

Tusemezane

PROMOTING A SOCIETY FREE OF GENDER VIOLENCE

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE BY PEACE INITIATIVE KENYA (PIK) PROJECT

ISSUE 9

High Cost of GBV management
leaves families frustrated

Page 3

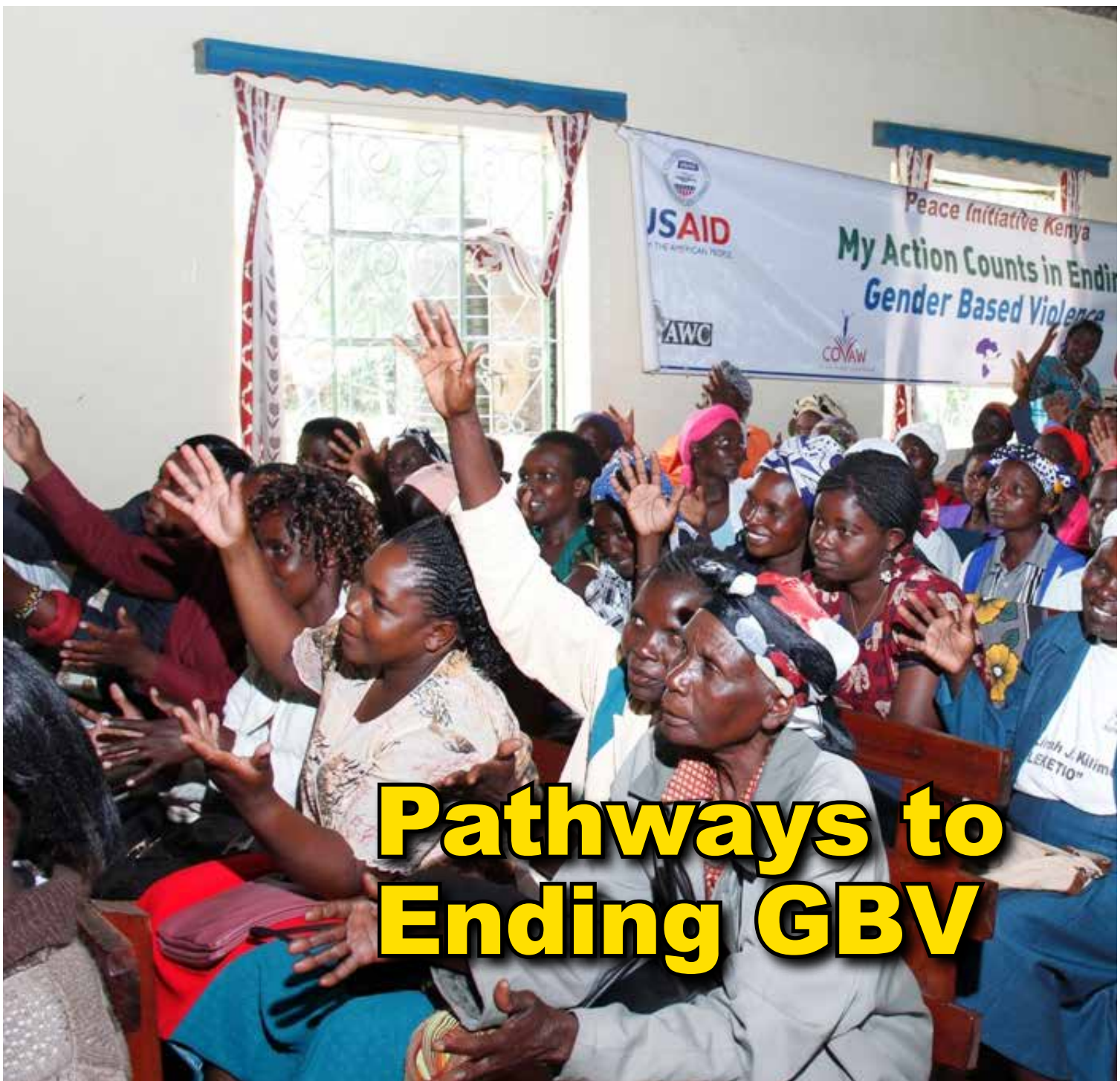


Priscilla Terer: Nandi Woman
chief's fight against GBV.

Page 6

Court users' committee
godsend for GBV survivors

Page 18



**Pathways to
Ending GBV**

About Peace Initiative Kenya

Peace Initiative Kenya (PIK) is a three-year USAID funded project working towards the prevention of and response to gender based violence (GBV) in Kenya. The project aims at supporting prevention of Gender Based Violence and improving the current GBV response framework at the national and county levels.

The PIK project is implemented by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), together with local partners; Rural Women Peace Link (RWPL), Sauti Ya Wanawake – Pwani, Health Care Assistance Kenya (HAK) through GBV helpline 1195, Women’s Empowerment Link, African Women’s Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP), Rapado, Nyabende Support Programmes, Amjutine Children’s Care and Protection Centre and African Woman and Child Feature Service (AWC).

The project covers nine counties: Taita Taveta, Kwale, Mombasa, Kisumu, Migori, Kisii, Uasin Gishu, Nandi and Trans Nzoia to improve GBV prevention, as well as increase access and utilization of GBV services through community outreach and other awareness raising efforts.

At the national level, the PIK project works closely with the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), Ministry of Devolution and Planning, specifically the Directorate of Gender, Anti-Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Board and other stakeholders to support the Government in creating an enabling environment for coordination of GBV prevention and service provision.

Project Goal:

- To improve national and county-level gender-based violence (GBV) service delivery systems and policy implementation.

Project Objectives:

- Strengthen county engagement in preventing and responding to GBV
- Increase access and utilization of GBV services through community outreach and other awareness raising efforts

Contact Information

International Rescue Committee

Regent Court, along Argwings

Kodhek Road

Contact the Chief of Party

Phone: +254 726082140

Email: PIK@rescue.org

Facebook: GBV Service Providers

Africa Woman and Child Feature Service

Nairobi Baptist Church Court, Green Lane,

off Ngong Road Nairobi

Phone: +254 20 2720554, +254 722 209510

Email: info@awcfs.org

Website: www.awcfs.org

Twitter: @AWCFS

Contents

FGM circumcisers turn against the tradition, call for its end

Page 5

Community organization joins PIK in fight against GBV.”

Page 9

PIK media tour exposes journalist to

GBV stories

Page 12

AWC counts gains of belonging to the PIK family

Page 20

Editorial Team

IRC TEAM

Jebiwot Sumbeiywo
Joyce Muchena
Valine Moraa
Ruth Oywaya

AWC TEAM

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Arthur Okwemba

MANAGING EDITOR:

Jane Godia

PROGRAMME MANAGER:

Ruth Omukhango

SUB EDITOR:

Odhiambo Orlale

CONTRIBUTORS

Jael Jelimo
Jane Godia
Ruth Omukhango
Valine Moraa

DESIGN & PRINTING:

Vieve Omnimedia

This production is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.



INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE



AFRICAN WOMAN AND CHILD FEATURE

High cost of GBV management leaves families frustrated

BY JANE GODIA

If it were not for the collaborative efforts of Sauti ya Wanawake Pwani and Healthcare Assistance Kenya (HAK) Katana (not his real name) would not be alive today.

Sauti which is based in Mombasa and HAK which runs the toll free GBV helpline 1195 have proofed how working partnership can produce major positive results.

Katana's case is one of the many that the two organisations have jointly or singularly addressed.

When Katana's mother turned against him for allegedly stealing money from her handbag, it was heartlessly. She beat him and then set his hands ablaze as punishment.

Evacuated

Following a tip off from neighbours — because the two organisations had created awareness around GBV — Sauti and HAK rushed to Katana's rescue.

They evacuated him to a safe environment in Tudor Estate called Mji Wa Usalama, a safe home in Mombasa.

Domestic violence in homes where parents turn against their children and vice versa, or where siblings turn against each other have been an issue of concern. It is for this reason that the Protection Against Domestic Violence law, which International Rescue Committee supported through Peace Initiative Kenya, was formulated and



Fanis Lisiagali, Executive Director Healthcare Assistance Kenya, explains details about GBV Helpline 1195 to delegates at the Nairobi+30 Conference Expo. PHOTO: CHRISTINE OGUTU

enacted.

With a vision to have a nation free of all forms of gender based violence and a mission to improve national and county-level gender based violence (GBV) service delivery systems and policy implementation, the PIK project is working in nine counties to ensure that this dream is realised.

Partners

Other implementing partners in the project that is supported by USAID are African Woman and Child Feature Service, African Women's Entrepreneurship

Programme, Women's Empowerment Link and Rural Women Peace Link; Amjutine Children Care and Protection Centre, Nyabende Support Programme, and Rural Aids Prevention and Development Organisation (RAPADO).

Objective

The PIK project's objective is to strengthen county engagement in preventing and responding to GBV and increasing access and utilization of GBV services through community outreach and other awareness raising efforts.

It's the community awareness raising efforts that has seen members of the public alerting PIK partners about Sexual and Gender Based Violence cases in their localities.

Although Katana was removed from his home to a safe place, the issue of who would cater for the cost of his treatment remained a challenge. HAK had to refer him to Coast General Hospital in Mombasa for treatment.

Arrested

Katana's mother was later arrested and PAGE 4 >>

<<FROMPAGE3

convicted. This was big blow to the family who depended on her heavily. However, she would later die in custody, double tragedy for the family.

Katana's case is proof enough of how cost of GBV in its all dimensions, can be destructive. It not only drains family's resources but also that of others such as organisations that chip in when a survivor of violence cannot afford to pay hospital bills.

Widespread

According to the United Nations, the cost of Gender Based Violence is widespread. The UN notes that every recognisable effect of violence has a cost implication which could be direct or indirect.

The effects of GBV could also include intangible costs such as premature death (as in the case of Katana's mother), pain and suffering for which there is no imputed monetary value in the economy.

According to a report released by PIK in 2013, The Status of GBV in Kenya, the cost of managing loss due to uncompensated fatal and related ailments such as headaches, back pain, abdominal pain, fibromyalgia, gastrointestinal disorders,



“Gender Based Violence is a problem that those keen on economic development should worry about.”

Joyce Muchena, Gender Specialist at IRC

limited mobility and poor overall health, absorbs resources that could have been utilized for more productive purposes.

The report notes that children who grow up in violent families may suffer a range of lifelong behavioural and emotional disturbances.

Another report, Gender Based Violence and Development: A paper of Peace Initiative Kenya, 2015 notes that direct costs are the actual expenditures related to GBV.

Effects

“They include health care services, judicial services and

social services. They represent real money spent in dealing with immediate or long term effects of GBV. Indirect costs stem from effects of GBV that have an imputed monetary value even though they do not involve an actual monetary exchange.

They represent the value of lost income and reduced productivity from paid and unpaid work, as well as the foregone value of lifetime earnings for those who have died from GBV causes,” says the PIK report.

For instance, reconstructive surgery for Katana cost KSh750,000 which the family could not raise. It was HAK which appealed to Kenyatta National Hospital who agreed to carry out the surgery for free.

Pulling together

The war against GBV cannot be won by one person or organisation. Pulling together of resources and bringing organisations in a coalition, has been the strength that has helped PIK project achieve mileage in the fight against GBV.

According to Joyce Muchena, Gender Specialist at IRC under the PIK project notes: “Gender

Based Violence is a problem that those keen on economic development should worry about.”

She explains: “The cost of violation as in the case of Katana, for example, is both immediate and long term and it must be given a multifaceted approach.”

Costs

According to Muchena: “The immediate costs are in terms of health which requires instant response. However, the long term effects and costs are psychological because survivors have to live with the trauma that they were violated.”

These costs can be looked at in terms of indicators like in the case of Katana, as a child he lost school hours and would have to pay in terms of both time and money.

Muchena says: “The mathematical figure is tempered by the fact that we're not able to value other issues. We may not have actual hard figures but have various indicators that show loss.”

According to Muchena, each GBV case should be costed on its own merit because the impact of loss or injury for the rest of one's life cannot be quantified.”

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE **HELP** **LINE** **24 HOURS**

DIAL TOLL FREE 1195

Enhance support for Survivors of rape, defilement, FGM and physical assault.



Some of the FGM practitioners who have abandoned the practice and are now teaching schoolgirls about its harmful effects
PHOTO: GEORGE NGESE

FGM circumcisers turn against age old tradition

BY ODHIAMBO ORLALE

In Nandi County, a group of about 30 women have become the talk of town. The women live by the Nandi saying: “Do not annoy a midwife while you are still bearing children (Mo kisasei korgopsigisio yotakesikisie).”

Reformed

To the 30 women, who have now dropped the knife and are reformed Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) practitioners in Tinderet Constituency, the proverb is a warning against misusing relationships in which we still depend on.

Led by Mary Tot, leader Tuli yoluk Women’s Group, the women are now using their experience advocate for girl-child education by campaigning against Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), a harmful practice that has been outlawed.

So far, Tot and her colleagues are the talk of their villages since they publicly announced their anti-FGM position and took up the decision to promote girl child education.

The elderly women stand out by the wrinkles on their faces and dangling slit ear lobes but cannot talk freely about the bloody exercise because the

Nandi culture forbids it.

Efforts

Their efforts are already bearing fruit as six girls who had dropped out of school have returned, thanks to their joint efforts.

