

AMPLIFYING SURVIVOR VOICES:

INTERVIEWS WITH SURVIVORS OF
GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN KENYA



FOREWORD

Over the past twenty nine years of Equality Now's quest to realize a just world for women and girls, it has been critical for us to ensure the voices of women and girls are at the center of our work.

As we adapt to this unique time of the COVID pandemic, a quarter of a century after the groundbreaking Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, and against the backdrop of the Generation Equality Forum, we in partnership with several other local women's rights organizations sought the voices of survivors of sexual and gender based violence, to understand their reality and specifically their experiences as they sought to access justice.

The stories that we heard painted a picture of two common themes we know to be true. Firstly, that Kenya has robust laws that should prevent, protect and respond to sexual and gender based violence; And secondly, that critical gaps in the justice sector prevent the effective implementation of those laws. Worse still pervasive socio-economic factors continue to be a catalyst for sexual exploitation as well as child and teenage pregnancies.

With the violations being shared by these survivors ranging from rape to female genital mutilation it is critical that we pay attention to underlying issues that their narratives highlight. I wish to highlight four:

Firstly, in the realm of harmful practices, it is easy to see that the communities have not comprehended the gravity of female genital mutilation as their response appears to be largely driven by fear of prosecution and not conviction of its harmful effects. This indicates our work in sensitization and education to the community is not done.

Secondly, with regard to sexual exploitation it is evident that it arises from and is a consequence of gender and other systemic inequalities. Inequalities between men and women cut across public and private spheres of life, and across social, economic, cultural, and political rights, and are manifested in restrictions and limitations on women's freedoms, choices and opportunities including economic opportunities.

In these narratives, women and girls can be seen experiencing limited access to education and economic opportunities as well as extreme poverty. This has, for some, resulted in their being coerced into exploitative sexual relations as they seek to access resources. This highlights how important it is to invest in holistic legal interventions that provide social safety nets and address the underlying causes of the vulnerabilities that are exploited by the exploiters.

Admittedly the compendium also captures other relationships and outcomes that are either as a result of insufficient sexual and reproductive health education or are an outcome of criminalized consensual relations between teenagers. Incidences of violations of persons with mental disability contrary to the sexual offences Act were also captured warning us of an emerging issue of concern. Review of the Sexual Offences Act is critical for the latter to be addressed while robust Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights programmes are critical overallly.

Finally, across all of these stories the survivors tell us of challenges in all sectors from reporting to adjudication in implementation of the relevant laws. Addressing these critical issues calls for a multi-sectoral approach to ensuring effective survivor centered trauma informed approaches - ensuring all actors, state and non-state, deliver on their specific roles and responsibilities and effective coordination to increase alignment of their services, activities and responses. As well as a centralised monitoring of performance, and of access to justice outcomes for survivors.

I invite you to read these survivors' stories and hope that you not only learn where the shoe pinches but that you also come to a similar conclusion - that now is the time to double up on our efforts towards gender equality.

Faiza Jama Mohamed
Africa Director, Equality Now



TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	INTRODUCTION
6	KEY EMERGING ISSUES
8	RECOMMENDATIONS
10	BUSIA STORIES
34	KAJIADO STORIES
62	KISUMU STORIES
76	KWALE STORIES
88	NAROK STORIES
105	AFTERWORD
107	PARTNER ORGANIZATION BIOGRAPHIES
109	PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS CONTACT INFORMATION
110	COMPENDIUM OF SURVIVOR VOICES INTERVIEW GUIDE
114	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

From a legal standpoint, Kenya possesses a robust legal framework against Sexual and Gender Based Violence. These include: the Sexual Offences Act 2006, the Children's Act 2001, the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act 2011, the Marriage Act 2014, the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act 2015, the Victim Protection Act 2014, the Witness Protection Act 2008, the National Policy for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence 2014, the National Guidelines on the Management of Sexual Violence 2015, the Multi-sector Standard Operating Procedures for Prevention and Response to Gender Based Violence, and the National Policy on the Eradication of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) 2019. Kenya has also ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, among other instruments and therefore has international and regional obligations to protect the rights of women and girls.

One thing, however, is clear, full implementation of these laws and therefore realization of these rights for women and girls has been elusive. Statistics indicate that the number of women and girls being subjected to gender based violence is still high, with the period 2020 to 2021 experiencing a spike in these numbers owing to exacerbation of drivers of gender based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. The last Kenya Demographic and Health Survey report 2014 (KDHS), indicated that 45 percent of women aged between 15 and 49 years old have experienced physical violence, and 39 percent of married women have experienced physical or sexual violence. The Judiciary in 2020 recorded that over 38 percent of all of its cases were on sexual violence.

There is no doubt that prevention and protection, as well as response to these violations, requires political will. And there is a clear articulation of this political will most recently in the twelve point commitment by the government of Kenya on ending all forms of Gender Based Violence by 2026 under the recently concluded Generation Equality Forum.

The dissonance between the government's objectives regarding gender based violence and the reality can be best understood through an analysis of survivor journeys as they seek to access justice. This will enable us all to see the critical gaps in the law and its implementation. The overarching objective of this compendium, therefore, is to provide insight into how we can improve the implementation of the existing legal framework against sexual and gender based violence and identify specific challenges to implementation inviting survivor recommendations on what needs to change.

METHODOLOGY

The survivors' voices were collected through a series of interviews with fifty survivors from five counties, specifically Busia, Kisumu, Narok, Kajiado and Kwale. The interviews were conducted by a communications expert supported by counsellors to provide psychosocial support during and after the engagement in alignment with our 'do not harm' approach to safeguarding..

Through the use of a pre-set and pre-validated list of questions (Annex I) and in a safe environment survivors were invited to, in their own words, share their specific justice journeys. The very young survivors had intermediaries speaking with and sometimes for them.

It can be noted when reading the stories that whilst each survivor experience is unique they all lend themselves to highlighting critical gaps in the justice chain, with some underscoring the need for legal reform, such as through the inclusion of 'Romeo and Juliet' clauses in the Sexual Offences Act to more appropriately respond to 'consensual' sexual relations between minors.

KEY EMERGING ISSUES

Key emerging gaps in terms of individual capacity gaps and sectoral challenges highlighted through the survivor stories are as follows:

1

Community Actors

- a. Stigmatization of sexual and gender based violence and survivors of SGBV
- b. Low public awareness of the sexual offences laws which can impede the reporting of violations and can inadvertently lead to the destruction of evidence
- c. Dilemma of consensual sexual relationships between minors which are criminalized in law and disincentivizes reporting of these offences or undermines faith in formal processes of justice
- d. Lack of comprehension by practicing communities of the negative effects of harmful practices such as FGM

2

Investigations and Prosecution

- a. Insufficient effective witness protection, especially in cases where the perpetrator is known to the survivor and/or their family
- b. Inadequate and lack of uniformity in sensitization and training among police officers with regard to evidence gathering, spanning the collection, storage, and transmittal of forensic evidence, to basic interviewing and taking of statements
- c. Insufficient police training in handling cases of minors who are survivors of sexual offences
- d. Inadequate levels of sensitivity to the need for psychosocial support for survivors entering the investigatory or prosecutorial process
- e. Inadequate expertise and/or capacity among prosecutors regarding sexual offences
- f. Overburdened caseloads

3

Forensics

- a. Insufficient human and infrastructural resources to support DNA analysis of all forensic evidence in criminal cases

4

Judiciary

- a. Inadequate training and sensitization of Judges magistrates and court staff about sexual offences and related legislation of Judges and magistrates
- b. Absence of standardized courtroom procedures for sexual violence related cases including the use of the post rape care form vis-à-vis the P3 form and the issuance of bail and bond
- c. Insufficient guidance regarding deployment of Sexual Offences Act's minimum sentences, especially when faced with insufficient evidence due to poor investigations and 'consensual' sexual relationships between minors
- d. Absence of a national case management system to track cases
- e. Undue delay, adjournments and inconsistent adjudication caused in part by lack of prioritization of SGBV cases, caseload, and the routine transfer of judges
- f. Overburdened caseloads
- g. Lack of understanding of bail and bond procedures among the public

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

All sectors should standardize and coordinate inter- and intra-sector guidelines and training curricula regarding implementation of sexual offences laws

2

The government should work in collaboration with civil society groups to simplify and translate the Sexual Offences Act into local languages and work with organizations with rural outreach capacity

3

Review of the Sexual Offences Act to develop appropriate 'Romeo and Juliet clauses' to ensure good outcomes for the young people involved and for any child born of their interaction

4

Entities tasked with police training should improve sensitization regarding SGBV among law enforcement personnel, specifically general understanding of sexual offences and the Sexual Offences Act's evidentiary standards and proper techniques regarding the collection, storage, and transfer of forensic evidence

5

Relevant training entities should improve prosecutors' familiarity with sexual offences laws including the process of seeking restraining orders in sexual offence cases to better protect witnesses from accused persons

6

There is need for critical support to witnesses and complainants including through the establishment of safe shelters

7

The judiciary should develop a case management system to enable appropriate and expedited hearing support and follow-up in Sexual offences related cases

8

The Judicial Training institute should train judges and magistrates on the Sexual Offences Act and other relevant legislation as well as on sensitivities surrounding sexual offences

9

Sexual offences cases especially concerning minors should be prioritized and expedited to mitigate survivor suffering and ensure evidence preservation

10

There is a need for a multisectoral approach by all sector members, such as is the case with court user committees, to detect and respond to barriers to justice for SGBV survivors emerging in each context

BUSIASTORIES

Interviews Conducted on 13th and 14th August 2021

Trigger warning

This publication contains details from personal experiences of survivors of gender-based violence including sexual violence; Female Genital Mutilation (FGM); sexual exploitation and abuse; and early, child and forced marriage, sometimes in explicit terms. We respect the lived reality and words of survivors, so we have not censored any language. However, we recognize that certain terms may be distressing for some readers. If you need support, please contact the GBV toll-free hotline 1195.



*CHERYL 5 BUSIA

My name is Cheryl*. I am now five years old. In 2019 When I was three years, I was defiled by a man called Robert but he kept changing his name in court.

I think the man was related to my grandma because she told my mother not to go to police but my mother reported and he was arrested. We started going to court 4 and I thought I will get justice. One day a lawyer came and said the man who defiled me was mad and from that time, they stopped calling us to court. I know he is not mad as I can see him living happily with his wife and children. I am still afraid. Who will help me?

(Story narrated jointly with intermediary.)

*I am still afraid.
Who will help me?*



*FAITH 14 BUSIA

My name is *Faith. I am 14 years old and currently in class eight. I am the fourth born in a family of six and currently live with my parents. My other siblings are all in boarding school.

In my free time, I like studying science and reading topics related to the subject, which is my favorite. I would like to be a judge when I grow up because I want to stand for the rights of other children.

To me, the phrase Gender-Based violence means the act of violating women's rights and also includes physical violence.

When I was nine years old, I was defiled by a *boda boda* rider who was well known by my family. My parents trusted him and used to send him for our daily errands. One evening my father sent him to bring my sister-in-law home from the nearby Market. After dropping her in the house, he asked my elder sister if she could show him where the toilet was but my sister refused because he had used that toilet many times before.

He then found me around the kitchen area on his way to the toilet; grabbed my neck and took me with him. When we got

next to the toilet, he removed my clothes and started defiling me. I couldn't make a noise but my mum sensed it and started shouting for help. The man stopped and took off. I was so traumatized. When my father came, he took me to Nambale Sub County hospital where doctors confirmed that I had been defiled. They collected the evidence which we later took to the police station. The reception and treatment that we got at the hospital were really good - they did not ask us for any money.



The following day, we went to record a statement with my mother and father at the Nambale police station. After this, we were given a date to go to court but the court process was not as smooth as we expected. There was a lot of back and forth and at one point we were even told that our file had disappeared.

In my view, the government of Kenya is not doing enough to ensure that girls and women are safe. If it was, all the sexual offenders would be serving life imprisonment. For now, I do not need any support from the government and have not received any support. They have failed. Besides, the support will still pass through the hands of our corrupt leaders on the ground.

“The government of Kenya is not doing enough to ensure that girls and women are safe.”

However, REEP has been very supportive to my family and I. Mary has walked with us throughout this journey. She provides us with transport and is always at the court with us.

My plea to government officials is therefore to ask them to strengthen the justice system in Busia County. The court officials are so corrupt, hindering justice for many girls and women.

My future plan is to help my parents and other people get justice when I finally become a Judge.

*HANNAH 14 BUSIA

My name is Hannah*. I am 14 years. I was only 9 years old when a 33 year old man called Walter dragged me to his house and defiled me. My little brother who had seen him drag me ran and called my mother. She came and pushed the door and fainted when she saw the man naked defiling me. There was blood all over the mattress. The man ran out naked but community members chased and caught him. They started beating him but police came and rescued him.

We went to court and the man did not show up many times. At one time when in court it was said that he had disappeared from police custody. Since 2017 to 2019 there was never a single hearing and the case had to be transferred from court 2 to court 6. My file also disappeared only to be later retrieved from Korinda prison. I have never understood how it went to prison.

Finally the court found Walter guilty but was going to give him a non-custodial sentence until civil societies and the media made noise. The man who was caught red handed defiling me when I was nine years was given a sentence to serve for six years. He will soon be released...

“The man who was caught red handed defiling me when I was nine years was given a sentence to serve for six years. He will soon be released...”

*NALIAKA 27 BUSIA

My name is Naliaka. I am 27 years old and the firstborn in a family of five. My mother passed on when we were still very young.

I finished school in 2019 at the Busia Teachers Training College. During my free time, I like watching movies. My favorite genre is investigative movies. I also like CRE and home science. I love CRE because it teaches us values we relate to in our day-to-day lives.

Growing up, I wanted to be a teacher and that is what I went for even though I have not found a permanent job yet. I am still happy that I followed my heart. I am married with one child so I live with my husband who works in Siaya County and only comes on weekends.

To me, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) refers to any inhumane act directed at girls and women. It is something that is common in our communities even though we do not like talking about it. My experience with GBV is one of the most traumatizing events of my life. I really do not like talking about it.



On March 16, 2019, I went to visit my friend at the hospital. She was quite ill so I did not want to miss the hospital visit. I stayed with her for quite some time then I called my Boda Boda rider to come and take me home. He was well known to me and my family as we were neighbors. He came and picked me up but did not follow the usual route. When I asked him why he had changed the route, he said that there was some police inspection on the usual road and that it would take us longer to get home. He rode into a forested area and then stopped after some distance, telling me that he needed to go for a short call. But he did not go. He instead started telling me that he had always wanted to have sex with me and that he did not know how to tell me about it. I begged him not to do it but he took out a knife and threatened me with it.

He raped me several times and when he was done, he dared me to report him to any police station. I ran out of the forest but the attacker was still following me. The first person I met and asked for help did not believe me because the perpetrator was accusing me of being a prostitute who had been using his money.

So I went home and told my father about it. He did not react in any way. I didn't sleep that night. The following morning, I went to the hospital for a checkup and thereafter went to the police station where I recorded everything. After a lot of back and forth, the man was arrested. Although he was to be imprisoned for 10 years, I saw him going about his business a week later.

