take part in:

"There are norms but unluckily or maybe disappointingly, most of the norms don't favour especially the girl child, because if we have the norms majorly like with marriage, the child is not protected at all, because a girl after FGM/C, this girl is an adult, because it is viewed as... it is an initiation process from childhood to adulthood, so once this girl has been through FGM/C, then you cannot ask anything, you cannot question, this is a big girl, she can make decision, can do anything, after FGM/C, this girl can marry, no problem, it is not strange news, it is not." (KII, teacher, Migori)

Wife inheritance occurs in Homa Bay, Siaya and Migori (but not the Kuria area). A societal actor in Homa Bay mentioned that wife inheritance was a major contributor to defilement and exposed young children to sexual activity because in some instances the women lived in small houses with limited privacy. Wife inheritance is also an avenue for the spread of HIV, since it is likely that one man may inherit many women. Wife inheritance only happens to a woman whose husband has died, and it is only done to ensure that a widow is taken care of materially and sexually. It is also done to keep the name of the deceased alive. If children are born from this union, they belong to the deceased.

"...we still have the wife inheritance which in most cases we've also found out that those who inherit the wives are the ones also who defile the girl child in those families." (KII, societal actor, Homa Bay)

"...and in our community, there is a rite, that one must be inherited, so you find one person inheriting so many and this leads to, if one happens to be sick or infected with HIV, it is likely to spread across." (KII Teacher Homa Bay)

In all the study counties, the belief that a girl or woman is property and a source of wealth for the family was expressed. This is because of the bride price that is paid when she gets married.

Discussions between parents and children on sexuality are largely taboo, and in certain settings they are limited. According to the Luo tradition, it is not easy to find a parent sitting down with their children and discussing matters concerning sexuality and challenges affecting them. This was said to be left to the teachers. It was noted that this could have contributed to the increase in teenage pregnancy that was observed during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. This was also reported in Migori, where the teacher said that a father could not speak openly with his daughter on matters relating to relationships, menstruation or body changes during puberty, especially when the girl was nearing the age of FGM/C or after FGM/C had been performed. In addition, a girl could not even mention the word 'boyfriend' to her mother. Because of this silence and secrecy between parents and girls on these matters, the girls might take advantage and engage in sexual acts, knowing that the parents would not bring it up for discussion.

"You'll find in our family setup, like the Luos, it's not easy, you find the mother sitting the child down and teaching him or her the various challenges she undergoes, apart from the teachers in school who always do that. That is why you find during this COVID-19 period the rising early teenage pregnancies and SGBV, increased because parents, I don't know they shy off." (KII, CSO, Homa Bay)

"...like father to daughter, is that privacy, that secrecy, that big respect such that a father cannot talk openly to his girl, like when it comes to issues touching on relationships, menstruation, the body changes, biological changes. So there is that distance that a father keeps from the daughter from a given age, let's say from age 10, 12, the age near FGM/C or after FGM/C, there is that distance, so that closeness is not acceptable and that one makes most girls get lost, because they don't have frequent contact with the parents." (KII, teacher, Migori)

According to the Luo tradition, girls and boys were not allowed to engage in sexual intercourse with boys before marriage, and this was nurtured in them by their parents, grandparents, and elders. Over time this has changed, whereby girls and boys freely engage in sexual activity, and the young people do not listen to or obey their parents. This was attributed to the fact that more young people are educated, while most of their parents and elders are not; and there is a perception that the traditional culture is an inferior practice. This was alluded to by the CSO from Homa Bay:

"Traditionally as a Luo community, there were the roles or what is expected of a boy and a girl, and boys and girls were not allowed, even up to now, they are not allowed to engage in early sexual intercourse. This was inculcated in them by their grandparents and parents and senior members of the society, but nowadays, they rarely listen to the elders, they assume that they have gone to school and most of our elders did not go to school, so there is a perception that modern civilisation is much more superior or better than the traditional cultural values." (KII, CSO, Homa Bay)

Boys and girls were expected to get married through arrangements between families, after being initiated into adulthood, but this has changed over time and no longer happens, as more young people see arranged marriages as a difficult task.

"...there was also whereby as a community, a girl or a girl's family or a boy's family would send emissaries to the girl's family that we want to marry your girl. This was a family engagement, not the boy's or the girl's engagement. It was a decision by the two families, so nowadays it's very rare because they see that is too much work and effort for them. People have gone to school and kind of civilisation has come up and nowadays we rarely see that happen." (KII, CSO, Homa Bay)

Early marriage was encouraged, and divorce was discouraged. Girls aged 20–24 in Migori reported that once a girl got pregnant, she was forced to get married to the boy who made her pregnant, irrespective of whether the boy's family wanted her or not. In addition, once married, they were not allowed to divorce and return to their parents' family. The teacher in Homa Bay reported that a pregnant girl could be married to an older man who might also have other wives:

"For example, a girl is impregnated by a boy you will be forced to go to that family, and maybe that family does not want you it becomes a problem... They force that it is a must, you must be married in one place. There is no way you can leave your current home to be married elsewhere." (FGD with girls, 20–24 years, Migori)

"...another practice is whereby if a girl has been paid for a lot of bridewealth and you get where she is married she is suffering, but she cannot leave because her family has already used the bridewealth and finished it, they cannot pay back to the man, so she remains stuck there and continues suffering." (FGD with girls, 20–24 years, Migori)

Another cultural practice among the Luo is that women are not allowed to plant fruit trees in their parents' compound. This practice, which still happens, is mainly to deter women from returning to request part of the family's property and land.

"Okay, there is an issue also on matters of the cultural norms, there is also...as much as we always follow our culture, there are some that they should do away with, like, for example, I am a victim, I am not supposed to plant fruit trees in our home. Why? I don't know. It is a taboo. Thankfully I have been empowered, I have parents who understand, I have been allowed, right now I have planted avocados at home, and nothing has happened. So there is also that issue with some cultural norms that were practised long ago, and now they should not apply." (KII, CSO, Homa Bay)

The removal of six lower teeth is a cultural practice among the Luo community that occurs in Siaya, Homa Bay and Luo-Migori, but not Kuria (where the baseline was conducted). It is done to acknowledge adulthood and serves as a way to feed people when they are very sick.

"...the elderly people traditionally the six lower teeth were to be removed, that's the Luo culture, that was an identification that you are now an adult. And behind that why remove the six lower teeth, when you were sick that was the only way, you could be given some medicine if unconscious and you are not able to drink the medicine well, so they would use that gap of the teeth..." (KII, CSO, Homa Bay)

Land ownership—girls should be married off so that they cannot ask to share the father's land with the boys—was also mentioned:

"Another norm that I saw is land ownership. They believe the girl should be married off so that they don't struggle for ownership of land with the boys, because they believe they will be fighting for land with the boys. Also, property inheritance, apart from land, property inheritance, we have parents that have got maybe rental houses and other properties inform of businesses, they will not want these girls to inherit their property, so they marry the girls off so that the property can remain for the boys." (KII, teacher, Siaya)

Implications of changes in social norms

Participants were asked to state what they saw as the implications of changes in social norms. Their responses reflected both positive and negative implications. Participants in the four study counties noted that the adoption of education for both boys and girls had positive implications for the lives of youth who completed school. This was particularly relevant for girls who got pregnant and did not have to enter into early marriage. The reduction in the stigma associated with teenage pregnancy and the return to school policy has meant that girls who would have otherwise dropped out have the opportunity to continue with their education. Education was described by one of the key informants as being the equaliser in society:

"Then you tell them education is an equaliser: it makes people equal, and it can create hope where there was no hope. This one we have achieved because the school has been trying. It has been doing well because quite a number have gone to the university. In fact, from 2017 up to now those who have gone to university are 17 in total. Because when they see a poor child who was just here going through that school then going to university, they see change and that creates hope in the community." (KII, Teacher Homa Bay)

However, the freedom that comes with the free mixing of boys and girls provides both genders with space to express themselves but at the same time is seen to increase girls' vulnerability to SGBV and teenage pregnancy. Freedom is also linked to indiscipline, with children having little respect for their parents, which leads to friction. This is more so where the parents may also be engaged in behaviours that are not socially acceptable. In one interview with a social worker in Homa Bay it transpired that the sexual behaviour of a mother influenced the daughter's subsequent behaviour, and she was not able to discipline her. The issue of indiscipline and parents abrogating their responsibility was also raised in Migori in an interview with a teacher, who referred to the fact that the norm of collective parenting is gone, and parents have ignored their responsibilities for their children.

"...girls were not allowed to talk where men were, and the community felt like girls should not express themselves where men are. Nowadays you find that value is being lost, girls do associate with boys anyhow, it was somehow helping. Girls were afraid of associating with men back in the days. These days they are free. That's why rape, defilement and early pregnancy come up. We feel we are equal. That norm would have helped if it was there." (R2, FGD with mothers, Homa Bay)

"They are left with the responsibility to fend for themselves, sometimes the mother is not there or is not there tells when you go come with Daga [also known as Lake Victoria sardines], now from where, you see? So this are things that have changed, parents have switched their responsibility and left it to the kids, so these kids because they have to take care of themselves, they have to provide for themselves, we lose them along the way, in the process of them trying to provide for themselves, those are the things that have changed a lot, and then with the media they are so much exposed, when you watch TV nowadays, all movies are for romance, all music are for romance, children access phones at a very early age. Personally I accessed a phone in first year college." (KII, teacher, Migori)

"...there are actually mothers who keep changing their sexual partners because even sometimes back we had a very serious case whereby a child who was 13/14 years has started sleeping out, going to visit men, so when the mother brought her here, there were a number of issues, and the child said, 'Why should I not go, and yet you are busy having different men in the house?', so that type of friction." (KII, social services, Homa Bay)

Women mentioned that after being sensitised they could now engage in economic activities in the marketplace and were able to have income of their own. This contributed to conflict reduction in the household:

"R5: We have seen that there are few changes because in the old days, women never even used to do businesses so, all the responsibilities were on men. If you go and tell him there is no salt, he buys. Tomorrow if you tell him to give you money to go to the posho mill, that is where conflicts were beginning. That was the source of conflicts and beatings, but nowadays since women have been empowered and are now doing businesses at least they can get some income to help them out."

R1: ...Earlier on, you could not find a man taking your opinion useful, you were not allowed to have your own money or farm your own or be in a group or buy a cow or a goat or say that they belong to you, it's only men who used to possess them but nowadays, we have women who now possess their belongings." (FGD with mothers, Migori)

In Kajiado, although decision-making is largely the responsibility of men and elders, some changes have been taking place, and young men are standing up to their parents and now rejecting the choice of wife that would have been made for them.

