



BREAKING THE SILENCE:

**GBV Survey Insights
in Kisiii County**

**AFRICAN YOUTH ADVOCACY NETWORK
KENYA
(AYAN-K)**



**Breaking the Silence: GBV Survey
Insights in Kisii County by AYAN
Kenya and Supported by ISF.**



**INTERNATIONAL
SOLIDARITY
FOUNDATION**



**Funded by
the European Union**



AYAN-Kenya



@AYAN_KENYA



@AYAN_KENYA



African Youth Advocacy Network - AYAN Kenya

Introduction

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) remains one of the most pressing human rights challenges globally. Across the world, GBV disproportionately affects women and girls, with devastating consequences that extend beyond physical harm, impacting the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of individuals. In Kenya, this issue is particularly significant, as GBV is embedded within complex socio-cultural, economic, and institutional structures that perpetuate violence and hinder the achievement of gender equality. Despite significant progress in policy development and national frameworks aimed at reducing GBV, it remains widespread, and survivors continue to face numerous barriers to accessing justice, support, and services.

AYAN Kenya, a prominent advocate for the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of adolescents, young women, and marginalized groups, recognizes the critical intersection between GBV and SRHR. GBV not only compromises the health and dignity of those affected but also exacerbates vulnerabilities in key areas, including sexual and reproductive health, mental health, and overall well-being. AYAN Kenya's mission is to create a society where SRHR for all is respected and upheld, and addressing GBV is central to achieving this vision. Through this GBV survey, AYAN Kenya aims to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of violence, identify critical gaps in the response systems, and inform the development of targeted interventions that will ultimately contribute to a safer, more equitable society.

This initiative has been made possible through the generous support of the **International Solidarity Foundation (ISF)**, which has enabled AYAN Kenya to conduct this vital survey. ISF, a dedicated organization committed to supporting initiatives that advance human rights and social justice, shares AYAN Kenya's vision of empowering vulnerable communities and advocating for lasting change. The partnership with ISF has provided the necessary resources to carry out this survey and implement its findings effectively, ensuring that AYAN Kenya's work in combatting GBV is both impactful and sustainable.

The need for this survey stems from the desire to capture real-time data on the prevalence of GBV, public awareness, survivors' experiences, and the challenges they face when seeking support. Although there have been many reports and studies on GBV in Kenya, there is a scarcity of community-based, localized data that highlights the unique needs and perspectives of those most affected by violence. This survey specifically focuses on Kisii County, one of the areas where AYAN Kenya operates, to provide detailed insights that will directly inform local programming, advocacy, and policy development. The findings are intended to serve as a call to action for community members, local authorities, healthcare providers, policymakers, and civil society organizations to strengthen the collective response to GBV.



AYAN-Kenya



@AYAN_KENYA



@AYAN_KENYA



African Youth Advocacy Network - AYAN Kenya

Purpose and Scope of the Survey

The primary purpose of this survey was to assess the scope and nature of GBV in Kisii County by capturing data on the following aspects:

- **Awareness:** Understanding how well community members are informed about GBV and its various forms.
- **Prevalence:** Documenting the frequency and types of GBV experienced by individuals in the community.
- **Challenges to Reporting:** Identifying barriers that prevent survivors from reporting GBV, such as stigma, lack of trust in systems, and financial constraints.
- **Support Mechanisms:** Investigating the actions taken by survivors, including reporting incidents, seeking medical care, and accessing legal support.
- **Attitudes Toward Gender Equality:** Assessing community perspectives on gender roles, equality, and the normalization of GBV.

The survey focused on a diverse sample of participants, including men and women of varying ages, education levels, and socio-economic backgrounds, to capture a comprehensive range of experiences and perceptions related to GBV. By doing so, AYAN Kenya aims to ensure that the findings are representative of the broader community and can effectively guide future initiatives aimed at combating GBV.