The women are pursuing their agenda in collaboration with the Rural Women Peace Link, an implementing partner of the Peace Initiative Kenya (PIK) project. Through this collaboration, the women have had four capacity building sessions.

Taboo

Female Genital Mutilation is a taboo word and most leaders who spoke to journalists during a media tour of Nandi

County denied that the vice is still being practiced with an exception of a few who were bold enough to say there are isolated cases.

The media tour was organised by Peace Initiative Kenya project through the lead partner, International Rescue Committee, and other implementing partners African Woman and Child Feature Service (AWC) and Rural Women Peace Link.

The main focus of the media tour was to document on PIK’s work with the reformed FGM perpetrators. The women have since formed themselves into a group.

To be eligible for membership into the group, one must be over 60 years and confirm that they have discarded the crude tools among other paraphernalia used in the practice.

TURN TO PAGE 8 >>

Priscilla Terer: Nandi woman chief's fight against GBV

BY ODHIAMBO ORLALE

When an alarm was raised about scrapping off the position of chiefs, who are government administrators at the lowest level many people were worried. However, the most worried group were women and girls, because to them in the villages, the chiefs were the first point of defence especially in dealing with Sexual and Gender Based Violence.

Justice

Chiefs in the villages are known to dispense of justice so fast that even the Supreme Court cannot match them. Another gain for the women in the new Constitution is that all appointive positions must have a two third gender principle where there must not be more than two thirds of the same gender in appointments. This clause has seen an increase in the number of women who have been appointed to position of chiefs in many locations.

One location that has gained in having a female chief is Kiminde, in Nandi County. Here, for the past six years, Priscilla Terer has literally stuck out her neck for the sake of women and girls.

Being the first woman chief of Kiminde, Terer has had to ensure that she leaves a mark that would make many people remember her once she hangs up her boots.

Even though she is a national government administrator, her passion lies in protecting women and girls. Through this drive, one of the best partnerships she has forged is working with Rural Women Peace Link (RWPL), a local non-governmental organisation in the anti-Gender Based Violence (GBV) campaign.

Her work in the fight against Gender Based Violence has been a long one having started much earlier when she was a primary school teacher and has grown to bear fruit.

Across borders

Rural Women Peace Link is based in Eldoret town in the neighbouring Uasin Gishu County. The organisation works across county borders covering the entire North Rift.

However, in relation to the Peace Initiative Kenya (PIK) project, RWPL works in Nandi, Uasin Gishu and Trans Nzoia counties where cases of GBV and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) have been a cause for concern.



The first woman chief of Kiminde location in Nandi County, Priscilla Terer, says the decline in GBV cases in the area has been one of her biggest achievements.

PHOTO: GEORGE NGESA

This is according to a recent report published by Peace Initiative Kenya (PIK), My Action Counts: An Assessment of Gender Based Violence Responses in Nine Counties in Kenya. Other than the three mentioned counties the others are Kisumu, Kisii, Migori, Taita Taveta, Kwale and Mombasa.

Launched

The PIK report which was launched in December 2014 reveals that Kapsabet, which is Nandi County headquarters, receives between five and six cases of Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) daily, while between three and four cases of incest are reported weekly. Nandi County is where PIK has programmes on GBV and FGM

The assessment was commissioned by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in

partnership with USAID and carried out under the PIK. The main aim of the assessment was to provide an overview of prevalence of GBV and how various sectors are responding to it.

The partnership between RWPL and Chief Terer is in line with the PIK strategy which strives to strengthen county engagement in preventing and responding to GBV as well as to increase access and utilization of GBV services through community outreach and other awareness raising efforts.

Awareness

During a recent interview in Kapsabet where was following up on a GBV case at the police headquarters accompanied by her assistant Ezekiel Chepsiror, Terer says their joint efforts with RWPL has created awareness and led

TURN TO PAGE 7 >>

to a reduction in the number of SGBV cases reported and taken courts.

These efforts have seen Terer identified as one of the anti-GBV champions in the county for her role in the community as a mother, former teacher and now administrator in an area that holds tight to its traditions and culture.

Reach out

Before staking up the position of chief, Terer taught at Mugondo Primary School where she also served as the school's principal for seven years. During this time, she used her position and experience to reach out to parents, particularly mothers to protect their daughters against paedophiles and rapists.

In 2010 when the national government decided to split administrative areas in Nandi County to create another location in her village, Terer seized the opportunity and sent her application to compete for the hotly contested position of a chief.

"I had served children for long and it was time to serve adults," she says.

Coveted position

Terer recalls being the only woman applicant among the 20 applications for the coveted position.

Her first contact with RWPL was when she was invited to attend a sensitisation and awareness public forum in Chepsiror Location that was attended by over 100 women. It was at this forum that Terer decided to support the organisation's efforts after

being inspired by the team of experts who talked against GBV and FGM.

It was from here that Terer decided to join the anti-GBV and FGM activists to promote the message to all and sundry in her location and beyond.

She has since attended a number of RWPL capacity-building forums and addressed participants on issues of defilement, incest, rape and early marriages among other vices.

Promoting peace

Terer has never shied away from using her security barazas (meetings) to highlight these vices as a way of promoting peace and harmony in families and the community at large.

Asked whether she has been confronted with any FGM cases in her location, Terer replies in the negative saying the isolated cases were reported in locations bordering Kericho and Kisumu counties.

Clearly aware that she cannot win alone, Terer has had a close working relationship with other leading anti-GBV champions among

them Zipporah Kering, Nandi County Women Representative and Irene Magut, a member of Nandi Council of Elders among others.

Her affiliation with RWPL has also been boosted by the partnership they have had with local religious leaders who allow them to use their facilities such as churches and halls for public forums.

"One of our biggest successes so far has been the decline in the number of GBV cases reported in my location and the county as a whole," Terer explains.

She notes that the initiative has also led to more women being empowered because they are now reporting GBV cases not only to her office but also to the police.

Major cause

Indeed, under the RWPL empowerment programmes and trainings, poverty was identified as a major cause of GBV and a number of women have since been supported to start small scale businesses such as bee-keeping, kitchen gardens, horticultural

production and poultry as well as baking bread and cakes for income generation.

With the support of RWPL, Terer has extended awareness and sensitisation programmes to local schools, starting with the three around where she used previously taught.

In these forums, parents and pupils are addressed separately by experts including reformed circumcisers, about their rights as well as causes and solutions around GBV.

Terer is also working closely with the Court Users Committee, which is chaired by the Kapsabet Principal Magistrate to address GBV cases and make it easier for the complainants to access justice.

Free to share

"During a meeting at Mosobicho in a church compound, I invited the Council of Elders to attend and asked them to be free to share their words of wisdom with the participants," says Terer. She adds: "We also urged the elders to listen to what the participants had to say."