"I: You said some boys leave the wives chosen for them by their parents at home?

R: It is simply because they do not want them. It's not their choice, hence, they do not

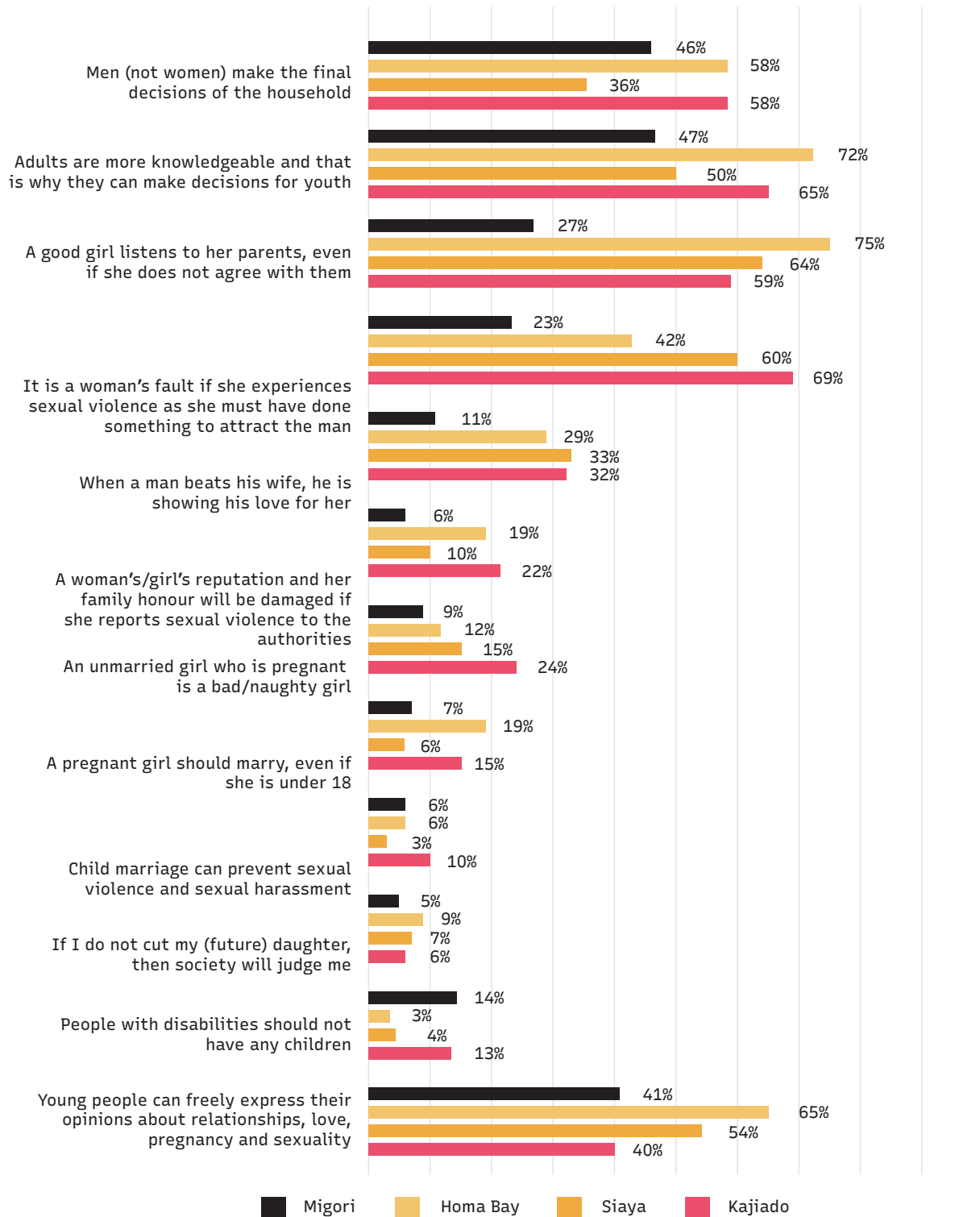
prioritise. This issue also tends to annoy the boys, some of them just find their spouses at home already when some of them are still schooling. This will force other boys to run away from home, and out of school.” (KII, community volunteer, Kajiado)

Figure 13 shows the (strong) agreement of respondents with a number of statements about gender norms. In Migori, no statistically significant difference was found between male and female respondents. In the other three study counties, however, differences could be seen between male and female respondents. In Homa Bay, more adolescent boys and young men (strongly) agreed with the statement ‘Men (not women) make the final decisions of the household’ (62%) and ‘A good girl listens to her parents even if she does not agree with them’ (79%), compared to their female counterparts (53% and 71%, respectively).

In Siaya, more male than female respondents (strongly) agreed with gender norms related to SGBV. This was seen for the following two statements: ‘It is a woman’s fault if she experiences sexual violence, as she must have done something to attract the man’ (with which 35% of adolescent boys and young men and 30% of adolescent girls and young women agreed), and ‘When a man beats his wife, he is showing his love for her’ (with which 10% of male respondents and 9% of female respondents (strongly) agreed).

The most differences between male and female respondents were found in Kajiado. Adolescent boys and young men, for instance, were more likely to agree that men were the final decision makers in the house (65% compared to 50% of females); that unmarried girls who were pregnant must be naughty or bad (20% compared to 10% of females); that pregnant girls should marry even if they are younger than 18 (13% compared to 6% of females); that child marriage can prevent sexual violence and sexual harassment (10% compared to 3% of females); and that they would be judged by society if they did not cut their daughter in the future (18% compared to 7% of females). Male respondents in Kajiado were also more likely to (strongly) agree that young people could freely express their opinions about relationships, love, pregnancy and sexuality (48% compared to 31% of female respondents), and less likely to agree that women could always decide for themselves (63% of males vs. 75% of females).

Figure 13: Adolescents and youth who (strongly) agreed with the following statements relating to gender norms



5.2 LEGAL AND POLICY ENVIRONMENT

5.2.1 LAWS AND POLICIES

Participants were asked whether they were aware of laws and policies on harmful practices. A majority of the participants mentioned the Children's Act, the return to school policy for pregnant girls, 100% transition for all children (from primary to secondary school), the anti-FGM/C policy and the Sexual Offences Act. In Kajiado, the national anti-FGM/C policy has been cascaded to the county level; as a result, it is the first county to have a localised anti-FGM/C policy. Siaya has developed a county action plan in response to teenage pregnancy and is in the process of developing the county SGBV policy and then domesticating the national youth policy. However, there were no reports of domestication of policies in Migori or Homa Bay.

In a discussion with fathers in Siaya, it was also mentioned that there were laws but that the issue was a lack of civic education in the community for people to be fully aware of their rights. In Migori, the religious leader was conversant with the laws regarding the provision of education for all children and the provisions in the law regarding gender-based violence. He went further to state that as a pastor and community leader he had the responsibility to report to the chief whenever there was a violation of any of these laws, and he was willing to play the role of witness in any court case.

The teacher in Siaya said that he was aware of the laws governing sexual violence and child marriage. Although he could not mention the actual laws, he was aware of the sentencing attached to the laws around sexual violence that should not be less than 20 years:

"Child marriage is not allowed because they are underage, they do not have consent, so they should not be married. So a person who marries an underage should also be arrested, the girl should be taken back to school, and the person also charged in the court of law." (KII, teacher, Siaya)

"I know those laws are there and when you read the children's rights, when you read the Children's Act, I think it is, when you read when you look at anti-FGM/C act, and the constitution at large." (IDI, youth advocate, Migori)

Changes in laws and policies

According to the literature review and the interviews with various participants, there have been no changes in the existing laws and policies. However, counties such as

Kajiado have cascaded the FGM/C policy, while Siaya is in the process of developing an SGBV policy and adopting the youth policy.

Enforcement of laws and policies

Enforcement of laws is a challenge in all four study counties. Participants were asked about the extent to which the laws had worked for the community, and the general consensus was that the implementation of these laws faced challenges. Examples were given where the laws were flouted, as the perpetrators of crimes were either not arrested or, if arrested, were allowed to go free for flimsy reasons. Moreover, bribes play a key role in determining the fate of most cases. Some of the SGBV cases, including rape and defilement, were often not prosecuted due to community considerations rather than considering the victim. It is of more valuable for the community to settle such matters at home rather than to report them to the authorities. Parents were reported to be compromised by taking payments or compensation in exchange for dropping the case.

Where the return to school policy is enforced, girls were said to go back to school after teenage pregnancy. However, in Kajiado it was reported that where FGM/C is still practised, early marriages were more frequent, and this was seen as violating the rights of the girl child.

"Policies provide which action should be taken when such cases are reported. The only problem that we have is that some parents are compromised and therefore they don't take action. You see the parents might be compromised, and the child has been raped." (KII, teacher, Homa Bay)

"In the issue about unintended pregnancies, many girls dropped out of school during COVID-19 season but parents took care of the kids for the girls to go back to school instead of being married at a tender age. About FGM/C, it's so rampant in this county, especially in my village, 80% of the girls have been cut. This means many girls have been denied their rights." (IDI, boy, Kajiado)

"I think the authorities are not doing all well about these acts of raping, fighting. If you report it, you will find the authorities some are ready to put you down so that you can agree before reaching there, you will find some assistant chiefs and walangos and the chiefs, they will put you down. 'You know this is your relative. If you can do this and he is jailed you may bring a curse to you if he dies there. Just help him (laughs). Mwelewane tu [just agree].'" (R8, FGD with fathers, Siaya)

5.3 POLITICAL WILL OF STATE ACTORS TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE'S RIGHTS AND ADDRESS HARMFUL PRACTICES, SGBV AND UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

The county governments have the potential to address issues affecting young people; however, this has not been the case. The key informants and FGD participants said that there was a need for more political will at the county level to support the implementation of the policies in place.

County governments have domesticated or are in the process of domesticating national policies. The importance of domestication or adoption of these policies by the county government is that it enables the county government to allocate resources for their implementation.

"...it is important that the county adopts these policies so that it guides operations, and that will also influence budget allocation for these issues because, for instance, if you want to approach the county to support the teenage pregnancy campaign, they may not do so because there is no policy to back it up." (KII, CSO, Siaya)

"...if there is no policy then it means they can't allocate resources. Ours is to ensure that we have policies in place that will be able also to influence budgetary allocations. That way will have sustainability of these interventions." (KII, CSO, Siaya)

6. FINDINGS: CIVIC SPACE

The study found that there are two core components of civic space that are important for youth and adolescents. These are freedom of expression and access to information, as described below.