I feel so bad every time I see him and what's worse is that he operates from a point that is right next to the school that I work in as a volunteer clerk. Sometimes he even shouts my name when I am passing along the road which I find so embarrassing.

I faced a lot of difficulties following up on the case given that I did not have any support from my father. He actually told me to drop the case but I wanted and still want justice. I struggled on my own until the moment Mary from REEP came in.

I have nothing to tell government agents because it is the people who work for the government that set free the man who violated me in the most inhumane way. Our systems lookout for the welfare of the perpetrator rather than the survivor.

If the government can ensure that anyone who commits such crimes is imprisoned for life, that for me would be good enough. Because in my view, the government of Kenya is doing absolutely nothing to ensure that girls and women are safe in this county. The saddest part is that even after we have identified perpetrators, they are still being set free. The chances of them committing the same crime are very high.

Although I enjoy my work as a volunteer, I dread seeing that man. I am also very happy with the support that I received from REEP, which is a non-governmental organization. In the future, I want to start an organization such as REEP to help other girls and women and also ensure that REEP is not overwhelmed by this kind of work.

*SYLVIA 45 BUSIA

“My partner said that he had decided to punish me for going back to school.”

My name is Sylvia. I am 45 years old and a mother of two. I'm a teacher by profession. I have other siblings and I'm the firstborn in my family. I went to school and reached the university level.

Growing up, I wanted to study food and beverages but my father was not into the idea. I, therefore, ended up being a teacher. My favorite subject is English which I currently teach. I live with my mother as my children are already grown up and working. During my free time, I like trying out different recipes, cooking, and enjoying meals.

The phrase Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is not new to me. I even teach students about it in school and have experienced GBV. It is the most horrible thing I have ever experienced in my life.

I was 22 years old when I got married and at 25, I was already a mother of two. At 27, I lost my husband and became a widow. I opted to go back home to Kisumu because I was still young and did not want to stay at my husband's place alone because I would be exposed to so many cultural traditions. So when I got back home my father decided to send me to a teacher's college in Busia as my mother watched over my children.

In Busia, I got a house and later started dating another man who was also a teacher. After some time, we started living together and I stopped going to college. He would be gone for work during the weekdays and would come back on the weekends. Things were okay for a while but

then he just changed. He would beat me up regularly over anything. Sometimes he would beat me up so badly that I would end up in hospital with bruises and a black eye. Every time the doctors asked what happened, I would make up excuses. I would either tell them that I was hit by a window or got into an accident.

Later on, I decided to go back to school and he stopped beating me up before picking up the habit again. One day it got really bad that I was taken to hospital and my mother was called. She took me to Eldoret where I was admitted for three days. When I was discharged, I ran away from my mother's place and went back to him. I don't know why I went back.

That night as I was sleeping, I felt someone touching me. When I woke up, I noticed that it was his friend. There were three men in the room - my partner and his two friends. They gang-raped me and took turns with me. The third man was the worst - he did horrible, painful things. He sodomized me. I don't think that I have ever felt such pain in my life. But it happened to me.

I don't even know how long it took. But after they were done, my partner said that he had decided to punish me for going back to school and spending money on things that would not help us. I was very stressed. I almost went into depression.

But I did not have the courage to report this violation immediately. I just applied some “*chapashoka*” ointment but I didn't go to the hospital to be examined. I could not imagine telling the doctor that I was raped by three men. How was I to do it?

Eventually, I went to the police station to report but my case did not see the light of day. My partner bribed the police with KSh150,000 (USD1,500). I did not have it in me to pursue justice after this.

I later got an infection but asked my brother, who is a doctor, to prescribe some medicine to treat it. I never disclosed what had happened to me to anyone. I later moved back to my mother's home and kept my secret until I started getting random headaches and a lot of other illnesses. My brother insisted that I go to the hospital and I eventually did. When I got there, I asked them to run all tests and that was when I was diagnosed as HIV positive. Then my whole world shut down.

*NEKESA 14 BUSIA

(as narrated by grandfather)

Nekesa is my first grandchild. My daughter gave birth to her but then left her with me to look for work in Nairobi. She only returned once when she brought me two other children to take care of before leaving again. I have not seen her since then and do not know her whereabouts..

I am a father of six children; four girls and two boys. Growing up, I was the last born in a family of three. My mother was living with a disability and so I used to help her with a lot of house chores.

I will be turning 61 this year in September while Nekesa is 14 years old. I live with her together with six other grandchildren and my wife. As you can see, she cannot speak but is able to follow a conversation for a few seconds as someone talks before she loses her concentration.

My wife and I are both farmers. We do not have other sources of income. I went to school for 12 years and studied up to form four. I grew up here in Busia, although at some point I went to live with my uncle in Siaya County. Life was so easy and enjoyable and people were loving and caring as well.

During our time, there was no big difference between boys and girls. We did not know anything to do with relationships. Parents however treated boys with a lot more respect than girls. Many times, girls would be married off when they were still young.

I was 24 years old when I got married to my wife and she was 19 years old. We were both young and so I thank God that we pulled through and raised our children together. We are now raising our grandchildren together.

I would describe Nekesa as a loving and caring girl, having lived with her since she was a baby. When she was two months old, she fell sick. Her illness affected her and resulted in her current situation. As much as she is limited to some extent, I can say that she is a very hardworking girl. I have a lot of plans for her but most importantly, I want her to feel loved because she was abandoned by her parents. I will take good



care of her because she cannot be enrolled in a regular school and I cannot afford specialized education for her at the moment.

To me, the phrase Gender-Based Violence (GBV) means violation of human rights. It is something that we have experienced as a family. One Sunday morning as I was preparing for church, our neighbor, who works with the Kenya Defense Forces, paid us a visit. He was coming from Nairobi where he stays. We call him Gelly.

When he saw Nekesa, he suggested that we should start looking for avenues of taking her to school and getting her treated. He offered to assist with her treatment when he went back home and even called me the following day asking me to get her ready. I asked Nekesa's cousin to get her ready and take her to Gelly's home which was right next to ours. Nekesa's cousin did as I had told her and took her to Gelly's.

At around 6:00 pm, we saw Nekesa coming back home but she was just crying. She

demonstrated what happened to her and we knew that she had been defiled. Gelly had defiled Nekesa. And since she can't speak, she couldn't scream. He also threatened to kill her if she dared report what had happened. I felt so bad.

The next morning, I took Nekesa to the hospital. She was in so much pain. I kept wondering why Gelly had turned on my grandchild and couldn't get any answers.

I just want to see him in jail. Nothing will change my mind. I have had so many challenges pursuing justice. I have been threatened by Gelly's relatives to drop the case and the court processes have also been discouraging. The amount of money I have paid on transport to the courts alone is enough to build a house. All these challenges came after I reported the case and he started bribing policemen. At one point he said that the case will not go anywhere because we are very poor and don't have money.

Since the incident, Nekesa's mental health has gone from good to bad. Sometimes when she is alone she just starts crying. The manner in which her case was and is still being handled is not pleasing because we have enough evidence to prove that my neighbor actually violated her but nothing is being done. The perpetrator is using his money well to bribe everyone in authority so there is no justice and I feel like in Kenya the law applies differently for the poor.

I don't think that the government is doing anything at all to ensure girls and women are safe from such incidents. I do not know if in other parts of the country women are safe but in my county, they are not safe. Women and girls are raped on a daily basis and the government is doing absolutely nothing.

The concerns I have for Nekesa's future are for her well-being. I am appealing to any organization dealing with mental health to help us. I want to take her to a special school for mentally challenged students.

And before I finish, I would like to send this request to our president - can he create a safe environment for our girls and women? These girls are our future leaders. We should treasure their rights.

*ACHIENG' 14 BUSIA



My name is Achieng' and I am a class eight pupil in a school in Busia County. I currently live with a counsellor because my mother cannot afford to raise all my siblings and I. Before then, I was staying with my grandmother and used to help her run a small hotel before and after school. This hotel also served as our home. It housed my mother, my siblings, my grandmother, and I.

On December 20, 2016, when I was 9 years old, I woke up at 4:00 am as usual to go about my duties at the hotel. Schools were closed at the time so I could help run the hotel operations the whole day. My mother, who was also up, was cooking *chapatis* for the hotel while I was washing the dishes. I then heard my small sister crying. She was about six months old by then so I went to help her get back to sleep. My grandmother was furious at me for leaving the utensils but I decided to continue soothing the baby while standing outside the hotel.

A man that I recognized came in asking for *chapatis*. He told me to go get some money from him which was 50 shillings. Since I wanted to please my grandmother after upsetting her, I quickly followed the man. When I reached his house, he closed the door, grabbed me, and threw the baby that I was holding on his bed. He then started tearing my clothes before he defiled me. I fainted and then found myself on a hospital bed when I regained consciousness. I stayed in the hospital for one week.

When I recovered, I was told that I lost consciousness during the ordeal and that a neighbor's child heard the baby crying and went to call my mother. My mother stumbled on the man defiling me, screamed, and then also lost consciousness. Her scream however attracted an angry mob that descended on the attacker before he was rescued by the police.

We reported the incident to the police station and started attending court. However, we didn't have enough money to attend all the court proceedings so our case experienced several delays. Sometimes we missed hearings because of a lack of transport to the court. And then one day we were told that our file was missing so we decided to seek help from REEP. Our file was eventually found and the man was sentenced to six years in prison.

I still feel like justice was not served because the incident left me with quite a number of health problems. I urinate on myself whenever I see any man and I also started bedwetting. In addition, my stomach always seems to hurt and the incident also tore my birth canal. I am always afraid of the unknown and also feel that the man who is walking freely right now might repeat the same thing the attacker did a few years ago.

I went back to school and want to be a researcher and a lawyer when I finish school. I shall fight for the rights of people and will also assist my mother financially.

"I still feel like justice was not served because the incident left me with quite a number of health problems."

*ACHIENG'S MOM BUSIA

My name is *Akoth and I am a mother of three children including *Achieng. A neighbor's child came running to me saying that my child was crying from someone's house. I stopped making the *chapatis* that I was making and followed her. When we got to the house she was referring to, I pushed the door, and to my shock, I saw a man naked on top of my daughter. My youngest child was crying helplessly on the side of the bed. I screamed several times and then collapsed. When I came to, I found myself in a hospital with my daughter.

We faced a lot of difficulties in seeking justice when we started the court hearings. The Judge would always postpone our case. Before long our file disappeared and then we realized that the man had started bribing people at the court. I remember the perpetrator's father asking me to take 350,000 shillings to drop the case but I refused. My mother-in-law, who I was working for at the hotel, chased me because I refused to take the bribe they were offering. She told me that I would die poor because that was something 'small' and one that could be solved without involving the authorities.

But I would not trade my daughter's life for any amount of money.

And finally, after walking in and out of court for three years pursuing justice, the man was imprisoned for six years. Despite this, I feel that six years is a short period of time for such an injustice. If there is a way I can be helped to appeal so that he can remain in prison for life, that will be helpful.

I am currently selling charcoal to earn a living. My daughter currently lives with a counselor who has been helping her psychologically. She is now okay and in class eight.

What I would like from the government and any well-wishers is to help to educate my daughter because in her I see a greater future.

I would also request the government to prioritize girls' safety and to build survivors a safe house.

*LENAH 85 BUSIA

My name is Lenah. I was born in the year 1936 and I am now 85 years old. I gave birth to two children with my late husband - a boy and a girl. The boy went to Uganda many years back and has never returned. We have never talked since he left. But my daughter is still here and helps me a lot.

I did not attend any school. During my time all that mattered was that one could count money. This is what mattered the most. I presently live alone in a grass-thatched house. I don't want to put too much pressure on my daughter to build me another house because she is also struggling.

Prior to my experience, I did not know what Gender-Based Violence was. I had never heard of such a phrase. My husband had never abused me in any way - he was a very calm person. We lived in peace until he passed away.

One Saturday night in December 2020, at around 11:00 pm, I heard some movements around my house. No sooner had I heard the movements than a man pushed the door open. My door wasn't very strong. The man got in and sodomized me. He did not care whether I was going through pain as an old woman or not. I struggled with him for quite some time but then he overpowered me.

When he was done, he started running away but I recognized him. He was like my grandchild. I had also seen him hovering around my compound on that particular day. I was deeply hurt. I cried out loud and never wanted to live after that. Life seemed pointless.

The following day, I stayed in bed due to the embarrassment and the pain that I was going through. I could not wake up. My neighbor noticed that I had not come out of the house and came to check on me. I was then taken to the hospital and helped report the case. The boy who attacked me was 32 years of age and was arrested.

Through Mary (REEP), I underwent counseling because I was very bitter and suicidal. She also pursued my case making sure that it went to court. The man was jailed but the case is still ongoing. I still fear for my life and am worried about the man getting released. I feel like one day he will be released and will come after me and kill me.

I'm happy I got help from Mary because it was not easy. The government did not assist in any way. A few community members called me a cursed woman because I refused to let go of the case. I pray for the day when the government of Kenya will ensure that women and girls are treated the way they used to be in our days. Ever since the incident, no assistance has been provided by the government be it financial or counseling.

"I still fear for my life and am worried about the man getting released."

*ROSE 20 BUSIA

My name is *Rose, I am 20 years old and the last born in a family of four. I am an only girl and like listening to gospel music as a pastime activity. My favorite gospel artist is Rose Muhando.

I am currently in high school having dropped out due to a lack of school fees. I'm planning to go back to school as soon as my parents make enough money to take me to school. They are both small-scale farmers. Although I am currently out of school, I want to be a nurse so that I can take care of the sick and especially women.

In 2017, I was violated. I was in the company of three girls and we were all coming from an event that was not so far from my home. It was getting dark so we were all rushing back. In like a split second, we heard some roaring from behind us. The other girls ran but I froze.

The village administrator - a man who is well known by everyone because of his position - grabbed me and defiled me in the sugarcane plantation. When he was done, he threatened me with death if I reported the incident and then left. I think I lost consciousness after that.

The following morning, people who worked at the plantation found me but instead of helping me, they started mocking me. I then went home, took a shower, and then told my mother about the incident. We were then referred to REEP who took me to the hospital where I was examined and given some drugs.



We then reported the case to the police station and recorded a statement. The officer who handled my case was very friendly, unlike the nurse who examined me. My case was then taken to court and in 2019 the official hearing began. Since then, I cannot count the number of times I have been in and out of the court and the challenges we have been through.

First of all, the man who defiled me has been threatening my family and me. At some point, my father was so tired and just wanted to leave the case. My file kept disappearing and the man's witness lied in court. All this made me realize that corruption is rife in Kenya and that money is more valuable than human life. I also accepted that justice can never be served unless one is rich.

If we followed the law as a country, this man would have been punished and would not have defiled another girl. But because we do not follow the law, he recently defiled a 3-year-old girl. He is a serial rapist. Some families do not report him because the community fears him. He also uses his money to bribe the police so his cases are not prosecuted.