Terer says: "We raised the issue of incest in families, how to dress our girls and how to teach them to avoid risky environments for their own safety."

She confirms that the meeting with the Council of Elders "was a big success".

Turning to the challenges she has faced in leading the anti-GBV campaigns with RWPL, Terer says the strong conservative Nandi culture remains the biggest stumbling block especially on issues around sexuality.



Chief Priscilla Terer during the interview in her office.
PHOTO: GEORGE NGESA

FGM circumcisers turn against the tradition, call for its ends

FROM PAGE 5 >>

Asked whether they were remorseful now that they had 'seen the light,' Tot says they had a lot of time to reflect and believe that there is a time for everything.

Graduate

"The time for FGM has been overtaken by events," says Tot. She adds: "This tradition was used as a training to help our girls graduate into womanhood, but since it was banned our girls need something to replace it and help them transit from girlhood to womanhood."

Since the 30 women abandoned the practice they have faced mixed reaction from their family, relatives and community.

The traditionalists have shunned them and their activities while the elite and Christians have embraced them with open hands and urged them on for saving their girls from the 'cut'.

According to Tot: "We decided to abandon FGM last year after we attended a sensitisation meeting organised by RWPL where we learnt that FGM was not only a reproductive and health issue, but it was also a human rights violation." She adds: "We also attended some workshops that addressed GBV issues that was organised by RWPL."

Since then, the elderly women aged between 60 and 72 have used their group to work with RWPL



"We are reformed and cannot keep on conducting outdated culture which will have far reaching effects on our children instead of helping them invest in their education and future,"

Sabina Metto, also a leader of the Tuiyoluk Women's Group

in its GBV awareness and sensitisation programmes in Nandi County.

Message

The women move in groups of five from one school to another speaking to girls and their teachers. They also meet parents and share the same message.

Nine girls who are in primary and secondary schools have already benefited from the anti-GBV and FGM message.

"So far we are succeeding. The girls who became pregnant and dropped out of school have since returned after we talked to them as well as their parents and husbands," says Tot.

Decades

The reformed women say

they had been conducting FGM in different parts of Nandi County for decades.

However, since they saw the 'light' and abandoned the practice, the women have been receiving invitations to visit schools during lunch time or in the afternoon to counsel and advise girls on life skills.

Addressing the media at Got Nelel Girls' Secondary School in Tinderet, Sabina Metto, also a leader of the Tuiyoluk Women's Group says a high number of girls aged 14 years and below were being forced to drop out of school in Tinderet Sub-county and other parts of Aldai and Mosop Constituencies because of forced FGM.

She notes that the practice was being done in secret for the past three decades and usually prevalent in December.

Perpetrator

Being a FGM perpetrator was a form of generating income and sustaining livelihoods for the women. However, it was being carried out at the expense of the girls whose lives ended up being ruined and forced out of school at a tender age.

"We are reformed and cannot keep on conducting outdated culture which will have far reaching effects on our children instead of helping them invest in their education and future," says

Metto.

Asked what they were doing to encourage others to join in their cause, Metto says they use their weekly meetings with the support of experts to woo more women to join their group and be empowered economically through trainings and starting table banking and/or savings and credit groups.

Rachel Choge, the women's group coordinator says: "Unless we act, we may lose the next generation."

Complaints

Female Genital Mutilation is rampant in other parts of the county and the women say they had received complaints from school teachers on young girls who confessed they dropped out of school because of FGM.

She notes that many of the women are ready to reform as long as the county government and women's organization helps into getting an alternative source of income such as bee-keeping and poultry.

Activities

So far their activities include weekly school visits where five members of the group visit different institutions as per invitations. They receive about 10 letters weekly from school heads seeking their services to talk to students.

According to Dinah Keter, Principal Got Nelel Girls' School, GBV is a serious issue in the area and was leading to a high dropout rate of students due to early pregnancy, FGM and/or marriage.



Nyabende Support Programme official at a community awareness session. PHOTO: CHRISTINE OGUTU

Community organization joins PIK in fight against GBV

BY JANE GODIA

One of the lasting effects of the Peace Initiative Kenya project is its ability to work with diverse partners to realise its main goal: making gender-based-violence history in many communities in Kenya.

Partners

One of this partners at the grassroots level is Nyabende Support Programmes, a community based organisation that operates in Kisumu County. According to Caren Omanga, chairperson Nyabende Support Programmes, the PIK funded

intervention is a project geared towards supporting peace and GBV activities in Kisumu County.

“We are addressing issues of human rights, peace and how to co-exist,” explains Omanga. She adds: Other issues that we are addressing include sexual

violence, domestic violence and child protection.”

The PIK project cannot work without beneficiaries and Omanga notes: “Our beneficiaries are children, women, persons living with disabilities, victims of ethnic clashes and other special groups.

Affected

We also help people who have been affected by floods

in the county.” She adds: “We partner with relevant government departments like; children’s, Health, Judiciary, District Social Development Officers, police and local administration through Deputy county commissioners.”

Nyabende Support Programmes also works closely with youth and women’s groups.

Omanga, who recently attended a PIK partners’ meeting in Nairobi says: “The meeting was good for us because as a community based organisation it was just an achievement to attend a convening of such magnitude.”

She notes: “For us the



We partner with relevant government departments like; children’s, Health, Judiciary, District Social Development Officers, police and local administration through Deputy county commissioners.”

Caren Omanga, chairperson Nyabende Support Programmes,



Jebiwot Sumbeiywo, PIK chief of party, addressing AWC interns, during the Nairobi +30 Conference and Expo. PHOTO: CHRISTINE OGUTU



Paul Omole of RAPADO CBO, an implementing partner of PIK, addressing a community forum in Kuria East in Migori County PHOTO: CHRISTINE OGUTU



Elizabeth Wanjiku, PIK Beneficiary at her sweater shop during an interview with Tusemezane magazine. PHOTO: CHRISTINE OGUTU



Some members of Nandi County government and Kaburwo at a RWPL forum with Nandi County Women MP, Zipporah Kering PHOTO: GEORGE NGESA

PIK staff poses for a photo after holding a meeting with the Nyando Law Courts Margistrate on the strengthening of the Court Users Committee. PHOTO: VALINE MORAA





Ruth Oywaya, Gender Officer at PIK, during training session held by RAPADO in Migori County. PHOTO: GEORGE NGESA



Community Volunteer Elizabeth Mkongo at the Mombasa Stadium while commemorating the Day of the African Child 2015. PHOTO: VALINE MORAA



Participants at a GBV forum in Seme, Kisumu County, being addressed by one of the officials. PHOTO: CHRISTINE OGUTU



Belta Mulinge of Healthcare Assistance Kenya engages the participants of the Nairobi +30 Conference and Expo on GBV response and referral pathways. PHOTO: VALINE MORAA



Joyce Muchena, Gender Specialist PIK samples the Anti-FGM Board IEC materials during a National Music Festival Expo at CITAM, Kisumu County PHOTO: CHRISTINE OGUTU



Gloria Ocholla, Project officer at RAPADO addressing a community forum in Kuria East, Migori. PHOTO: CHRISTINE OGUTU



Journalists from Nandi County during the two-day media tour organised by Rural Women Peace Link with AWC and IRC. PHOTO: GEORGE NGESA

PIK media tour exposes journalist to GBV stories

BY Jael Jelimo

I have served as a journalist representing a leading media house in Nandi County for the past two years. During this time, I have never had an opportunity to be part of a media tour.