The Need for Localized Data

In many parts of Kenya, GBV remains underreported and inadequately addressed due to cultural, social, and systemic factors. In some communities, traditional norms uphold patriarchal power structures, making it difficult for survivors to seek help. The stigma associated with reporting GBV is another significant barrier, as victims often fear retribution, ostracization, or disbelief from authorities and their communities. Furthermore, many survivors lack awareness of their rights and the legal and healthcare services available to them. As such, localized data is essential to provide a clearer picture of the specific challenges faced by communities, the effectiveness of existing support systems, and the areas that require urgent intervention.

AYAN Kenya's focus on Kisii County is informed by the organization's longstanding presence in the region and its commitment to understanding the unique dynamics of GBV in this specific context. Kisii County, like many parts of Kenya, is shaped by a mix of traditional beliefs, economic challenges, and evolving social structures. By focusing on this region, AYAN Kenya can tailor interventions that are not only informed by data but are also culturally relevant, effective, and sustainable.



AYAN-Kenya



@AYAN_KENYA



@AYAN_KENYA



African Youth Advocacy Network - AYAN Kenya

Significance of the Survey for Program Development and Advocacy

The results of this survey are intended to have a profound impact on the development of programs and policies aimed at addressing GBV. By identifying the key factors that perpetuate violence and the systemic barriers that survivors face, AYAN Kenya can design evidence-based interventions that are grounded in the realities of affected individuals. These interventions may include community-based awareness campaigns, capacity-building for law enforcement and healthcare providers, and advocacy efforts to improve policy and legal frameworks related to GBV.

Moreover, the survey provides a critical evidence base for advocacy at both the local and national levels. By documenting the prevalence and impact of GBV in Kisii County, AYAN Kenya can better advocate for stronger implementation of existing laws, policies, and international agreements that protect the rights of survivors and promote gender equality. This data can also be used to engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including government agencies, local community leaders, health providers, and other civil society organizations, to create a unified, multi-stakeholder response to GBV.

Structure of the Report

The findings of this survey are presented in a structured format that provides detailed insights into the key areas explored. The report begins with an overview of the methodology used to conduct the survey, followed by a summary of the demographic profile of the participants. The main findings are then presented, highlighting key data on awareness, prevalence, reporting barriers, and actions taken by survivors. Finally, the report concludes with a set of actionable recommendations for addressing the challenges identified in the survey.

Through this report, AYAN Kenya aims to contribute to the broader conversation on GBV in Kenya and provide actionable recommendations that can drive real change in the fight against violence. The data presented here underscores the urgency of addressing GBV at both the community and systemic levels, and serves as a call to action for all stakeholders to collaborate in creating a safer, more just society for all.



AYAN-Kenya



@AYAN_KENYA



@AYAN_KENYA



African Youth Advocacy Network - AYAN Kenya

Executive Summary

This report outlines the findings of the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Survey conducted by AYAN Kenya, with support from ISF, aimed at addressing the pervasive issue of GBV in Kenya. The survey targeted communities in Kisii County and gathered vital data to understand the dynamics, awareness, and experiences surrounding GBV. With 200 participants from varying age groups, the survey revealed both the alarming prevalence of GBV and significant barriers survivors face in reporting incidents.

Key findings include that nearly 45% of respondents reported experiencing GBV, with stigma and mistrust of reporting mechanisms being the leading challenges. While 85% of participants were aware of GBV, only 40% took action by reporting incidents to authorities, underscoring the urgent need for enhanced support systems and trust-building within communities.

The results from this survey will inform AYAN Kenya's future programs, particularly those aimed at increasing GBV awareness, reducing stigma, and strengthening reporting mechanisms. It also serves as a critical tool for advocacy, providing evidence for the development of survivor-centric policies and systems. By addressing the root causes of GBV, the survey aims to contribute to a culture of zero tolerance for violence and a more equitable society.



