

International Solidarity Foundation (ISF)

A Mid-Term Evaluation of the Muungano Gender Forum Project

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CECOME	Centre for Community Empowerment and Mobilization
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
FBO	Faith Based Organizations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAD	Gender and Development
GBV	Gender Based Violence
ISF	International Solidarity Foundation
KII	Key Informant Interviews
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MGF	Muongano Gender Forum
MSC	Most Significant Change
NGEC	National Gender and Equality Commission
ODK	Open Data Kit
PPS	Population Proportional to Size
RA	Research Assistants
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
ToR	Terms of Reference
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive Summary

The mid-term evaluation sought to determine the progress of the implementation of the Muungano Gender Forum project. The evaluation sought to assess progress against established indicators (goal and outcome level). To determine the progress made towards realizing the project targets; ascertain the factors associated with the project results; establish the challenges the project has faced and how they have been remedied, and identify some of the best practices that the project has generated in Kisii and Nyamira counties.

The evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach that collected qualitative data through desk reviews and primary sources that included direct and indirect project participants. Use of secondary (desk review) and primary (focus group discussions and key informants) data collection methods strengthened data credibility through triangulation.

The evaluation found that overall, the project has made significant progress in transforming gender inequalities by improving key stakeholders' knowledge and exposure to gender issues. This was evident from the various individual initiatives the key stakeholders had carried out. There was an establishment of and support of a gender desk in the police stations in Kisii and Nyamira counties, among other initiatives. There was also an increase in knowledge among frontline workers and community members regarding gender equality and women empowerment. The MGF project implementation context has been characterized by diverse internal and external factors that catalysed results. At the same time, some could be recognized as barriers. The inception of the project in 2018 coincided with a period of intense political activities in the country related to the implementation of Kenya's Constitution requiring the two-thirds gender rule to take effect. The volatility generated affected implementation of the project as both duty bearers and beneficiaries were in one way or the other.

Implementation of the gender equality and women empowerment project in Kisii and Nyamira counties has proceeded successfully over the last two years. There is evidence among implementing partners as well as key stakeholders of improved knowledge on gender equality and women empowerment. The coordination and technical support provided by MGF and the Steering Committee has been a key driver of sustained growth in capacity to realize project milestones. Implementation of the Two-Third Gender Rule after the 2017 elections has impacted the programming context in the country. The macro-level policy context and the presidential agenda derived from the Kenya Vision 2030 Medium Term Plan (2018 -2022), the 'Big Four Agenda', are receptive and well-aligned with project priorities.

The report makes the following overarching recommendations in light of the preceding salient findings:

Strengthen local administration staff's capacity like chiefs to implement gender equality and women empowerment activities in their jurisdictions: The evaluation identified gaps in the implementation of MGF dialogue meetings held without the local administration's involvement which should be supported to improve through sustained capacity building.

Increase the number of dialogue meetings as well as decentralise (take the meetings to the grassroots) to open up for more participation opportunities: The topical issues on gender equality and women empowerment are invaluable to women and girls at the grassroots but the number that can access and participate in the dialogue meetings when held in towns is dismal compared to the demand. The project should expand their scope and offer opportunities and access to women and girls at the community level (grassroots).

Develop a project sustainability strategy and disseminate to stakeholders: The project is currently dependent on ISF funding. It is crucial to start employing strategies that strengthen sustainability such as policy development and advocacy, strengthening women and girls' agency, community ownership, and multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approaches. It is critical that as part of the transition plan, the project develops a coherent sustainability strategy to avoid harm to the community when external funding and technical support concludes.

Need to have Sustained and expanded use of innovative multiple communication strategies: Use of diverse communication-related activities such as local vernacular radio stations, banners, social media and theatre to reach out to more people are good innovations that the project should sustain and scale-up. The use of bloggers' café should also be explored.

Document project coordination best practices: The project has demonstrated effective coordination between the MGF Steering Committee and MGF staff in hosting the dialogue meetings. The centralized coordination of the same should be documented as a best practice.

This report is divided into **four major** sections as follows:

- **Introduction:** It highlights the project context and the mid-term evaluation exercise. It presents brief information on social, economic, political, geographic and demographic factors within which the project operated and a description of the project, purpose of the evaluation, evaluation objectives and scope, evaluation team, and evaluation questions.
- **Methodology:** This section of the report presents a summary of processes and tools used in conducting the evaluation. These include the evaluation design, data sources, data collection methods and analysis, sampling, research ethics, and the evaluation methodology's limitation.
- **Findings:** This section of the report presents detailed findings in line with project indicators. The section also evaluation criteria (impact, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability).

- **Discussion, Summary and Recommendations:** This section presents a synopsis of the evaluation results and draws conclusions based on the key findings. It outlines recommendations based on the key findings.

1. Part 1: Introduction

This section of the report presents the mid-term evaluation context at the county and sub-county levels. The section also articulates the project’s design and mid-term evaluation rationale, objectives, pertinent questions, challenges and limitations.

1.1 The Project Context

Kenya is committed to developing and implementing policies, laws, and programmes to realise the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aiming to end poverty and ensure prosperity for all. Among the 17 SDGs, Goal 5 focuses on gender equality and women’s empowerment, which addresses girls and women’s issues. The issues range from ending all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, including female genital mutilation (FGM) and early and child marriage, to ensuring women’s full, effective and equal participation in decision-making processes; women’s universal access to sexual reproductive health and rights; recognition of unpaid care and domestic works; and equal rights to economic resources and property ownership. Besides, Kenya is committed to many progressive policies and legal frameworks enacted to promote gender equality, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and FGM.