Tour

However, a recent media tour under Peace Initiative Kenya (PIK) project organised by Rural Women Peace Link (RWPL), International Rescue Committee (IRC) and African Woman and Child Feature Service (AWCFS) was my first media tour and an eye-opener.

All the other 19 journalists

in Nandi who were in the media tour said they had also never participated in such an activity before in their career.

However, some journalists — five out of 19 — have benefitted from training opportunities with different organizations most of which were conducted away from the county, mainly in the neighbouring towns of Eldoret and Kisumu.

Key contacts

I was looking forward to meeting key contacts and stakeholders on Gender Based Violence (GBV) issues. While I had an opportunity to interact with some survivors, I felt representation by

the national and county governments was low. While they can provide real solutions to this problem, their absence was disappointing.

However, the Court User's Committee interview was an eye-opener to many journalists and after this our relationship with the court has since improved.

Published

On a personal level, I have covered many stories on GBV in Nandi County, some of which have been published.

Most of the stories involved rape, defilement and incest. A case in point is that of a 17-year-old girl who was raped and impregnated by

her guardian, who is also a renowned pastor at a local church.

The survivor was later ejected from the home by the pastor's wife who accused her of tarnishing the family's name.

The girl who became pregnant as a result of the rape later dropped out of school and gave birth to the child. Although her case was taken to the Kapsabet Court, it is yet to be heard and concluded.

I have also covered cases of extreme child and wife battering. Other stories included violence to the old and disabled in the society.

Mainstream

However, I can say that the mainstream media houses have not given issues of GBV the much deserved attention or coverage. The stories are few, far apart and not given sufficient prominence in the pages or on television screens.

In Nandi County, coverage of issues of GBV has been particularly difficult. Stories cannot be written because most survivors are almost always unwilling to speak out.

The fear of stigma or tarnishing the family name has led the survivors and their families to resort to out of court settlements. Others are coerced to drop the cases while most are not reported to the police.

Important voices

Lack of important voices to quote on the subject has led most journalists to neglect GBV stories for fear of lawsuits by alleged perpetrators.

This has been worsened by the fact that the Nandi community is reserved on issues of sex and sexual violence.

The recent media tour was definitely an eye-opener to me and many journalists in the county who had first-hand opportunity to comprehend the seriousness of GBV in the county.

Success

The success of stories of the 30 reformed FGM practitioners, Court User's Committee, Kaburwo (Nandi Council of Elders) and Nandi County Women Representative Zipporah Kering indeed gave us content for filing.

They also served as a lead to many other unwritten stories some of which are currently being followed by different journalists.

Specific areas

I would recommend longer time periods in the next tours, probably a whole week, where journalist will have the opportunity to exhaustively tour specific areas in the county.

The two-day programme though tight was a success and I look forward to another one.

The journalists from the national, regional and vernacular media houses and stations interacted freely with survivors of GBV, champions against GBV who included women, girls among other groups.

The tour set off with a debriefing breakfast meeting at the County Lodge Hotel in Kapsabet where officials of Nandi County government outlined what Nandi was doing to address GBV.

During a visit to Got Ne Lel Secondary School in Tinderet, journalists had an opportunity to interact with a group of 30 reformed traditional female circumcisers.



AWC team during a PIK partners' meeting in a Mombasa hotel
PHOTO: VALINE MORAA

How PIK opened my eyes to the impact of Gender- Based-Violence

BY JANE GODIA

For the past three years African Woman and Child Feature Service (AWC) has partnered with the Peace Initiative Kenya (PIK) project of the International Rescue Committee supported by the USAID as the media partner.

Issues of peace

The project initially started with addressing issues of peace and security before, during and after elections as well as Gender-Based-Violence (GBV) within the electoral processes.

As a media partner, AWC held a series of

trainings with journalists, media roundtable discussions with community stakeholders and media encounters with grassroots women in the counties that PIK targeted.

The organisation also held trainings and sessions with PIK partners on communication strategy and media relations. Unpacking communication and media strategy for the partners opened an avenue to stories that were covered on AWC publications.

However, this also enabled mainstream media to pay more attention to some of the issues raised. The highlight of this process was the National Summit on GBV and Peace, held

in August 2013 in Nairobi.

Eye opener

The Summit itself was an eye opener, bringing to the fore many factors that are brought about by Gender Based Violence. The fact that survivors and perpetrators shared one platform, gave a human face to the statistics that were shared and brought home a better understanding of the impact of GBV.

While the mission was to ensure that women and men in various communities would preach peace, and be united in ensuring that calm prevailed before, during and after the electioneering period, the issue of violence,

TURN TO PAGE 14 >>

<< FROM PAGE 13

ethnic animosity and domestic violence were clearly with us.

The fact that as media, we were accused of playing a role in the post-election violence of 2007-2008, made it all important that we should never relax in our responsibility of informing, educating and entertaining the public.

The education part of the media brought to the fore the subject of peace-building and conflict-sensitive reporting which had never been an issue of concern to the media in Kenya and the country as a whole before.

Engaged the media

However, even as we talked about peace and security in the pre-2013 electioneering period, every time we engaged the media and the community at large, the topic of domestic violence never failed to rear its ugly head. Women would speak of sexual violence including marital rape, a subject that is considered taboo in most communities. For many, they noted, one cannot be at peace if they are raped with their partner or husband.

Right to vote

It also emerged that many women still do not have a right to vote for a candidate of their choice. This would be cause for domestic violence if one dared go against the wishes of the man of the home.

The high number of incest and defilement cases shocked me to the core of my bones. The horror of daughters not being spared sexual violence by their fathers and step-fathers echoed across the county



AWC GBV training of North Rift journalists. PHOTO: GEORGE NGESA

borders.

I came to understand that sitting at my desk would never have given me these stories because then I learnt a lot. I even did a story No Longer Safe: Kenyan Children at Threat from the Four Walls They Call Home, and won the Courage Against Adversity Award in the Children's Rights Media Awards 2012.

