

THE GENDER LENS

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Participants of the National Dialogue Committee meeting held on 10th February 2022

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Kenya leads in the implementation of the EAC Consultative Dialogue Framework (CDF)

By Maurice Goga

Kenya is said to be leading in the implementation of the East Africa Community (EAC) consultative dialogue framework, this came out during the National Dialogue Committee (NDC) meeting convened by the Ministry of East African Community and Regional Development. The meeting was attended by stakeholders from civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector organizations (PSOs), other interests such as Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and the government aimed at identifying national issues that will be discussed during the national dialogue forum.

Speaking during the meeting held on 10th February 2022, Mr. Masheti Masinjila, the Chair of the NDC lauded the stakeholders who have been implementing the East African Community (EAC) consultative dialogue framework (CDF) since its inception. He noted that Kenya was the first country to implement the CDF as stated in the EAC law thereby creating space for the CSOs and PSOs to write issue papers and have a structured discussion with the government on the issues.

Masheti also noted that the Secretary General's Forum has not been convened for the past 2 years owing

to the break out of COVID-19 which had a major impact on the member states.

However, he mentioned that this year Secretary General's Forum (SG's Forum) will be held. Masheti said Kenya has been very strong with youth participation during the SG's Forum. He called upon January - February 2022 The Gender Lens 2the youth to put their agenda on the paper so that they can present it during the upcoming SG's Forum.

Mr. George Barasa, Assistant Director of Social Affairs in the Ministry of East African Community and Regional Development attributed the collapse of EAC to a lack of participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as the partnership was viewed as the head of state affairs. However, Article 127 of the Treaty establishing EAC resolved the issue by allowing the participation of CSOs, Private Sector Organizations (PSOs) to be part of the integration agenda in the EAC..... [Read more](#)



Participants of National Dialogue Committee (NDC) meeting held on 10th February 2022 in Nairobi [Maurice Goga, CCGD]

Gender Based Violence Centers (GBVRCs) in Busia Kwale and Kajiado Counties Strengthens Services to SGBV Survivors

By Maurice Goga



Structure of Kajiado GBVRC located at Kajiado County Referral Hospital. File

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) refers to harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful cultural practices. GBV is a serious violation of human rights and a life-threatening health and protection issue. GBV can include sexual, physical mental and economic harm inflicted on a person. This can take different forms including intimate partner violence, sexual violence, child marriage and female genital mutilation among others.

World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that one in every three women and girls will experience sexual or physical violence in their lifetime. GBV disproportionately affect women and girls, and their vulnerability increases during times of displacement, crisis and pandemics as witnessed during the break out of COVID-19. In response to the spike of SGBV witnessed during the breakout of COVID-19 pandemic, Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development (CCGD) through COVID-19 Recovery and Resilience Program supported by Mastercard Foundation.

The program sought to strengthen the support and services to SGBV survivors by offering institutional support to the County Referral Hospitals, the HAK 1195 toll-free helpline, County Administration Police Stations and Safe Shelters in Busia, Kajiado