6.1 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND EXPRESSION

The findings of the online survey on civic space suggest that youth and CSO advocates consider different aspects of freedom of information and expression constrained or restricted. For example, on citizens' access to information they require to exercise their rights, the majority of the advocates (13 out of 17) reported that they felt either constrained or restricted. With regards to freedom of expression of organisations when lobbying and advocating on SRHR, 12 out of 17 advocates also reported feeling constrained or restricted (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Youth and CSO advocates' assessment of different aspects of freedom of information and expression in Kenya (n=17)



However, there was a huge contrast with the findings from the qualitative component of the study, where societal actors, state actors and CSO participants in all four study counties reported that CSOs had freedom of expression and could speak out about any issue without fear. CSOs were said to speak about matters that other societal actors felt unable to speak about. In Homa Bay, a social services key informant said that CSOs interacted with government structures and could express themselves as a key stakeholder representing members of the community. A lawmaker from Kajiado said that CSOs had freedom to express themselves; the challenge would be if the CSOs were not aware of this freedom. A health care worker from Migori said that CSOs had freedom to speak without fear and hesitation in public and that CSOs were

mandated to speak freely. This was confirmed by the CSOs and youth advocates in Migori, who also said that CSOs had the freedom to speak. A youth advocate in Siaya said that CSOs could talk and influence decisions around resource allocation:

"...the meetings that are being organised by the government most of the times, they come in as stakeholders and you will always have them share what they feel is not right or they feel is not going on well with them or what the government is doing that is not making their work easier, so they share all that and the government side also responds, so I would say that on the issue of them expressing themselves, I think it is there..." (KII, social services, Homa Bay)

"...I have witnessed them talk in public about what I cannot say, and I believe they are not bound by fear; they are on good terms with the county government which is funding them. The CSOs believe that it is their mandate to speak out. I believe they have freedom to talk." (KII, health care worker, Migori)

"...freedom of expression because of the Bill of Rights. Yes, it is good, they can speak out without any fear. We thank God for Kenya being a democratic community society." (KII, youth advocate, Siaya)

Similarly, societal actors, state actors and CSO participants stated that they believed that CSOs had access to information about government actions and decisions. In all four study counties, all participants said that CSOs had access to government information through various channels such as government reports, being invited to workshops organised by the government as stakeholders, government websites and social media. However, one CSO representative from Kajiado said that they only depended on social media and had no formal way of getting information from the government. The health care worker in Migori said that CSOs had access to information and worked closely with the county government. However, this view was contradicted by a youth advocate, who said that government information was not readily available and made a particular reference to a lack of transparency in the county budgeting process.

The NGO representative in Siaya said they did get some information from the government, but the challenge was that they might not get all the information they needed. The youth advocate said that information was available online. The CSO from Siaya said that they had access to government information when needed, because they worked closely with the key government departments and, hence, were able to get the information on a needs basis. Second, they had access to the county government websites which also had some information, and as an organisation, they were able to ask the government to update the websites. For example:

"...It depends whether they are aware, and that is if they are aggressive to get this information, because they are not restricted." (KII, lawmaker, Kajiado)

"We only depend on social media; otherwise there is not a formal way from the government that helps us get this information." (KII, CSO, Kajiado)

"I want to say CSOs work directly, they access information, they work closely with even the council of governors so, and they can get that information." (KII, health care worker, Migori)

"No, I can't say, it is not to a good extent. I can say that it is not to a good extent because the government should put their information public even on the website but there is some information that if you go to seek from them, they will tell you to go to the website and you will not find that information. So they also keep on posting the points of reference, they say go to so and so, you will get that document but if you go to so and so you will not get it. There's that back and forth until you get tired, so that is a major challenge that civil society always faces in accessing information from the government." (KII, youth advocate, Migori)

"You might find that there are two or three, four, five budgets that are being worked on so, you will never understand which one, it is only them and the department of planning and those who are in treasury... because there is corruption, they don't want people to understand what they are doing, like sometimes the people might come into public participation to prioritise programmes, but you will find that they will pick number 5 to implement. Why? Because they want to confuse the community in terms of monitoring." (KII, youth advocate, Migori)

"But most critical other than access to information through the website, we are able to work closely with the key departments of the interventions that we do and we are able to get that information." (KII, CSO, Siaya)

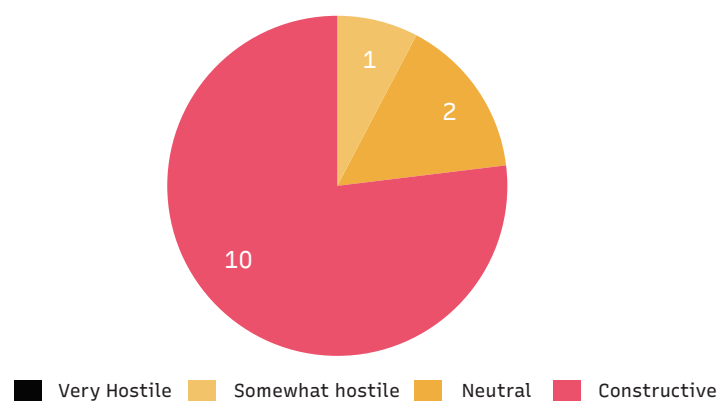
"Access to government information is still critical, it is still a challenge, however through the central departments, we are able to now seek and get information and even frequent updates of access to government website... but most critical other than access to information through website, we are able to work closely with the key departments of the interventions that we do and we are able to get that information." (KII, CSO, Siaya)

Role of the media in lobbying and advocacy

Seventeen CSOs were asked which media they engaged for lobbying and advocacy. All of them reported using social media, 15 used radio, 5 television, and only 1–4 used newspapers, magazines or books. They were further asked to identify the aspects of

lobbying and advocacy that were discussed on social media. Their response was that social media was used in addressing/preventing SGBV and improving SRH service delivery. Twelve of the 17 respondents reported using social media for messages about the impact of unintended/teenage pregnancy and continuation of school for teenage mothers. Eleven out of the 17 used social media to enhance the recognition of young people's SRHR; elimination of child marriage; and reducing unintended/teenage pregnancy. Most (10 out of 13) of the CSOs reported that their interaction with the public on social media was mainly constructive (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Youth and CSO advocates' assessment of interactions with the public on media platforms/channels (n=17)



Similar views were expressed by societal and state actors with regards to the role of media lobbying and advocacy. In all four study counties, the media were said to be playing an important role in advocacy and lobbying. Both mainstream and social media were mentioned as avenues for engagement. Mainstream and social media platforms create a lot of awareness on FGM/C, early marriage and teenage pregnancy. Local radio stations, broadcasting in local languages, were said to allow more reach into the communities. The radio stations in local languages frequently listened to by community members include Radio Ramogi, Radio Ramenya, and Radio Ratego, and in the Kuria dialect, Radio Namlolwe and in Kajiado Radio Mayian.

The lawmaker from Kajiado said that the media could be instrumental in advocacy and lobbying, but this was dependent on how active and engaging the CSOs were themselves in reaching out to the media. The youth advocate and CSO representative from Migori said that the media played the role of highlighting and bringing to the attention of the public harmful practices as identified by CSOs, such as FGM/C and early marriage, which often led to the rescue of the girls involved. The CSO representative in Siaya said that the role of the media was to pass on information and create awareness, but there was a need to ensure that the information being

passed on was accurate; otherwise, if the media provided inaccurate information, the community tended to focus on that aspect, and it became difficult to change the messages:

"The media also play a big role, but it depends on the activism of the CSO. If the CSOs by themselves are not active in lobbying such practices, the media will not also do so..." (KII, lawmaker, Kajiado)

"The media is key. Through various forms of media they can reach out to a household. For example, radio, especially the local stations. Not all people can read, but with the radio stations, in the language that people can understand, like in Migori there are Luos who listen to radio Ramogi and Ramenya, and the Kurias, who listen to radio stations in the Kuria dialect." (KII, health care worker Migori)

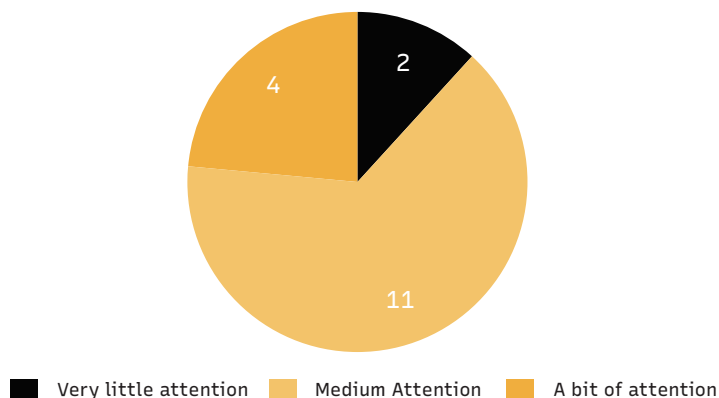
"Media plays a very important role because it is through the media that they amplify their voices because the media is being heard by everybody. Civil societies work closely with the media to ensure that their issues are addressed, and their voices are heard within the society." (KII, youth advocate, Migori)

"Of course, the media here have both mainstream and social media. Social media is a key platform for any CSOs because that's where they put the real issues and people engage a lot in social media and so to that extent a lot of advocacy issues, a lot of awareness is done at social media level. Now mainstream media, I see programmes on TV that deal with gender-based violence, with early marriages, unintended pregnancies. So I would say both in mainstream and social media, there is a good space for CSOs." (KII, youth advocate, Siaya)

Media support for Power to You(th) core issues

Youth and CSO advocates were asked to assess the level of media attention paid to Power to You(th) core issues. Out of the 17 respondents, 11 said that the media provided a medium amount of attention to the core issues, while 4 said that the media provided a lot of attention (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Youth and CSO advocates' assessment of the level of media attention paid to Power to You(th) core issues (n=17)



Media platforms, messaging and target groups

Youth and CSO advocates were asked to identify forms of media that are most influential in shaping public opinion on the issues of harmful practices (child marriage and FGM/C), SGBV and unintended pregnancy. All 17 respondents mentioned the radio, 12 mentioned television, 11 social media, and only 1–3 mentioned newspapers, magazines or books. The types of media mentioned were also reported to have a positive influence.