Women and girls are not safe in this country. Only those who have money enjoy the protection of law enforcement agents. As a survivor, I have not received any support from the government. My support has come from REEP. They have stood by me and encouraged me to carry on relentlessly. My next hearing is next month and I hope that he will eventually be punished for defiling me. I am still optimistic that justice will be served one day.

I would like to urge the government to ensure that cases of rape and defilement are fully investigated and perpetrators punished. Survivors' emotional well-being should also be looked into because these violations are not easy to live with.

In the future, I would like to educate girls from my communities on self-protection against any form of GBV.

*SHEILA 29 BUSIA

My name is *Sheila. I am 29 years old and have one brother. I am the last born. I like spending my free time with my children.

I used to work as a security guard in a school but stopped. I did not complete my education because girls were not valued as much as they are now. Besides, my cousins and I were raised by my grandmother who I think had other priorities. But I have big plans for my children. I want to work so hard and provide to them everything I never had. They are hardworking and brave.

To me, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) means mistreating girls and women simply because of their gender. My children were both subjected to GBV in my own house. Sometimes I look at them and I burst into tears because I feel like it was my fault.

I had been in a relationship with a man for over a year. He used to come to my house drunk, have sex with me and then leave the following day. On this particular day, he came home drunk and I refused to open the door because I had an early morning and did not want any disturbance.

But then he offered to prepare the children for school the next day telling me not to wake them up as I was leaving for work. I accepted his offer because it meant that the children would not have to be up too early. So the next morning, I woke up early and left for work. When I came back home, my younger daughter kept on saying that the man had done something bad to her. I dismissed her but then she kept on saying it.

As I was bathing her, I noticed that there was semen on her underwear. It was at that point that her older sister also said that he had once tried to defile her as well. I broke into tears and felt so helpless. I couldn't understand how he would have sex with me and then still defile my children. My youngest was only four years old at the time.

The next day, I took them to the hospital and then reported the case. I did not even talk to him. I later found out that he has several rape cases in court. The police know him for this. He is a ward administrator in our village. He has defiled quite a number of girls before and uses the money to bribe those in authority.

My daughters' cases marked the beginning of my frustration with the police. At one point, they offered me 370,000 Shillings to drop the case but I refused. I am still pleading for justice - this is the only thing I need from the government. I have faced many challenges because of this including threats to my children.

The government is not doing anything. I wonder what it takes to get justice in Kenya if you are poor. The police are not doing their work - they are instead protecting perpetrators. They are the reason why someone like Ken would rape several girls and women in one village and still walk free.

If I had a chance to speak to someone in government, that would be the president. I pray that he remembers us. We are not getting justice.

*HOPE 6 BUSIA

My name is Hope*. I am six years old and my sister is called Faith*. She is ten years old.

Early this year our step father who is a ward administrator defiled me for the second time. He told me if I told anybody he will not buy me bread. He also touched Faith's breasts and put his finger in her *chuchu*. Faith told our mother and that also made me tell what *baba* was doing to me.

He was arrested and we were told to go to court and speak. Our mother borrowed money for transport to court. We went to court and waited for a whole day. Then we were told our case has been moved to 18th January 2022. Will I remember all the details? Will the people who gave my mother money to go to court give here again? What if *baba* finds out where we are hiding?

MARY MAKOKHA

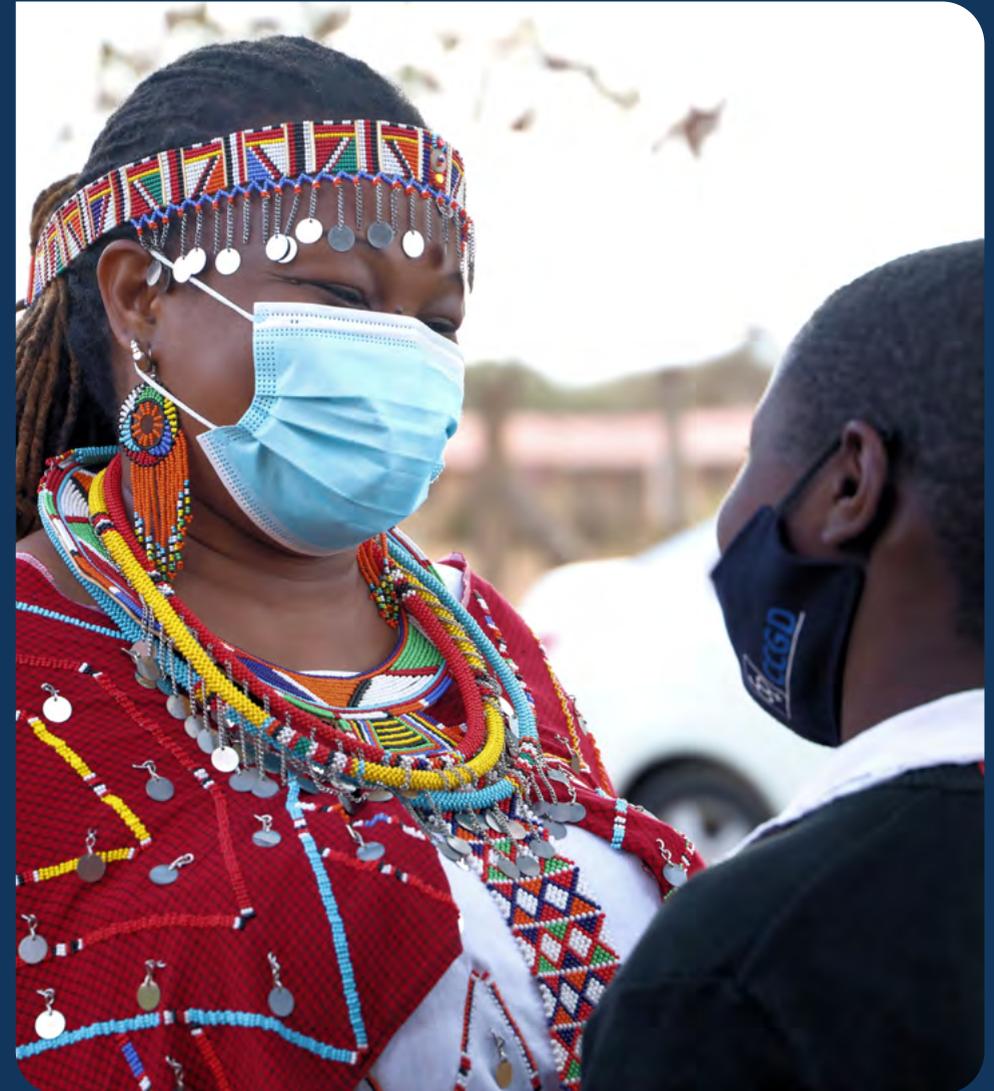
REEP RURAL EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC
ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME

"None of these cases is exceptional. We have struggled with the survivors and parents to get justice. In some cases, perpetrators are punished and in others, they are not. In my view, the government should strengthen the judicial system because it is one of the most corrupt wings of the government."

Court Files disappearing and or taking unnecessarily long before conclusion is something that has been happening at the Busia Law courts for instance in 2017 a nine (9) year old girl was defiled by a 32-year-old man. The perpetrator was caught in the act. From 2017, the case, CR 131 OF 2017 kept on being mentioned without the case progressing to hearing until 2019 when the court number 2 magistrate was transferred; meanwhile the perpetrator absconded court and when he was re-arrested he allegedly escaped from police custody. His file also disappeared only to be traced at the (Korinda) Prison after we hired an advocate to watch brief and therefore point out the fact that the file was missing. The case was transferred to court number 6 and the perpetrator was found guilty and given a lenient sentence of 6 years which is contrary to life imprisonment as per the provisions of the sexual offences Act."

KAJIADO STORIES

Interviews conducted on August 18, 2021



*NASERIAN 52 KAJIADO

My name is *Naserian and I am 52 years old. I have four sisters and am the third born in my family. When I'm not taking care of my family or herding the cows, I enjoy taking walks and meeting new people.

I started going to school when I was about 10 years old and studied up to class seven before I dropped out after being married off to one of my father's friends. While at school, my favorite subjects were Christian Religious Education (CRE) and history. I fondly remember one of my teachers. He was so patient with us and used to encourage my peers and I to pursue our education regardless of challenges. He made us believe in our dreams. Mine was to become a Judge because I wanted to ensure that justice was accessible to everyone regardless of their socio-economic status. I felt and still feel that justice is only served to those that are well-off. I wanted to fight for the oppressed.

But in 1985, at the age of 16, my dreams were cut short when I was subjected to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and then married off to a man who was 65 years old at the time. I did not have a choice. I didn't even know who this man was. I had never seen or met him. I only found out later that my father had offered this man my hand in marriage after receiving some cattle.

But before the marriage, I was cut and I remember being pinned down by about four women. It was extremely painful. Two weeks later, I was sent to my husband's homestead as a third wife. I was still a child and was always afraid of nightfall because I knew what was coming. Because I hadn't had my first period, my husband and co-wives would at times accuse me of using herbal contraceptives to prevent a pregnancy—yet this was not the case. He would also tell me that he would marry a fourth wife if I didn't conceive. And sometimes when his peers came over for a visit, they would also sleep with me.

In 1987, I got my first period and conceived immediately. My first child was born in 1988 - three years after the marriage and then my second child in 1990. Giving birth was a nightmare because my birth canal had been affected by FGM. I had to be rushed to hospital because I was bleeding too much and had lost consciousness.

In 1994, my husband died. After his death, his brothers started fighting for his property. They disinherited us and grabbed everything that he had left. I had to leave. Because I couldn't go back to my father's house as it would mean that he would have to return the dowry he had received, I had to find a new home for my children and I. It wasn't easy but we made it. I changed my name

from *Naserian to *Njeri to forget what I had been through. I did not want to be associated with my community in any way. I went back to school to learn how to write and communicate in English when I was about 25 years old. It was not easy because my children were still young but I did it and I am proud of the milestones that I have made. My first born is married and lives with her husband while my second born is a long-distance truck driver. I also remarried and conceived another child. She is currently studying catering and wants to specialize in pastries.

I think that Kenya has made good strides in ending gender-based violence including FGM and child marriage but there is a lot that remains to be done to ensure that other girls are not robbed of their future. While it might be difficult to marry off girls young because it is mandatory for them to go to school, child marriage is still common. If I had the choice, I would not have gotten married that young. I would have chosen my husband and would have had the agency to make my own decisions. My husband was chosen for me. I did not love him.

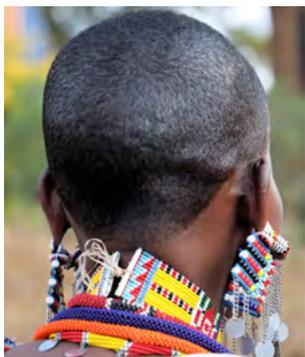
I am glad that girls and women can now report these violations. This was not an option for me. Although my mom tried to protect me and stop the marriage, she was dismissed because in my community,

mothers are seen as children whose opinion does not matter. They have no say. I did not get justice because I think that he should have been arrested together with my father.

If I had a chance to speak to anyone in the Government of Kenya who has the power to stop gender-based violence, I would lay a lot of emphasis on accelerating efforts to end FGM and child marriage in Kenya. This is because these violations lead to early deaths, domestic violence, high divorce rates and many other physical, emotional and psychological issues. I would also urge the Government of Kenya to go to the grassroots because that is where the bulk of these issues lie. Sometimes you hear stories about girls going to 'visit' their aunties while in actual sense they're being taken away for FGM purposes. Campaigns against child marriage and FGM must also be taken to schools for children to understand why these harmful practices need to come to an end.

Although my dreams were shut down before they even started, I still want a better life for my family and I. I want to build my own house, keep cows and chickens, start my own business, and continue farming. I was off to a bad start but that doesn't mean that I can't have a happy ending.

*MILANOI 33 KAJIADO



My name is *Milanoi and I am 33 years old. I have four children. My oldest is 18 and my youngest is five years old. I am the third born in my family and enjoy washing clothes. It is strange but I actually do. I am always quarreling with my mother-in-law because she thinks I spend too much time doing laundry.

I am not sure how old I was when I started going to school but I know I got to class seven before dropping out in 2003 after falling pregnant. I was 17 years old at the time and loved mathematics and home science. My dream at the time was to be on TV. I wanted to be a news anchor and I remember silencing my siblings so that I could listen to the news on the radio.

But life was not very easy for my siblings and I. Our parents broke up when we were young and split us up. My father took two of my siblings while my brother and I went with my mother. As she didn't have the ability to take care of us, she took us to her father and left us there. My brother and I were therefore raised by my grandparents.

When I was 13, my grandmother made the decision to have me undergo FGM. I did not know what it was and thought that it was a necessary step for me to transition from childhood to adulthood. A strange woman came to our homestead and cut me with the help of one of our neighbors. Although I was celebrated for undergoing the cut, it was very painful and I regretted it. It took about two weeks for the external wound to heal. I would use salty water to bathe to hasten the healing process. I would never subject my children to the cut.

After falling pregnant, I opted to leave school because I didn't have any support from home. I got married to the father of my child who was about 26 years old at the time.

I think that gender-based violence means being married off young and being denied the right to education. Although I got married young, I believe that if I had the support that I needed I could have gone back to school and would have pursued my dreams.

In my view, the government has made some progress with regard to ending FGM and child marriage but this effort ought to be scaled up so that everyone understands the harm that these violations cause. In addition, very few people in my community see the value of educating girls and we have to create this awareness so that more people are aware.

I would further plead with the Government of Kenya to pay attention to anyone reporting gender-based violence. They should not turn a deaf ear to survivors. These cases should be fully investigated and perpetrators held to account—especially at the grassroots level.

Lastly, as a teenage mother, I would also urge the government to put in place systems that would allow and ensure that school-going mothers go back to school or are provided with opportunities to pursue alternative education or economic ventures in order to sustain themselves. I am currently rearing chickens and farming maize and beans. I plan to get a cow for the purposes of producing milk and selling it to boost my income.

“I believe that if I had the support that I needed I could have gone back to school and would have pursued my dreams.”

*JOYCE 33 KAJIADO

My name is *Joyce and I am 33 years old. I have four sisters and seven brothers. I am the third born in my family and enjoy beading. I currently live with my husband and have six children. My oldest child is 14 and youngest is nine.

I have never been to school but I would have really loved to go to school because I think that it would have given me better outcomes and given me the power to make decisions for myself. I feel like I missed out on something very important and if I had the chance to attend school, I would have become a doctor so as to help my community.

In my opinion, gender-based violence means FGM, child marriage and bodily harm and I am a survivor of all these violations. I did not know what they were until I started interacting with Hope Beyond Foundation and participating in community forums against FGM. I was cut and married off when I was very young. But before the cut, my legs were burnt and my ears cut to prepare me for FGM. I was about nine years old at the time. They would place pieces of wood in my ear lobes to prevent the wound from closing up. It took a month for my ears to heal.