Female Genital Mutilation prevalence remains high among the Gusii (also referred to as Abagusii or Kisii) ethnic group living in the Kisii and Nyamira counties. The prevalence rate is 84 per cent being the third highest in the country. However, among the younger age cohorts, the prevalence was lower, at 16 per cent among girls under age 15, and 68 per cent among girls aged 15–19. Among Gusii people, FGM is considered a cultural “necessity” and rite of passage to prepare girls for adulthood and marriage. Even though this is gradually changing, 19 per cent of Gusii women and 24 per cent of men now think that FGM is required by the community, compared to eight per cent and 11 per cent at the national level. Medicalisation is complicating efforts to end FGM especially among the Gusii community, where 66 per cent of cuttings were performed by medical personnel, compared to 0–9 per cent among other ethnic groups.

Girls still make up a higher percentage of out of school children than boys. Typically, those families with limited means will prioritise education for their sons over their daughters. They cannot afford school fees, uniforms, sanitary towels, among other necessities needed by their daughters. Also, families may rely on girls’ labour for household chores, carrying water, and childcare, leaving limited schooling. Consequently, 23 per cent of women aged 20–24 were married before 18 years (early marriage) in Kenya. The fertility rate for girls aged 15–19 (adolescent birth rate) is 96 births per 1000 girls. In the Kisii County, half of the

women aged 25–49 first married by age 19, 48 per cent of currently married girls aged 15–19 use contraceptives, and 18 per cent of girls aged 15–19 have begun childbearing, the adolescent birth rate being 99 births per 1000 girls. In Nyamira County, half of the women aged 25–49 first married before they attained 20 years. Fifty-three per cent of currently married girls aged 15–19 use contraceptives, and 28 per cent of girls aged 15–19 have begun childbearing, the adolescent birth rate being 133 births per 1000 girls, considerably higher than the national rate (96). Teenage pregnancies of nonmarried girls contribute to early marriage, as some families want to cover the ‘shame’ by getting the girl married off.

In the Gusii community, many of the violations against women and girls’ rights are upheld and justified by male dominance, which is embedded in several cultural practices and men’s conception as ‘almighty bearers of knowledge and wisdom’. For example, women and girls are socialised to let men make most decisions and concentrate on domestic duties, mostly in only small-scale productive activities fetching them inconsistent income. They lack control over family property, and their mobility is restricted, allowing them only limited access to knowledge and networks. It is against the backdrop of these policies and legal frameworks that International Solidarity Foundation (ISF) through the Muungano Gender Forum (MGF) has facilitated a series of gender-based dialogues in Kisii but with one such dialogue held in Nyamira county. The dialogue platforms offer an opportunity to examine the vulnerability and challenges women face, and key policy and programme recommendations are made to improve women’s status and well-being in the two counties. The critical challenges and hardships faced by girls and women in the two counties are mainly due to persisting cultural practices and social norms which promote male dominance and superiority.

The dialogue meetings are consultative engagements mostly organized in Kisii town and are held in hotels on the last Wednesday of the month. The structure includes presentations, plenary sessions and parallel working groups led by members of the steering committee. Each forum is always dedicated to a specific gender issue that has been identified by the MGF Steering Committee which aims to build the capacity of the attendees. The forum brings together gender activists, community leaders and prominent figures from academic, public and private institutions in Kisii and Nyamira counties. The forums are convened and managed by ISF in collaboration with its partners, Centre for Community Empowerment and Mobilization (CECOME), and Manga Heart Orphan Care, who are local partners in both Nyamira and Kisii counties. However, the emergence of Corona Virus disease in 2019 (COVID-19) has affected the project by observing instructions and orders by the Kenyan government based on World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations WHO gives guidance on the number of people who could meet at the same time. This forced MGF to be innovative and start using Short Messaging Service (SMS), the social media like

Facebook to stream on line discussions to replace planned face-to face forum meetings.

The mid-term evaluation was carried out approximately after two years of project launch. The following is a summary of development indices in the two counties where the project has been implemented.

Table 1: Kisii County and Nyamira County Fact Sheet

Subject	Kisii County	Nyamira County	National	Source
Population	Male 74,608; Female 79,651	Male 29,090; Female 31,465	Male 23,548,056; Female 24,014,716	KNBS, 2019
Development Index	26%	29%	44%	NGEC, 2016
Health Index	56%	60%	67%	NGEC, 2016
Education Index	61%	64%	61%	NGEC, 2016
Social Justice and Civic Participation Index	58%	60%	71%	NGEC, 2016
Labour Index	50%	50%	64%	NGEC, 2016
Gender Equality Index	40%	37%	38%	NGEC, 2016
Link between Equality and Inclusion Index	48%	50%	59%	NGEC, 2016
HIV Prevalence	4.4%	4.2%	4.8%	NACC, 2018

1.2 Project Description and Objectives

International Solidarity Foundation (ISF) seeks to improve knowledge and information among different actors for effective advocacy on gender equality and acceleration of targeted interventions and/or actions to promote gender equality and women empowerment in Kisii and Nyamira counties. This is by supporting a series of gender-based dialogues called Muungano Gender Forum (MGF) in the two counties. The MGF is the first ever dialogue platform through which women’s vulnerability and challenges are examined and debated, and key policy and programme recommendations made to address the status and well-being of women in the two counties. Specifically, MGF intends to bring gender issues to the forefront of all concerned stakeholders’ policy agenda, debates, and interests.

The major challenges faced by women and girls in the two counties include high prevalence of SGBV including FGM and child marriage, low representation of women in decision making, lack of recognition of unpaid work as gender discrimination and inequality issue, limited rights to own land and economic resources, and high maternal mortality rate. The project aims to offer dialogue platforms at least once a month. The vulnerability and challenges faced by women are examined and debated and key policy and programme recommendations made. All these are geared towards improving the status and well-being of

women in Kisii and Nyamira counties. The project expects that scaled up gender-targeted investments, improved coordination among key State and non-State actors, and use of the MGF platforms for issues-based dialogues, will accelerate progress towards SDGs, Kenya Vision 2030 and County Integrated Development Plans. In addition, effective gender-targeted programmes will help these women lift their families out of poverty and allow more women to participate in social, political and economic spheres to their full potential, thus contributing to the achievement of national and county development goals.