I realised that the work we were doing was more than just an assignment, it was a call to duty which we, as media, needed to take to ensure that boys and girls, women and men are safe within the four walls they call home. We also had a duty to ensure that GBV, including domestic violence, is not institutionalised to the point of being seen as normal.

Huge task

The PIK project may have looked simple, and especially when it focused mainly on GBV programming. However, the task of ensuring that this nation zero rates domestic violence is huge. The challenges media faces when trying to address an issue that is eating up society made our

work even more important and challenging.

It was surprising when in some instances journalists opened up to say they were also survivors of domestic violence but could not speak out about it.

Negative impact

The challenge of culture and tradition would also affect their work because then, as a journalist, you are supposed to work in a seamless environment, and here are cultural values and traditions that you follow. This had a negative impact on the work that journalists did.

The PIK project, which was limited to a few partner organizations, made us a close family, and the partners' meetings that we held were also times of reflecting, as well as learning a lot about each other professionally. The bonding enhanced the way we collaborated.

However, the challenge was the fear that most partners had in working with the media. I would sense that many of them looked at AWC with suspicion. If I can use the

Kiswahili lingo, "mulika", they viewed AWC like it was spying on them especially with the prodding questions we posed and publishing in black and white in the Tusemezane Magazine.

Enhance impact

This came from the fact that initially most of the partners did not know how to work with the media. They hardly understood that you can bring the media to your side to positively enhance the impact of your work.

As we head towards the end of the project, many stories remain untold, because what I see as a journalist to be a story worth telling is not what partners see as a story, hence we end up at a crossroads.

However, as AWC allow partners to understand the media jargon, I remain optimistic that eventually the stories of domestic as well as other forms of Sexual and Gender Based Violence will continue to be told with a human face to help close the gap and eventually zero rate the statistics that are in our eyes, overwhelming.

„FROM PAGE 9

meeting acted as a debriefing that enabled us understand the project more in terms of knowing what to do and what not to do.”

Impact

According to Omanga, being a grassroots organisation they felt the positive impact of activities being done in other counties which made them realise the importance of the project.

“We realised that in the fight against GBV we cannot work alone. The meeting acted to emphasize the importance of coming together as a coalition and that networking with the other partners enables us to learn from each other,” says Omanga.

Omanga notes that the PIK project has had great impact in the community where they operate since they are now more informed on issues of peace and GBV.

“We can also say that our people are more aware of their rights,” says Omanga. She explains: “Through this support Nyabende Support Programmes, can be identified by the whole community as a group that is rescuing and referring identified cases. We have become a strong referral pathway.”

Omanga notes that community activists are now more empowered through capacity building activities that are conducted through PIK.

Although Nyabende Support Programmes came into the PIK project later in 2015, they are already registering successes in the

few activities that they have been able to carry out. The PIK project started in 2012.

“Among the successes that we can sing home about is that we have developed very healthy relationships with other stakeholders,” says Omanga. She explains: “We have been appointed to sit in two Court Users Committees (CUCs) in Nyando and Maseno courts.

Appointed

According to Omanga, they have also been appointed to sit on Community Service committee in Nyando.

“Other partners have more confidence with Nyabende Support Programmes which is a grassroots local organisation. Through the PIK project we have rescued and referred more GBV cases than ever before,” she explains.

Omanga says from when they started this project, they have recorded many success stories. For instance, a 30-year-old perpetrator was jailed for 65 years for sodomizing two 14 year old boys; A 28 year old perpetrator was jailed for 35 years for defiling a 12 year old girl who was also mental retarded; A 22 year old cattle herder was jailed for 15 years for defiling a 10 year-old girl inside a maize mill.

“There is the case of a 25-year-old perpetrator was jailed for life for defiling a 10-year-old girl in the bush as the girl went looking for fire wood with her friend; the family have filled an appeal against the judgement. “We are following it closely,” says Omanga. She adds: “These are just but a few success stories

in Kisumu County. We have about 20 on going cases in different courts.”

However, Omanga notes that despite the successes they have also faced challenges.

“We have experienced some challenges especially where other partners expect a lot from us,” she explains adding that the “members of the community have very



“Through this support Nyabende Support Programmes, can be identified by the whole community as a group that is rescuing and referring identified cases. We have become a strong referral pathway.”

Caren Omanga, chairperson Nyabende Support Programmes,

high expectations. Due to high poverty levels, survivors of GBV tend to have a high dependency syndrome.”

According to Omanga, “being a local organization we didn’t have proper structures in place and this is leading to us getting burnt out with the many cases that we are forced to handle”.

Representation

She notes: “The other challenge is that lack of proper legal representation is leading to derailing of cases which affect us as an organization

and survivors.”

However, as a grassroots community organization working in a coalition to intervene in ensuring that GBV mitigation at the county level involves both men and women, Nyabende Support Programmes has learnt very many useful lessons.

“The most important lesson we have learnt is to network with others well,” says Omanga. She notes: “Each person in the community has a role to play in peace building and safeguarding our values.

Omanga reiterates: “We’ve also learnt that it’s not about funding but what you can do for your community at your level.”

She reiterates there are very many opportunities that as an organisation they have realised that can be used in mitigating GBV in the county.

Effective

“We have realized that CUCs are very effective since all relevant departmental heads in terms of criminal investigation is represented in this committee. The others include monthly deputy county commanders barazas; weekly chiefs barazas in all seven sub-counties and Community Activists meetings in all the seven sub-counties,” says Omanga.

“We also have community paralegals, community policing committees; Nyumba Kumi Initiative committees; peace committees; Luo Council of Elders and Village elders,” She explains.

Omanga reiterates that these groups form an important base of alliances in

Community volunteers tackle GBV at the grassroots

BY VALINE MORAA

Elizabeth Mkongo and Mwanaisha Hamisi are both community volunteers with Sauti Ya Wanawake Pwani, a grassroots organisation that advocates for women and children's rights in the Coastal region.

Popularly known as Sauti, the organisation is an implementing partner of the Peace Initiative Kenya (PIK) Project that is supported by USAID.

Volunteers

The community volunteers with Sauti have taken it upon themselves to be the whistle blowers in cases of Sexual Gender Based Violence (GBV) within the localities they live.

They advocate for prevention and response to GBV at the community level through awareness creation forums as well as working with GBV service providers. They are particularly concerned with cases that involve children.

"I have been volunteering with Sauti for more than four years and within this period I have successfully helped resolve eight cases of sexual abuse against children in Ziwa la Ngombe area of Mombasa

County," says Mkongo. She explains: "Most of the cases have seen the perpetrators being prosecuted."

Mkongo notes that this is not a mean feat as many would attest that bringing perpetrators to face justice is a difficult task.

Lure

As a community volunteer, Mkongo has handled many heart rending cases including one that involved two male siblings aged seven and nine. According to Mkongo, the perpetrator owned a video shop in the neighbourhood which he used to lure unsuspecting children.