When I was 10, I was subjected to FGM. I remember my mother telling me that there would be a ceremony to celebrate and honor me. A day before I was cut, a sheep that is referred to as *'olkiteng letomon'* in my language was slaughtered and some men came to our homestead to eat the meat. I remember my hair being shaved and then I was asked by some of the older women to wear some of the sheep's meat on my neck to show that I was ready for the cut. They also removed all the clothes I had on and made me wear a black robe. Outside my door was a basin that had cold water and an axe in it. It had been left outside overnight and would serve as my anesthesia.

The following morning the women bathed me with this water and then cut me. There were four women in total – one was holding my back; two others were holding my legs and then the fourth one cut me. I was sitting on a cow's hide on the floor as is customary.

After the cut, they poured paraffin on me to stop the bleeding and then after that they put ghee on me. There were a lot of celebrations on that night with women singing songs of praise for me but I was in so much pain that I wasn't sure what they were celebrating. I had no idea how painful it would be and would never subject my daughters to it – no amount of coercing would convince me to. After this I was advised to hold my legs together every time I went for a short call in order to hasten the healing process and I wasn't allowed to shower until I completely healed. It took me about 3 weeks.

Three weeks later, I was married off to one of my father's peers. He was about 64 years old. All I remember is that some old men came to our homestead to have discussions with my father. When they finished, I was asked to accompany them because I was now a married woman. My mother told me that I would have to go and start my own family/home.

“When I was 10, I was subjected to FGM. I remember my mother telling me that there would be a ceremony to celebrate and honor me.”

Because I was still young, I was handed over to the first wife who was tasked with the responsibility of grooming and preparing me for wifely duties. I lived in her house for seven years and also herded her cattle. But my husband would still come and have sexual relations with me. I did not even know what sex was but I remember it being extremely painful.

Giving birth to my first child was extremely difficult but what was even more difficult was that I was not allowed to eat to my fill and I was often forced to throw up to

prevent the baby from becoming “too big” because it would complicate the birth process. Besides these, my co-wives would make me eat ghee because they believed that it would facilitate the birth process.

I am glad that I gave birth to a healthy child and have had other healthy children after that but I will never forget what I went through. While there are better reporting systems right now and people are more educated, these avenues were not available to me. Reporting was not an option that was presented to me so I did not report. But my parents are still alive and if I had a chance to tell them one thing, I would tell them that the world has changed and our community is being left behind because we are holding onto these harmful practices. And because they only educated my brothers and left out my sister and I, I would also tell them that there is no difference between boys and girls. We are all equal and all deserve these opportunities.

Additionally, I feel like I was denied justice and my right to mental, physical and psychological well being. God gave me beauty but they stole it from me and gave me this other form of beauty that is not mine.

If I had a chance to speak to someone in government who can effect change I would tell them to educate the masses and create awareness about FGM. FGM continues to disrupt the lives of many girls in my community and it needs to stop. The law has to be applied and tightened to ensure that perpetrators are punished. I am happy with the progress we have made so far but we can still do more as a country.

My plan for the future is to take whatever opportunity comes my way as long as it helps my children and I. I intend to continue beading, herding cattle and selling my ornaments to different people. I am forever grateful to Hope Beyond Foundation for teaching us about equality and our rights.

If I was younger and given a chance, I wouldn't mind going to school. But because beading and cattle keeping is what I know best, I would be happy if I got support to carry this forward.

*MARGARET 35 KAJIADO

My name is *Margaret and I am 35 years old. I have four brothers and one sister. I am the fifth born and love beading and making 'shukas.' I currently have five children aged between 22 and 13 and work as a casual laborer. I help pick tomatoes and French beans to earn a living and put food on the table for my children.

I have never been to school because I was raised by my uncle and he did not believe in educating girls. I would have loved to get the opportunity to go to school and believe that I would have become a doctor who would help my community if given the chance.

Gender-based violence means lack of equality and justice and I think that I have experienced it. I was cut and married off when I was very young. I am not sure how old I was. All I know is that my parents gave me away to my uncle and then I was married off to a drunk who was about 45-48 years old. He did not have any other wife and has not married another since then so I am his only wife.

I am not sure how he felt about the marriage because he left his homestead as soon as I arrived and did not come back until four years later. During those four years, my mother-in-law would force me to sleep with other men to ensure that I conceived and to prevent me from leaving. Leaving would also sour the relationship between my in-laws and uncle because dowry had been paid. I conceived two children in the four years and then three more when my husband came back.

“I was raised by my uncle and he did not believe in educating girls. I would have loved to get the opportunity to go to school.”

But as a child who did not know what FGM, sexual exploitation or child marriage was, reporting was not even an option. Where would I even start? But I know now that the younger generations can report and I would urge anyone at risk to report.

I also believe that I was denied justice. The first thing was that they robbed me of my future. I would not be a casual laborer today and would not be struggling to raise my children if I had had the opportunity to get an education and to be protected from harm. I should have been protected and I will never subject my children to FGM.

And if I had a chance to speak to a decision maker in government, I would ask them to work with anti FGM champions like me and ensure that we are protected. We face a lot of backlash from the community for campaigning against FGM so it would be great if we are supported.

I would also be happy to receive any support for GBV survivors if such support were available so that I can ensure that all my children are educated. One of them is being sponsored by AMREF and another one is being supported by Hope Beyond Foundation but I am still struggling with the other 3 children. They are all so bright but I cannot afford to give them the education they deserve at the moment. It would also be great if the government supported women like myself to access markets for our beads and ornaments to help us boost our income.

For now, my plan is to do everything in my power to educate my children and ensure that they do not end up like me. I am eternally grateful to Hope Beyond Foundation for helping me and others secure our children's education.

*WENDY 48 KAJIADO

My name is *Wendy and I am 48 years old. I love reading story books and cooking and have two brothers and three sisters. I am the second born in my family and believe that I am very bold.

I went to school and studied secretarial at the college level. My favorite subjects were French, English and home science. Our French teacher was great and friendly. My father, who was a teacher, would always insist that we only speak the Maasai language and/or English so I loved English because I was the best at it in my class. I also loved nursing because my mother was a nurse and I knew how important they were to the community.

Every school holiday my siblings and I would be ferried to my paternal grandparents where we would be exposed to all kinds of cultural practices. We were tasked with the responsibility of milking cows and herding cattle and would be beaten up if we performed any of these duties wrongly.

My grandparents also disliked the fact that my mom was a working nurse. They would call her names and take out their frustrations on my siblings and I.

One day in 1990 as we were herding cows during one of the school holidays, one of my peers came and told me that preparations were being made for me to be cut. She also told me that my father had promised my hand in marriage to one of his peers. But I dismissed her and told her that my father was educated and would never do such a thing.

However, when I got home, I noticed that there were preparations being made for a FGM ceremony. My head was shaved together with the heads of 18 other girls. I didn't want to go through the cut so I escaped at night. I hitchhiked and got a lift from a quarry truck, arriving at my destination safely. I was headed to a missionary school. When I got there, I informed the authorities of the risk that I was facing but it was not until I pointed out my shaved head that they believed me. They called my father and after some convincing he promised not to subject me to the cut. I was 17 years old at the time.

Unfortunately, my father had already promised my hand to someone and was under a lot of family pressure to marry me off. He eventually caved in and became very upset with me for turning him down. He threatened to discontinue my education and also threatened my mom with divorce if she supported me.

I opted to run away from home but instead of leaning towards government agents, I went to my boyfriend who was in university at the time and we started living together. I conceived and gave birth to two children during this period. He would keep telling me that he would pay my school fees but he never did.

A few months after the birth of our second child, I left my husband and went back to my parents' home. I remember telling my father that I would report him if he did not take me to school but he thought that I was bluffing. So, I reported him to the District Commissioner (DC) and also wrote a letter to the Ministry of Education. My father was summoned by the DC and directed to take me to school. He agreed. But the price for this was that my family became outcasts. The fact that I was a girl and had dared question our culture made it worse. But I was determined and also promised to use my first salary to refund the dowry that he had received from his friend.

I eventually went back to high school and then sat my final exams. My father and I fought again because he wanted me to study teaching after high school while I wanted to pursue nursing. He adamantly refused and said that he would no longer pay for mine or my sisters' education. He thought that nursing would make me hard-headed. My mother therefore took up the school fees responsibility and educated us with the help of her brother.



My uncle (mom's side) paid my nursing tuition and when it became hard for me to continue with this career opting for secretarial, he continued supporting me. It did not take long for me to secure a job after completing my studies. I still wanted to make peace with my father so I used my first salary to give him and his brothers a treat. I reimbursed the dowry and became a role model.

I broke the trend of FGM in my family. None of my sisters has been cut or married off as a child. We struggled with securing their education but they are all doing well. My father has become a beacon of hope in our community. Through me, my mother and others started a lobby group for girls whose fathers refused to educate them.

I think that I had justice because I was resilient and if I had the opportunity to speak to a decision maker in government about GBV including FGM, I would ask them to streamline the laws. If you report FGM to the police right now, it will not be recorded as FGM in the Occurrence Book. There is no slot for FGM in the P3 form. We therefore have to streamline our justice systems and laws in order for survivors to access justice.

Besides this, many survivors do not have a voice and do not know how to pick up their lives after being violated. I think that the government should create a kitty for them that they can use to rebuild their lives.

I am happy to see the government collaborating with civil society organizations as I believe that this will go a long way in promoting the rights of women and girls. I am grateful to all the people who believed in me and supported me throughout and as I dared to question what was seen as a norm.

My plan is to go into small scale fruit farming. I want to rear goats and keep cattle.

*NAISIMOI 16 KAJIADO

My name is *Naisimoi and I am 16 years old. I am currently in class eight and have four sisters and four brothers. I am the seventh born in my family and really enjoy playing football.

I cannot remember when I started school but I am happy that I go to school.

When my father passed on, his younger brother started insisting that I undergo FGM and be married off. I was 14 years old at the time. When my elder sister learnt about this, she called me and warned me about it. She also advised me to go to the chief and report. But the chief's place was so far from home.

A week passed by and then one afternoon policemen showed up in our homestead. My mother was not there as she had gone to the market. The policemen asked me to get into their car. I took my things and we went to the Children's Office who later took me to Hope Beyond Foundation.

Although I would not go home initially because I was at risk, I am no longer at risk and now go home from time to time. My sister saved me and I am happy that I was rescued because I know many other girls might not have the same luck.

In my view, ending FGM is a challenge but one that needs the government's commitment. Girls and boys must have equal rights. Boys are not more important than girls and girls are not more important than boys. We are all equal and must get equality in all opportunities.

Mom Dorcas works really hard to help girls through the Hope Beyond Foundation. She has helped change this community but she needs support to sustain this and to continue helping other girls that are like me. I would therefore urge the government to support such people so that many other girls can be saved.

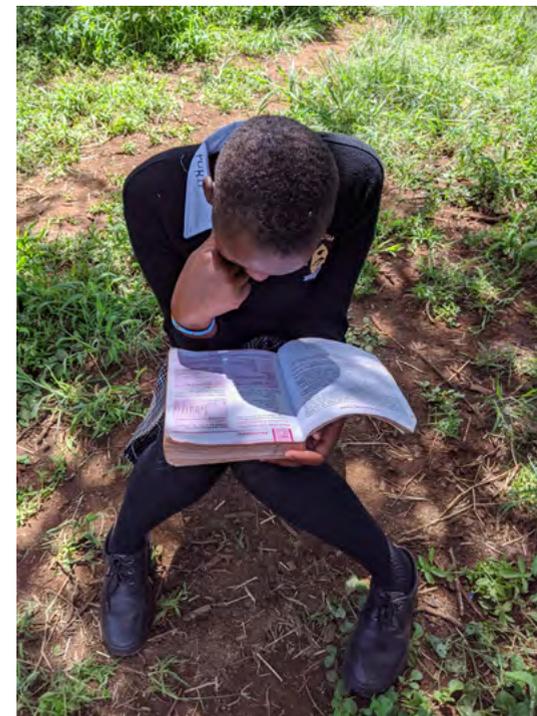
*EMILIA 17 KAJIADO

My name is Emilia and I am 17 years old. I have five brothers and five sisters. I am the fifth born in my family. I love singing and playing volleyball. I am currently in class eight but I cannot remember how old I was when I started school.

I wouldn't mind becoming a teacher either as I am focused on helping my community.

On November 3, 2018, at around 6:00am, an old lady came to our home. I was asked to take a shower and then informed that I would be cut. She, with the help of a second woman, subjected me to FGM. I did not have any prior knowledge of FGM and did not know that it was coming. I didn't even get a chance to escape. It was really bad. It took three weeks to heal and I would clean my wound with hot water and tea leaves. I was 14 years old. My elder sister, who is now 21, has also been cut.

More than a month passed after the cut. And then on the evening of December 21, 2018, a Friday to be specific, two men paid a visit to our homestead. They were accompanied by my grandfather. My mother sent me away on an errand and then when I got back home, the men were gone but my mother was washing my clothes. When I asked why she was doing it,



she said that she was preparing me for a wedding. She packed my clothes that evening and then asked my uncle to come and pick me up the next day.

I could sense that something was off.

The next morning, my uncle came with his motorbike to pick my mother and I up. On our way, my uncle started giving me marital advice and then my mother started crying. I confronted her and told her that I knew that she wanted to marry me off. When we got to a local shopping centre, I told my mother and uncle to give me a few minutes to buy some lotion. That was when I escaped.

I hid and ran to the District Officer (DO)/Assistant County Commissioner where I reported everything that I had been through. I spent the night at a police woman's house and then the next day they brought me to the Hope Beyond Foundation where I have been studying. My mother and uncle were arrested and then later released.

My parents and I later reconciled. I go home from time to time and I am forever grateful for the opportunity I got to continue with my studies. I do not know where I would have been today if I had not been rescued.

If I had a chance to speak to anyone within the government of Kenya, my message would be to the president. I want him to know and to understand that child marriage and FGM are really bad. These practices disrupt girls' futures and may also cause death. It is therefore important to me that they are eliminated so that other girls can be safe.

And if I was to get support from the government, I would want them to pay my school fees until I finish my university.

To the DO and police woman who listened to me and took action to protect me from being married off, I say thank you. And to mom Dorcas, who has been taking care of my studies, I say God bless you. I will never forget you.

DORCAS PARIT

HOPE BEYOND FOUNDATION
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (HOPE)

As an organization, we have tried to pursue justice for the survivors that we have been working with and I am glad that we have managed to advocate and campaign against FGM and child marriage in our area.

But I think that there is still more that remains to be done for us to truly safeguard our children's futures. I look forward to the day when we will no longer have FGM or child marriage. And I also look forward to the day when *kangaroo courts* will no longer be used as an avenue for litigating women's rights violations at the community level. They leave survivors traumatized and with no access to real justice. Decisions are made without thinking through the survivors' wellbeing and yet these survivors have to live with these decisions.

So, if I had a chance to speak to anyone in government about the promotion of justice for girls and women, I would call for the full application of the law. This will put an end to kangaroo courts; ensure that action is taken whenever survivors report violations; and ensure that justice is not lost. Lastly, time has come for the government to go to survivors rather than for survivors to go to government because justice in Kenya is very expensive for survivors and often out of reach.