The results framework includes the following objectives:

Goal: Targeted actions to promote gender equality in Kisii and Nyamira counties, indicated by

- An anti-FGM policy is approved by Kisii and Nyamira county governments
- An SGBV policy is approved by Kisii and Nyamira county governments
- Kisii and Nyamira county governments adopt gender sensitive budgeting
- Kisii and Nyamira county governments allocate budget resources for SGBV prevention.
- GSCG is institutionalised in both Kisii and Nyamira county governments.

Intermediate Outcome 1 Increased availability and key stakeholders' exposure to gender-based information in different sectors to promote knowledge and behavioural change

Intermediate Outcome 2 Enhanced effective and harmonized coordination among concerned stakeholders to address gender inequality in key sectors of Kisii and Nyamira

Intermediate Outcome 3 Increased visibility of Muungano Gender Forum among various stakeholders in the two counties

1.3 Project Implementation Structure

Traditionally, the International Solidarity Foundation (ISF) has been implementing the projects through local partners working in Kisii and Nyamira counties. However, ISF has implemented MGF itself, supported by local implementing partners, and a steering committee of 10-15 volunteer members. A total of 2,085 women and 1,674 men (direct beneficiaries) have attended the MGF monthly forums. They have been drawn from the academia (scholars), Abagusii Council of Elders, law and policymakers, civic leaders, civil society activists, students, representatives from government institutions (from both county and national levels), media, think tanks and academic entities, private sector, the general public, and especially representatives from women's groups in both counties.

1.4 Mid-Term Evaluation Objectives and Scope

The mid-term evaluation sought to:

- ✓ Assess whether the project focused on established indicators (output and outcome)

- ✓ Determine the progress made towards realizing the project targets.
- ✓ Ascertain the factors associated with the project results.
- ✓ Establish the challenges the project has faced and how they have been remedied
- ✓ Identify some of the best practices that the project has generated so far.

The mid-term evaluation was carried out in Kisii and Nyamira counties, where the project is being implemented. Participatory data collection methods such as focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) were used to ensure one-on-one interaction with direct project beneficiaries. These were the people who attended the MGF organized forums from the targeted groups.

The fundamental questions that the mid-term evaluation attempted to answer were:

Box 1: Evaluation Questions

- ✓ Is the project focused on established indicators (output and outcome)?
- ✓ What progress has been made towards realizing project targets?
- ✓ What factors are associated with project results?
- ✓ What challenges has the project faced and how can they be remedied?
- ✓ What are some of the best practices that the project has generated?

1.5 Evaluation Criteria

The mid-term evaluation identified and aligned with the ISF evaluation criteria that are explained in Table 2.

Table 2 Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Mandatory Evaluation Questions
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To what extent has the project achieved its overall goal (“Targeted actions to promote gender equality in Kisii and Nyamira counties)? ✓ Are the applied strategies and activities realistic, appropriate and adequate to achieve the project goal? ✓ Are the applied strategies and activities reaching (all) relevant actors? ✓ Have the project interventions led to some unintended (positive or negative) outcomes? ✓ Which social, political or/and economic (external to the project) factors have contributed or hindered the project impact? ✓ What kind of strategies and activities should be undertaken to strengthen the project impact?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To what extent have the expected results (as identified in the monitoring plan) been achieved? ✓ Which factors have facilitated/hindered the achievement of the expected results? ✓ Could a different approach (strategies and tools) produce better results?

Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is the use of human and economic resources efficient in relation to the project's achievements? ✓ Are the communication methods efficient? What kind of communication methods and channels could be used to make the project more efficient? ✓ Is the collaboration with the County Governments and the Steering Committee efficient and mutually satisfying? ✓ Are there actors and/or institutions whose engagement could improve the efficiency of the project? ✓ What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the project's implementation process?
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Are the results and impacts socially and institutionally sustainable? ✓ What are the factors that might influence the sustainability of the impact and/or results? ✓ What kind of strategies should be undertaken to strengthen the sustainability?

1.6 Study Limitations

The main limitation of the evaluation findings is related to the study population who were mostly project direct beneficiaries having attended various dialogues under the MGF project. It is therefore not realistic to generalize the findings to a population that has not been subjected to similar interventions within the same time frame and scope. Also, the final beneficiaries of the project, i.e. women and girls in the 2 counties, were deliberately excluded from this evaluation, because MGF does not assume to have made impact in their lives, yet.

2. Part 2: Methodology

This section of the report presents the approach, guidelines and process followed in undertaking the mid-term evaluation, including adherence to research ethics.

2.1 Evaluation Design

The Mid-Term Evaluation utilized a cross-sectional analytic study design employing a multi-method approach. A participatory qualitative evaluation technique was employed to generate and analyse primary and secondary data to assess project performance and draw lessons from its implementation.

2.2 Data Sources

Data collection began with a detailed desk review of selected documents (secondary data) provided by MGF staff and those identified by the consultant. Key documents reviewed included the Kenya Vision 2030 Medium Term Plan III (2018-2022), Kisii and Nyamira County Integrated Development Plans 2018–2022; National and County Budget Statements 2017/18 -2018/2019; Economic Survey Reports (2019), among others. Primary data collection was undertaken through participatory methods (FGDs and KIIs), and observations.

2.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

Purposive selection of FGD participants was utilised to involve the direct beneficiaries or those who have participated in the dialogue meetings. A total of six FGDs were conducted targeting adult women and men aged 18 years and above. The composition of the six FGDs varied from one FGD to another, as shown in table 3. The information generated through FGDs was critical in highlighting project implementation milestones.

