



REPUBLIC OF KENYA



## Eliminating GBV in Practice:

Key Insights from the NGEC–JICA GBV Elimination Project in Kenya





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# KENYA VISION 2030

TOWARDS A GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE  
AND PROSPEROUS NATION



VISION

An inclusive society free from gender inequality and all forms of discrimination



MISSION

To promote and protect gender equality and freedom from all forms of discrimination in Kenya, especially for Special Interest Groups through ensuring compliance with policies, laws and practice



CORE  
VALUES

- Dignity
- Equality
- Teamwork
- Integrity
- Inclusivity

## *Published by*

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## **FOREWORD**

**G**ender-based violence is one of the gravest barriers to equality and human dignity. It affects women, men, and children in every part of Kenya, undermining their safety, limiting their opportunities, and eroding the fabric of society. Confronting it requires more than awareness, it demands coordinated action, survivor-centered responses, and innovation across all sectors.

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) collaborated from 2023 to 2025 to pilot practical approaches to eliminate GBV in Kajiado, Machakos, and Nairobi counties. This collaboration focused on strengthening the capacity of service providers, improving access to survivor-friendly facilities, and testing new prevention models in schools, villages, and the private sector.

The project has shown that change is possible. Teachers are better equipped to protect learners, health and legal officers are delivering more responsive services, and communities are creating safer spaces through dialogue, economic empowerment, and collective action. The private sector has also demonstrated that it can be a partner in prevention, offering innovative solutions that link business growth with social impact.

This report captures the key insights from that journey. It highlights not only the progress made, but also the lessons that can guide policy and practice as Kenya moves toward scaling up survivor-centered, community-driven, and multi-sectoral approaches.

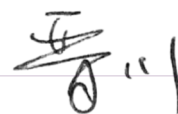
We thank all those who contributed to this effort, survivors who shared their experiences, county governments, civil society partners, community leaders, and service providers. Their commitment has been the driving force behind the results documented here.

As NGEC and JICA, we reaffirm our shared resolve to work with all partners in building a future where no one lives in fear of violence, and where every person can thrive in dignity and equality.



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## **Introduction**

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) remains one of the most pervasive human rights violations in Kenya, deeply entrenched in gender inequality and harmful social norms. According to the 2022 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), 43% of women and girls aged 15 to 49 have experienced Intimate Partner Violence. In addition, 13% have been subjected to sexual violence, while approximately 65% of women report having sexual harassment or violence in schools, workplaces or public spaces. Harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage also continue to affect the lives of women and girls across the country.

In response to these pressing challenges, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), launched a joint project aimed at strengthening county-level actions to prevent and eliminate GBV. Despite its relatively short implementation timeframe, the Project made a progress in strengthening capacities at the target counties, piloting innovative approaches, and generating practical knowledge to inform future GBV prevention and survivor support initiatives. This policy brief outlines the key achievements, lessons learned, and strategic recommendations based on the experiences and evidence generated through the Project.

## **Project Overview**

This project was implemented for two years (2023 to 2025) to prevent gender-based violence (GBV), protect survivors, and support their self-reliance and social reintegration. The project focused particularly on working with relevant officers from the three target counties—Kajiado, Machakos, and Nairobi. Key Initiatives were as follows:

### » **Capacity Strengthening**

Enhanced the skills and knowledge of professional service providers and support personnel at the county level to improve GBV response service delivery, with a strong emphasis on the survivor-centered approach.

### » **Coordination and Networking**

Facilitated collaboration and network-building among service providers and relevant institutions to promote more coordinated, comprehensive, and seamless support systems for GBV survivors.

### » **Community-Based Approaches in Schools, Villages, and the Private Sector**

Supported grassroots-level initiatives and piloted locally grounded approaches to GBV prevention, survivor protection, and social reintegration, leveraging schools, community structures, and private sector engagement.

Throughout the course of the Project, a series of capacity development initiatives were carried out targeting government officials and relevant stakeholders in Kajiado, Machakos, and Nairobi Counties. In parallel, GBV Recovery Centers (GBVRCs) and shelters within the three counties served as critical support hubs, facilitating the establishment of a more coordinated, comprehensive and seamless support system for GBV survivors.

<sup>1</sup> Kenya Demographic Health Survey (2022)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

At the community level, the Project collaborated with local authorities in Kajiado County to promote the creation of “GBV-Free Smart Villages”—a model aimed at fostering safer, more responsive communities through women’s empowerment, awareness-raising, prevention, and collective action. In Machakos County, efforts focused on developing GBV-responsive school models that actively engage in prevention, early identification, and student-centered support mechanisms. In Nairobi County, the Project explored business-driven approaches to GBV prevention by promoting enterprises and entrepreneurial initiatives that contribute to the elimination of gender-based violence.