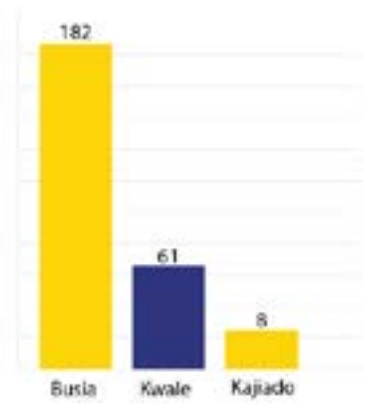
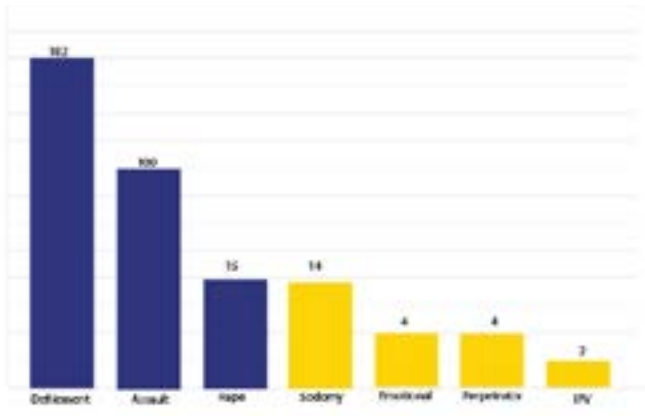
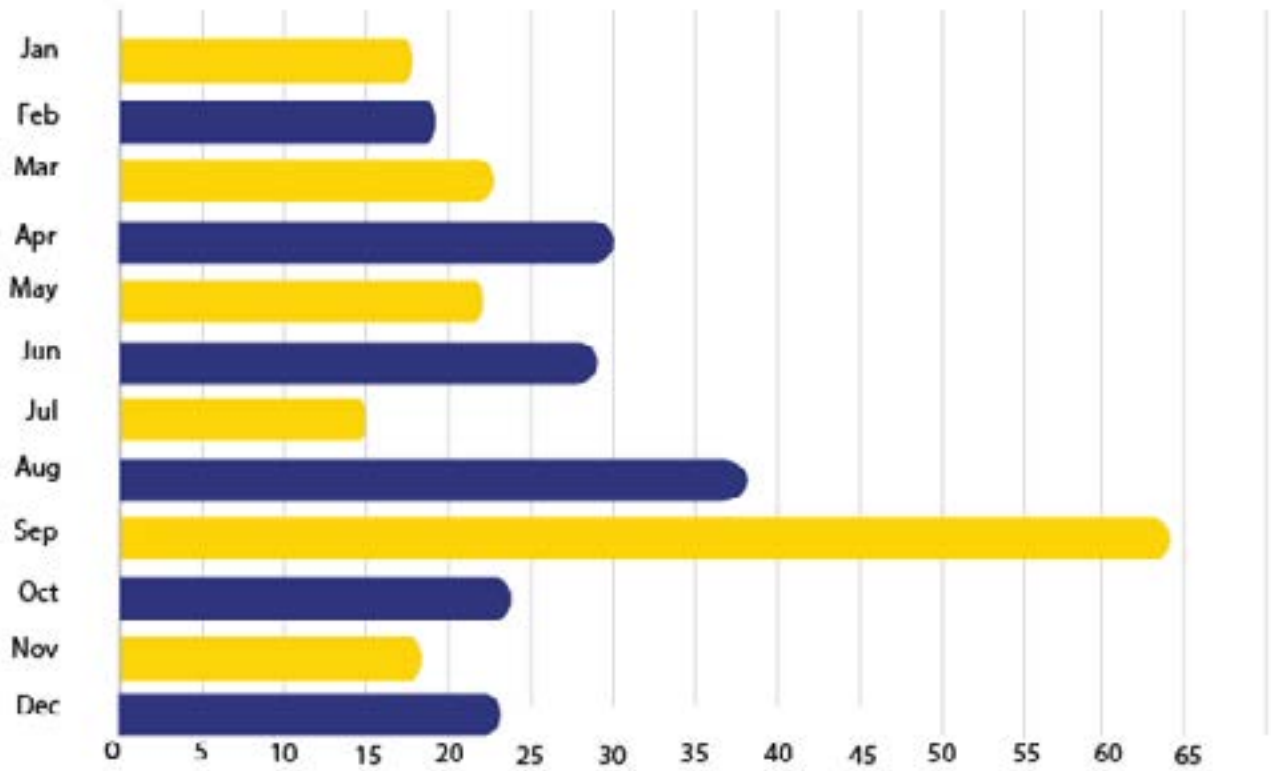
and Kwale counties.

One of the major outcomes of the two-year program was the establishment of Gender-Based Violence Recovery Centres (GBVRCs) at Busia County Referral Hospital, Kajiado County Referral Hospital and Msambweni Level V Hospital.

The Centres were established to strengthen support and services by ensuring that all SGBV survivors have adequate and timely access to quality services in the three counties.

The GBVRCs offer safe spaces where the survivors can get SGBV support services including medical attention, and psychosocial support, connecting them with referral pathways whenever they report their cases. Further, some survivors are provided with an in-kind grant which aids them in rebuilding their lives and following up with the referral services.

The centres also act as SGBV data collection centers. According to CCGD Research and Data Analyst Program Assistant, Mr. Calvin Chepsiror, a total of 321 SGBV cases were reported between January and December 2021.....[Read more](#)



variation, he says was a result of different factors such as the Centres not being established at the same time. “The variation witnessed especially in Kajiado County was because the Centre started operating in November, meaning we only recorded reports for two months,” he said.

From the data 87.54% were female and 12.46% were male this he attributed to the vulnerability of women and girls and the fact that women often report their cases while the men usually shun away from reporting such cases.

Defilement cases were the highest with a record of 182, assault 100, rape 15, sodomy 14, emotional 4, perpetrator 4 and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) 2. This points out children are more vulnerable to SGBV since they cannot defend themselves against the perpetrators or they can be cured easily by the perpetrators. Further, it was also evident that during school closure the cases of SGBV spiked as witnessed in the month of April and September where 15 and 67 cases were recorded respectively during school holidays.



The youth champions advocating for end of gender based violence. File

Bent But Not Broken

By Maurice Goga

What comes to your mind whenever you hear the term 'police'? To some the term brings fear or even anxiety, to others they will think of safety while others will think of law and order. But for Agatha Wanzala, an anti-GBV youth activist in Busia County the term reminds her of an ordeal that almost ruined her life.

Ms. Wanzala who hails from Bunyala is a survivor of attempted rape by a police officer in Uganda. "I was almost raped in Uganda by a Police Officer but to me, that was a drive to work and talk about GBV," she said.