Table 3 Composition of FGDs

	Group	Male	Female	Total
1.	Bosinya FGD	1	5	6
2.	CECOME	1	3	4
3.	Manga Heart	1	3	4
4.	MGF Steering Committee	2	3	5
5.	Media	8	3	11
6.	Nyamira North W. Sacco	2	2	4
	Total	15	19	34

2.4 Key Informant Interviews (KII)

Key informant interviews were conducted at the county levels, targeting project beneficiaries, policymakers and the steering committee members who play an active role in implementing the dialogue approach to women equality and promoting women empowerment projects. A total of 28 interviews were

carried out as shown in table 4. The information sourced through KIIs was used to implementation aspects.

Table 4 Distribution of Key informants

	Category	Kisii County	Nyamira County	Total
1.	Police	1	1	2
2.	MCA	1		1
3.	University dons	3	1	4
4.	Abagusii council of elders	2	1	3
5.	Gender officers	3	1	4
6.	Chiefs	1	1	2
7.	Media	2	0	2
8.	CSO	3	0	3
9.	MGF Steering Committee			4
10.	ISF staff			1
11.	Student	1	1	2
	Total	17	6	28

NB: some of the informants work in Kisii county but are from Nyamira County while others play multiple roles

2.5 Compliance with Research Ethics

Participation in the mid-term review was voluntary and based on informed consent. Before starting the interviews, the study participants signed consent forms with information on the evaluation and its approach, their role, and the benefits of their participation (both directly and indirectly). Study participants got assured of the confidentiality of all data collected from them and further that the data would be used exclusively for the mid-term evaluation exercise. Assessment tools did not contain fields that capture personal data that could be used to identify respondents. Participants not comfortable with having their information recorded and were willing to contribute were allowed, and notes were written down instead. Safeguards to ensure confidentiality during data processing and reporting entailed, not making or implying precise references to study participants or statements made by particular study participants. All data collected as part of the evaluation were adequately secured to ensure that they were not accessible to unauthorized persons.

3. Part 3: Findings

This section of the report presents the mid-term evaluation of the MGF project in Kisii and Nyamira Counties.

3.1 Intermediate Outcome 1: Increased availability and key stakeholders' exposure to gender-based information in different sectors to promote knowledge and behavioral change

The evaluation established that both experts and non-experts on gender issues had been brought together through the MGF dialogue meetings. According to the six FGDs and the KIIs, the dialogues that have been hosted by the MGF have contributed to their understanding and knowledge of gender issues. For example, some reported that they were able to identify that violence can take other forms apart from physical forms. In one of the FGDs it was said that the information shared in the dialogue meetings by the experts who had been brought onboard enabled them to understand different perspectives on gender issues. They also noted that they had made available statistics and information enabling decision making in programming, as well as making linkages to support safe spaces to refer survivors of violence.

The participant said,

“..... I always thought that GBV was only when a person is beaten by a person unknown to them. But now I know that even spouse battering is GBV...”

FGD 003

Others have been able to understand the thinking behind the acts of GBV. Through the MGF forums, they now understand the steps taken in seeking justice and the options available when dealing with GBV in case the system is compromised at some point.

“.... why would one hurt a person they love? now it is clear that no one deserves to be beaten” **FGD 004**

The informative dialogues have brought awareness to some of the participants that there is a gender desk in police stations for addressing GBV. They also came to know that gender issues involve not only women but men also. This is demonstrated by the following statements expressed during FGDs:

“..... you know..... before I started attending the MGF dialogues, I thought in case one is violated you had to go to the same front desk at the police station to report and have the occurrence booked in but now I know this is not the case since there is a dedicated desk in a different part of the police station where one can report.....” **FGD 002**

Another added that,

“...it is not just women who suffer GBV at the hands of their husbands at home Who would believe men are also violated by the wives?” **FGD 004**

Through the forums, participants of FGD 002 have been able to share challenges and find solutions. Others have learned the steps to be taken in seeking justice and the options available when dealing with GBV if the system is compromised at some point.

“... kumbe *mambo* ya GBV sio mchezo siku hizi?...yaani polisi wakianza mchezo na kutia mbaroni mshukiwa kuna kitu naweza fanya kama kwenda kwa watu wa media?”

Translated....

“...have realized issues to do with GBV are no longer a joke nowadays! If police seem unwilling to arrest a perpetrator, there is something I can do like going to the media to highlight the case” FGD 002

The main cultural issues that affect girls and women in the community have been highlighted from the dialogue discussions. According to the various participants, the main critical gender equality issues in both counties are similar. They mostly mentioned that men tended to take most of the opportunities available for improvement, leaving women with little or nothing, especially in decision-making. This was both at home and in the public spaces. However, a few still held that the advantage men had over women was not so obvious and was not based on cultural linings. It was due to the hard work that men put into what they want to achieve. Besides, all the beneficiaries interviewed concurred that women have to seek permission from their husbands before doing anything at home. Women cannot attend training because of their reproductive roles. Other issues mentioned were: -FGM, GBV, intimate partner violence, drug addiction, defilement, teenage pregnancy, women being the producers (working in the shambas) but have no say on the proceeds from their work their husbands control. There was also patriarchy in the two counties where women cannot own any property and cannot provide any input during meetings. From Kisii county, a KII said that the domination of men over women was demonstrated in the County Chambers.

The KII narrated the struggle they had to go through for women members of the County Assembly to contribute. According to the KII, they had to take their case to court for arbitration. Their male colleagues who are members of the County Assembly had decreed that they did not want to hear from female contributors. This is what she had to say:

“Can you imagine even in the County Assembly women were not supposed to speak? What kind of patriarchy is this? We are all equal, but our colleagues feel they have more rights than us!” KII 008.

Any social ill befalling the community is blamed on women; for example, deaths occurring in the community. According to the community, any death occurring had to have an explanation. This was

demonstrated in one of the FGD conducted where one participant said:

“There is no funeral I have attended that people would say is natural death. All deaths of men have to be linked to the women who are married to them,” FGD 002.