## Key Achievements of the Project

### 1. Strengthening the Capacity of Service Providers

One of the fundamental achievements of the project has been the capacity development of specialized service providers involved in GBV response. This included staff working at shelters and one-stop centers, as well as officials in health and gender departments, and professionals in the legal and judicial sectors. Through targeted training, over 219 government officials were equipped with survivor-centered approaches. Following these trainings, each participant was confirmed to have taken at least one tangible step to enhance the protection, case management, or reintegration of survivors.



*“I had heard the term ‘survivor-centered approach’ before, but I didn’t really understand what it meant in practice. Through this training, I now feel confident that I can apply it in my work. I want to start by listening to survivors without interrupting them.”*

**--Social Worker, Machakos County**

*“I didn’t know how to engage with children who had experienced violence at school. Through the practical training, I now understand what kind of support I need to provide. I’m now able to reach out and talk to the children more proactively.”*

**--Teacher, Machakos County**

*“We learnt about survivor screening and the importance of documenting. We developed a registration form for receiving survivors and managing the cases.”*

**--Safe shelter staff and counsellor, Machakos safe shelter.**

## 2. Empowering Local Actors to Lead GBV Prevention and Response

The Project also prioritized raising awareness across sectors and activating community-level actors who play a vital role in GBV prevention and response. These actors included government officers from sectors such as transport, students, religious and traditional leaders, local influencers, women’s group leaders, and private sector representatives. Through targeted capacity-building efforts, approximately 1,019 individuals were empowered to proactively address GBV within their respective roles and communities. Their engagement has been instrumental in fostering a more sustainable, locally driven, and inclusive support ecosystem for GBV survivors, laying the foundation for long-term prevention and protection efforts at the grassroots level.



*“I realized how frequently we encounter cases of GBV in the public transport sector that often go unaddressed. This session made us recognize the urgent need for developing a national policy to address GBV in public transport.”*

**--Government Officer, during an awareness session on GBV in the public transport sector**

*“We never considered water points as potential sites for GBV. Now we understand that poor lighting, remote locations, and the absence of separate facilities can expose women and girls to serious risks. We need to work closely with gender and protection officers to ensure that water access is safe for everyone.”*

**-- Government Officer, Water Sector**

*“I used to think GBV was only a social issue for the gender department. But I now understand that budgeting is a powerful tool—we can prioritize funds for survivor support services, shelters, and awareness programs. We all have a role to play.”*

**--Government officer in charge of budgeting.**

## 3. Improving the Lives of GBV Survivors and Children

The Project directly reached approximately 1,392 GBV survivors, including women and children, supporting their journey toward healing, empowerment, and self-reliance. Through mutual support groups, capacity strengthening, economic empowerment initiatives, and male engagement activities, these individuals have begun to regain confidence, restore their dignity, and rebuild their lives.

## *Initiative to create GBV Free Smart Village*

In Kajiado County, the “GBV-Free Smart Village” initiative empowered women to enhance their livelihoods and safety through a comprehensive approach that combined capacity building on GBV, peer support activities, literacy programs, vegetable farming, and the use of solar lanterns and energy-saving stoves. As a result of improved literacy and the effective application of these tools, women were able to reduce time spent on household chores by an average of three hours per day and earn an average of KES 1,500 per month. Some women reported monthly incomes of KES 6,000 to 10,000, contributing to measurable improvements in the health, nutrition, and overall well-being of their children.

These interventions not only fostered economic independence, but also significantly reduced exposure to GBV risks by improving safety in and around the home and decreasing reliance on firewood collection—an activity that often places women and girls at risk of violence. The energy-saving stoves enhanced household health and promoted environmental sustainability, while solar lighting enabled women and girls to study after dark and engage more actively in community life.

Importantly, the initiative also included male engagement components, helping to shift community attitudes and gender norms related to GBV. As a result, more women felt empowered to break the silence, speak out, and seek support, marking a significant step toward building a safer, more inclusive, and gender-responsive community.