AYAN-Kenya



@AYAN_KENYA



@AYAN_KENYA



African Youth Advocacy Network - AYAN Kenya

Foreword

It is with great commitment that we present the findings of this Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Survey, an essential step in our ongoing efforts to combat GBV and promote the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of adolescents, young women, and marginalized groups in Kenya. This survey was conducted with support from ISF and aims to shed light on the widespread and damaging impact of GBV on communities, particularly in Kisii County.

As an organization committed to advocating for SRHR, AYAN Kenya recognizes the intersectionality of GBV with broader issues of social justice and human rights. This survey is crucial for deepening our understanding of GBV's prevalence, identifying the barriers to reporting, and exploring the societal attitudes that perpetuate violence. The findings presented in this report will guide our future programming, inform our advocacy for policy change, and help strengthen our partnerships with local and international stakeholders in the fight against GBV.

The results are a powerful reminder of the work that remains in breaking the cycle of violence and building safer, more inclusive communities. By addressing the barriers to reporting and offering concrete solutions, we hope to create an environment where every individual, especially women and young people, can live free from fear and violence. This report not only represents the voices of those directly impacted by GBV but also marks a pivotal moment in our collective effort to ensure gender equality and human dignity for all.

We are grateful to all participants who shared their experiences, and to our partners for their unwavering support in this critical work. Together, we can build a future where GBV is no longer a barrier to the health, safety, and rights of women, girls, and marginalized groups.



AYAN-Kenya



@AYAN_KENYA



@AYAN_KENYA



African Youth Advocacy Network - AYAN Kenya

Acknowledgements

We express our deepest gratitude to all individuals and organizations who contributed to the successful implementation of this survey and the compilation of this report:

The Survey Participants: Our heartfelt thanks go to the individuals and communities in Kisii who participated in the survey. Your courage and willingness to share your experiences have been invaluable in shaping this report.

AYAN Kenya Team: The entire AYAN Kenya team for their unwavering dedication and professionalism in designing, conducting, and analyzing this survey.

ISF (Supporter): A special thank you to ISF for their financial and technical support, without which this project would not have been possible.

Field Researchers and Data Collectors: Appreciation for the field researchers who conducted interviews and collected data with sensitivity and diligence, ensuring the integrity of the survey process.

Local Leaders and Stakeholders: The local leaders, government officials, and community stakeholders in Kisii who supported the survey by providing access, guidance, and encouragement.

Partner Organizations and Volunteers: Our gratitude to partner organizations and volunteers who assisted in the survey logistics, community mobilization, and awareness.

Report Authors and Analysts: The authors and data analysts who synthesized the findings and developed this comprehensive report.

Reviewers and Advisors: The advisors and reviewers who provided critical feedback and ensured the accuracy and relevance of the report.

All Advocates of Gender Equality and Justice: Lastly, we acknowledge all individuals and organizations dedicated to addressing gender-based violence and advocating for justice and equality in Kisii and beyond.



AYAN-Kenya



@AYAN_KENYA



@AYAN_KENYA



African Youth Advocacy Network - AYAN Kenya

Rationale for Conducting the GBV Survey

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a pervasive issue globally, and Kenya is no exception. Despite significant strides in policy development and advocacy for gender equality, GBV remains a critical challenge, disproportionately affecting women and girls. AYAN Kenya, as a leading organization in advocating for the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of adolescents, young women, and marginalized groups, recognizes the profound intersection between GBV and broader issues of health, social justice, and human rights. Conducting this survey aligns with AYAN Kenya's mission to create a society where SRHR for all is respected and upheld.