The above statement could be construed to mean that women were the leading cause of the community’s deaths, even if the deaths resulted from ill-health. Women in Nyamira were viewed as practitioners of black magic - witchcraft. This was one of the differences between Kisii County and Nyamira County. Akey informant from Nyamira said the following in an interview:

“Let me tell you! Women in Nyamira cannot be trusted. We live in fear of being bewitched by our women. You see, we control everything at home and this makes them to want to take over. Do you know what they do? They will go and seek the powers of darkness so that they neutralize you. You will be doing what she wants and she will now start controlling you, including your wealth,” KII 010.

The above claim is backed by yet another male KII 016 who said that:

“Women also beat men. When people talk of GBV, people tend to think that it affects only women. But men do suffer as well. This is especially when the women put them under a spell by using charms.”

While husband battering in Nyamira County, was blamed on charms used by women, the consultant got invited to arbitration of a man who had been abused at the local chief’s office when seeking an audience with him for an interview. The chief requested the consultant to sit in to listen and learn from real-life experiences from the community. The complainant had gone to the chief after being mistreated by his wife and their children. According to the complainant, he had been assaulted before the recent incidence that made him seek help from the chief. The problem revolved around income from rental houses he had put up in Kisii town. For a long time, the wife had been pocketing and misusing the proceeds from rent. She had also recently got employed in a government institution, and she had started getting home late at night, around 9.00 pm, even though her duties in the institution ended at 5.00 pm. When he inquired about her lateness in returning home, he got assaulted by the wife and their grown-up children. He also spent the night tied down with a rope and was untied in the morning. The community elders, who assist the chief in arbitrating such matters, after listening to both sides (man and wife) instructed that the whole family had to present itself at the chief’s office the following morning. Apparently, the man assaulted was from Nyamira and but living Kisii County where he had invested.

The case story provides an example of the kind of cases that the provincial administration deal with. Men, too, are battered by their women. This can be summarized as disputes over household incomes from assets owned constitute a significant cause of domestic violence in Nyamira County as observed during the research. Therefore, chiefs or the provincial administration need to be exposed to gender-based information in different sectors to appropriately serve his community.

The evaluation respondents have been able to come up with different initiatives to address some of the issues bedeviling their community due to knowledge gained from attending the MGF. Some have been able to organize women who are most affected by the cultural beliefs into self-help groups. An example is mama Safi Sacco which has been able to bring women together, helping them make savings, thereby becoming economically independent. In these organized groups, the information gained from dialogue meetings is cascaded down to the members through interactive sessions. Others have used the information gained in other ways. Through media, they have highlighted the different challenges faced by women in pursuit of their rights in cases of abuse. A media KII said the following:

“A lady’s hand was chopped off by the husband and because her story was aired, she was able to get medical help and her hospital bills paid by the MCA. She was also able to get legal aid,” KII 004.

“Two ladies were physically assaulted at the County Assembly and they got help because their stories were aired,” KII 006.

Others have taken it upon themselves to engage various leaders and advocate for the reasons for having policies in place guarding against cultural beliefs that are retrospective. A rescue centre for GBV survivors has been set up as a result of highlighting of the magnitude and challenges girls and women face in the community.

Bulk SMS that entails beneficiaries receiving issue-based communication such as information on the 16 Days of Activism, or involving leaders in advocacy is one way that MGF staff have used to sustain information on gender equality to various stakeholders. For example, leaders fear talking about bad cultures because they will lose votes. Through advocacy, leaders can work on the gender policy and develop guidelines to eliminate GBV e.g. the Alternative Rites of Passage (ARP) has been domesticated as a guideline. It addresses the needs of women and child survivors through the establishment of camps and mentorship programmes. It also sets out at reaching out to survivors (champions) to talk about their experiences, enabling the discussion on cultural issues like FGM that are never discussed openly, the youth

have also been empowered to take up these issues in the future and that MGF contributed to the establishment of youth-friendly services in the county, they have done well in creating a one-stop-shop. These include the GBV desks at the hospital and police. They have also brought on board prosecutors so that GBV cases do not disappear in courts, the larger population is aware of MGF and is able to contact them should they encounter any challenges in the process of seeking justice, networking for CSOs in Kisii has been strengthened through MGF and that the media has been brought on board to highlight GBV matters.

3.2 Intermediate Outcome 2: Enhanced, effective and harmonized coordination among concerned stakeholders to address gender inequality in key sectors of Kisii and Nyamira

From the field data collected, it was evident that MGF plays a critical role in coordinating stakeholders to address gender inequality issues in Kisii and Nyamira counties. Coordination of gender inequality and the promotion of women empowerment is led by the national government and the county governments. In Kisii County, coordination of gender equality issues is led by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, Youth and Social Services. The Gender Office in the Ministry, together with the TWG on gender equality and women empowerment, and the MGF are involved in coordinating all matters related to gender issues in Kisii County. They organize events that address women's issues like the 16 Days of Activism against GBV. A KII from the County Government said:

“MGF has been good to us ... they have been instrumental in making certain activities take place. As a county, like any other government departments, we are limited in funds. So, we plan in collaboration with the various sector TWGs and ask ISF through MGF to fund these activities,” KII 001.

Some of the activities that have been coordinated efficiently include the 16 Days of Activism. The KII 001, said that,

“During the 16 Days of Activism, we plan events that address certain aspects of gender equality. Most of the activities are focused on addressing girls'/women's issues...so we plan together in the county what we will be doing during the 16 Days. We may plan to visit certain areas and take with us pads to the girls in those areas. We have to get the pads first before thinking of where to go and distribute them as well as transport ... branded materials like T-shirts --- which MGF provides.” KII 01

Various stakeholders involved in gender issues attend workshops and meetings whenever they are held in Kisii County. In these, forums sensitizations and discussions on gender equality and women empowerment

issues are discussed by panellists identified by the MGF Steering Committee.

“As the steering committee of the MGF, we have to agree on the topic of discussion. It is only after we have agreed on the topic of discussion that we look for the right person(s) to be involved as panellists or discussants” KII 020.