*“The vegetable farming has increased my income. I now make a profit of KES 200 to 300 per day. I’m able to provide for my family’s needs, and my husband has started to recognize my value in the household—unlike before, when he used to say I added no value to his life. Now, he even encourages me to go out every morning and work—something he never used to do.”*

*-- Woman participating in kitchen gardening, Orinie Village*

*“Before we had the solar lantern, I couldn’t prepare dinner on time because it got dark too early. My husband would get angry and sometimes beat me for delaying the food. Now, with the lantern, I can cook even after sunset. There’s peace at home, and the violence has stopped.”*

**--Woman beneficiary in Orinie Village.**

*“I used to walk for four hours every day to collect firewood in bushy areas, which put me at high risk of abuse or attack. And whenever I returned home late, my husband would beat me. But since I started using the energy-saving stove, I only need to fetch firewood once every two weeks. This has greatly reduced my risk of being attacked—and of being beaten by my husband.”*

**-- Woman beneficiary of the energy-saving stove, Orinie Village**

*“In the community forums, women are standing up and calling on men to end GBV. This is something that never happened before, there is a transformation in women.”*

**-- A community activist in Orinie village**

### ***Initiative to create a GBV Responsive School Model***

In Machakos County, school-based interventions—including the establishment of counseling rooms (safe havens), the introduction of educational materials such as the “Life Board Game”, and the promotion of club activities including the Anti-GBV Karate Program led to a notable increase in GBV reporting by students. Moreover, these efforts, combined with improved teacher support skills, have contributed to enhancing students’ self-esteem and supporting their recovery from trauma.



*“The establishment of the safe room and the anti-GBV committee in our school has had a significant impact on GBV case reporting and providing counseling to survivors. Previously, students would report cases to the staff room, where teachers sometimes discussed them casually—or even laughed—which discouraged learners from speaking out. Since putting these structures in place, students have started reporting cases more openly. So far, we have received 18 reports.”*

**-- Deputy Head Teacher, Mumbuni Primary School**

*“I joined the music club where we learn about GBV and we compose songs to create awareness on GBV through the support of our music teacher. We use the songs to pass messages on GBV to our school mates and the community during the community events where we are invited to perform.”*

**-- (A member of music club at Machakos Muslim Comprehensive school)**



*“Our learners often struggle to express themselves, especially when they are experiencing abuse. The karate program has created a safe space where they are beginning to open up. One of our students used to be aggressive and violent, but through the program, she gradually began to share her experiences. We eventually discovered that her behavior was linked to sexual abuse she was facing at home during school holidays. We reported the case, and she was connected to all the necessary support services.”*

*-- Teacher, Machakos School for the Deaf.*

*“I used to be teased and harassed by some boys on my way home from school. I felt scared and would run away. But after joining the karate program, I began to feel confident and courageous. Now, when they try to harass me, I stand my ground and call out their bad behavior—I tell them what they’re doing is wrong. They don’t harass me anymore.”*

*-- Female Karate Learner, Kwanthanze Secondary School*



#### **4. Rehabilitation of the GBVRC in Kajiado, Shelter in Nairobi and Improvement of Service Delivery**

The Project contributed to enhancing survivor-centered service delivery at the Gender-Based Violence Recovery Center (GBVRC) within Kajiado County Referral Hospital. Following targeted training provided through the Project, the hospital now offers free medical services to GBV survivors. Previously, survivors were required to cover part of the medical costs, which posed a significant bar-

rier to timely and appropriate care. In addition to financial accessibility, the Project led to improvements in case documentation and survivor handling, reflecting a shift toward more dignified, empathetic, and survivor-focused care. This transformation—adapted from best practices at the Kisumu GBVRC—marks a critical step toward building a more accessible, equitable, and survivor-centered support system

Furthermore, the Project supported the physical rehabilitation of the GBVRC, ensuring that the infrastructure aligns with survivor-centered principles. The upgraded facility now includes accommodation for survivors in need of temporary shelter and is also equipped to provide services to male survivors, thereby enhancing its inclusivity, safety, and effectiveness.

In Nairobi County, the Project supported the Kayole Women’s Centre, helping equip it with a safe kitchen and a kitchen garden for GBV survivors. These facilities are not only improving the living conditions of survivors in shelter care but also contributing to their well-being, recovery, and reintegration.



*Before the rehabilitation of the facility, we used to operate in a very open space. The survivors would feel uncomfortable and would not speak up. The renovation has established specific rooms for offering different services, and survivors feel safe when they are in an enclosed room. They open up and speak—unlike before.”*

*--Clinician in charge of Kajiado GBVRC*

*“When I take care of the kitchen garden and I see the vegetables grow healthy, I feel very useful and worthy. When we eat the vegetables for our meals it gives me an inner self-satisfaction.”*

*--A GBV survivor, Kayole safe shelter*

## 5. Institutionalization of Gender Justice in Kajiado Law Court

Building on lessons learnt from a study visit to Shanzu Gender Justice Law Courts, the Kajiado Law Court established a gender justice court system aimed at improving the handling of gender-based violence (GBV) cases. With the support from the Project, a dedicated GBV registry desk was set up to streamline case management. Additionally, the court designated two days per week—Tuesdays and Thursdays—exclusively for hearing GBV cases, and appointed a judicial officer specifically to preside over them. This innovation has not only enhanced the efficiency of GBV case flow management but also strengthened coordination between the judiciary and the Kajiado GBV Recovery Center, contributing to more timely and survivor-centered support.