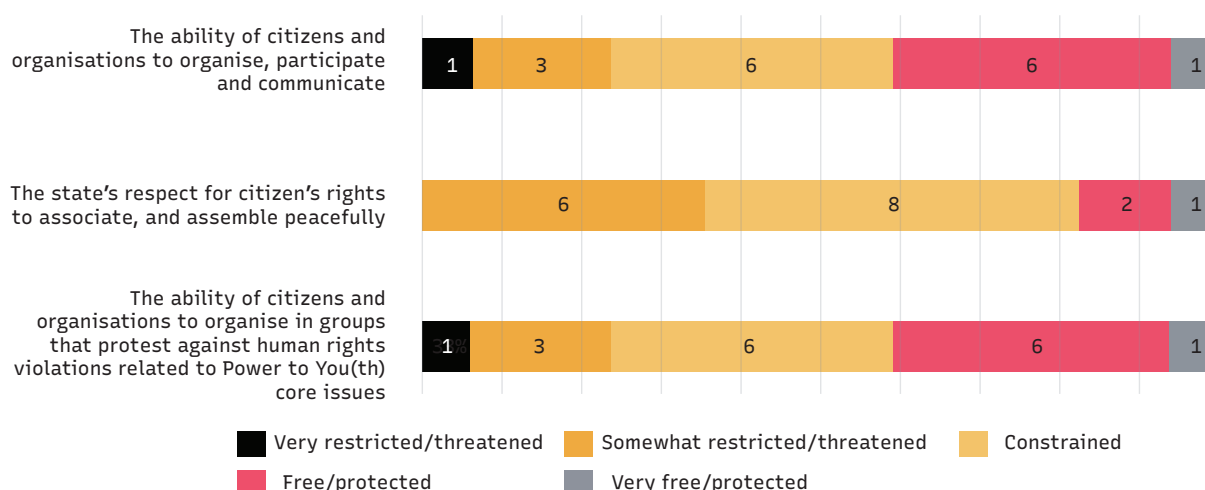
Participants were also asked to indicate the target audience of each type of media. They reported that social media especially targeted young people (as indicated by 11 of 11 respondents). Six respondents indicated that social media also targeted influencers/opinion leaders, while five mentioned the general public. Radio targets the general public in particular (14 of 17 respondents indicated this), followed by rural populations (11 of 17 respondents) and less educated groups (9 of 17 respondents).

6.2 FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

Youth and CSO advocates were asked to assess different aspects of freedom of assembly and association in Kenya. Most youth and CSO advocates felt that these freedoms were constrained or restrictive. Ten of the 17 respondents stated that the ability of citizens and organisations to organise, participate and communicate was constrained or restrictive. Fourteen of the 17 stated that the State's respect for citizens' right to associate and assemble peacefully was restrictive or constrained (Figure 17). The main restrictions limiting freedom of assembly and legitimate protest were identified as the use of violence, repression and policing, the cost of and requirements for authorisations, and the criminalisation or punishment of certain activities.

Organising and gatherings of young people and LGBTI+ groups were reported as experiencing the most difficulties.

Figure 17: Youth and CSO advocates' assessment of different aspects of freedom of assembly and association in Kenya (n=17)

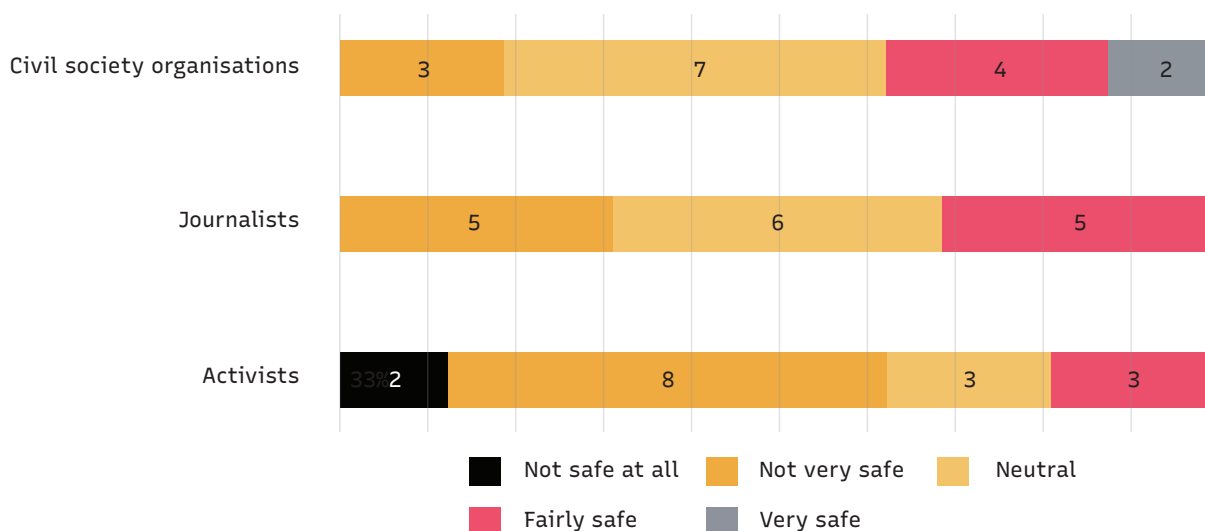


6.3 FINANCIAL STABILITY, AUTONOMY AND SECURITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Youth and CSO advocates were asked to assess safety levels of CSOs, journalists and activists working on SRHR advocacy in Kenya. There were mixed reactions about the safety of activists and journalists advocating for adolescent SRHR. Most respondents (10 out of 16) felt that activists were not very safe or safe at all. Five of the 16 respondents felt that journalists were safe, while five felt they were not. Most felt that CSOs were fairly safe or very safe, while only three felt that CSOs were not safe; seven respondents were neutral about the safety of CSOs (Figure 18).

Stakeholder participants were asked whether there were government mechanisms or initiatives that provided financial support to organisations working on SRHR. Ten respondents said there were not, while three said there were, and three did not know. Asked why they thought these finance mechanisms or initiatives were not in place, some responded that their funding came from outside Kenya or from other partnerships, including with NGOs, but not from the government. However, other respondents said that the financial mechanisms were limited and not easy to access.

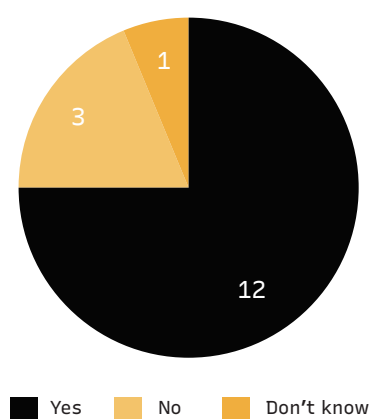
Figure 18: Youth and CSO advocates' assessment of safety levels of those working on SRHR in Kenya



6.4 DIALOGUE AND CONSULTATION

Youth and CSO advocates were asked to give their views on the extent to which CSOs and youth advocates were engaged by the government for meaningful consultation on policies relating to Power to You(th) core issues. Three quarters (12 out of 16) of the respondents said that CSOs/youth advocates were actively engaged and meaningfully consulted on policies relating to the issues (Figure 19). The nature of engagement included being invited to comment on draft policy documents, attending policy consultative meetings and jointly organising activities together with the government at the local level.

Figure 19: Youth and CSO advocates' views on whether or not CSOs/youth advocates are actively engaged by the government for meaningful consultation on policies relating to Power to You(th) core issues (n=16)



6.4.1 ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS FOR CSO ENGAGEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT

When asked to characterise the nature of dialogue between their respective CSOs and government, most said the engagement was constructive (11 of 16), followed by irregular (5), lip service/tokenism/irregular (4) and hostile (1).

Most respondents (11 of 16) reported that spaces for dialogue with government engagement involved having a diversity of civil society actors (including women's rights organisations, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities etc.), and that no groups were discriminated against or excluded from these dialogues (9 of 16). However, a few respondents felt that women's rights organisations, indigenous or minority groups or people with disabilities were discriminated against or excluded.

6.4.2 CITIZENS' ROLE IN ACCOUNTABILITY WITH REGARDS TO SRHR

The role of citizens was seen as reporting negative practices in the community and sometimes demanding that cases be escalated to a higher level such as a court trial and prison. In some instances an individual could take the initiative to lead sensitisation activities in the community or in schools. One such community member was reported in Kajiado. She took time to sensitise girls at a school. Teachers are at the forefront of sensitising girls against harmful practices.

Youth advocates also play a role in ensuring that leaders keep the promises they have made to the community. A youth advocate in Siaya stated that by mobilising the community they were able to petition the county government to establish several health facilities, which increased access to health care services.

"I: Is anybody in your community standing up to remind community leaders/ government of their promises responsibilities?"

R: Yes, even in this area, there is a lady who is in the gender offices in Kajiado, who use to move from one school to another to sensitise the young girls about their rights, and enlighten the elderly women to stop the FGM/C. She is really working hard to end FGM/C particularly." (KII, teacher, Kajiado)

"We as the teachers are really teaching and enlightening these girls about their rights, so they can fight for themselves. Actually, the syllabus has some topics that purely address the rights of the youth; hence they get enough knowledge about their rights. This includes children rights, so that they should know even children have their rights." (KII, teacher, Kajiado)

"I: Is anybody in your community standing up to remind community leaders/ government of their promises?

P: I being one of them. We have advocated and come against writing these Acts and reaching these people. The church is playing a big role as well. We also have the authority like the chiefs, district commissioners: they are joining hands together to fight these." (IDI, youth advocate)

"The people in my community whom I see taking action number one is the headman, the village elder. The village elder in cases of gender-based violence you can find maybe a woman has been assaulted there in her home the village elder will come in, they will get the assailant arrested bring the chief then he is taken to the police so the village elder is the people, I see them taking action." (FGD with fathers, Siaya)

6.4.3 COMMUNITY LEGITIMACY AND TRUST IN CSOS

CSOs have earned trust from the community because of the work they are engaged in, whereby the community is able to see the positive results—for instance, following up the case of a girl who has undergone SGBV up to the litigation stage, bearing in mind that it would take a long time to conclude. The trust has also been earned because the organisation respects existing community structures through which activities are implemented.