She says the act did not drain her emotionally or physically but made her to start championing for women's and girls' rights in relation to sexual gender-based violence. Personally, this was a turnaround in my life, I can now share my story to anyone and give survivors hope that whatever happened

to you is not a loss.

"Bent but not broken, it happened, I accepted, I talk about it and it didn't kill me but rather it made me a much better person than I was," remarked Ms. Agatha

After sessions of counseling, the anti-GBV activist says she embraced forgiveness: "I never used to enter a police station because I was scared of the police but after a series of counseling sessions, right now I can talk to the police on GBV issues or even have a random conversation with them, something I never used to do," she said.

Despite being so passionate about GBV issues, Ms. Wanzala says she faces numerous challenges such as being undermined by the older survivors who she sometimes counsels. "A times survivors who are much older than me tend to undermine me and look at me like I don't know what am saying." However, the survivors have begun to accept her to the extent of referring other survivors to her.

She called on other survivors to share their stories – "Never hesitate to speak out, always speak out and your story will help someone somewhere."

Lunch of Study on Women Economic Empowerment

By Maurice Goga



Ms. Generose Minani, the EAC Principal Gender and Community Officer addressing stakeholders during a two-day stakeholders conference on Increasing Salience and Strategic Engagement for Women's Economic Empowerment, Women Empowerment Collectives, and Gender Integration. [Getrude Angela, CCGD]

Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development (CCGD) in partnership with the Ministry of East African Community and Regional Development, the East Africa Civil Society Organizations' Forum and Nathan Associates Foundation convened a two-day stakeholder (state and non-state actors) forum for the launch of a study on women economic empowerment.

The study dubbed, Increasing Salience and Strategic Engagement for Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE), Women Empowerment Collectives (WECs), and Gender Integration (GI) was conducted between October and December 2021 with a focus on the WEE, WECs and GI policy and projects and initiatives outside the Ministry in charge of Gender, State Department/ Agencies directly charged with advancing women's empowerment and gender equality.

While addressing the stakeholders, the Principal Secretary, State Department for East African Community

Dr. Kevit Desai stated that a lot of efforts have been put into women's economic empowerment especially around building the capacity of the women cross-border traders. He attributed these efforts to the able leadership of Mr. Masheti Masinjila, the Executive

Director of CCGD, and Prof. Wanjiku Kabira, Director University of Nairobi Women Economic Empowerment Hub (UON-WEE Hub).

The PS noted that the Ministry of East African Community and Regional Development in partnership with development partners have embarked on transformation agenda of engaging the women cross-border traders in the border counties with a view of building their capacities so that they can benefit from the gains of EAC integration process.

"Towards this end, we will continue to train and capacity build women cross-border traders on the EAC trade rules, regulations and procedures," remarked the PS.

He said the training has been informed by the reports from the Regional Women in Business Conferences that took place in Kigali Rwanda and Nairobi Kenya in 2011 and 2015 respectively.

Adding that during the two conferences, the women cross border traders complained that they struggle to find and understand information on goods and services allowed for trade in each partner state, the standardization process, the authorization of certificates required, the taxes and tariffs applicable.....[Read more](#)

Youth Highlight Challenges to their Participation in Elections

By Maurice Goga



A poster on the upcoming elections/Courtesy.

With only six months until the general elections, Kenyans are still grappling with a worrying trend of voter apathy witnessed among the youth who have lost interest in matters of leadership and governance which they can influence through the ballot. The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) has failed twice to reach its target of registering 6 million new young voters due to youth apathy.

The Citizen Agenda Pillar of the Multi-Sectoral Forum on Corruption organized a webinar on Youth and Election February 17, 2022, to provide a platform for over 70 youth drawn from across the country to articulate their issues and come up with recommendations on how the challenges can be addressed to bring about positive behavioral change among the youth towards more participation in elections.

Ms. Judith Oyoo, Women President at Kiriri University and a young political aspirant in Korogocho North called for voter civic education among youth on the need to participate in the elections.

“There are more than 50,000 university students in Kenya majority of who are youth that have not registered as voters because they say they are tired of voting yet this election offers them their first chance

to vote,” she said.

According to Ms. Gabrielle Lorere, founder of Samburu Well-being Initiative for All (SWIFLA) noted that youths from the northern frontier counties do not take part in elections simply because they lack national identity cards which is a key requirement for one to register as a voter.

“Youth from the northern frontier counties do not actively participate in the elections because they are subjected to numerous vetting processes that make it hard for them to obtain national identity cards which is viable for voter registration,” said Lorere.

The youth cited a lack of youth inclusion in decision-making and leadership roles in governance processes, lack of cross-sectoral approaches that deepen organized youth participation, lack of role models and mentorship in political leadership, lack of resources to mount serious campaigns, inexperience in competitive politics, and lack of meritocracy in elective politics in communities like among the Somali community where members of a majority clan....

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**East African Civil Society
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*Strengthening Civil Society in the
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