*“Inspired by what we learnt at Shanzu Gender Justice Law Court, we set up a GBV registry to improve the documentation and coordination of survivor support services.”*

*-- Magistrate, Kajiado Law Court*

## **6. Enhanced Collaboration, Networking, and Partnerships to address GBV**

The Project contributed to strengthening collaboration and coordination among key institutions involved in GBV response and justice processes. In Kajiado County, a working relationship has been established between the GBV Recovery Center (GBVRC) and the Law Court. The court proactively informs the GBVRC in advance when GBV cases are scheduled for hearing and communicates expectations for court proceedings. This coordination has improved case preparedness and enabled more survivor-centered support throughout the legal process.

In Machakos County, the safe shelter has established close working relationships with the Machakos Law Court, the Machakos GBV Technical Working Group—including duty bearers such as the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP), the Police, the Department of Children, the Department of Health, and the Probation Office—as well as with civil society, faith-based organizations, and other concerned stakeholders. The court ensures that shelter staff including paralegals are informed of GBV hearing schedules and has facilitated direct linkages between the shelter and the GBV registry within the court. These partnerships have strengthened communication and coordination among frontline actors, ensuring survivors are supported to attend court and that their cases are addressed in a timely and coordinated manner. In addition, emerging collaboration is underway between the safe shelter and vocational training institutions in Machakos, aiming to support the economic reintegration and self-reliance of GBV survivors.



*The training sessions offered us an opportunity to create a partnership with the Judiciary. Before the training, I used to feel intimidated going to court—but now I feel confident and supported. The courts have now set specific dates for hearing GBV cases and they have given us the priority in attending court virtually. We use our legal aid room for the virtual court attendance.'*

**--The clinical officer, GBVRC in Kajiado**

*“Most safe shelters lack exit plans for survivors. By partnering with TVETs, we can equip survivors with technical skills for self- or formal employment, helping them break the cycle of violence caused by economic dependency”*

**--(Chief Officer, Gender, Machakos County)**

## 7. Advancing Innovative Business Approaches to Address GBV

The Project successfully introduced an innovative perspective in Kenya by positioning business as a key actor in the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence (GBV). Through the Ideathon and Business Idea Contest “Innovate Against GBV,” stakeholders from the business community and GBV sectors came together to explore how entrepreneurial solutions can be harnessed to address GBV. This marked a pivotal step in expanding private sector engagement and shifting the narrative toward business-driven social impact in the fight against GBV. The initiative not only broadened awareness of the idea that businesses can play a meaningful role in eliminating GBV, but also led to the emergence of concrete business models aiming to address the issue. Several innovative business ideas were launched as a result of this initiative, including:

- » A business that empowers GBV survivors by creating income-generating opportunities through the production and sale of clean biofuel made from agricultural waste, tackling both environmental sustainability and social reintegration;
  - » A mobile application that enables survivors to safely and discreetly access support services and report incidents;
  - » A community-based menstrual hygiene enterprise led by young women, addressing both GBV risk reduction and menstrual dignity for adolescent girls;
  - » A transportation safety platform offering verified drivers for women traveling in high-risk areas.
- A digital business matching platform for GBV survivors

This initiative also catalyzed cross-sectoral collaboration involving a diverse range of Kenyan and Japanese partners—including local universities, government agencies, the Trade Development Bank, Unicharm, Rohto Pharmaceutical, and Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV). Through this dynamic platform, the Project contributed to lay the foundation for the growth of a gender-responsive entrepreneurial ecosystem in Kenya—one that actively contributes to building a society free from GBV.



*“The idea that business can contribute to the prevention and elimination of GBV is both powerful and inspiring. It opens up new pathways for sustainable, innovative, and inclusive solutions”*

***--Participants of Business Idea Marathon from Local NGO***

*“This Mysoja App will be very helpful to me as a student. I leave the library late at night and usually have to call my parents so they can stay on the phone with me until I reach my hostel. If I can have this Mysoja App, I can always switch it on and seek help in case I face any risk of attack or abuse at night.”*

***--Student from Strathmore University***

*“As we interact with domestic workers, we realized that they face a high risk of GBV at their workplaces. With the emergency panic button in our CONNECT HER App, domestic workers can feel safer, as we are able to connect them immediately to rescue services when they press the button.”*

***--Founder CONNECT HER App***

*“I was in an abusive marriage, my husband would beat me and tell me how worthless I am. It affected my self-esteem. I did not have a job so I was afraid to leave the house. When I started the sales work with MOMA Renewable Energy, I decided to gain the courage to move out of his house and rented a house somewhere else. I am now at peace and my children too”*

***--(A survivor and sales agent of MOMA Renewable Energy)***

## **Key Findings, Lessons Learned and Policy Recommendations**

This Project implemented and tested a diverse range of initiatives in collaboration with government institutions, community members, schools, and the private sector to advance the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence (GBV). Through these field-based interventions, several effective models were developed, and valuable insights were generated to inform future programming in Kenya and beyond. These learnings provide not only practical guidance for enhancing GBV prevention and survivor support but also carry important policy-level implications—particularly for the scaling, adaptation, and institutionalization of successful strategies across regions and countries.