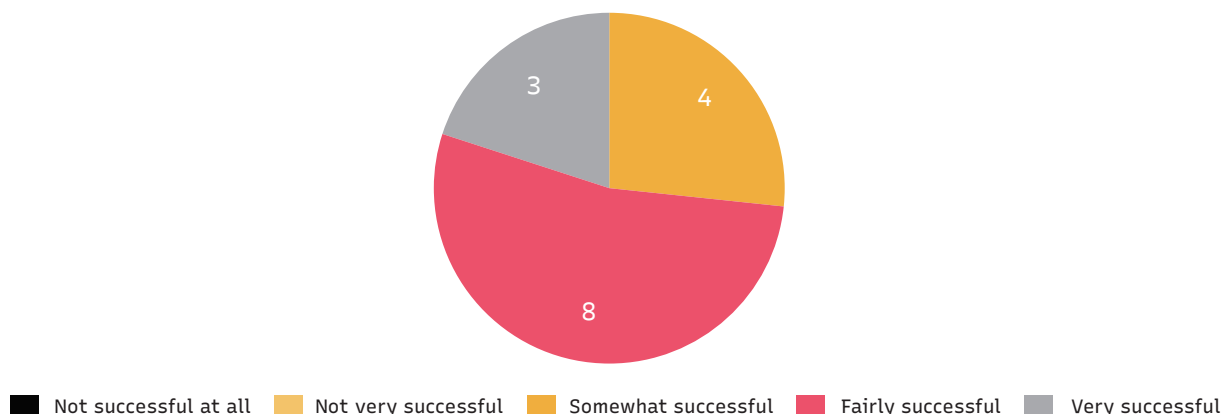
One of the CSOs has some leadership in the county health management because the organisation has been appointed a member of the county SGBV technical working group.

"...as a CSO working in the community, I am very proud about this because at least if you go across the sub-county, when you pass people will call you by the organisation, meaning, you have really done something that the community is able to recognise. We have been able to respect the existing structures, and that is what we use in our execution, so that has really brought that aspect of both from the administration or the sub-county leadership, to the community. So that aspect of recognising those structures is one milestone." (KII, CSO, Siaya)

6.5 LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY ENVIRONMENT FOR CSOS

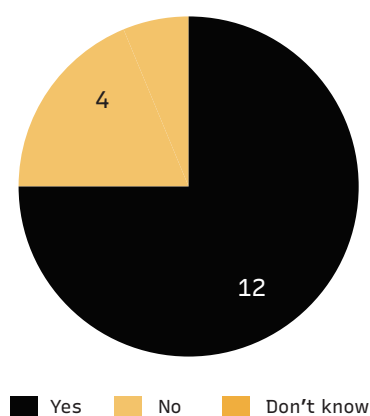
Youth and CSO advocates were asked to assess CSOs' success in influencing government policy. Most (11 out of 15) of them said that CSOs' influence was fairly or very successful (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Youth and CSO advocates' assessment of civil society success in influencing government policy



In addition, 12 out of 16 CSO/youth advocates agreed that the level of evidence available to support lobbying and advocacy efforts on SRHR issues was sufficient, while four respondents said that the evidence was insufficient (Figure 21). The respondents who said that the evidence was insufficient indicated that they needed more information on SGBV (mentioned five times) and FGM/C (mentioned three times). Other topics mentioned included: availability of services for young people, clear data on child/early marriage, unintended and teenage pregnancies, contraception, and the number of students impregnated by their teachers. When asked about the types of effective evidence needed to influence policy, 11 of the 16 respondents mentioned field reports, followed by statistics (10), case studies (10), surveys (8), personal testimonials from beneficiaries (8) and, to a lesser extent, academic research papers (2 out of 16).

Figure 21: Youth and CSO advocates' assessment of the level of evidence available to assist lobbying and advocacy efforts



6.5.1 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CSOS

The study sought to establish the challenges CSOs experience in their course of lobbying and advocacy activities. Several challenges were mentioned, including the reach and dissemination of information. This is because the area to be covered is large, and the CSO volunteers have limited or no transport to reach remote areas. Limited funding is a key challenge to the execution of CSO activities in all the study counties. A health care worker reiterated that because of the nature of their work, which involves data collection, mobilising and educating the community and collaborating with local stakeholders, adequate financial resources were essential. Differences in funding of CSOs have contributed to competition among CSOs, in particular when the better-funded CSOs remunerate community members or volunteers, raising their expectations to the detriment of the smaller CSOs with limited funding. This causes friction between CSOs and also affects service delivery. The other main challenge is the culture of the community, which becomes a barrier to discussions, particularly regarding SRH, since parents may not be supportive and, therefore, place the burden of providing SRH information on CSOs. For example:

"...I also have a challenge that the cultural norms as had been alluded to those parents shy away from discussing these matters openly. They leave the matters to the CSOs, and probably it's not enough, it should be seen parents taking the leading role in such discussions and programmes, so that we achieve." (KII, CSO state actor, Homa Bay)

"The possible challenges are like resources. For instance, if a group wants to advocate on a certain subject, they need to move around, and this county is very wide, hence need to have adequate resources like transport, and other needs. Also, they can get opposition from those who embrace culture. The Maasai culture is protective of certain beliefs. They believe that if you go against the old people who are the advocates of culture, you will be cursed and you will die." (KII, lawmaker, Kajiado)

"The key challenges are the funding. You find that sometimes we do not have resources to operate, making our group seem to be inactive. Some groups will look down upon us, hence not willing to collaborate with us. The community has also been spoiled by those groups that have money, making them not listen to small groups like ours since we do not have money to pay them the tokenism they have been receiving from others." (KII, CSO, Kajiado)

In other instances, the barriers are related to general resistance from the community, which does not see an immediate need or benefit from the CSO. An example was given where the community did not see any value in the CSOs, such as Aluora Makare:

"...they face challenges when some people see them as a menace or see them negatively that they are not supporting the community. So they get resistance from other community members. But these community members we usually talk with and tell them that Aluora Makare is coming in to assist them. Even though they are doing good work for the society, they are commonly resisted. You know we are in a world where people may not see good things as good things. Not all will accept that they are doing good things." (KII, state actor (chief), Homa Bay)

Making leaders answerable to the electorate or to the needs of young people has been left to the CSOs. However, CSOs face challenges in making the leaders accountable, because to engage with political leaders (who are in charge of budgetary allocation at the county level) it is necessary to bring these leaders together, and this is costly, especially if the CSOs do not have adequate resources to convene meetings. In cases where CSOs attend meetings and make contributions, for instance, to the budget, it is often expunged from the final document to the disappointment of youth. It is challenging for the CSOs to take on the role of accountability, because it requires a lot of financial resources to bring the leaders together.

"So at some point when young people engage—for example, when we get to the final document—and they realise that their contribution is missing, they lose hope, they lose trust in those people, and do not even participate when there is a subsequent engagement. That means that holding them accountable is, in most cases, left for CSOs, especially the CSOs that work in the space of accountability." (KII, CSO, Siaya)

Where the community is not receptive to change, CSOs have a challenge in supporting any cases that they may identify in the community. Unless the community is supportive of change, it is not likely to happen. This is also true of local leadership: if they do not support changes identified by the CSO, nothing may be implemented:

"It is one thing for civil society pointing out areas that the county needs to improve, pointing out supporting the budgetary process but it is another thing for them to be implemented. They can push about implementation but the back remains with the leadership, if the leadership has not supported, the CSOs can talk and talk and push for those other challenges, but I want to say that we need to keep on pushing because we cannot change people within one day. We need to jump up, and there will be change, and everything will work out as desired by the society." (KII, health care worker, Migori)

The lack of employment among young people is a major challenge to the participation of young people in CSOs. An interview with the youth advocate in Migori made it clear that young people were sometimes unable to participate in activities initiated

by CSOs, as they often demanded payment or transport. They were, therefore, not in support of volunteering. The lack of funding for CSOs threatens their sustainability:

"Another challenge that I didn't mention is sustainability of the advocacy work because the civil society becomes very active when there's funding, and when there's no funding, they will again lower their advocacy otherwise." (KII, youth advocate, Migori)

Besides poor funding of CSOs, a lack of accountability is an issue for most organisations. They receive funds but fail to account for them, as they prioritise other things on which they spend very little. The use of advocates from other community was viewed as a major challenge that often leads to rejection of the CSO:

"...if an organisation has come from Nairobi and they want to talk about FGM/C in Kuria, or FGM/C in Nyatike, and the same organisation comes with all employees and community ambassadors from other regions, that is a very big challenge because the community will not accept them... so you find that they take time before they start to engage the locals. Those are some of the things that being new people in an environment to address issues that they are not privy to is a major challenge that is facing civil societies in advocating for those issues." (KII, youth advocate, Migori)

The CSO in Siaya involved in school programmes said that there was limited access to schools. The schools have restrictions on who can access schools and when. This is because of the Ministry of Education's policy on access to schools to avoid disruption of learning because of the congested timetable. Due to the COVID-related school closures, all schools are behind schedule and are trying to catch up.

"That is one of the challenges we are facing, that we want certain information, for the purposes of reporting, but we are not able to get it immediately, reason being, there are some that delay. If you ask for information from the school head, then he has to get it from the departments or the respective classes which take time, so you may not get that information immediately as you want it, so that is probably the challenge. Two is the current policy that is very strict on no access to schools. It is also a challenge, but for now it is not a challenge for us because we have been given that access with strict regulations." (KII, CSO, Siaya)

Access to information from schools was largely a challenge due to the school health policy that restricts access to schools. It requires consultations and permission before an organisation can be allowed to talk to the students. For example, there have been delays in obtaining termly reports from schools—for example, the number of students enrolled, SGBV cases reported, cases of teenage pregnancy.

There are also limited human resources, especially in certain specialisations such as psychology, counselling and peer counselling.

"In summary the demand for the services you do outweighs the resources you have, so the resources become a big challenge in execution of the plans based on the demands from the community, so it is resources high demand, high expectations." (KII, CSO, Siaya)

7. DISCUSSION

Pathway 1: Young people demand accountability and responsiveness on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy

Under Pathway 1, the baseline study aimed at exploring adolescents' and youths' perspectives and actions relating to harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy, and their ability to demand accountability.

The findings of the baseline study show that young people have dreams and positive aspirations for their lives, including securing careers for economic independence for their future. These aspirations are against a backdrop of harmful traditional practices such as FGM/C in Kajiado and Migori and early marriage in all four sites. Teenage pregnancy and school drop-out for girls are closely linked to these traditional practices. Although young people are affected by these issues, they have very limited decision-making power, as this is vested in men and, especially, community elders. From the survey and qualitative results, many of the young people knew that these practices were illegal and did not want them to continue, but they also observed that adherence to social norms and cultural practices was a major barrier to the abandonment of these practices. Girls and women have a particularly insignificant role in household decision-making. This was more so in Kuria and Kajiado, where FGM/C is practised. However, in instances where youth have formal education, they (including girls) have relative leeway to assert themselves and oppose or refuse to undergo some harmful practices such as marrying a spouse selected for them or deciding not to undergo FGM/C.