*MARIA 30 KAJIADO

“When I came of age, I was subjected to FGM and then to child marriage.”

My name is *Maria and I am 30 years old. I currently live with my two children -and was never enrolled in school. My father claimed, at the time, that my step brother and I were his favourite children, but he never took us to school. We would instead stay home and herd the cattle while our other siblings went to school.

When I came of age, I was subjected to FGM and then to child marriage. I'm not sure how old I was but if I was to approximate, I would say I was around 17 years old when I was married off to a man who was about 29 years old. To me, these experiences, together with the denial of my right to education, were gender-based violence.

I remember how difficult it was for me to live with the man that I was married to. He was very quarrelsome; we barely agreed and always seemed to be arguing and I felt like I did not know him. His mother was also very harsh. All these in addition to the fact that their values and way of life were different from my home made it very difficult for me. After living with him for less than a year, I decided to go back to my parents and explained the challenges that I was going through. My parents together with the parents of the man I was married to, held negotiations and they both agreed to terminate the marriage. I already had a child at the time but my parents took me back and allowed me to stay with them.

Because I was happy to have a roof over my head, and had no idea that FGM, child marriage and the denial of the right to education were a violation of my rights, I never even considered reporting my violations to anyone

in authority. In fact, reporting was never an option for me. All I knew was that FGM, child marriage and herding cows were our way of life.

Having interacted with Hope Beyond Foundation and being empowered by them, I now know better. I understand the importance of reporting these violations and know how to go about it. I am currently enrolled in a school for older people because I want to learn how to read and write. I am also very keen on safeguarding my children's future so that they can have a better life than I did.

If I had a chance to speak to the government of Kenya, I would ask it to address the challenges that survivors of gender based violence face when it comes to accessing justice. This journey is often difficult, tedious and costly for survivors; many of them give up before securing justice. I would therefore appeal to the government and urge it to prioritise girls and make it easier for them to get justice whenever their rights are violated. I hope that the government listens to us as survivors.

Besides this, I think that the government is not doing enough to protect women and girls from sexual and gender based violence and ensure justice. Because for me justice should mean that when a girl is defiled, the perpetrator is held to account and is punished accordingly.

I also strongly believe that the government should ensure that perpetrators are not granted bonds because they come back to the same community and continue violating other people.

My plan for the future is to give everything I have to ensure that my two children get a good education which I didn't have an opportunity to enjoy so that they can have a good future.

If I had gone to school, I would have loved to work in my community and give back to them. I feel like the community needs to be supported because of the challenges they face; many parents lack school fees to educate their children among other challenges.

*SANTEU 36 KAJIADO

My name is *Santeu and I am 36 years old. I have four sisters and three brothers. I am the second born in my family. I do bead work for a living to complement our family's income and currently live with my husband. We have seven children together.

When I am not in the farm or doing other house chores, I enjoy bead work but we have not had good returns from the beadwork since the COVID-19 pandemic struck and affected travel and tourism. I usually sell my beads in Sopa Lodge near Amboseli National Park.

Although I never went to school, some of my siblings did. This was because my father did not have sufficient money to pay school fees for all of us. So to keep me busy, I would herd the cattle.

One day when I was about 15 years old, my father married me off. At the time, we did not have the option of choosing our spouses because marriages were arranged by parents. I therefore didn't report the case because I was too young and knew nothing about reporting. I still live with the man I was married to. He is violent and is also a drunkard so I have to work extra hard to be able to provide for my family.

I also survived FGM and have vowed to protect my children from this violation. In our community, girls are subjected to FGM and subsequently married off. If I had been protected from FGM, perhaps I would not have been married off at such a young age and I would not be suffering now.

My mother could not protect me from these practices because women did not have the power to speak out back then. Now, I understand the law and I know my rights and where I can report either of these violations. We have had numerous sessions with Hope Beyond Foundation and we have been empowered as women to understand our rights.

I would therefore ask the government of Kenya to walk with us and hold our hands as survivors. We live close to the Tanzanian border and people freely move to Tanzania to have their daughters cut because they want to avoid arrests. I hope that our government can work with the government of Tanzania to address this. The government should also invest in awareness programmes for the youth on the consequences of FGM.

“We did not have the option of choosing our spouses because marriages were arranged by parents.”

I think that the government has done enough but we need to speak out about our issues so that the government can be aware and the issues addressed. If we do not speak out, the government will not know the challenges we are facing. However, it still needs to strengthen community surveillance because they live within the community and are the eyes of the community. I also appeal to the government to remember and support women economically because many families depend on us.

At the moment, my plan is to ensure that my children are well educated so that they are empowered enough. And since I did not have a chance to go to school, I will do everything in my power to educate them. I want to see a world where my daughter can learn and prosper in life but most importantly enjoy her rights and be free.

*NAMELOK 29 KAJIADO

My name is *Namelok and I am 29 years old. I am the first born in a family of four boys and three girls. I currently live with my husband and we have four children; two girls and two boys. I do bead work for a living.

I have never had any formal education. My father was a drunkard and could not pay school fees for us because he used all the money to buy alcohol. My mother did not have the power to speak out nor did she have enough money to educate us. If I had been given an opportunity to go to school, I would have loved to be a policewoman.

I think the phrase Gender-Based Violence refers to either FGM or child marriage. In 2004, I was married off. I was 13 years old and knew nothing about marriage. I had to live with his mother so that she could teach me how to be a wife. I had not had my first period by this time and that means I could not conceive. However, my husband did not understand this. Instead, he would beat me up because he thought that I could not bear children.

As well as being married off as a child, I was also subjected to FGM. The pain that I went through is unbearable. I cannot describe it - it is beyond words. I did not report because I knew that it was part of our culture and that every girl in our community had to go through it. I was also young and didn't know where to go. I have now been empowered and know what to do should I come across someone at risk.

My message to the government would be to protect women and girls from any harm. I generally feel like the government has done well in protecting women and girls. And in Kajiado county, the prevalence rates of FGM have declined.

My plan for the future is to ensure that my children are educated.

For me justice means having equal rights including land ownership which is very rare in patriarchal societies.

*JANE 13 KAJIADO

My name is *Jane and I am the last born in a family of nine; four girls and 5 boys. I am 13 years old and in class one. I started school on August 16, 2021 after being rescued from child marriage two months ago. One of my siblings is in school but the rest have not gone to school. When I grow up, I would like to be a doctor. My favourite subject is Kiswahili. Outside of school, I enjoy running.

In 2020, I was subjected to FGM. My parents warned me against telling anyone because they knew that they would be arrested. In June 2021, I was married off to an older man who is in his 30s. After three days, I was lucky enough to be rescued by Hope Beyond Foundation and I am eternally grateful for this.

I have not reported anything because I do not know where to go because I am still a young child. My mother however, did not want me to be married off but the ultimate decision was made by my father.

The perpetrator has not been arrested and I am not happy about it and I think he should be arrested.

I would ask the government to protect young girls. The government needs to do more to be able to prevent such violations. But I think the government has done enough in ensuring that girls have access to education.



*MUKAMI 40 KAJIADO



My name is *Mukami. I am 40 years old and the first born in my family. I presently live with my husband and children.

I went to school and completed secondary education. My favourite subjects were English and Mathematics. I am a community health worker and I have always had a passion for working for the community.

My understanding of gender based violence is sexual harassment, marital rape, defilement, rape and economic violence. As a community health worker, I deal with these cases every day and it breaks my heart. It is disheartening when the violations happen and the survivors do not get justice.

I would plead with the government to prioritize justice for children who are vulnerable and cannot really defend or speak for themselves. Most cases end up at the chiefs' offices and in some instances perpetrators pay their way out making justice for survivors expensive.

I would also urge the government to create awareness about human rights violations, reporting mechanisms and enhance the capacity of duty bearers to be able to handle sexual and gender based violence cases effectively.

Additionally, there is a lot of stigmatization surrounding sexual and gender based violence. Because of the fear of being stigmatized, survivors do not speak up. The government should therefore invest in awareness creation, especially targeting schools so that children can also speak up when they are violated or are at risk of violations and when their homes are no longer safe for them.

Finally, the government should invest in psychosocial support services for survivors. Survivors of sexual and gender based violence often suffer life-long consequences. In this regard, the government should provide support for them.

I think that the government has not done enough and can still do more. Most survivors of gender based violence do not access justice. What is the government doing to ensure that these survivors access justice?

I also think that doctors can play a key role in the promotion of justice. Most people speak out when they are seeking medical services so medics should be empowered to help survivors of GBV access justice especially if they are not comfortable disclosing these violations at the police station.

GBV is brutal. It leaves people stigmatized and makes them lack confidence. These violations are real and create bitter societies. They need to be addressed with urgency for future generations so that we can have a world that is free from violence. A perfect world for women and girls is one where they are free, respected and can make their own choices.

“Most survivors of gender based violence do not access justice. What is the government doing to ensure that these survivors access justice?”

*CELINA 30 KAJIADO

My name is *Celina and I am 30 years old. I am the first born in my family and have three sisters and one brother. I live with my husband and four children; three boys and one girl.

I have never been to school because my dad did not see the importance of educating girls. If I had gone to school, I would have loved to be a pilot or an engineer.

My understanding of gender based violence is torture. I cannot describe it in any other way.

When I was young, I used to herd my parents' cattle every day and I still herd cows even now when I am married. In the evening when I come back from herding, my husband checks whether all the cattle are there and if any are missing, he beats me up. Despite this difficult life, I still stay because I want a good life for my children.

I was married off when I was about 12 years old after being subjected to FGM. I did not report either of the violations - all I knew, at the time, was taking care of cattle, cleaning and cooking. As a survivor of FGM, I would describe it as torture. I feel like a part of me was taken away. I would sell anything to get it back.

*“If the government loves me as *Celina, can it buy land for me? When I am chased by my husband, where do I go? I cannot go back home because my parents' land has now been shared among my brothers. Do I go and live in the park?”*

I would therefore tell the government to invest in girls. The government needs to empower women because they are the main support system of the family. Although it has tried to protect women and girls, more remains to be done. I am glad that we now have many girls going to school but I still feel that the government needs to hold our hands, support us in business and in ensuring that women have equal access to land ownership.

If the government loves me as *Celina, can it buy land for me? When I am chased by my husband, where do I go? I cannot go back home because my parents' land has now been shared among my brothers. Do I go and live in the park?

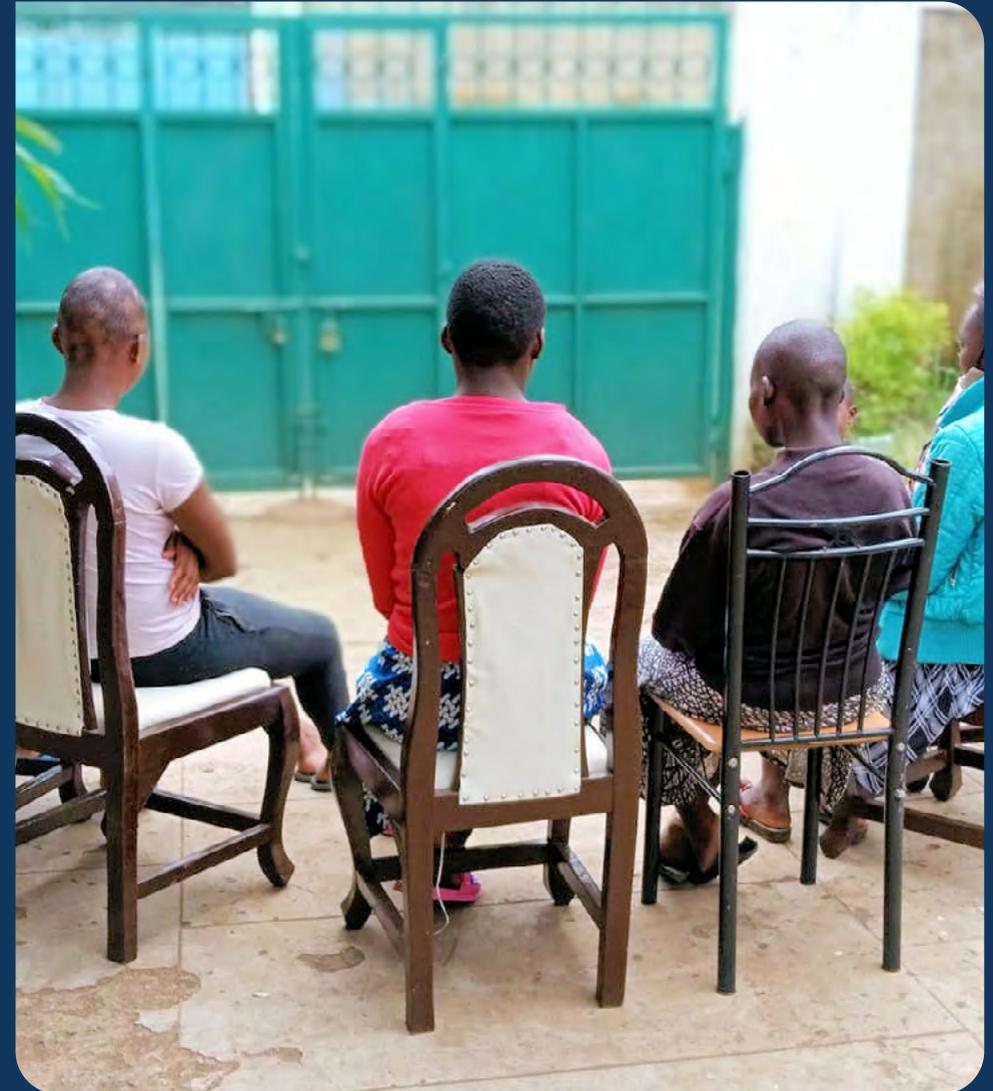
For me justice means me being able to protect my daughters from FGM and child marriage when my husband decides to marry them off.

For me a perfect world for women and girls is one where they are free to do any business, travel without restrictions and also enjoy and know how the world is moving just like any other person.



KISUMU STORIES

Interviews conducted on 11th August 2021



AKINYI 40 KISUMU

My name is Akinyi. I am 40 years old and an only child. I have two children and separated from my husband two years ago. I went to school up to class 5 and then dropped out but I loved mathematics so much that my favorite teacher was our mathematics teacher.

Growing up, I wanted to be a teacher. I loved how teachers dressed up - their style inspired me a lot.

Having worked closely with Kisumu Medical and Education Trust (KMET), I am familiar with the phrase Gender-Based Violence. I think it involves physical violence between partners and also rape.



I was gang-raped in 2018 when I was coming from my shop. I used to sell clothes and on that particular day, I was accosted by two men just as I was approaching our estate's gate. I had left the market late and when I was about to enter the gate, two men grabbed my bag and started asking me for money. I told them that I did not have money. They then got upset and decided to rape me. They took turns and also stole all the money that I had on that day.