## **Cross Sector Capacity Building is Critical: Invest in Cross-Sector Capacity Building to Strengthen GBV Prevention and Response**

Effective prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV) require the engagement of a wide range of sectors beyond traditional health and social services. This Project clearly demonstrated that professionals in sectors such as education, transportation, agriculture, infrastructure, and public administration must be equipped with the necessary knowledge, practical skills, and shared values to recognize GBV, understand its root causes, and respond in a survivor-centered and professional manner.

A truly holistic and sustainable GBV response also depends on the active involvement of influential community figures—including local leaders, religious authorities, and women leaders—who often play critical roles in shaping community attitudes and behavior. Providing these actors with survivor-centered training can significantly strengthen community-based prevention and response mechanisms.

To achieve this systemic shift, it is essential to expand survivor-centered training across all relevant sectors and stakeholder groups. These trainings should foster a shared recognition of GBV as a cross-cutting social issue that requires coordinated, multi-sectoral engagement—not limited to specialized service providers. Moreover, the effectiveness of such training is enhanced when it incorporates participatory and experiential learning methods, such as field visits, peer exchanges, and practical simulations. These approaches help translate knowledge into actionable practice and promote stronger coordination among institutions at the local level.

Looking ahead, governments and development partners should work towards institutionalizing cross-sectoral human resource development frameworks that integrate GBV prevention and response into the mandates and professional development pathways of diverse sectors. By equipping frontline personnel with the tools to respond effectively and empathetically, communities can establish inclusive, survivor-centered, and well-coordinated systems to prevent and address GBV in a sustainable manner.

## Infrastructure Must Reflect Survivor Needs: Design Survivor-Centered Infrastructure that Prioritizes Safety and Dignity

Physical infrastructure plays a critical role in enabling survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) to access services safely, privately, and with dignity. This applies not only to the construction of shelters and Gender-Based Violence Recovery Centers (GBVRCs), but also to the thoughtful design and functionality of these spaces.

The Project underscored that it is not enough to simply build facilities—their **quality and design** are equally crucial to the effectiveness of support services. Infrastructure must be designed from a **survivor-centered perspective**, prioritizing **privacy, safety, and dignity**. Key design features include:

- » Separate entry and exit points;
- » Shielded reception, waiting, and consultation areas to protect confidentiality;
- » Child-friendly spaces;
- » Kitchens and areas for recreational or therapeutic activities;
- » On-site security measures such as surveillance and secure layouts to prevent retaliation.

Facilities informed by the lived experiences of survivors are far more likely to be trusted, accessed, and effective. Survivor-informed infrastructure significantly increases survivors' willingness and ability to seek help.

In Kenya, while progress is being made in constructing GBVRCs and shelters, future efforts must go beyond physical constructions. A shift is needed toward designing spaces that reflect the real needs of survivors, integrating their experiences into every stage from planning to design and implementation. The project also found that visual tools such as clearly posted survivor rights and support options, along with complementary facilities like kitchen gardens, can contribute to survivors' psychological recovery and foster autonomy.

## GBV Support Must Be Integrated and Multi-Sectoral: Integrate GBV Support Across Sectors for a Coordinated and Holistic Response

Support for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) must go beyond stand-alone services. Survivors often require a range of assistance—medical, psychosocial, legal, protective, and economic—and fragmented service delivery can delay or prevent access to the comprehensive care they need. The development of Gender-Based Violence Recovery Centers (GBVRCs) and shelters should therefore be accompanied by systems that deliver integrated, survivor-centered support. These systems must bring together medical treatment, psychosocial care, legal aid, police response, and vocational guidance in a seamless and coordinated manner.

A key lesson from the Project is the importance of linking GBV services with vocational training institutions and economic empowerment programs, enabling survivors to move from protection and recovery toward long-term reintegration and independence. While many shelters in Kenya currently offer small-scale livelihood activities—often with limited resources from NGOs—there is a growing need to shift toward institutionalized, medium- to long-term support frameworks.