SGBV is common in all four study sites or counties. One of the major factors that make young girls vulnerable to SGBV is poverty, and this has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The issue of unemployment among youth in the four communities was repeatedly referenced in the discussions and interviews. Reporting on SGBV was limited due to stigma, the need to 'keep it in the family' and a preference for settlement at the community level, thereby denying the victim the right to justice. Even though laws are in place, enforcement is a challenge: there is reluctance to report SGBV, and the legal process is slow and costly.

In terms of communication and agency, the quantitative and qualitative results show that youth are generally constrained in expressing themselves, particularly on topics relating to reproductive health and relationships. This is attributed to culture and socialisation, where communication between parents and young people is inhibited to the extent that they are constrained to speak openly. An important challenge expressed by young people is that they are not meaningfully engaged in programmes that affect them. The good news is that young people are able to identify potential safe spaces where they can express themselves, such as schools, where the majority of

youth spend most of their time, social networks such as youth-led organisations and, to some extent, the church.

It is evident that young girls aged 20–24 can make their own decisions. They demonstrate positive reproductive health-seeking behaviour. This shows that they are empowered, and they recognise the consequences of their decisions. Similarly, young boys can be allies in SRHR, since they exhibit better knowledge of contraception. From these findings, it is important for us to leverage this agency and look at ways to use both girls and boys to champion SRHR issues and to act as agents of change and home-grown role models within communities.

Pathway 2: CSOs amplify young people's voices to claim, protect and expand civic space

Under Pathway 2, the baseline study aimed to assess the meaningful engagement of adolescents and young people in lobbying and advocacy, policymaking and community activities on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy. The baseline results show that generally young people are not meaningfully engaged in activities carried out by CSOs in the four study sites. However, there was an exception in Siaya, where a youth network, Siaya Muungano Youth Network, has been established. Young people in Siaya use this platform to identify issues that affect them through community dialogue forums, voice these issues and demand action from duty-bearers by drafting memos and engaging the leadership at the county level. Another activity young people can participate in is raising awareness through different spaces identified in Pathway 1.

CSOs have the potential to organise and provide spaces for young people to express themselves and champion their rights through representation in the county government policymaking process. For example, the Youth Parliament lobby group in Siaya seems to be a good platform to replicate in other study sites/counties. This is because CSOs have freedom of expression, can speak freely on any matter and are able to interact with government structures. A major constraint is that these CSOs have limited coverage due to limited resources. They are, therefore, unable to address all the needs of young people in their area of operation or ensure that policies are implemented in the absence of commitment from the key stakeholders, particularly the duty-bearers such as the county government.

Pathway 3: Societal actors support and promote youth rights and progressive social norms

Under Pathway 3, the baseline study aimed to explore the norms and attitudes of

community members to the rights of young people, harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy, and the extent to which they take actions to prevent these practices.

The baseline results show that overall, most young people are aware of the legal status of FGM/C (91%) and would not want to perform it on their daughters (96%). In addition, most young people (92%) think that SGBV is not acceptable. Despite this high level of awareness, the practices are still prevalent. Social norms are still a hindrance to the promotion and protection of the rights of young people. Social norms influence the continuation of FGM/C in Kajiado and Migori, and early marriage and SGBV in all four counties. Widow inheritance takes place predominantly in Homa Bay and Siaya, and to a lesser extent in Migori and Kajiado. Furthermore, culturally, women are perceived and treated as property and, therefore, an asset for family sustenance. Positive changes in social norms that contribute to a reduction in harmful practices revolve around embracing formal education for both boys and girls, the return to school policy for pregnant girls, and a change in perception that pregnant girls should marry even if underage.

Societal actors play a key role in addressing harmful practices by reporting cases of early marriage, SGBV, unintended pregnancy and FGM/C to the local leaders such as chiefs, village elders, community health volunteers, community-based organisations, NGOs, the police, the Children's Department, teachers, and SGBV desks at health facilities.

The media was identified as an important lobbying and advocacy tool for issues affecting youth. Their role in highlighting the issues and bringing them to the attention of the public and the law was seen as a positive element in the abandonment of harmful practices. The presence of local radio stations that use vernacular language was considered particularly important in areas where literacy is low. Young people use social media for reporting or communicating messages on reproductive health.

Pathway 4: State actors improve policymaking, budgeting, and implementation at the local, national, regional and global levels on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies

Under Pathway 4, the baseline study aimed to examine the development and implementation of laws and policies addressing FGM/C, SGBV and unintended pregnancy and ensuring young people's rights. There are laws and policies in Kenya around FGM/C, SGBV, and early and child marriage, and the return to school policy for cases of teenage pregnancy.

Some counties have domesticated or are in the process of domesticating the national laws and policies to enhance implementation and accountability at the local level. The domestication process enables counties to allocate resources and budgets for implementation. For example, Kajiado has an anti-FGM/C policy, and Siaya has a county action plan in response to teenage pregnancy and is in the process of developing a county SGBV policy and domesticating the national youth policy. However, there were no reports of policy domestication in Homa Bay or Migori.

Despite the existence of a favourable policy and legal environment, implementation of these policies and laws remains a challenge. Concerns were raised about people in positions of responsibility failing to enforce laws, on the one hand, and community interference, on the other. There were reports of allegations of bribery against those enforcing the law, while communities often want to settle matters locally at home.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 CONCLUSION

The baseline results confirm the main problem as stated in the theory of change: on the whole, although young people know about harmful practices, including unintended pregnancy, they have limited agency to demand their rights and question the social norms that are entrenched in their culture and under the custody of elders. Social norms and gender inequality persist in the four study sites and affect girls and women more than boys and men. Similarly, SGBV affects girls and women more than boys and men. Although there are policies and legal instruments regarding the SRHR of young people, there are challenges to enforcement.

Poverty and societal norms are key drivers of harmful practices such as teenage pregnancy, early marriage and FGM/C. Poverty keeps young people—especially girls—out of school, hence increasing their vulnerability to harmful practices. Investment in education with concomitant programmes that provide avenues for employment are critical for the empowerment of young people, which would then allow them to demand their rights. This is related to the results of this study that show that meaningful youth engagement is limited and could be related to their lack of economic power. Similarly, organising youth groups is a challenge in a setting where young people are unemployed.

CSOs have the potential for lobbying and advocacy and have legitimacy and trust among members of the community; however, some of them have limited resources to undertake advocacy work and convene meetings with relevant stakeholders to address issues affecting young people. CSOs need to be part of a cohesive stakeholder network that works together, drawing on their various synergies to comprehensively build the capacity of young people to address issues that affect them. To some extent there are community members who are taking the initiative as citizens to lead the sensitisation of the community—a positive proposition of initiating change from within the community. This approach increases buy-in, as it is driven by one of their own, thus increasing acceptability based on legitimacy and trust.

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

A more detailed record of the study participants' recommendations can be found in the annexes.

Pathway 1: Young people demand accountability and responsiveness on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies

- There is a need to use a targeted approach to addressing harmful practices and SGBV in the four counties. For Siaya and Homa Bay, the focus should be on teenage pregnancy and SGBV. For Kajiado and Migori, the focus should be on FGM/C and early marriage. Young people are not homogeneous, and this needs to be taken into consideration during intervention design. There is a need to have specific interventions for girls and for boys, and they should also be county-specific.
- In-school interventions targeting young people aged 10–17 should be prioritised. This could also include the provision of sanitary towels.
- In terms of approach, there is a need for a multi-component approach that builds youth programmes around economic enterprises that can use the skills young people already have so that they are socially and economically engaged as part of their desire and vision for a better and productive future.
- There is a need to sensitise all community members, including girls and boys, men and women, to address SRHR issues holistically in the form of community dialogues.
- Youth empowerment programmes should have a component to support education, especially for girls who are escaping early marriage and FGM/C. There is a need to support formal education for both boys and girls so that no one is left behind—recognising that education is an equaliser in terms of the empowerment that comes with it—to increase participation in decision-making and assertiveness. Keeping girls in school in Kajiado and Migori has been lauded as saving the girls from FGM/C and early marriage.

Pathway 2: CSOs amplify young people's voices to claim, protect and expand civic space

- The programme should use local role models and champions to illustrate the possibilities from within and also create forums for community dialogue. In the FGD, it was highlighted that using "outsiders" would not have the same effect.
- Engage the local administration, teachers/schools and church leaders more aggressively, given their legitimacy and trusted position in the community.
- Strengthen male involvement in programmes because they are the key decision makers in the community. Use youth networks and leverage other working practices such as the Youth Parliament in Siaya, the Siaya Muungano Network, and Tunaweza

Empowerment Organisation in Migori to replicate in other counties.

- There is a need to ensure that the CSOs engaged by the programme have the capacity to address and deliver effective interventions and are accountable to the community. This may involve strengthening the capacity of CSOs and developing leadership skills for young people for effective advocacy and community engagement.
- In Kajiado and Migori, there is a need to strengthen the programme's links with other projects/programmes, especially around rescue centres, for leverage. This could include the provision of basic reproductive health needs for girls and educational support such as paying school fees.
- There is a need to work with CSOs that are based at the community level, who understand the community dynamics and context within which the harmful practices occur and have community presence such as the Siaya Muungano Network in Siaya and the Tunaweza Empowerment Organisation in Migori which have been instrumental in the fight against FGM/C and early marriage in Migori.

Pathway 3: Societal actors support and promote youth rights and progressive social norms

- There is a need to embrace partnerships with different stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, civil society, law enforcement agencies, the Ministry of Youth, Gender and Social Services, the local administration and the police.
- Elders in the community have been singled out as wielding the power, including traditional culture and social norms. It is, therefore, imperative that they are brought on board so that they can support the changes identified to improve the lives of young people in the community. This was stressed for Migori and Kajiado counties, where elders are powerful with regard to promoting FGM/C.
- Engage boda-boda riders and sand harvesters as key stakeholders in preventing unintended pregnancy.
- Communities need to be educated about the reporting and referral systems within counties, to increase their awareness of the systems.
- There is a need to focus efforts especially on mainstream media. In addition, Power to You(th) needs to strengthen engagement with local medial channels, especially vernacular local radio stations, to create wider reach.
- There is a need to leverage social media to reach young people with information and collaborate on online engagement.