Strategic Relevance

The GBV survey is a foundational step in understanding the specific dynamics, perceptions, and experiences of GBV among communities in Kenya, particularly in the counties where AYAN Kenya operates. By capturing data on the prevalence, awareness, barriers to reporting, and societal attitudes toward GBV, the organization can:

- **Inform Program Development:**
 1. Tailor interventions to address identified gaps, such as stigma, lack of trust in reporting mechanisms, and inadequate awareness.
 2. Design community-driven solutions that reflect the lived realities of those most affected by GBV.
- **Advocate for Policy Change:**
 1. Provide evidence-based insights to inform national and county-level policies aimed at reducing GBV and improving support systems for survivors.
 2. Strengthen advocacy for enhanced implementation of existing laws and the introduction of survivor-centric policies.
- **Strengthen Partnerships:**
 1. Engage stakeholders, including community leaders, healthcare providers, and policymakers, by presenting clear data that highlights the urgency of addressing GBV.
 2. Build collaborative frameworks with local and international partners to amplify the impact of anti-GBV initiatives.



AYAN-Kenya



@AYAN_KENYA



@AYAN_KENYA



African Youth Advocacy Network - AYAN Kenya

Contextual Significance

In Kenya, GBV is fueled by socio-economic, cultural, and systemic factors, including:

- **Cultural Norms:** Deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes often normalize violence against women and discourage reporting.
- **Economic Inequality:** Financial dependency on perpetrators frequently inhibits survivors from seeking help.
- **Lack of Trust in Systems:** Perceived inefficiencies and biases within legal and law enforcement institutions deter survivors from pursuing justice.

These challenges are compounded for marginalized groups, including adolescents, young women, and sexual and gender minorities. AYAN Kenya's survey acknowledges this complexity by capturing diverse perspectives and experiences, thereby ensuring inclusivity in its analysis and subsequent programming.

Summary Report on GBV Survey Results in Kisii County

Key Findings

Total Sample Size: 200 participants contributed to the survey.

Age Distribution:

- I. Majority (45%) fall within the 25–34 age bracket.
- II. Younger respondents (18–24) represent 25%.
- III. Under 18 and those aged 35–44 comprise smaller portions (10% and 15% respectively).

Awareness of GBV:

- I. High awareness: 85% of respondents are aware of GBV.
- II. Only 15% reported a lack of awareness.

Experience with GBV:

- I. Nearly half (45%) reported experiencing GBV.
- II. The remaining 55% indicated no direct experience.

Challenges in Reporting:

- I. Stigma (60%) and lack of trust (50%) are the main barriers.
- II. Financial constraints and lack of awareness are secondary challenges (20% and 35%).



AYAN-Kenya



@AYAN_KENYA



@AYAN_KENYA



African Youth Advocacy Network - AYAN Kenya

Action Taken:

- I. 40% reported incidents to authorities.
- II. 25% did not report due to various reasons, including stigma and mistrust.
- III. 20% sought medical help.

Gender Equality:

- I. A majority (55%) strongly agree that gender equality is important.
- II. 30% agree, while only 5% disagree.

Education Level:

- I. 40% have secondary education, while tertiary education is limited to 15%.
- II. No formal education was reported by 5%.

Recommendations

- **Awareness Campaigns:**
 - I. Strengthen community outreach to further increase GBV awareness, especially among groups with low education levels.
- **Addressing Stigma:**
 - I. Develop community-based interventions to reduce stigma and shame associated with reporting GBV.
 - II. Create safe spaces for survivors to share experiences and seek help.
- **Enhancing Trust in Systems:**
 - I. Build trust in reporting mechanisms by improving transparency and effectiveness of law enforcement and community organizations.
- **Support Systems:**
 - I. Provide financial and logistical support to reduce barriers to reporting.
 - II. Partner with healthcare providers for accessible GBV-related services.
- **Education Initiatives:**
 - I. Expand programs targeting secondary and tertiary education levels to emphasize the importance of gender equality and GBV prevention.