To achieve this, county governments should invest in placing career counselors and establishing

dedicated spaces for vocational support within GBVRCs and shelters. Strengthening formal partnerships with vocational training centers and government-run programs can help survivors build practical skills and regain autonomy. Furthermore, the Project found that the introduction of ICT tools, such as remote access to courts and legal consultations, helped reduce barriers to justice—particularly for survivors in remote or insecure areas.

These experiences underscore that multi-sectoral collaboration is not optional, but essential. Effective GBV prevention, response, and recovery depend on the existence of holistic, coordinated systems that are rooted in survivors' needs and accessible at the community level. A truly survivor-centered approach must integrate medical, psychosocial, legal, and economic support, ensuring that survivors are protected, empowered, and fully supported throughout their journey to recovery and reintegration.

### **It All Begins with Unlocking the Innate Potential of Women and Girls: Empower Women and Girls to lead, learn, and thrive**

A key lesson from the “Smart Village Free from GBV” initiative in Orinie Village is the transformative impact of believing in and nurturing the innate potential of women and girls. This approach served as a powerful driver of both individual behavior change and community-level social transformation.

At the beginning of the initiative, many women were reluctant to participate in land preparation or community activities due to deeply entrenched gender norms—such as the belief that “farming is a man’s job. However, through gender training and community dialogue, women began to recognize their own capacity to drive change. As their mindsets shifted, so did their behaviors: they started cultivating land on their own, engaging in village initiatives, and gradually gaining confidence to speak out and lead. This experience affirms that the core of effective GBV prevention lies in empowering women as agents of their own change, rather than simply treating them as recipients of support.

The initiative also underscored that sustainable change requires more than awareness-raising campaigns. Participatory and reflective processes that encourage individuals to re-examine their lived experiences and social norms—especially when combined with efforts to reduce women’s unpaid care burdens and promote their economic empowerment—are far more effective in enabling long-term transformation. Even minimal external support, when paired with opportunities for self-reflection, can lead to meaningful, self-driven change.

A critical enabler in this process was the role of informal, women-led structures, such as savings groups. These groups functioned not only as mechanisms for economic empowerment—supporting healthcare, education, and small business—but also as grassroots safety nets. They strengthened social cohesion, facilitated early identification of GBV cases, and created trusted channels for support and referral. Investing in such community-based mechanisms is essential to fostering resilience and locally rooted systems of care.

Ultimately, empowerment strategies should go beyond service provision and aim to unlock the intrinsic potential of women and girls. Programs that enhance self-worth, self-expression, and collective agency have proven transformative, particularly in communities with entrenched gender norms. Institutionalizing community-based platforms—such as women’s forum—can create opportunities for peer learning, critical reflection, and shared action. Such platforms should be embedded in local governance structures to ensure sustainability and community ownership.



## **Practical and Accountable Male Engagement is Essential: Promote Practical and Accountable Male Engagement in GBV Elimination**

Engaging men and boys is a critical component of efforts to eliminate gender-based violence (GBV) and promote gender equality. However, many existing approaches remain limited to raising awareness or providing information, without effectively translating understanding into concrete, sustained action.

This Project demonstrated the importance of moving beyond passive awareness toward practical, action-oriented male engagement in GBV prevention. In this initiative, men were not only educated about the consequences of GBV but were also directly involved in developing and implementing their own action plans to promote gender equality. These efforts were reinforced by community-based gender dialogues held jointly with women, which provided opportunities for men to reflect on their behaviors and challenge harmful gender norms.

Crucially, the project also engaged influential male leaders—such as religious figures and village elders—supporting them to develop and implement localized action plans to promote gender equality and prevent GBV. By creating context-specific action plans and taking responsibility for their execution, these leaders became active agents of change within their communities. This participatory and action-driven process fostered a sense of ownership, accountability, and agency—demonstrating that when men are empowered to define and lead change, they can play a pivotal role in building safer and more equitable societies.

A defining strength of the initiative was its positive and forward-looking framing. Instead of portraying men as potential perpetrators, it emphasized their constructive role in protecting their communities. This empowered men to take initiative voluntarily, leading many to reassess their roles at home and to mentor younger generations on respectful, non-violent relationships.

These outcomes highlight the transformative potential of structured, action-based male engagement. To ensure long-term impact, such approaches must be institutionalized within community-level GBV strategies, supported by mechanisms for peer learning, personal reflection, and practical planning. A shift toward accountable, locally grounded male participation is essential for achieving sustained and community-led GBV prevention.

## **Schools are Effective Entry Points for Preventing and Eliminating GBV: Utilize Schools as Strategic Platforms for GBV Prevention and Awareness**

Schools serve as critical entry points for preventing and eliminating gender-based violence (GBV), while also driving broader community-level change. As environments where children and adolescents spend their formative years, schools are uniquely positioned to promote values of gender equality, non-violence, and respect for human rights from an early age.