Pathway 4: State actors improve policymaking, budgeting and implementation at the local, national, regional and global levels on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies

- The results of this baseline report should be shared with the county government and other stakeholders at the county level. This will enable all stakeholders to adopt a common approach to addressing the concerns of young people in the community. This will also be an opportunity to share the programme's theory of change.
- Contribute to operationalising policies and action plans that have been domesticated by the county governments to respond appropriately to the needs of youth at the community level. Examples are the anti-FGM/C policy in Kajiado, and the SGBV policy and teenage pregnancy response plan in Siaya.
- Convene the stakeholders in the study sites and agree on the areas of focus and approach so that the community is dealing with a working team.
- Capacity-building for stakeholders and regular feedback on the focus areas are needed.

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10. ANNEXES

ANNEX 10.1 ADDITIONAL FIGURES & TABLES

Table 14: Youth reactions to child marriage

What would you do if:	Migori		Homa Bay		Siaya		Kajiado		Total
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	
Your parents tell you that they have found a good person for you to marry									
Refuse	97.7% (84)	93.6% (87)	95.1% (78)	89.3% (83)	95.5% (84)	97.7% (84)	87.5% (63)	81.1% (77)	92.1% (641)
Try to influence them to make my own choice	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.2% (1)	9.7% (9)	1.1% (1)	2.3% (2)	12.5% (9)	8.4% (8)	4.3% (30)
Your parents continued to pressure you to marry the person even after you refused									
Report to local administration (chiefs, assistant chiefs, village elders, village administration)	22.1% (19)	22.8% (21)	48.8% (40)	32.3% (30)	40.7% (35)	31.4% (27)	58.6% (41)	42.7% (38)	36.8% (252)
Run away from the house/ community	33.7% (29)	22.8% (21)	23.2% (19)	11.8% (11)	36.1% (31)	31.4% (27)	32.9% (23)	23.6% (21)	26.6% (182)
Report to the police	33.7% (29)	33.7% (31)	18.3% (15)	12.9% (12)	26.7% (23)	32.6% (28)	40.0% (28)	25.8% (23)	27.7% (190)

Table 15: Overview of quantitative data in study counties

	Migori	Homa Bay	Siaya	Kajiado	Total
Young women 15–24 years	113 (52.0 %)	107 (54.0%)	108 (54.3%)	99 (47.6%)	427 (51.0%)
Young men 15–24 years	106 (48.4%)	110 (55.3%)	90 (45.2%)	109 (52.4%)	415 (49.2%)
Other 15–24 years			1 (0.5%)		1 (0.12%)
Total	219 (26.0%)	217 (25.7%)	199 (23.6%)	208 (24.7%)	843

Figure 22: Youth who sometimes or often feel the following

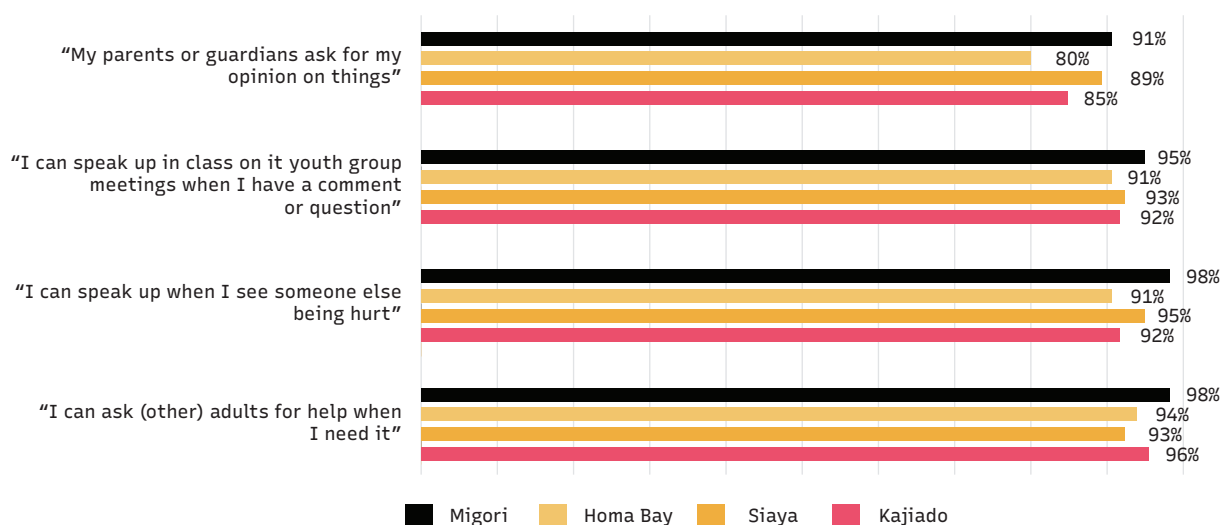


Table 16: Youth participation in activities or action to prevent child marriage, FGM/C or SGBV

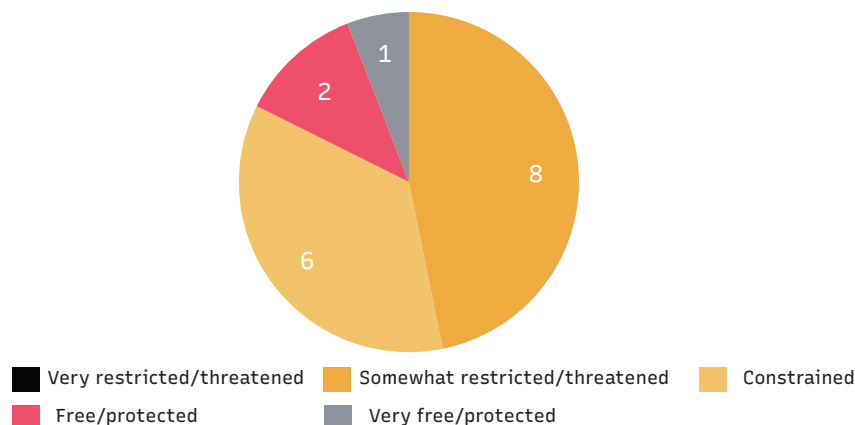
Proportion (and number) of adolescents and young people who have participated in activities/action to prevent child marriage, FGM/C and/or SGBV who indicate that these activities/actions were youth-led and that they felt meaningfully engaged

	Migori	Homa Bay	Siaya	Kajiado	Total
Were these activities youth-led? (n=372)					
Females	56.0% (28)	30.3% (10)	91.1% (41)	64.9% (37)	62.7% (116)
Males	48.9% (23)	42.6% (20)	90.0% (27)	71.0% (44)	61.3% (114)
Other			100.0% (1)		100.0% (1)
Total	52.6% (51)	37.5% (30)	90.8% (69)	68.1% (81)	62.1% (231)
Did you feel meaningfully engaged? (n=372)					
Females	50.0% (25)	72.7% (24)	86.7% (39)	75.4% (43)	70.8% (131)
Males	44.7% (21)	70.2% (33)	86.7% (26)	82.3% (51)	70.4% (131)
Other			100.0% (1)		100.0% (1)
Total	47.4% (46)	71.3% (57)	86.8% (66)	79.0% (94)	70.7% (263)

Table 17: Young advocates' engagement with CSOs by gender

	Females	Males	Non-binary
Age of young advocates			
14–19			
20–24	1	2	1
25–30		1	
31–35	1		
Total	2	3	1
Type of organisation [1] that young advocates are involved with			
Youth-led organisation	1	1	1
Women-led organisation			
Faith-based organisation			
Community-based organisation	1	1	
Labour union			
NGO		1	
Total	2	3	1
Level at which the CSOs young advocates are involved with operate			
National			
Regional		1	
District	1	2	
Community	2	3	1
Total	2	3	1
Activities young advocates are engaged in within CSOs			
Advocacy	2	3	1
Lobbying		3	1
Research		2	1
Programming		2	1
Total	2	3	1

Figure 23: Youth and CSO advocates' assessment of the State's respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Kenya (n=17)



ANNEX 10.2 PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide feedback to the baseline study results: Need for providing feedback of the baseline findings to the stakeholders in the study sites. The state actor from Homa Bay said that they would not like to come across the findings of this baseline (baseline report) on the website without having prior knowledge of the findings of the baseline report. This was also requested by the health worker from Kajiado. The Lawmaker from Kajiado said that the findings of this baseline assessment should be shared with the governor as the leadership of the county and especially if there are recommendations that the governor should implement.

...Once we have done such interviews, we need feedback, and we give the community feedback on progress ...like a report and what we want to forge ahead as a way forward on this matter. Because I have handled some NGO's where they come to do interviews, pick articles, you meet them online; you meet them in their websites, you are not aware how it ended up there, so we want this to come and build this society and I would welcome you... (KII CSO state actor Homa Bay)

...My humble request is that we get feedback on this research, follow up and support to further stop these practices (KII Health worker, Kajiado).

I also wish to recommend that, the overall person in the county is the governor, and he needs to be updated on the findings, the possible laws that the investigators find to be relevant for the County, the gaps that are wanting in the county and any ideas or solutions that they can advocate for the county government to implement. So, I recommend that the final feedback should be shared to the governor, so that he can also share with the county leadership (KII Lawmaker Kajiado).

I will give my recommendation, which is please share your findings to the county government so that they can see the gaps they are ignoring. This will help the youth in the future. Also, if possible, let the youth lobby and run some programs that are beneficial to the elders, to attract them (KII CSO Kajiado).

...you people have come out and have made some research, so, let this research not be like you have come here to pick some words and go and rest, if you have come here for a reason, let this reason come out and get some fruits (IDI Youth Advocate Migori).

2. When addressing issues of Gender based violence, there is need to also include the women and men because most programs tend to only focus on the girls. This was said by the state actor from Homa Bay. The CSO in Homa Bay said these talks should also include the boys in the talk because “girls cannot get pregnant on their own” (CSO Homa Bay). The youth advocate from Migori also said that in addressing these harmful practices, there is need to address the issues of drug and substance abuse as these can lead to sexual and gender-based violence. In addition, the boys should also be educated on matters related to harmful practices.

GBV is wide, you know at times we talk of Gender Based Violence at times we only look at the side of girl child and we forget the women, we also forget the men, it's very wide so more groups to come in so that they cover a big area (KII state actor Homa Bay)

Despite talking about harmful practices, we should also talk of drug and substance abuse, like I told a class seven pupil who smokes weed. That also leads to these harmful practices. After charging their heads they do whatever they want. That's where violence begins. Despite focusing on the girl child, we should also focus on the root cause of the victim (KII Youth advocate Homa Bay).