"The two siblings were sexually abused inside the shop and threatened by the perpetrator against disclosing to anyone his actions," says Mkongo. However, like the proverbial 40 days of a thief, the perpetrator was exposed



"Handling children's cases is very sensitive especially for those who have been abused by relatives since such children need safe shelter,".

Elizabeth Mkongo, community volunteers with Sauti Ya Wanawake Pwani,



Mwanaisha Hamisi during a follow-up visit to check on the recovery progress of the abused child. PHOTO: VALINE MORAA

when one of the children returned home very late and had to explain to his mother the reasons for his delay in getting.

Revealed

The boy revealed that he had been held hostage and abused by the man. This prompted his brother to disclose that he had also been abused by the same perpetrator.

"The mother of the two boys immediately reported the incident to me and we took the children to the Coast General Gender Based Violence Recovery Centre for examination and treatment," says Mkongo.

Investigated

The matter was also reported to the police who investigated on the case. The perpetrator confessed to the crime which prompted his arrest.

"However, when the man was arraigned in court he denied the charges. He has been remanded at the Shimo la Tewa Maximum Prison as he awaits the final judgment in September 2015," she says.

Mkongo observes that children are unsafe even in their own homes as she highlights a case involving a 14-year old girl who was brought up by her stepfather but upon the death of her mother, the man begun to abuse her sexually.

However, with the intervention of Sauti and Mkongo as well as support from the area chief and the community, the perpetrator was caught in the act and arrested. He has also been

remanded in custody as he waits prosecution.

Sensitive

“Handling children’s cases is very sensitive especially for those who have been abused by relatives since such children need safe shelter,” says Mkongo. She reiterates: “This has prompted me to turn my home into a temporary safe house for abused children as they wait to be taken to rescue homes with the support of the Department of Children’s Services.”

Mkongo’s experiences are similar to those of Hamisi who has also been volunteering with Sauti for close to six years. “When PIK first started working with the community in 2012, Sauti could get a number of GBV cases on a daily basis,” says Hamisi. She notes: “Through continuous community forums on GBV awareness creation, cases have greatly reduced.”

According to Hamisi who lives in Kisauni area of Mombasa County, they remain vigilant to ensure that perpetrators do not go scot free.



Public forum by Sauti Ya Wanawake Pwani. PHOTO: VALINE MORAA

Volunteer

As a volunteer for Sauti ya Wanawake, Hamisi has been able to respond to a number of SGBV cases. She narrates a case where her intervention led to the arrest and incarceration of a paedophile.

“A mother who sells coconuts by the roadside left her two young daughters in charge and went home to attend to an emergency. However, as she was gone, a man came posing as a customer and asked the older child to go to the shop and buy

sweets. He then kidnapped the younger one and defiled her at a nearby forest before abandoning her,” Hamisi narrates.

The girl was rescued by a boda boda operator and was reunited with her mother who reported the incident to Hamisi.

“We immediately took the child to Coast General Gender Based Violence Recovery Centre where she received free medical care and psychosocial support,” says Hamisi adding that a comprehensive medical

report on the defilement was done. She confirms: “We also reported the case to the area police station.”

Though it initially appeared as if the case might go unresolved, the man reappeared at the place where the women sells coconuts and the girls were able to identify him.

Arrested

“We notified the police who came and arrested him. The court process found him guilty and he was sentenced to life imprisonment,” explains Hamisi.

Initiatives such as this have seen the PIK project continue to work with and build the capacity of community volunteers in Mombasa, Taita Taveta and Kwale counties.

Through this engagement, the volunteers have become agents of change at the community level by providing free legal and psychosocial support to GBV survivors. They also visit schools to create awareness on SGBV and how children can respond in case of violations.



Peace Initiative Kenya

My Action Counts in Ending Gender Based Violence











Kapsabet Senior Resident Magistrate, Ms Gladys Adhiambo, who is the chairperson of the Nandi CUC, is flanked by the members. PHOTO: GEORGE NGESA

Court Users Committee godsend for GBV survivors

BY ODHIAMBO ORLALE

Court users in Nandi County, especially those affected by sexual violence, are a happy lot since a committee was set up to address their issues.

“The number of people complaining about poor services at the Kapsabet law courts has dropped drastically since the setting up of the Court Users’ Committee (CUC),” said Gladys Adhiambo who is the Committee’s chairperson and Senior Resident Magistrate in Nandi County.

Sensitize

According to Adhiambo, there is need to sensitise the public about Gender Based Violence (GBV) cases because incest, defilement, rape and sodomy incidents

are quiet rampant and must be addressed.

“I believe that only 80 per cent of GBV cases reach the courts and this is why we need the support of organisations like Rural Women Peace Link,” explained Adhiambo.

Network

Rural Women Peace Link is (RWPL), is a local non-governmental organisation that was set up in 1992 as a network of grassroots women’s organizations working in 14 districts in Rift Valley and western Kenya. Rural Women’s Peace Link promotes peace at the community level and empowers women and girls to become active citizens and agents of change in communities affected by ethnic violence and GBV.

According to Adhiambo, the biggest challenge while

dealing with GBV cases is culture where some people feel that they must “protect one of their own no matter what” and opt to meet with elders under a tree and offer livestock as compensation.

Other than culture, red tape and bureaucracy in government institutions also poses a stumbling block to survivors of SGBV getting access to justice.

Survivors

“Complainants who included GBV survivors, most of who experienced sexual violence, have been frustrated by the red tape, delay and insensitivity of some officials,” noted Adhiambo.

However, since the CUC was formed three years ago and started partnering with RWPL, much progress has been made in addressing GBV

issues.

Adhiambo explained: “The CUCs are a platform for various actors in the justice sector. We come together to ensure access to justice for all.” She added: “We also ensure speedy dispensation of justice.”

According to Adhiambo, through the CUC they provide an opportunity for the Judiciary to engage in a participatory and inclusive approval by all other arms of government, civil society organisations and the private sector groups.

The Kapsabet CUC has 35 members and an office as well as a website for the public to report and get urgent feedback. The CUC has since held a series of meetings, workshops and interactive forums with the public, supported by Rural Women Peace Link.

Success stories

Adhiambo identified one of the success stories as public awareness and sensitisation meeting in Kiminde Location where cases of GBV had been on the rise.

The CUC partnered with Priscilla Terer, the location chief, who works round the clock to ensure that GBV cases are reduced.

Addressing journalists at the Kapsabet Law Courts during a media tour organised by Rural Women Peace Link in conjunction with African Woman and Child and International Rescue Committee, Adhiambo said members were representing all major stakeholders in the courts.