Through the establishment of student-led awareness campaigns, gender-focused school clubs, and confidential reporting systems, the project supported students to take an active role in identifying and responding to GBV. These efforts created safer school environments, helped break the silence around violence, and encouraged attitudinal shifts among teachers, parents, and the wider community. Importantly, the school-based approach proved to be highly cost-effective, requiring only limited financial resources—primarily for teacher training and basic materials—while achieving strong outcomes in both prevention and survivor support.

The project also highlighted the importance of empowering girls, particularly those affected by violence, to remain in school and build self-confidence. This has direct implications for reducing early marriage and teenage pregnancy, which are key GBV risk factors. By supporting girls' education and psychosocial recovery, schools play a critical role in helping to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and violence.

To ensure the sustainability and scalability of these efforts, it is essential to institutionalize school-based GBV prevention models within national and county-level education systems. This includes integrating gender-responsive content into curricula, developing clear school-based reporting and referral protocols, and providing continuous training for teachers on gender equality and child protection.

Ultimately, positioning schools as agents of change offers a long-term, community-based solution for transforming social norms, preventing violence, and promoting inclusive, safe environments for all learners.



## **Harnessing the Power of Sports Is an Effective Strategy for Psychosocial Recovery and GBV Prevention: Harness the Transformative Power of Sports for Recovery and GBV Prevention**

This project demonstrated that sports can be a powerful psychosocial and empowerment tool for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), particularly adolescent girls and women at risk. Through team-based activities, participants not only found an outlet for self-expression and healing but also developed a sense of belonging, trust, and self-worth. Sports helped restore confidence, reduce social isolation, and foster peer support networks—contributing significantly to emotional recovery and resilience.

In particular, team sports promoted values such as cooperation, mutual respect, and leadership—skills that are essential for reintegration and empowerment. For many girls, participation in these activities marked a turning point in their recovery journey, enabling them to speak up, form friendships, and re-engage with their communities in meaningful ways.

Beyond individual benefits, sports also served as a gateway for community-level engagement. Through sports festivals, friendly matches, and dialogue forums, the project brought together youth, parents, teachers, and local leaders, opening opportunities to raise awareness on GBV in a non-threatening and participatory way. These events helped shift social attitudes, encouraged open communication, and strengthened collaboration among community actors.

Given the positive outcomes observed, it is recommended that sports-based methodologies be institutionalized as a part of psychosocial support programming for GBV survivors. This includes integrating sports activities into protection and education initiatives, developing trauma-informed, gender-responsive coaching guidelines, and training facilitators accordingly. In addition, collaboration with schools, youth centers, and community groups should be strengthened to expand access and ensure sustainability. Harnessing the unifying and transformative power of sports can not only aid individual recovery, but also shift social norms, promote gender equality, and contribute to long-term GBV prevention efforts.



*“I feel that I want to engage in sports even more. This sports event has made me feel very energetic and happy. Most of the time I am usually at home taking care of the house, my husband and children and I am usually sad because I never get to do anything for myself. But today I feel like I did something good for my body, I really feel happy!”*

***--A woman from Orinie village during the sports event at Orinie village***

*“I came here feeling very low and emotionally outweighed. But after playing and meeting other women whom we have become friends with, I feel very happy and reenergized.”*

***--A woman from Orinie village during the sports event.***



*“In this country, people see women as weak. Many face harassment and gender discrimination. I joined this program because I want to change that mindset. Now, I feel stronger. I used to get angry easily, but I’ve learned to control my emotions.”*

***--Female Student (16)***

## **Leveraging Business can be Powerful Tools to Address GBV: Leverage Business and Innovation to Provide Sustainable GBV Solutions**

The private sector holds untapped potential in the fight against GBV, not only as a funding or service delivery partner but also as a driver of innovation and economic empowerment. While GBV prevention and response have traditionally been the responsibility of public sectors such as health, education, and law enforcement, this project demonstrated that the private sector can both complement these efforts and lead the way in developing innovative, scalable, and sustainable solutions.

Through business competitions and ideathons, several social-impact-driven startups proposed creative and context-specific solutions tailored to the lived realities of women and girls. These included safety alert applications, gender-sensitive transportation services, economic independence of women. The experience showed that when provided with the right incentives and support, the business community can make a meaningful contribution to both GBV prevention and survivor recovery. Such enterprises help shift social norms and catalyze structural change.

However, realizing the full potential of business-based approaches to GBV requires a supportive ecosystem. Many entrepreneurs and citizens who are passionate about addressing GBV often lack the skills or knowledge to ensure profitability and sustainability. Moreover, despite growing interest in addressing GBV through business as an innovative concept, understanding and interest from investors and donors remain limited.