So, boy child should get some empowerment and their capacity to build on matters of harmful practices in the society. They are the major contributors to that (KII Youth advocate Homa Bay).

3. Find activities that keep young people busy and inspire them. The girl from Homa Bay said that we should keep young people busy by providing them with books that they can read or engage them in educative video sessions, sporting activities so that they don't become idle

Okay, let's say like you are inspiring the youth, you know, we can provide them books, they read so that they don't become idle, we can provide for them a video session, also you can put them to run when they are competing, you understand, in short making them busy (IDI girl Homa Bay)

4. Form structured youth groups with the aim of improving the lives of young people. The health worker from Homa Bay said that the structured youth groups can be formed in schools, churches and within the community.

If we had structured groups centred towards improving their lives, health wise structured groups within schools, within the community, within churches, I don't know how it can be done but if they were in groups such that within the groups we will have these people that I told you are so influential in the community with a positive change, the CBOs, will talk to them with the permission of the schools, permission of the churches that we may talk to them (KII health worker Homa Bay)

5. Have a space in the community where young people can gather and have discussions about issues that concern them in the form of community dialogue. This will include inviting mentors to come and talk to the girls in the community about teenage pregnancy and early marriage. The mentors should be ladies from the community (or preferably from outside the community who have succeeded and should be aged below 35years. These talks should also include boys.

...we need a mentor and probably a room or a tent or a place where we can gather to give them information.... you need mentors, you need space to talk to these young people... also, we need community dialogue with a trained person who can give us information on early marriage, early pregnancy (KII Societal actor, Homa Bay)

...maybe to us the community they are used to us, so it is important to get a facilitator from outside and the facilitator should be a lady so that they can copy.... let's say a lady from 35yrs down so that these girls can copy, they can even admire to be like her, so that they can question themselves if having a boyfriend will stop to reach where that lady has reached, then let me just stop this boy/girl relationship, I concentrate on my education, so that I turn out like that lady. I think that can motivate them (KII Societal actor, Homa Bay)

You have said power to youth, if it comes, it should provide space for talking. Youth out here have not been given a chance to talk so if they are coming, they should give that space where we can talk and be heard (IDI Boy Migori)

6. Programs to support the girls have access to sanitary towels and for boys also condom. This can be placed at one of the offices at the beach so that the young can have easy access to them.

I would like to request the responsible partner or the organization to help these young

girls with these social amenities like sanitary towels so that they can get them easily. At this beach, we have an office here. I think it could be good if we get some protective things like condoms in our office, ...these government ones.... this can help a lot so that they cannot have time to go searching for those things out there (KII Societal actor, Homa Bay)

7. Build the capacity of local youth so that they can come back and educate the other youths in the community. This was alluded to by boys in Kajiado

Because you have heard about our challenges, you can take two guys amongst us and let them move around with you so that they also get to know what happening elsewhere and this two can come back and train us and try change the life of the youth in our community (FGD Boys 20-24 Kajiado)

8. The girl from Kajiado said that programs should provide support to girls that are rescued by paying school fees, meeting their basic needs. This will enhance the voice of those championing for the rights of the girls in the community.

9. Programs should support community empowerment and sensitization on the benefits of eradicating harmful practices

... we should be supported through provision of sponsorships for the girls we rescue, so that we can have enough voice in the community and make our goal of HELPING GIRLS, "NARET INTOYIE" a reality. Also, we recommend for support in areas like empowerment and funding of programs that will help us train the community on the benefits that comes with eradication of such harmful practices. This will end such challenges that have persisted (IDI girl Kajidao).

10. The boy from Kajiado reported that the boy child should also be supported in terms of education because current programs only support girls.

...I have a question. Are you in a position to help the boy child in terms of education because they are not empowered like the girls? (IDI boy Kajiado)

11. Power to You(th) should come up with programs that are community oriented that target both youth and adults. These will be educational programs that sensitize community members on the effects of the harmful practices. The chief from Kajiado said that training and sensitization on harmful practices should be done for all members of the community, because if all community members are sensitized it would make it easier for them as chiefs to convince the community members to stop these harmful practices as opposed to the chiefs being trained alone. The same sentiments

were made by mothers from Migori who said that the programs should use role models from the community to educate other young people. The role models should be young people from the local community e.g. girls who have not undergone FGM, have completed their education and have succeeded in life. The chief from Siaya also expressed the need to build the capacity of more members of the community on how to address these communities. The lawmaker from Kajiado said that parents should sensitize their children on the need to completing education and sensitize community members on the existing laws and their implications

12. Use of home-grown role models in the community to educate other young people. This was suggested by teachers, chief in Kajiado and mothers in Migori

...that you come up with programs that are community oriented, like youth programs and adults' programs, that would help the community to understand the details of the vices you as an organization(s) are trying to wipe out in this community. I believe knowledge is power, and you know you cannot force them to stop these practices, unless through a good approach, like sensitizing them, teaching them and showing them the benefits that come with it (KII Teacher Kajiado).

Our communities need training and sensitization, you see if us the chiefs are taken for training and we are released to the community, we are seen as government officials and doing as per what the government directs us to do. But if the village elders, both males and females get these exposure and training, it becomes easier to convince them against these harmful practices (KII Chief Kajiado).

There is a need for the stakeholders, particularly the parents, to come out strongly and sensitize their children that their future is worth more than the current life, hence they need to complete their education (KII Lawmaker Kajiado).

There is a need to sensitize the community about these laws and their impacts. If you do so, it will be easier for the government to penetrate and fight such practices (KII Lawmaker Kajiado)

It would be better if the youth could get sensitized, it is good to educate them to show them the negative effects and having role models that can be used as examples of those who did not undergo FGM and got a good chance to go to school. If we have such seminars for instance if they come here and see both of you living a better life although you have not undergone FGM so bench marking can help this youth to change their views and attitudes (FGD Mothers Migori).

...we as parents, should also be sensitized and that is when we will be able to end FGM (FGD Mothers Migori).

...capacity building for societal actors so that when they come back to the community they can address challenges in the community, the number should be increased, local leaders so that it becomes a collective responsibility for each and every person for when different people talk, they will realize that it is a serious matter (KII Chief Siaya).

...even if we talk to the youth and at their home people still live with the old days attitude, the teachings can't help these children, so there should be programs that focuses on parents in the community, men and women living in the community, we talk with them things about sexual violence and we talk to them how they can live in a good way so that their children don't get to be abused (KII Chief Siaya)

...that they come up with some groups on the ground so that we can have enough time to dialogue in the community, we can have time to educate people (FGD Mothers Migori)

13. Support to women in coming up with income generating activities to pay school fees for the girls and boys. Women from Migori said that if they are supported to form groups where they can engage in income generating activities, this will help them educate their children. This was also suggested by the girl in Siaya who said there should be programs that engage youth in income generating activities.

...at least if you can form for us women support groups or they start a project for women that will be bringing in money which will help in paying school fees.... (FGD mothers Migori)

...Probably they can do youth programs they can...maybe they can engage youths in some activities that can bring finances to them (IDI Girl 15-24 Siaya).

14. Collective responsibility: Fathers from Siaya said that ending these practices should be a collective responsibility of all community members. The same was raised by the health worker in Siaya who expressed the need to work as a team in addressing issues affecting youths.

...it is about all of us participating in bringing changes to these bad practices. The government is acting according to its capacity, if you report a case the policemen will be sent to do their job. After the policemen have done theirs, the community should have its ways of talking to these young people or youths maybe in the barazas or maybe

in churches, these young ladies are in schools, parents are being called there when they get time there, they should address some issues affecting these ladies. To me it is upon each and every one (Fathers FGD Siaya).

...we are requesting for us to work as a team, let us come as a holistic in issues surrounding the youth, let us have the youth at heart, I know majority of us are old and we can't be youth now but let us have the youth at heart so that they can assist our community, remember the bigger percentage are youth... (KII health worker Siaya)

15. The need for better coordination and more stakeholder engagement. The CSO from Siaya said that there is need for better coordination and more engagement of relevant stakeholders, both state and non-state actors, to ensure a multi-sectoral approach. Similar sentiments were said by the chief in Migori who said that there is no single NGO that can bring change in the society but rather the government should come up with a multi-agency approach to ensure that all efforts are coordinated.

...it requires a multisectoral approach so that both affected and infected persons are all brought together to address the issues. For example, issues of sexual and gender-based violence requires the police, it requires all lines of administration, it requires the health facilities and then the coordinating body, which is now the secretariat of the technical leads to be strengthened, so that all these actors are able to play their role at independent point so that at the end of the day we are able to look at it in a holistic manner and say that this case was litigated and therefore people around kind of discipline towards responding to such issues (KII CSO Siaya)

...No single NGO or urgency can change this society, so, we should come up with a holistic approach on how to counter these vices and we also lobby to see that these laws are implemented (KII Chief Migori).

...the government should come up with multi-agency approach to ensure that all effort is made.... we should also collaborate and meet at a common platform on where these things can be highlighted and the way forward (KII Chief Migori).

16. Include the issues of adolescent information and rights in the school curriculum. The youth advocate from Siaya said that young people spent 80% of their adolescent life in school and hence including these issues would help in the young people receiving information at the appropriate age. The youth advocate also said that young people should be given explicit information using the local language especially in addressing sexual violence.

School Curriculum, why school curriculum. Our education system puts 80% of the life of an adolescent in school and the curriculum should be inclusive of such things packaged at a level where somebody grows up knowing that this is wrong, and this is right. Somebody grows up respecting the rights of each other, somebody grows up knowing how to speak for themselves (KII Youth advocate Siaya).

The second level, the second thing I would talk about is the language. Most of these things are given to people in either English or Kiswahili and the local language in this County for example is Luo is ignored. I would give you example Luos call sex "kulala na mtu". There are many children who have been abused been carried on a bodaboda but because sex for them is kulala na mtu somebody feels sikulala na yeye "okonind kode". She doesn't know because nobody slept with them so in terms of language, I would really advocate that the Luo language be used to communicate some of these things so that people know when they are abused or not. So those two things are the language and education curriculum in our schools (KII Youth advocate Siaya).

17. There is a need to focus on young people in the rural setup. The youth advocate in Siaya said that programs should also focus on young people in the rural areas who are often left out in most problems

...power to youth should entirely focus on rural set up. The program should focus on young people in rural set up who for a very long time have not been reached (KII Youth advocate Siaya)

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