AYAN-Kenya



@AYAN_KENYA



@AYAN_KENYA



African Youth Advocacy Network - AYAN Kenya

Alignment with AYAN Kenya's Vision and Mission

This survey aligns seamlessly with AYAN Kenya's core objectives:

- **Promoting SRHR:** Addressing GBV is integral to safeguarding the sexual and reproductive health and rights of survivors, many of whom face unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, and mental health challenges as a result of violence.
- **Empowering Youth and Women:** By identifying barriers to reporting and accessing support, the survey empowers communities to break the cycle of violence and fosters resilience among young people and women.
- **Advocating for Equity and Justice:** The survey's findings will serve as a powerful tool to challenge discriminatory practices and advocate for systemic reforms.

Evidence-Based Approach

AYAN Kenya recognizes that effective interventions must be grounded in robust evidence. This survey's findings will:

- Highlight gaps in knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to GBV.
- Provide quantifiable metrics to measure progress over time.
- Identify priority areas for investment, such as education, community engagement, and survivor support systems.

Long-Term Impact

The survey's outcomes are not only immediate but also long-term. By addressing the root causes of GBV and promoting a culture of zero tolerance, AYAN Kenya envisions:

- Strengthened community resilience against GBV.
- Improved access to justice and healthcare for survivors.
- A shift in societal attitudes that supports gender equality and the dignity of all individuals.



AYAN-Kenya



@AYAN_KENYA



@AYAN_KENYA



African Youth Advocacy Network - AYAN Kenya

Conclusion

The findings of the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) survey in Kisii County have highlighted the widespread and deeply entrenched nature of GBV within the community. Despite a relatively high level of awareness, there remain significant barriers to reporting and seeking help, particularly due to stigma, a lack of trust in the justice system, and financial constraints. The findings demonstrate the urgent need for comprehensive, community-driven solutions that can effectively address these challenges.

The survey has also shown that while many survivors of GBV do take action, a large portion of the community is still hesitant or unable to report due to fear of retaliation or a lack of resources. These barriers must be addressed through targeted educational campaigns, improved legal and health support systems, and stronger community involvement. Additionally, the positive attitudes toward gender equality among the majority of respondents present an opportunity for advancing gender justice and fostering a more supportive environment for survivors.



AYAN-Kenya



@AYAN_KENYA



@AYAN_KENYA



African Youth Advocacy Network - AYAN Kenya

Recommendations

Based on the survey findings, a set of practical recommendations should be provided. These recommendations will help inform future actions, program planning, and interventions aimed at addressing GBV in the community.

Recommendations

Community Awareness Campaigns:

Strengthen education and awareness programs on GBV, focusing on addressing misconceptions, reducing stigma, and informing the community about available support services. Special efforts should be made to target marginalized and remote areas where awareness is low.

Enhance Trust in Reporting Mechanisms:

Work closely with local law enforcement and healthcare providers to build trust in the reporting system. This could involve training police and healthcare professionals to handle GBV cases more sensitively and effectively, ensuring that survivors feel supported and protected when they come forward.

Increase Access to Services:

Expand access to GBV response services, including medical care, legal aid, and counseling. Create mobile units or outreach programs to reach survivors in rural or hard-to-reach areas where accessing these services may be difficult.

Gender Equality Education:

Promote gender equality through school programs and community-based initiatives. Educating both young men and women about healthy relationships, mutual respect, and gender equality can play a pivotal role in reducing the prevalence of GBV in future generations.

Support for Survivors:

Develop financial assistance programs or partnerships with local businesses to support survivors in overcoming financial barriers. This could include providing transportation, legal aid, or medical costs for those unable to access these services due to financial constraints.

Monitor and Evaluate Programs:

Establish a continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanism for GBV programs to assess their effectiveness. This will help identify areas of improvement and ensure that interventions are meeting the needs of survivors.

Prepared by:

AYAN Kenya Programs & Research and Learning Team



AYAN-Kenya



@AYAN_KENYA



@AYAN_KENYA



African Youth Advocacy Network - AYAN Kenya



Breaking the Silence

GBV Survey Insights in Kisii County

KISII COUNTY