Even though the MGF steering committee coordinates the topics of discussions in the county to ensure an enhanced, effective and harmonized coordination among concerned stakeholders to address gender inequality in key sectors, a CSO representative said that,

“Sometimes I feel as though the Steering Committee should not follow the international calendar of events...for me it would make sense to all of us if we could have a local calendar of events....” KII 022

The KII 022 seemed equally unhappy with the way some of the panellists were engaging with the attendees. According to the key informant some of the panellists were too theoretical than practical. She said,

“some of the people who come to present to the forums seem to present what is written in the books. And you see most of these books are of the western culture. Mind you.... African culture is so different from the western culture. In the west we have systems that work. But in Kenya? I feel they should be addressing or discussing the issues that affect us women in Africa... we live in a community where everyone seems to know everybody...for us they should be talking of using ubuntu¹ principle...” KII 022

Through the enhanced effective and harmonized coordination among concerned stakeholders to address gender inequality in key sectors of Kisii and Nyamira counties, an agreed upon referral system has been developed. This has had input from various sectors as well as by experts within the counties geared towards providing survivors / victims with information and support. The referral system documents the kind of services one would get in various points of care which are dependent on the kind of service one would be seeking for. In the referral system the contact details of the services providers are provided so as to make referral system easier and effective.

There are a number of strengths in the way the steering committee has coordinated with the Kisii and Nyamira county governments. One of these is the coordination of TWG meetings as well as the

¹ Ubuntu principle means that a person is a person through other persons. Or I am because you are

coordination of MGF monthly meetings which are held every Tuesday of the last week of the month. The MGF Steering Committee has also been able to solidify the work of the project through advocacy and sensitization of actors as well as bringing onboard different organizations to tackle GBV/FGM/C. The selection of the experts to present or to be engaged in the dialogues is carried out by the MGF Steering Committee. The experts are normally from backgrounds that articulate different gender equality and women empowerment issues. The MGF Steering Committee evaluates the way the project is proceeding and, in case of any remedies needed, they act on them.

The project has some gaps in the engagement of the MGF Steering Committee and how they function. One gap is the membership of the Steering Committee. The committee members are just volunteers and therefore there could be a case of non-commitment. The majority of the members can only be available after work since they are working elsewhere. Training of health care workers/professionals and the police sector has been hampered due to limited resources. The MGF Steering Committee have not involved the provincial administration even though most of the violations on GBV are in communities where chiefs are located. As much as these challenges exist, there have been some achievements.

Some of the achievements are that FGM cases have reduced possibly due to sensitizations and / or dialogues that have been held. There is a shift to having more men involved in the fight against GBV in the print, radio and social media. People have been empowered through the knowledge they have gained by sharing experiences on GBV. And as such, more people are enlightened on what constitutes domestic violence. There has also been progressive involvement of political leaders and county government back-up. This led to the construction of the Gender-Based Violence Recovery Centre (GBV RC) in Kenya, and there is hope of having more. Also, through the engagement of partners, safe spaces for girls and women have been enhanced. Muungano Gender Forum staff have been in the forefront in coming up with strategies to ensure that actors can get information. The use of media has been scaled up in the wake of Covid-19. It is through coordination by the MGF that media coverage of GBV issues has improved.

3.3 Intermediate Outcome 3 Increased visibility of Muungano Gender Forum among various stakeholders in the two counties

According to the evaluation participants, the Muungano Gender Forum project was visible among various Kisii County stakeholders. This was affirmed by some of the participants reporting that they had been present during the inception of the project, which is an indication that before the project could be launched a lot of work had been done. One of the KII who is a university lecturer said that they were invited to the launch and she was one of the people involved in the project from inception. She said that,

“You cannot ask me whether I have heard about the project. Do you know that I was present during its inception?” KII 008

She continued,

“When I heard that such a project was going to be initiated in Kisii and Nyamira, I was overjoyed. As an academician and a counsellor in that matter, I have been dealing with cases of GBV which are as a result of our cultural misconceptions about women in our community,” KII 008.

Working with other stakeholders has enabled people to know the MGF project. Stakeholder involvement in the project has enabled it to be visible in the community. One of the KII 023 said that,

“I came to know about MGF during my attachment at The Eagles for Life (TEFL) organization. Do you know that the director is the chairman of the Steering Committee?” KII 023.

In addition to the above ways in which the evaluation participants came to know about MGF, there are those some who got official communication via a letter or a text. Others got to know about MGF from engagement in MGF as part of sectional members addressing an aspect of GBV. A KII had this to say:

“During introductions in these meetings, the mention of MGF created curiosity and I wanted to find out what it was all about.” KII 011.

A former county gender officer reported that he came to know about MGF from his officers working on the ground. He said that:

“I hadn’t heard about MGF. But one day while in the office, my junior officers came to me asking whether I knew of a group of people calling themselves ‘MGF’ who were carrying out an intervention in the community. I said “no”. I asked the officers to let them know that there was a procedure that needed to be followed before one could engage with the community. That is, they needed to pass through my office for clearance. It is then that they came, we had an agreement and I gave them the go-ahead”. KII 004

An Abagusii elder reported that he had come to know about MGF and the dialogues they hold through ISF staff. He said,

“I learnt about MGF from an employee of ISF who was my student,” KII 009.

Muongano Gender Forum has attracted attention due to the work they are carrying out in the community. From involvement with the county gender officers to participation with other stakeholders in addressing gender issues like GBV, the MGF has made the community acknowledge the platform's existence. During interviews with KIIs and FGDs, it came out clearly that the project was known for various reasons despite having existed for only two years.

KIIs and members of FGDs were able to associate MGF with the work they were doing. Some of the words mostly associated with the MFG were;

“GBV/FGM”; “women empowerment”; “gender equality/equity”; “balancing gender issues on radio”; as well as “organization dedicated to eradication of gender violence”.

There were others who associated, MGF with the presentation of information, by experts and the discussions that ensue at the venue. Among some of the FGD participants and KIIs, the fact that the dialogue meetings are held every last Wednesday of the month enabled the community and stakeholders to look forward to the event, making MGF remain visible in the community.