These are the Judiciary,
TURN TO PAGE 19 >>

<<FROM PAGE 18

police and prisons department as well as the local administration and county government. The probation and children's departments are also represented.

Others are the Law Society of Kenya and civil society organisations represented by RWPL among others, Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization (MYWO), health sector, religious leaders and National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK).

"As of now, most people now know their rights and are using chiefs, the police and courts to demand for their rights," Adhiambo explained. She reiterated: "Incest and defilement are felonies under the law of Kenya and I will never allow a survivor and/or parents to seek for an out of court settlement."

Incest

In an incest case where a father is sentenced to jail, the courts ensure that the child is taken care of either by the mother and/or the Children's Department as required by law.

Asked about the conviction rate this year, Adhiambo noted: "I have handled four GBV cases where the suspects pleaded guilty and were sentenced. One of them was of a one-year-old girl and the other a three-month-old baby girl who were both defiled by their fathers. She added: "The

cases were concluded within three months with support from RWPL."

Questioned about the rationale behind giving a convicted GBV perpetrator bail, Adhiambo said she was aware of a case where a man on bond had seven cases in Kapsabet and at the Vihiga County law courts.

According to Adhiambo, being released on bond was a Constitutional right and a magistrate has a right to decline or cancel a bond where there was evidence of one interfering with the witnesses and/or evidence.

Defilement cases

According to the CUC's records, defilement cases lead followed by attempted defilement. Since the beginning of this year, 29 defilement cases were reported compared to 50 in 2014 and 53 in 2013.

Cases of attempted defilement were seven this year, in contrast to 12 in 2014 and 14 in 2013.

The records further show that since the year begun as at May 2015, there have been five cases of incest, four of rape, three of attempted rape and two cases of unnatural offences.

"The reporting rate of cases was 25 per cent while the conviction rate was four per cent in the GBV cases in 2013. In the same year, cases reported to the police were

2,693 which translated to seven defilement cases per day."

The list of perpetrators is shocking and includes parents (24%) in the defilement and/or incest cases; close relatives who include aunts and uncles are 10 per cent of the perpetrators; the other suspects are church ministers, drug abusers, carjackers, motorcycle/motorbike/taxi operators and guards.

Neighbours made up 10 per cent of perpetrators followed by teachers at five per cent.

"We have had a big impact and we thank RWPL for its support to help us have a reformed judiciary," said Adhiambo adding that cases of missing files had been minimized since all stakeholders were involved.

Another milestone has been the setting up of mobile courts to take justice to the residents in far-flung areas like Kibiyet, Kaptumo, Kabujoi and Songhor in Tinderet Constituency where cases of incest, defilement and rape are worrying.

Intervention

Through the intervention of the CUC, survivors are getting closer to justice unlike in the past when 'kipka' (village elders) would sit under a tree and ask the survivors and perpetrators to settle the matter out of court and cattle was given as compensation.

"Although we respect

culture, the law must be respected by all irrespective of age, relationship or social status," reiterated Adhiambo. She noted: "Of late, we have been getting a lot of support from the village elders and chiefs in GBV cases. School teachers and heads have also been supportive in the anti-GBV campaign."

One of the biggest challenges in incest and defilement cases is culture and the tendency of the affected children 'going missing' after the matter is reported to the authorities.

Policy

In relation to this, Adhiambo has made it a policy since she was posted to Kapsabet to hear and conclude all incest and/or defilement case within two weeks of presentation in court to ensure that survivors get justice and are not hidden away by the parents, some of who are the perpetrators.

The CUC works also closely with the Children's and Probation departments in cases where some children go missing midway into the incest and/or defilement cases.

"The importance of the CUC cannot be underestimated. We no longer have blame game whenever one of our clients raises an issue. We address it and give the complainant feedback as soon as we can," Adhiambo explained.

GBV map website:

Log to www.gbvkenya.org for gender based violence service providers in Kenya for quick reference

AWC counts gains of belonging to the PIK family

BY RUTH OMUKHANGO

If there is one project that has transformed how African Woman and Child Feature Service looks at gender based violence, then it is the Peace Initiative Kenya (PIK), a project of International Rescue Committee.

For AWC, being the media partner under the PIK project has been one of the most successful campaigns under its Media and Gender Justice Programme.

Even though the organisation has had previous engagements with several organisations in addressing issues around GBV, one of the drawbacks has been lack of coordinated efforts, particularly in regard to media.

“The media is powerful in setting the agenda of a nation on issues such as GBV. And hence it is important to improve the skills of media practitioners when it comes to reporting gender based violence and facilitating discussions around the matter,” explains Arthur Okwemba, Executive Director AWC.

For the past two years, AWC has been working with partners to strengthen GBV responses using strategic communication and strategic initiatives at both national and county levels. The organization has gained immense knowledge



Arthur Okwemba, Executive Director AWC, at a PIK partner's training. PHOTO: VALINE MORAA

as we interacted with partners to offer them media support. This is learning experience that cannot be gained from a classroom.

We have also, through the project, empowered media to hold county and national governments accountable when it comes to addressing responses and prevention of GBV.

AWC has so far managed to train 81 journalists drawn from the mainstream and community media. Through the trainings, the project has seen an increase in the number of GBV articles published in mainstream media as well as in the organisation's in-house newspapers, Tusemezane Magazine, which is currently funded under the PIK project.

The publication is distributed to strategic partners as well as key stakeholders addressing GBV at both national and county levels. Other newspapers

that are benefiting in terms of content generation include—The Reject and Kenyan Woman.

Through PIK, we have managed to expand our network at the National and County level. This is going to improve our response to many other issues besides gender based violence.

“Indeed, our engagement with PIK partners has helped to open opportunities for the organisation to network with various stakeholders in the nine counties which we would not have managed on our own,” says Okwemba. He adds: “This has enriched the organisation's capacity to engage at both national and county level.”

The partnership with PIK has also enabled AWC staff to acquire new skills that will immensely benefit the organisation. These include photography, monitoring and evaluation, grants

management as well as advocacy skills.

AWC has also received technical support from the key implementing partner, International Rescue Committee (IRC) on how to write technical reports as well as an understanding of how to apply for funding opportunities with large organisations.

The radio talk show intervention has seen AWC extend tentacles into this media platform, and be able to increase visibility of GBV and influence national and county debates on the same.

Working with other partners on this project has also enabled AWC staff to interact and share with various shades of minds on GBV issues. Partners have benefited from AWC's media liaison, especially in helping open doors for many of them into media spaces. This interactions with the media over time has improved and removed negative perceptions about the media, especially on the part of some partners.

AWC believes the media is a powerful force and change agent that cannot be ignored in addressing issues which are close to the hearts of men and women in society.

“We have learnt that the media will only support issues that they understand and which they believe have a positive impact on the lives of ordinary people,” says Okwemba.