After they were done, I gathered all the strength I had and went to report at the Obunga police station. I recorded a statement, took an Occurrence Book (OB number), and then went straight to the hospital. The following morning I went back to the police station to confirm if they had started their investigations but they were so rude. They told me to stop disturbing them and instead said that my attackers were my boyfriends.

My experience at the hospital was good, the nurses handled me well and with a lot of empathy. My worst experience was with the police. They told me it was difficult to follow up on that case because I did not know who my attackers were.

This whole experience was extremely traumatic for me. My neighbors and close friends do not want to associate with me anymore. This government has not given me any support since it got into office so I'm not going to ask for anything now. To be honest, even if I was given an opportunity to tell the government something, I would have nothing to tell. Our stories have been reported but no action has been taken. My focus right now is on expanding my business and protecting my children from these bad things.

"My worst experience was with the police. They told me it was difficult to follow up on that case because I did not know who my attackers were."

*NYAMBURA 33 KISUMU

My name is *Nyambura and I am 33 years old. I was born in Gem, Siaya County, and currently live in Kisumu. I'm the 1st born in a family of 5 and an orphan. My mother and father died when I was in form 2. I finished high school and enjoyed business studies. In fact, I wanted to be a well-established business lady when I grew up. I currently sell shoes and believe that I am doing fairly well with the business and live with my two sons.

The term Gender-Based Violence is quite familiar to me. I experienced it after the 2017 General Election. On that fateful day, men at Obunga started fighting the police after the presidential results were announced, pronouncing (H.E) Uhuru Kenyatta as the winner. The police came fighting back and beating people and eventually, they got in my house and raped me. They destroyed a lot of my properties and took the motorcycle that used to bring me income on a day-to-day basis. The two men who raped me were policemen - they were dressed in police uniforms.

I was taken to the hospital by the Red Cross people the following day. I then followed up my hospital visit with a visit to the police station but did not receive any help. I was so traumatized and have been living with a lot of fear because justice was not served. I know other women who went through the same thing I did - they, too, have never gotten justice.

My request to our president would be that he ensures we get justice before he leaves office because in my view, the government of Kenya has not done anything to help us. No one has followed up on the cases. Furthermore, we do not have safe spaces for survivors in Kisumu. We are therefore forced to live with the same people who violated our rights. The police are not helpful - instead of helping us, they call us names and harass us.

All the same, I remain hopeful and look forward to expanding my business and building a home for myself.

"The two men who raped me were policemen - they were dressed in police uniforms."

*BEATRICE 50 KISUMU

My name is *Beatrice. I am 50 years old and the last born in a family of 16. I have eight brothers and eight sisters but only two are alive today. I was born in Gem and got married in Alego Siaya County. When I'm free, I like listening to the word of God because it gives me hope to live.

Although I gave birth to seven children, only two are alive now. The others passed on. I currently live with my grandchildren who are very bright and on scholarships.

While I went to school, I only managed to get to class four before dropping out. Girls' education was not valued as much as boys'. In fact, I remember my parents saying that there was no need to educate me as I would get married and use my education to benefit the family whose son would marry me. I, therefore, opted for marriage and got married when I was very young. But during my school days, I loved drama classes and music. My music teacher was my favorite. He was so lively during class and always spread cheer.

Besides this, I wanted to be a lawyer or a policewoman when I grew up because I admired the kind of respect that policemen commanded. I also respected lawyers because I believed that they stood for the rights of other people, especially the poor. But fate had other ideas.

To me Gender-Based Violence before is a violation of human rights especially for women and girls. I have experienced it, having been raped during the 2017 General Election. As if this was not enough, one of my granddaughters was raped during the prolonged school holiday in 2020 by someone who is well-known to the family. I don't want to talk about this though because she is not here.

After the election results were announced, there were wrangles and some chaos. Policemen were all over trying to control the situation. That day I prepared dinner early and then we all went to bed. At around midnight, I heard a bang at the door and



then six men walked in. They threatened to rape my granddaughters but I really pleaded with them not to do it. They listened but raped me instead. They raped me and took turns raping me. I believe that they were all policemen.

The following day, I could not look my grandchildren straight in the eye. I was so embarrassed. I went to the hospital where I was treated very well. They even gave me PEP. Afterward, I passed by the police station but when I mentioned that I suspected the perpetrators were all policemen, the officer taking my statement stopped recording. They harassed me and asked me to leave. I have never followed up on this case.

After three months, I went back to the hospital only to find out that I was HIV positive. I feel a lot of pain in my heart to date.

Given a chance, I would speak to our president. He has failed in ensuring cases of gender-based violence are looked into. I hope that the new Chief Justice, who is a woman, will help us find justice.

*“Given a chance,
I would speak to
our president.
He has failed in
ensuring cases
of gender-based
violence are
looked into.”*

*EMILY 50 KISUMU

My name is *Emily and I am 50 years old. I am the third born in a family of six children. In my free time, I like watching and listening to gospel music. I went to school up to form four-level and my favorite subject was History.

I wanted to be a policeman when I grew up because I had witnessed a lot of tribal clashes while growing up and wanted to be a policeman so that I could enforce peace.

In 2017, I was raped. I was closing my business to go home at around 7:00 pm. I saw a man walking towards me as I was closing the shop but paid him no mind. When he reached me, he blocked my mouth so I would not make noise and then dragged me inside my shop. He raped me for about 30 min and then left. I could not see who he was and remember crying out for help but everyone seemed busy going home.

The following day I went to the hospital but since I had bathed, I couldn't get much help. A few tests were carried out and medicine was given to me. I then went to report at the Obunga police station who told me off because I did not know who the attacker was. They told me not to burden them with a lot of work and did not treat me well. I gave up and let go of the case.

My message, therefore, goes to Raila Odinga. If he vies for the presidency, I urge him to ensure that people who live in informal settlements are protected from violence after the elections.

I intend to continue building the business that I had started through the money that I saved thanks to KMET, these are the transport reimbursements we are given each time we have a meeting as Obunga survivors, we do save as a group, more of a table banking and each time a member borrows money, they have to return it with some interest.

*AWINO 35 KISUMU

My name is *Awino - a 35-year-old mother of three. I have three sisters and four brothers and I'm the 3rd born in our family.

My parents passed away when I was still young and so I was forced to drop out of school due to a lack of school fees. If I had finished my education, I would have pursued accountancy. I instead got married young which made my life even more difficult.

In my view, Gender-Based Violence refers to rape and other forms of violence.

My experience with this violation goes back to 2011. I was 25 years old and had gone to attend a funeral. After the event, we started heading back home but it was pretty late. There were three women and three men together. But as people got to their homes, the numbers continued dropping. I was the last one. Just as I was about to enter my house, I was met with three men. One got hold of me and started strangling me as another one was undressing me. I could not even scream. They raped me continuously. They only stopped and fled when a vehicle appeared and then I lost consciousness.

“When we try to report these violations, no action is taken.”



The man who rescued me took me to the hospital, carrying me like a child since I could not even walk and was bleeding. The staff at the hospital were very empathetic and advised me to report the matter at the police station. I did as I was told. The police gave me an OB number and also took my statement. They also asked me to keep an ear out and report to them if I heard anything about my ordeal because there were no witnesses.

My husband and I were not on good terms at the time but when he learned about it, he became very distressed and said that he didn't want to live with a prostitute. He also wondered why I was the only one that was raped and also accused me of cheating. We parted ways after that.

When it comes to gender-based violence, I would prefer to talk directly to the president and my message would be a reminder of all the challenges women face. We don't know our rights and when we try to report these violations, no action is taken. Are we really Kenyans? Where should we go to get justice? For me, the only assistance that the government can offer is money. They should just give us money so that everyone can go and start their businesses.

*MARGARET 33 KISUMU

My name is *Margaret. I am 33 and the 4th born in a family of seven. We are four girls and three boys. During my free time, I like praying and attending fellowship. Growing up, I wanted to be a well-known businesswoman so I am happy that I am still into business. I'm married and have five children. I did not go to school because my parents could not afford to educate us due to the poverty we lived in back then.

I have come across the words Gender-Based Violence before and know that it is something that happens to girls and women. I'm not sure if it happens to boys as well. I experienced the situation in 2017 after the General Election. I was raped for about 30 minutes in the presence of my husband. He could not do anything to save me because he would have been killed. I reported the matter to the Kondele police station but the officer who was taking my statement told me that I was not the only one who had been raped. He asked me to go home and sort out my problems with my husband. The only place I was treated well was at the hospital but that whole experience left me with a lot of questions. I have been wondering if women and girls are truly safe in this country.

I cannot say that I got justice and this is something that I would really want. The people who did this to me should be in jail. But because the government has not put enough measures to ensure girls and women are safe, our rights are violated over and over again.

Were it not for KMET, we still could be where we were before. They have taken us through psychosocial support and even gave us some money to start our businesses and become financially independent.



*LINDA 48 KISUMU

My name is *Linda. I am 48 years old and the 3rd born among five siblings. I went to school and reached class eight before dropping out. During my free time, I like watching television although I do not have a television set and rarely get free time as I am always busy with my business.

I live with my nine children. I use the money I make to feed them. Their father left us and has been living in our rural home.

I have experienced Gender-Based Violence three times. All my experiences are linked to electoral processes. In 2007, my properties, including a boat, were destroyed back in Naivasha and while this experience was painful, it was not as bad as the 2017 one.

My daughters and I were raped by men who broke into our house. I know that they were policemen even though I did not see them very well. This remains my worst experience. Although I reported the incident, I have never received any help from anyone working in a government office. They dismissed our case right away. I remember a policeman shouting that rape was normal and that I should only go to the hospital and check if my health is okay. Since then I have lost hope in our government, knowing that they have never done anything that benefits the common person.



So my message to the President would be: "Dear Mr. President, please consider our emotional and physical wellbeing. We are human beings who pay taxes like other Kenyans. We deserve justice."

*WAMBUI 38 KISUMU

My name is *Wambui. I am 38 years old and come from Vihiga County. In my free time, I like reading the Bible because it gives me peace and helps me forget all my troubles. I studied up to class 8 and then discontinued my education. Music was my absolute favorite subject and our music teacher was the best.

I wanted to become a doctor when I grew up because I thought that they were magicians who used to work their magic for people to feel better. It makes me sad when I remember that I lost my dream. I live with my three children alone, we separated from my husband in 2009.

Gender-Based Violence means violence among married couples. It can also extend to women, especially when they are raped.

When the 2017 General Election winner was announced to be Uhuru Kenyatta, the police took advantage of us and the commotion that ensued. They broke into my house and raped me. There were four. When I went to report the matter, one officer dismissed me. The hospital on the other hand took good care of me when I went for treatment. Every time I think about elections and remember that the next General Election will be coming in a few months in 2022, I get goosebumps. I know that whatever happened in 2017 is definitely going to repeat itself.

Given a chance, I would speak to both Raila Odinga and Uhuru Kenyatta. If they really cared about us, they would do everything in their power to ensure that the upcoming election is peacefully conducted and that our safety is guaranteed. Otherwise, I want nothing to do with the elections and will not vote.

The government has not yet done enough for women. Women are not safe or protected in this country. If they were, we would already have received justice.

*WALAMBE 31 KISUMU

My name is Walambe and I am 31 years old living in Nyawita slums of Kisumu. I experienced GBV back in 2020 when curfew was introduced due to the COVID 19 pandemic. A man I don't know and cannot identify sneaked into my house and raped her for a period of one hour. I reported the case to Obunga police station. The police officer I found there told me to stop reporting my boyfriends who are well known to me". That broke my heart so badly, I remember breaking down at the police station and they did not care at all.

I have never followed up on that case to date I just went to the hospital for treatment.

KWALESTORIES

Interviews Conducted on 19th and 20th August 2021



*KABIBI 17 KWALE

My name is *Kabibi, I am 17 years old. I have a brother and a sister. My sister and I are both in high school while my brother dropped out of school. We all live together. In my free time, I like reading storybooks. My favorite subject is Kiswahili - I find it easy to understand and think I excel in it. I would like to be a teacher when I grow up because I like imparting knowledge to others.

When I was 16 years old, I got pregnant. The man who was responsible denied the pregnancy. He was 19 years old and we met at a party. This has forced me to take care of the child alone. Although my mother helps me with my son, I am unable to concentrate on my studies. I find that I am always thinking about the child who is nine months now. Sometimes, when there is no food at home, I stay back to breastfeed him.

I never reported my case because I believe the man should be mature and behave like an adult. So for now I just want to leave him alone.

In my opinion, the government is partially doing its part to ensure that girls are safe but in my community girls are still getting pregnant and getting married before they are 18. This has become so normal.

Through Sauti za Akina mama, I was able to go back to school. The only support I have received from the government has been through school bursaries and I am grateful.

In the future, I want to help young girls and discourage them from engaging in sexual relations while they are still young.

Given the opportunity to talk to someone in government, I would talk to our county women representative and urge her to come up with more projects to help girls in our community.

“in my community girls are still getting pregnant and getting married before they are 18. This has become so normal”

*BINTI 18 KWALE

My name is *Binti and I am 18 years old. I am presently in class eight and the 7th born in a family of 10. I like mathematics and want to be a doctor when I grow up so that I can help my community. I live with my mother and siblings. My father left a while ago so my mother fends for us with the money she earns selling fish. In my free time, I like playing football with my friends.

The phrase Gender-Based Violence is not new to me. I have heard of it before and think that it happens more to girls than to boys.

I was 14 years old when I got pregnant. I was in class six at the time. The man responsible was 37 years old and was new in our locality. He stopped talking to me when I told him that I was expectant. I never reported him and do not intend to do so because he is already in jail having been reported by another lady. I later found out that he was married and had a family.

I do not think that I faced any difficulties in getting justice. My family did not want me to report and I was not keen on reporting him either. I am, however, glad that he is serving time for his mistakes. Being a mother and a pupil at the same time is so stressful. This is why the government should help teenage mothers like me.

My plea to the government would be a request to ensure all girls are safe and empowered to make the right decisions. I also believe that the government ought to address poverty which drives a lot of girls into sexual exploitation.



*AZIZA 18 KWALE

My name is *Aziza. I am 18 years old and the second born in a family of five. All my other siblings are still in school. Our first born sister went up to class eight before dropping out. I also reached class eight before discontinuing after I fell pregnant. My sister currently works as a house help in Kwale town while I run a small salon. I plait people's hair when I'm free, which helps me generate a little income. We use my income together with the little my older sister sends to sustain our daily needs as my mother and father are not working.

I am currently enrolled in a polytechnic studying hair and beauty. My favorite part is learning how to set hair in different styles. I would like to be a beautician when I finish school.

In my view, Gender-Based Violence refers to violations that girls face at the hands of men. I would say that it has happened to me.

In 2020, I got pregnant. I was 17 years old at the time and in-class seven. I then decided to drop out of school because I couldn't face the embarrassment and ridicule that I would face from my fellow pupils anymore. They would taunt me and tease me for being pregnant. The man responsible was a Boda Boda rider who was way older than me. He disappeared when I told him about the pregnancy and I have never heard from him since.

“He disappeared when I told him about the pregnancy and I have never heard from him since.”