As one of the stakeholders involved in addressing GBV in the counties, MGF has participated in demonstrations from time to time when a case of GBV has been reported and there seems as though nothing was going to be done. This has made it a preferred forum for help in seeking justice for GBV survivors when the justice system seems to be slow, or not working at all, especially when there is a feeling or fear that the police investigating the incidences are compromised. In one of the FGDs a participant reported that:

“When a case of GBV like rape is reported to the police and nothing seems to be happening, we just go to MGF. You are sure if they follow up the case and nothing seems to be happening, they will mobilise, and even the media people will come and highlight it. You know the police don't like negative issues about them being broadcast. They will act on the complaint without any further delay.” **FGD 005**

Several things have enhanced the visibility of MGF. First, the consistency of the meetings that are held regularly every last Wednesday of the month. This enables the various stakeholders to plan and anticipate the forum to take place on the particular day of meetings. Through the media, MGF has continued to be visible to various stakeholders whom it updates on the various activities that it is doing by publicising

them. This is something they have been able to consistently carry out through Facebook, WhatsApp, and sending out emails. The use of local media stations to keep the MGF project visible in the two counties was contested. Some felt that MGF had utilised this medium well and helped in maintaining the visibility of the project while others felt that the radio stations were not a useful mode of communicating its presence in the two counties. The reasons advanced were around the times of the day when important information about MGF, or their activities was being aired. The prime-time period which was said to be reserved for those who could afford the charges was the most likely period when people tuned in to the radios. The other times when MGF staff were on air, their message would be to a few people. Therefore, the utility of the radio stations for communication was not the ideal one but could be a complimentary intervention.

Increased visibility of Muungano Gender Forum among various stakeholders in the two counties was being achieved through bringing experts onboard who are able to deliver well-informed information to the attendees. In one of the FGDs a participant said that the fact that she is going to learn something new every time she attends the forums makes it hard to miss them. She has also been able to invite other people in her office to attend. She said:

“I always look forward to the next forum meeting ...am always sure that I will learn something different from what I had learnt the last time ...since it is always once a month, I have been able to encourage my colleagues from the office to attend and get new information,” FGD 002 .

The MGF project has also been visible through participation MGF in events geared towards fighting for gender equality in the counties. MGF project staff and their associates have been in most of the events in branded gear. These would either be branded T-shirts, wrist bands, notebooks, banners, umbrellas, among others. Moreover, with the advent of COVID-19, face masks. According to most of the evaluation respondents, the distribution of condoms and branded face masks was a big deal. There was a lot of praise for the introduction of branded face masks at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. A member of one of the FGDs said:

“I remember when masks were being introduced as part of the must-have piece of clothing...the N-95 type of masks were very expensive and the surgical masks which are the common ones were also out of reach for most of the people in Kisii...MGF staff started distributing locally made face masks which they branded...this way you would know who they were” FGD 006

Use of social media would seem as one of the sustainable ways for continued visibility of the Muungano Gender Forum among various stakeholders in the two counties. In addition, utilization of every opportunity

by the MGF staff to sensitise and invite stakeholders. Even though branded materials is a good means of maintaining its visibility, it would be hard to maintain it if there were no donor onboard as it is an expensive undertaking. The use of the radio especially during prime time requires money which as a non-profit entity cannot be sustained beyond the funding period.

4. Discussion, Summary, and Recommendations

The findings below are discussed against the Evaluation Criteria and mandatory evaluations questions presented in Part 1.4.1 Impact

Implementation of the project on promoting gender equality in Kisii and Nyamira counties is on track. From the evaluation participants, engaging with experts in various fields e.g., medical personnel to provide solutions, and psycho-social support by mentors are some of the strategies that have been working for the MGF. Monthly meetings are held without fail every last Wednesday of the month. The monthly meetings are always facilitated by experts on various subjects of interest as suggested by the MGF Steering Committee. The meetings are advertised mostly through print and electronic media to create awareness on gender issues. Meeting notices are sent-out to the general population with the hope that they will reach a wide audience. The main disadvantage of this mode of communication is that not everyone is techno-savvy or is able to attend the meeting forums online.

Due to strong cultural beliefs about women, this factor has made the implementation of the project to face headwinds as most of the political leaders would not want to be seen advocating against GBV or FGM. This is because to do so would amount to alienating their voters from them. There is perception that MGF is trying to make girls and women to be headstrong or “*kichwa ngumu*”. The dialogues are seen as a threat to the ‘family peace’ as one KII put it. He was of the opinion that instead of focusing solely on empowerment of women girls and women, boys and men should also be included in the project. The concern was about what would happen to the boys and men when their counterparts have been empowered. According to him, this will result to increased divorce rates and single parents who will not want to be dictated to as is the norm in the community. This kind of thinking or beliefs is a threat to the project as it is likely to turn other members of the community against it. It is suggested that sustained gender equality and women empowerment education should be offered not only to those regular dialogue attendees but broadly to the community gatekeepers who are also community opinion makers.

The fact that the dialogue meetings are held in hotels in town, limits some of the would-be attendees. According to some of the participants, the project is seen as tailored for the town residents. This makes it to seem as though it is for the elites who stay in town; people who have already been empowered and not for the rural (grassroots) people. The language used in the forums being English is seen as a barrier to people who would benefit more from the project. Nevertheless, the dialogue meetings have let to girls and women being able to make their own decisions on an array of undertakings.

4.2 Effectiveness

Data collected from the Steering Committee and project staff shows that the project’s implementation is

on course as planned. Every month, there has been a dialogue as envisaged in the work plan apart from December. This is because most people break for Christmas holidays earlier than the scheduled dates of the last Wednesday of the month. Project staff felt that the project was yielding the results they were expecting based on the positive feedback on their social media platforms. However, there is a need to have a more structured way of collecting data to ascertain this claim.