To address these gaps, it is critical to foster an enabling ecosystem for GBV-responsive enterprises. This includes providing mentorship and coaching, facilitating access to capital, and offering technical assistance in business planning and impact measurement. At the same time, integrating “Gender and Business” modules into university curricula, vocational training programs, and corporate leadership courses can help cultivate a generation of entrepreneurs and professionals equipped to design and implement gender-sensitive innovations and solutions.

Furthermore, national governments and development partners should formally recognize the role of business in GBV prevention and response by integrating it into economic development strategies, investment policies, and innovation funds. Incentives structures such as tax benefits, access to public procurement opportunities, or public recognition for businesses that adopt GBV-responsive practices could also accelerate private sector engagement.

Finally, based on the promising outcomes of this project, it is recommended to further document, share, and scale up the “Business-Based GBV Elimination Model” in collaboration with other African countries and international partners. Doing so will not only broaden the impact but also contribute to the development of inclusive, safe, and equitable economies where women and girls can thrive.



## Preventing GBV Must Be a Core Principle in Urban Planning and Public Infrastructure Design: Mainstream GBV Prevention into Urban Planning and Public Space Design

Infrastructure plays a crucial role in shaping the safety, mobility, and well-being of women and girls. However, infrastructure planning and service delivery often fail to account for the specific risks and vulnerabilities faced by women—particularly in public spaces, transportation systems, and water access points.

Across both urban and rural areas in Kenya, women and girls routinely experience gender-based violence (GBV) in public settings. Schoolgirls have reported sexual harassment while waiting at bus stops; women frequently avoid walking on poorly lit streets after dark for fear of assault; and overcrowded public transport systems are often sites of verbal abuse and unwanted physical contact. In rural communities, women and girls collecting water often feel unsafe, especially when they must travel long distances through isolated areas. These daily threats restrict their freedom of movement, limit access to education and employment, and reinforce systemic gender inequalities.

*<The voices of women and girls>*

*“The water point is far and hidden behind bushes. We go in groups during the day, but if you delay and have to fetch water in the evening, it feels very unsafe.”*

*--(Mother of three, Kajiado County)*

*“There are no proper toilets at the bus terminal. Men hang around there and sometimes harass us when we wait for matatus.”*

*--(Street vendor, Kajiado)*

*“We walk long distances to the clinic, and some routes go through open fields with no lighting. Many women have stopped going for evening appointments.”(Pregnant woman, Orinie in Kajiado )*

*“When I leave work late, I walk fast and keep looking back. There are no lights, and the road has no people. I never feel safe.”*

*--(Domestic worker, Nairobi suburb)*

Given this reality, a survivor-centered and gender-sensitive approach to infrastructure is not optional—it is essential. By working with stakeholders in the transport and water sectors, the project demonstrated that infrastructure designed with safety, accessibility, and dignity in mind can play a transformative role in preventing GBV and promoting inclusive development.

Key measures identified include improved street lighting, gender-segregated sanitation facilities, safe waiting areas, onboard emergency reporting systems, and secure, easily accessible water collection points. In addition, supporting women-led transportation businesses and promoting collective water collection initiatives by women can further enhance both safety and economic empowerment. These investments contribute to building integrated rural and urban communities where women and girls can move freely and confidently—without fear of violence or harassment.

To institutionalize this approach, GBV prevention and response should be embedded in national and county-level infrastructure policies, planning frameworks, and public investment strategies. Multisectoral coordination among urban planners, engineers, gender experts, and community representatives is also essential to ensure that safety and dignity are not afterthoughts but foundational principles of infrastructure development.

By transforming the physical environment in ways that reduce vulnerabilities and promote protection, infrastructure can become a powerful enabler of GBV prevention and a catalyst for broader gender equality.



## Conclusion

Grounded in the principle of a survivor-centered approach, this project succeeded in catalyzing a shift in mindset among professionals and strengthening the quality and responsiveness of GBV-related support services. By actively integrating innovative and previously underutilized approaches—such as sports-based engagement, business development, and school based programs—into GBV prevention and response, the project took bold steps to drive social value transformation and behavioral change, yielding notable empirical results at the target sites. Although many interventions were implemented on a pilot basis and at a limited scale, the project generated valuable insights, scalable models, and practical tools that can inform future programming and demonstrated that transformative change is possible when interventions are rooted in cross-sectoral collaboration and grounded in the lived experiences and local realities of the people.

Looking ahead, the institutionalization of successful approaches, strengthened coordination across sectors, and genuine community ownership will be essential to sustaining impact. To achieve a society free from GBV in Kenya and beyond, it is vital to ensure continued investment, policy commitment, and active participation from government, civil society, the private sector, and community members. Only through such sustained and inclusive efforts can we build safer, more equitable environments for all.







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