My baby is now eight months old. I do not want to report the man to the authorities because we are all human beings. I also feel like I have done a lot by myself and can manage. We are told to forgive and so I have forgiven him. If he wants to continue doing the same to other girls that is up to him.

I am glad to be alive and think that the government has put a lot of things in place to help women, especially school-going girls, to secure their education. The fact that we are able to go back to school as teenage mothers is the government's initiative.

In the future, I want to have a big salon here in Ukunda that will help me generate money to take care of my child and my family. If given the chance, I would speak to the First Lady of Kenya and request her to empower girls so that they can realize their dreams and not get cheated by men because it will destroy their lives.

*MARGARET 15 KWALE

My name is *Margaret. I am 15 years old and the firstborn in our family. I have six other siblings. I am currently in class six. My mother is a farmer and my father mines stones. We all live with my mother.

I like Kiswahili, Science, and Mathematics because they need a lot of thinking.

When I finish my studies, I want to be a teacher or to work with the Kenya Defense Forces (KDF). I want to be respected by people just like a teacher is respected in school and KDF is respected by Kenyans.

Although I had not heard of the phrase Gender-Based Violence before, I am happy to learn about it now. I was defiled when I was 13 years and in class three. The man who violated me was 22 years old by then. He defiled me multiple times and I conceived as a result.

I did not know that I was pregnant. I learned about it when my mother took me to the hospital. My father was so angry that he reported the matter and the man was arrested. He was locked up for two days and then the court processes started.

Although the man admitted to defiling me before we went to court, he changed his testimony when we got to court. My father later dropped the charges because it was difficult and expensive for us to keep going to court every week using a bicycle. I understand that the man's family sold some cows to bribe the police so he was eventually released. I no longer see him around.

My message would go to the Governor - I would urge him not to forsake us because I feel like he has forgotten our part of Kwale.

I am happy with the support that I have received from Sauti ya Wanawake - it is the only organization that encourages us. The idea of going back to school actually came from them. I had already given up on education.

“Although the man admitted to defiling me before we went to court, he changed his testimony when we got to court. My father later dropped the charges because it was difficult and expensive for us to keep going to court every week using a bicycle. I understand that the man's family sold some cows to bribe the police so he was eventually released. I no longer see him around.”

*LEAH 15 KWALE

My name is *Leah. I am 15 years old and in class eight. We are 10 in our family and I'm the eighth born. In my family, there are eight girls and two boys. I like playing football when I'm free. It gives my heart peace and helps me to relax. My favorite subject is English. I like it because it helps me understand the other subjects. I stay with my parents and some of my siblings. Others are already married and have their own homes.

When I grow up, I want to be a nurse because they help everyone and work towards our health.

In my view, Gender-Based Violence means looking down on someone because he or she is a woman or a man. It can also mean the violation of someone's rights. This is something that I have experienced before.

During the prolonged school holiday in 2020, I went for Disco harusi in a nearby home. The DJ who was playing music approached me and asked me to be his girlfriend. I agreed because I thought he had money and would make my life comfortable.

He had sexual relations with me that night and gave me 500 Shillings (5USD). After that we had sex multiple times - sometimes on my way from school. I am now seven months pregnant.

He is 25 years old and is married with three children. His wife attacked me when she realized that I was pregnant. My parents were also very angry with me but eventually came around. We have, however, not reported him to the authorities. I just want to give birth to a healthy child and then go back to school.

Although I don't have a specific message to anyone in the government, I would like to urge all young girls to take care of themselves. Being pregnant while you are still going to school is stressful.

My future plan is to work with Sauti ya Wanawake to educate girls and create more awareness on early pregnancies.

*KADZO 15 KWALE

My name is *Kadzo and I am 15 years old. I am in class seven and the fifth born in a family of nine. There are six girls and three boys. During my free time, I enjoy playing football with my friends. We are actually planning to create a girls' football club.

My favorite subject is science. When I grow up, I want to be a teacher because teaching will allow me to give back to the community.

The phrase Gender-Based Violence is not new to me and although I am not in a position to clearly explain what it means, I can say that it is the violation of women's rights.

An 18-year-old boy lured me into having sexual relations with him by giving me 400 Shillings (4USD). He was in class eight at the time. We had sex four times and then I got pregnant. I only realized that he was using me when he told me that he could not continue dating me because I was pregnant.

When my parents learnt about my pregnancy, my father chased me away from home. He later calmed down and allowed me to go back home. My fellow pupils would laugh at me and sometimes teachers would be very cruel to me. I would curse myself for being cheated and hated myself a lot.

But having learnt so much from Sauti Ya Wanawake, I can confidently say that I want to report him so that action can be taken. I do not know how long it will take before I get justice but I want justice. My child is now one and half years old and for sure the journey has not been easy.

Given the chance, I would speak to the First Lady of Kwale County and urge her to help girls realize their dreams. This is what I would like and also want to do in the future.

AISHA ALI RAAPHU (SAUTI YA WANAWAKE)

Sauti ya Wanawake is an organization that has been operating in Kwale County for years now. We have been doing a lot of community engagements and talk to both parents and girls about teen pregnancies and early marriages.

We are happy that a number of girls are now opting to return to school after having their children because this was not the case in the past. Many of them would get married and then the cycle of poverty would continue. We still have more on our plates as an organization because many of these girls are young and are already engaging in sexual relations so that they can get things like sanitary towels.

“It is hard to fight for justice in this part of the country because survivors do not want to take part in the justice process.”

It is hard to fight for justice in this part of the country because survivors do not want to take part in the justice process, often for the sake of family peace. Many cases go unreported and the few which are reported do not go anywhere because of chiefs and village elders. In fact, village elders seem to have so much power here. Their word is often final. The terrain and the roads also make it difficult to access the interior parts of the county.

We are however determined as an organization. Just like many girls said, I would direct my message to the President. I know resources in this country are distributed according to need but Kwale needs a lot more. The biggest challenge here is poverty so there should be a lot of community sensitization on the importance of education so that parents can realize where they have been going wrong.



NAROKSTORIES

Interviews Conducted on 17th and 18th August 2021



*JOY 12 NAROK

My name is *Joy. I am 12 years old and have six siblings and I'm the third born in my family. The firstborn and second-born are both boys. When I grow up I want to be a journalist because I like being informed about current affairs.

My father wanted to subject me to FGM so that he could marry me off. When I learned about this, I refused and went to the (local) children's office together with my mother. I was lucky because my mother did not want me to get cut. The children's office later took me to the Tasaru Rescue Centre where I have been staying.

My mother comes to visit me but I have never seen or heard from my father. My mother encourages me to study hard so that I can be successful later in life. Although my mother and father were not on talking terms when I was brought here, they reconciled. I think that they are okay now. I however don't know what happened to my father after he was reported to the children's office.

“My father wanted to subject me to FGM so that he could marry me off. When I learned about this, I refused and went to the children's office together with my mother.”

In my view, the government should build more rescue centers to help girls like me. I think the government has done well with regard to teaching people about the harms of FGM and early marriages in the villages and on television in order to fight against Gender-Based Violence.

I am also happy that I received support from the government through the children's office and the District Officer (D.O).



*JANET 14 NAROK

My name is *Janet and I am 14 years old. There are seven children in my family and I am the second last born. In my free time, I like playing football. My favorite subject is mathematics because I understand its concepts.

My favourite teacher to date is called Ann - my English teacher. I love her because when I joined the school, I didn't know how to read but she taught me and ensured that I had learnt how to read. When I grow up I want to be a journalist because I think they look great when they are presenting.

My father tried marrying me off to an old man but because I did not want to, I decided to run away. The first time I ran away, I went to a lady who was the chief but she was colluding with my grandmother. Instead of helping me, she called my grandmother and told her to go and pick me up. My grandmother came and took me back home. She, together with my father, ensured that the old man who was to marry me came to pick me up on the same night. My father had already received two cows, some money, and blankets in the form of dowry and so he beat me up for running away.

That night, the old man came for me and took me to his place. But, I ran away and hid in the forest. In the morning, I went to a local pastor and told him about the plan to marry me off. He housed me for three days as he tried to find a rescue center for me. My father tried



looking for me but with no luck. He later took me to the District Officer (DO) who took me to the children's office in Narok and that is how I ended up here.

I have not heard from my father since then.

The pastor also reported my father to the police and then he was arrested and taken to jail for two weeks before being released. The man who was to marry me ran away and has not been found. My father, on the other hand, had to sell a cow to secure his freedom.

I would like justice and would like to see my father and the old man arrested.

I also want the government to help me go to school until I finish University. I am glad about the support I have received from Tasaru so far. They took me in, took me to school, and kept me safe.

In the future, I would like to help girls like me who are being mistreated.

My father tried marrying me off to an old man but because I did not want to, I decided to run away.

*BRENDA 14 NAROK

“In 2018, my father attempted to marry me off to an old man. I didn’t want to be married off because I was 11 years old. I didn’t even know the man I was being married off to.”

My name is *Brenda. I am 14 years old and in class six. I have six siblings and am the second born. My parents are still alive. My father is a farmer who keeps cows while my mother sells potatoes. I like drawing dresses whenever I am free and would like to be a designer when I grow up. Besides being a designer, I would also like to be a lawyer who helps people with all kinds of cases.

Gender-Based Violence means discrimination against girls or boys. It happens when a family decides to educate the boy and then leave out the girl. It also refers to child marriage.

In 2018, my father attempted to marry me off to an old man. I didn’t want to be married off because I was 11 years old. I didn’t even know the man I was being married off to. At that time, I wasn’t in school and had never been to school because my father did not see the need to educate me.

I was lucky because I was rescued before the marriage took place. A lady came to visit us and then I told her what was about to transpire. She then reported my father to the police and I was taken by the children’s office. I was interrogated by the police and my father was arrested. I think he was later released on bond but I have not seen him since then. I understand that he once came here to pick me up by force but he was turned away by the security guard.

My mother didn’t have the capacity to say anything because she is under my father’s authority. She would have been beaten up if she dared question him.

I would like my father to be arrested because of what he did to me and because I want to understand why he did it.

If I could talk to the governor about the GBV that we face as girls and women, I would ask him to help people like us by ensuring that we get an education.

I also want to fight for others who are like me and to have more safe spaces built. My advice to my peers would be to work hard so that they can secure their futures.



*RENEI 15 NAROK

My name is *Renei. I am 15 years old and have seven siblings.

I like singing alone or with my friends during my free time and hope to release a song when I am older. I am currently in class eight and really like science because it is my best performing subject. When I grow up I want to be a doctor to treat sick people and help mothers to deliver their babies.

To me, Gender-Based Violence refers to violations such as early marriages and FGM. In 2018, my father decided to marry me off to an old man. I pleaded with him not to do it but he would not listen. He instead told me that I needed to go and live with my husband because I had been cut. So he took me to Narok town where he bought me a dress and told me that I was going to get married. The person who sold the dress to us noticed that I was crying. When she asked me why I was crying, I told her that it was because my father wanted to marry me off. She promised to help me and then called the children's office who rescued me. I was 13 years old at the time.

When we got to the children's office, my father was left behind while I was taken to a safe house. I think my father was jailed because he was reported to the police by the children's office. Since then, I have neither seen my mother nor my father. My mother did not support the idea of me getting married but when she opposed it, my father beat her up. He had already received seven cows as dowry.

“In 2018, my father decided to marry me off to an old man. I pleaded with him not to do it but he would not listen. He instead told me that I needed to go and live with my husband because I had been cut.”

The man who wanted to marry me was also arrested but I don't know what happened after that. I was just happy that he was arrested because he would have hindered my dreams.

If I was to talk to the President right now, I would ask him to help girls who are undergoing the same thing I went through. I would also request that he arrests the parents who give out their children to be married off including my father. I want him arrested so that my siblings don't undergo the same thing.

I think that the government has helped girls and women from child marriage and FGM by banning these practices. However, these laws are not always followed.

Apart from being a doctor, I would like to go to villages to talk to parents and discourage them from marrying off their young girls. I would also like to reconcile with my father in the future but I'm not sure if he would be interested because he probably thinks that he will be jailed.

I would just finally want to ask people not to do these things to their daughters. I would also ask the government to create awareness about the harms of FGM.

*EMMY 24 NAROK

My name is *Emmy and I am 24 years old. I like reading novels in my free time and studied up to University level at the Mt Kenya University. I will be graduating in December 2021 with a bachelor's degree in Laboratory Sciences and Technology.

My favourite units were all related to Chemistry and Biology. I hope to get a job in my area of study but within a research institute. I currently live alone in Narok and work at a law firm as a secretary.

Gender-Based Violence means the hardships that women go through due to inequality. In 2006, I ran away from home because of FGM. I was in class six and around 12 years old. I knew about FGM and was certain that I did not want to undergo it. And so when the time came, I ran away and sought refuge at the Tasaru Rescue Centre.

My parents wanted me to be cut but to continue with my studies. We were later reconciled and none of my six sisters has been cut. My father was mad at me for refusing to undergo FGM but he later came to understand why I did not want it. My parents also came to appreciate the importance of educating girls without any interruptions. Unfortunately, most girls from my village are married off immediately after FGM and therefore drop out of school.

My father was never arrested because I ran away before the cut.

I strongly feel that the government is not doing its job because sometimes cases of FGM and child marriage are reported but no action is taken. Somewhere along the way, perpetrators are released. It is also difficult for young girls to push for the prosecution of their fathers. Sometimes they sympathise with their fathers during the case and it ends up being dismissed.

The government should therefore take cases of FGM and child marriage seriously. The Judiciary should also be educated on the impact of FGM so that they can understand what they are litigating against. Most Judges and Magistrates are not familiar with FGM and don't know how to handle it. They should therefore be trained.

In my view, the time taken between arrest and prosecution should be reduced because it takes too long. If I was given a chance to talk to a Judge in the Judiciary I would ask them to ensure that cases are not prolonged in order to avoid loss of evidence.

"I was in class six and around 12 years old. I knew about FGM and was certain that I did not want to undergo it."

*NESSERIAN 20 NAROK

My name is *Nesserian. I am 20-years-old and I completed my secondary schooling in 2020. I would like to be a nurse because my village has so many hospitals with no medical personnel. People really suffer because they have no one to assist them. I live with my entire family - my mother, my father and siblings.

Gender-Based violence has something to do with women and the state of abuse and being forced into situations they don't want. It also has to do with the suffering that women and girls go through as a result.

My father wanted me to undergo FGM so that he could marry me off. I had not been enrolled in school at the time. Back home, I was tasked with the responsibility of taking care of our home and herd animals. But as I got older, I started noticing that other children were going to school while I wasn't. So I started questioning this but never got an answer.

Soon after, my father started talking about circumcising my brother in addition to subjecting me to FGM. His plan was to get me cut and then married off because I wasn't going to school and did not have other commitments. My mother who was an avid church goer knew the harms of FGM and told me not to go through with it if I did not want to. She also promised to help me if I needed help.

“My father started talking about circumcising my brother in addition to subjecting me to FGM. His plan was to get me cut and then married off because I wasn't going to school and did not have other commitments.”

I got the opportunity to run away when my mum had gone visiting in the next village. I lied about going to fetch firewood and never went back. It took me one and a half hours to reach one of my pastor's homes where I took refuge for the night. The next morning, they took me to Tasaru where I was well received and taken to the children's office. That was when I got the opportunity to go to school.

They only asked me if I would be okay with having my father arrested but I did not mind. My biggest driver at the time was my desire to go to school. I never asked for any updates after that. When my dad got wind of the fact that my mother had aided my escape, he beat her up. She however did not hold any ill feelings towards me and we are very close.

I don't know if my father was ever held to account since we lost touch when I came to Tasaru. But he got “saved” later on and changed his ways. I'm not sure if my other siblings were subjected to FGM after I had left home. I have heard rumors that they did but I'm not sure.

My father was so disappointed in me and cursed me but I survived. Some family members alienated me and did not want to associate with me because I was not cut. Sometimes this gets to me but I know that I did nothing wrong and don't regret the decision I made. I want to prove these people wrong.

People would also claim that I would not be able to bear children and that no one would ask for my hand in marriage but I don't believe them.

There is no turning back for me now. I went to school and intend to continue studying. My siblings have also been taken to school. I thank God for mother Agnes for being there for me throughout my journey. It was not easy but I made it.

“When my dad got wind of the fact that my mother had aided my escape, he beat her up. She however did not hold any ill feelings towards me and we are very close.”

*NAILA 26 NAROK

My name is Naila. I am 26 years old and the second born in a family of 10 - seven boys and three girls. I enjoy my own company and studied up to university level. I have a degree in Finance and Banking.

Growing up, I wanted to be someone great. I now aspire to become a CEO in a financial office. I am very sure that I will achieve my dreams. I have one child and am determined to make the world a better place for her.

Gender-Based Violence refers to violence that is directed at someone because of their gender. I left home when I was 13 years old because I did not want to undergo FGM or be subjected to child marriage. I had never been enrolled in school and remember several men asking for my hand in marriage. I still don't know who among them was to marry me. My older sisters had gone through the same thing.

I got the idea of running away after attending a seminar on the effects of FGM. I spoke to my uncle who also disliked the idea of FGM. He knew Agnes of Tasaru Rescue Centre and that is how I ended up here.

This created a rift between my father and my uncle. He suspected that my uncle was the mastermind of my disappearance. He was also very annoyed with me and told me never to go back home. In my community, that sounds like a curse and that is what we fear most when running from FGM. At this point some part of the dowry had already been paid so my father had to reimburse it. When I was in form two, I was taken back home to reconcile with my father by a team from Tasaru. But my father was still very annoyed. He wanted to kill us. The reconciliation ceremony did not take place and we never went back.

I can say that in my family, I am the first girl to go through the full education system. I'm always proud that I passed my examinations. After my high school exams, he got news that I had passed and invited us to go for the reconciliation ceremony. In his speech, he said that he regretted his decision. So far I am happy that all my other siblings are in school.

No action was taken against him because I did not go through the children's office. My father was never reported.

Given a chance to speak to someone in the government, I would address our Governor because he knows our challenges. I would tell him there is a need for awareness on GBV and its side effects. Some girls end up dead.

I appreciate all the measures that have been put in place to ensure that girls are

not undergoing FGM. However, I wish to encourage law enforcement agents to continue protecting girls. Not everyone is law abiding.

My vision is to see a Massai community where girls can voice their thoughts freely and are free from FGM.

"I left home when I was 13 years old because I did not want to undergo FGM or be subjected to child marriage. I had never been enrolled in school and remember several men asking for my hand in marriage.

My older sisters had gone through the same thing."

*MAYAN 62 NAROK *NAILA'S FATHER

My name is *Mayan and I'm 62 years old. I have 15 children from two wives - five girls and two boys, from my first wife and 7 boys and 3 girls from my second wife. Two of my children are married and have their own homes while the rest live with me.

I am a farmer. I have five cows and 10 goats. I never went to school.

As a father, I did not want Naila to go to school or get married and knew at the time that what I was doing was out of love. But I now know better and acknowledge that FGM and child marriage are harmful. FGM causes difficulties when it comes to child birth among other harms.

I would like to urge everyone who still practices these to stop.

The government and chiefs should take legal action against those people who still practice those acts. I am happy that the government has placed chiefs and nyumba kumi representatives to monitor things and ensure that these practices do not take place. We have to allow our girls to go to school and determine the direction that their life should take.

I appreciate Agnes for holding Naila's hand and I am also grateful that Naila came back home. I would want her to forgive me for not taking her to school when she was younger. When she came back and we reconciled I just cried. I was so happy. I want Naila to have a good life and love her so much. She is respectful and just walks around with her church friends. I have come to see and appreciate the value of educating our girls.

AFTERWORD

Equality Now was privileged to be part of the interlocutors supporting and building momentum towards the Generation Equality Forum. The Generation Equality Forum was a watershed moment for gender equality as it marked 26 years after the Beijing Platform of Action for Change and convened both state and non-state actors to re-evaluate progress on commitments made in Beijing and ensure commitments were made looking forward.

Our role as civil society actors was three fold. Firstly we provided technical support to the Kenyan government through the National steering committee convened by the State Department of Gender within the Ministry of Public Service and Gender. Our Second role was to convene civil society organizations nationwide to participate and inform the national and international processes. The third role, which is specific to this compendium was to ensure public participation in the process of the generation equality forum especially survivor voices. Whereas our mandate causes us to centre all our efforts on survivor voices, this third role enabled us contextualize these voices along the justice chain in order to understand the survivor's journey and address the challenges faced in their quest to justice. This compendium therefore is a byproduct of that role.

This publication is a call to action both to duty bearers specifically and to community members as well.

With regard to duty bearers we wish to note that, the survivor stories tell us of challenges in all sectors. From reporting the violation, to adjudication in implementation of the relevant laws. This in our view calls for a multi-sectoral approach that prioritizes the critical issues and:

- aligns all actors (state and non-state) to undertake with integrity their specific role
- ensures centralized coordination
- increases capacities of each function
- monitors and reports on progress

For the community, it calls for us to strip ourselves of the preconceived perceptions towards survivors of sexual and gender based violence to ensure that we form part of the referral pathway when persons have been violated or become part of the prevention and protection against violations. It is our hope that once you have engaged with the survivor voices you will cease being ambivalent and become compelled to take action.

Judy Gitau Nkuranga

*Regional Coordinator, Africa
Equality Now*

PARTNER ORGANIZATION BIOGRAPHIES

Hope Beyond Foundation

Hope Beyond Foundation is an organization that was established in 2003 in Kenya to rescue and support girls who undergo forced child, early and forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and abuse, providing them with education, counselling, therapeutic activities and a safe home. It is based in Kimana, Kajiado County

Il'laramatak Community Concern

ICC is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that was founded in September 2011, with the aim of addressing human rights and development concerns of Maasai pastoralist women and girls. ICC tackles girls access, retention and transition from primary to secondary level education; ending harmful traditional practices such as FGM and Child marriage; creating opportunities for income generating projects for women; advocating for inclusion of women in leadership and decision-making positions to reduce the level of poverty among Maasai women and girls; and contribute to national development goals. It is based in Kajiado County

Kisumu Medical and Educational Trust KMET

KMET is a non-profit making, non-governmental organisation founded in 1995 and registered under the Trustees Act in 1996. It was formed to create, establish and manage health, education and development programs; promote and manage medical institutions to provide and sustain comprehensive clinical and educational facilities and services of the highest quality throughout Kenya. KMET is managed through a Board of Trustees which ensures that the programs are managed according to KMET policies and procedures and the laws of Kenya.

Rural Education and Economic Enhancement Programme REEP

REEP (Rural Education and Economic Enhancement Programme) is a local NGO operating from Butula town, in Busia County. REEP's mission statement is "to improve the quality of life for marginalised groups in rural communities in Western Kenya". REEP is a strong, grass roots level agency, focusing on community participation and working closely with local leaders.

Sauti Ya Wanawake Pwani

Sauti Ya Wanawake Pwani started as a local women's movement in Mombasa, Kenya in 2001. It was started with the aim of creating a safe space for women at the grassroots level to discuss issues that affect them and to become a forum that contributes to the fight for women's and children's rights. The organization, operates in the six counties of Kenya's coastal region namely: Kwale, Kilifi, Taita Taveta, Lamu, Tana River and Mombasa. It is headquartered in Mombasa County and sustains its programmes through a culture of volunteerism, networking and collaboration with partners and stakeholders.

Tasaru Ntomonok Initiative

Tasaru Ntomonok Initiative is a Community-Based Organization (CBO) that is based in Narok county and was founded in 1999. TNI champions for the rights of women and girls in Narok county providing a safe haven for girls and women at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and child, early and forced marriage. TNI was started with the aim of providing a "safety net" for girls running away from their homes to escape FGM and early marriages.

Equality Now

Equality Now, founded in 1992, is an international women's rights organization that works to achieve legal and systemic change that addresses violence and discrimination against women and girls around the world, with a focus on ending sexual violence, harmful practices, sex trafficking, and achieving legal equality. Combining grassroots activism with international, regional and national legal advocacy Equality Now's approach links high level policy advocacy and global activism with support and legal advice to grassroots partners and networks working on specific cases of women and girls in order to promote change at all levels.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS CONTACT INFORMATION

ORGANIZATION	CONTACT INFORMATION
Rural Education and Economic Enhancement Programme REEP	reepapt@yahoo.com
Il'laramatak Community Concerns	illaramatakcommunityconcerns@gmail.com
The Kisumu Medical and Educational Trust KMET	info@kmet.co.ke
Hope Beyond Foundation	info@hopebeyond.org
Tasaru Ntomonok initiative	Mkereto5@gmail.com
Sauti Ya Wanawake	info@sautiyawanawakepwani.org

COMPENDIUM OF SURVIVOR VOICES INTERVIEW GUIDE

Overview

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a pervasive human rights violation that continues to affect the lives of millions of girls and women across the world. In Kenya, at least 45 percent of women and girls aged 15-49 have experienced one form of GBV ranging from physical to sexual assault. It is therefore critical to give women, girls and survivors of this violation the agency and voice to speak out and amplify their experiences in order to enhance state accountability and ensure that the gaps in the justice system are addressed.

In this regard, Equality Now will be developing a compendium of survivor voices that will not only amplify the voices of survivors but will also be used to advocate for change by demonstrating how and why the government of Kenya ought to address GBV. This will be done through a series of interviews with survivors based in Busia, Kajiado, Kisumu, Kwale, Makueni and Narok counties. The interviews will result in a compilation of survivor quotes addressing the following areas: prevention and protection; reporting; medical and psychosocial response (Forensics); investigation; prosecution; and adjudication.

Interview guide

1. Questions to survivors

1.1. Biographical questions

- a. What is your name?
- b. How old are you?
- c. Would you like to be anonymous? If yes, what name would you prefer?
- d. Do you have any siblings?
- e. Where do you come in the birth order?
- f. Do you have a favorite pastime activity? If so, would you like to tell me what it is?

- g. Do you go to school? (depending on survivors' profile) or have you ever had a chance to attend school? If so, how old were you when you started? What level did you reach?
- h. What was/is your favorite subject/teacher and why?
- i. What job would you like to have/liked to have growing up? Why?
- j. Who do you live with?

1.2. Questions touching on survivors' experience with GBV

- a. Have you ever heard of the phrase "Gender-Based Violence?"
- b. If so, do you know what GBV means?
- c. What do you think it means?
- d. Have you ever experienced GBV?
- e. Would you mind sharing your experience with me? Follow up questions will depend on survivors' response but can include:
 - Did you go to the hospital or report to a police station or any other person? If so, what was your experience?
 - What action was taken after you reported it?
 - What happened with your case afterwards?
 - Do you know if the perpetrator was prosecuted? Were you happy with the outcome? What did you think about the sentence given to the perpetrator?
 - What do you think about how the hospital, police, and courts handled your case?
 - Have you faced any difficulties in getting justice? If so, do you mind sharing these difficulties with me?
- f. If you had one chance to speak to the government of Kenya about GBV, what would your message be and who would you address it to?
- g. What additional support would you like from the government of Kenya or the authorities generally?
- h. In your view, is the government of Kenya doing enough to protect girls and women from GBV? What else should be done?
- i. What are you doing now?
- j. Have you received any support from any government or non-government entity? If so, who?
- k. What are your plans for the future?

2. Questions for parent/guardian (in case they come and/or are available for an interview)

2.1. Bibliographical questions

- a. What is your name?
- b. How old are you?
- c. Do you have any other children other than [insert name]? If so, how many?
- d. Who do you live with?
- e. What do you do to earn a living?
- f. How many years did you go to school for and what level did you get to?
- g. Where did you grow up?
- h. Did you grow up in a big/small family?
- i. (If female), how was life for you and the girls you knew when you were growing up?
- j. (If male), how was life for you growing up?
- k. What was the difference between the way boys and girls were treated?
- l. Has life changed much for women and girls since you were young? If so, how has it changed?
- m. How old were you when you got married?
- n. How would you describe [insert girls' name]?
- o. What are some of her best qualities?
- p. Did you have any plans/dreams for her as she was growing up?

2.2. Questions touching on survivors' experience with GBV

- a. Have you ever heard of the term Gender-Based Violence? If so, what do you think it means?
- b. Would you mind telling me how you found out that she had been subjected to GBV?
- c. How did you feel when she told you?
- d. How do you feel now? If your views have changed, why is that?
- e. Did you report to the authorities? If so, what was your experience?
- f. What are some of the challenges that you have faced since then?
- g. How have you dealt with these challenges?
- h. How has life been like for her?
- i. What difference has this experience made to you and your child?

- j. What do you think about the manner in which [insert name] case has been handled so far?
- k. Do you think that the government of Kenya is doing enough to protect girls and women from GBV? What else would you like to see?
- l. How effective and important do you think the law is in promoting the rights of women and girls?
- m. Do you think that local authorities such as the police are doing enough to protect girls and women, and ensure they get justice if their rights have been violated? Is there anything you think they could do better?
- n. Do you think there should be any changes in your community regarding the way that girls and women are treated?
- o. Do you have any concerns for [insert name]'s future? If so, would you mind sharing these concerns with me?
- p. What do you wish/hope for [insert name]'s future?
- q. If you had a chance to speak to anyone in government about your and [insert name]'s experience in getting justice for your daughter, what would you say?

2.3. Questions for partners

- a. How did you get to know about this case?
- b. How has your experience been with regards to securing justice for [insert name]?
- c. What do you think needs to be done to facilitate and smoothen the process of accessing justice for survivors of SGBV?
- d. If you had a chance to speak to anyone in government about your and [insert survivors' name]'s experience in getting justice, what would you say?

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Faiza Jama Mohamed
Director, Africa Office



Hope Beyond
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EQUALITY NOW

P O Box 2018 00202

Nairobi, Kenya

Email: equalitynownairobi@equalitynow.org

www.equalitynow.org