The project has faced challenges in the course of implementation that include the Covid-19 pandemic. Implementation of all MGF project activities was reported to have been on course as planned before the pandemic outbreak. The COVID-19 impacted negatively on the execution of the plan. Alternative new and innovative means of holding the monthly meetings like live streaming on Facebook of the sessions were put in place.

The male dominance narrative that distorts what constitutes gender equality and women empowerment has also been a challenge in the two counties of Kisii and Nyamira. The deep-rooted patriarchal traditions and practices have made advocacy for gender equality and women empowerment challenging in some areas. The community is apparently reluctant to expand the role of women and girls in decision making, control of resources, autonomy over their bodies, among others. For example, the political class seeks to capitalize on project activities for political mileage which militates against its objectives. This has also been affected by the failure to have a two-thirds gender rule implemented in the National Assembly which in turn makes the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment to be looked at as untenable. Female members of County Assemblies encounter barriers when they attempt to make contributions to debates in the Assembly because their male counterparts do not recognize their right to participate in decision making. Institutions like the Kisii Council of Elders also have also shown reluctance to fully identify with messages and actions that seek to alleviate some forms of discrimination against women like FGM. Key informants and focus group discussion participants observed that political goodwill is important in getting more people aware and supportive of gender equality and women empowerment issues in Kisii and Nyamira counties.

The project has achieved key project results especially in Kisii County. The use of bulk SMS was started and is used to send communication to beneficiaries on gender equality issues like the 16 Days of Activism. Project leaders have been sensitized and capacity built to advocate for gender equality and promotion of women empowerment interventions in the communities. This is a great achievement as leaders normally fear talking against cultural practices as this can cost them votes or good standing in their communities. MGF dialogue sessions have opened up discussion on subjects like FGM that are considered taboo in the community which has influenced actors in Kisii County to start developing the Gender Policy. The policy makers have also developed and adopted guidelines for the Alternative Rites of Passage (ARP).

The dialogue meetings have led to addressing the needs of women and child survivors through establishment of camps and initiation of mentorship programmes in the community. There have been efforts to reach out to victims (champions) to talk about their experiences and by so doing allowing others to learn from them. The youth have also been empowered to take up these issues in the future through provision of youth friendly services as well as creation of a one-stop centre for GBV at the Kisii Level 6 Hospital and police stations in Kisii and Nyamira counties. This is to enable quick and efficient response to GBV cases in the counties. The enhanced networking facilitated by MGF staff has resulted in getting some key personnel like prosecutors, and the media to ensure GBV cases do not disappear in court and /or are dismissed or withdrawn from courts against the rule of law. MGF staff are currently known to be the go-to people by the larger community in case they encounter challenges in the process of seeking justice against GBV related violations.

In order for the project to continue being effective it is important that MGF staff and the Steering Committee put more emphasis and focus on securing political goodwill since the community listens to their leaders more than project staff. The project should also convene forums at the grassroots as opposed to hotels in towns to ensure community level people are reached, including survivors. There is also a need to embrace radio to broadcast relevant information during peak hours.

4.3 Efficiency

Most of the participants in Kisii County said that the project staff and the Steering Committee were involved in the coordination of gender matters and the dialogue meetings. However, it was observed that they are not prominent on the ground in Nyamira County. This could be attributed to the fact that the project has one staff who is supposed to cover both Kisii and Nyamira counties. There is the involvement of various stakeholders in gender issues through workshops and meetings in Kisii County. The Steering Committee was said to be instrumental in selecting discussants and panellists for the dialogue meetings. Different dialogue forums to discuss gender equality and women empowerment issues with professionals in various sectors have been promoted through the media. In addition, sensitization on GBV issues has taken place, including follow up on GBV cases in court to ensure access to justice. In Kisii, the MGF steering committee and staff have been helpful and able to direct GBV survivors to lawyers in Kisumu County who offer free legal services. This has made the working relationship and collaboration between the County Government and the MGF steering committee to be seen as efficient and mutually satisfying. The technical working group (TWGs) has members who are gender activists and also members of the MGF Steering Committee.

For enhanced efficiency of the project, there is need to increase the time allocated for the dialogue forums

from the usual two hours to three hours, according to the FGD and KII participants. A diversified means of communication is needed so as to reach different cadres of the population and thereby ceasing to invite the same people and / or organizations to the dialogue meetings. For example, the chiefs and assistant chiefs reported that they had not been invited to any meeting or dialogue forum discussing gender equality and women empowerment. They can be helpful in reaching out to many since they work in the community and get involved in enforcing the same messages.

Targeted dialogues should be encouraged where specific people interested in a certain issue for discussion are invited. Church leaders, police (especially those who are in-charge of the gender desk), and the judiciary are other actors who could improve the efficiency of the project. Church leaders are instrumental since they have a sustainable platform and audience for addressing gender equality and women empowerment issues that are embedded in community dynamics. Local vernacular radio stations should be utilized whenever possible to inform the public about meetings and the message of gender equality and women empowerment. Streaming live through the use of new technologies like Zoom should be explored without abandoning other social platforms and or media like Facebook and WhatsApp. In addition, branded materials like t-shirts, books, umbrellas, bags, calendars, wrist bands, among others were said to be other ways of increasing visibility of the MGF. Engaging grassroots communities using road shows and music to target those change agents who do not listen to radio would also help. The project could also sponsor some sporting activities where the MGF information on GBV is passed.

Coordination of activities undertaken by the MGF could be improved if additional staff were brought on board to mind a specific county or jurisdiction. This would enable the expansion dialogues session to communities instead of being limited to towns. There is need to strengthen advocacy activities and policies by engaging more of the political leaders. Some strengths of the MGF is the fact that it is a unique way of building the capacity of actors who are involved in addressing GBV and other violations against women. The consistency of the information disseminated on gender equality and women empowerment has enabled the project to form networks with other actors involved in similar work. Some of the areas for improvement in implementation of the MGF project are listed below:

1. The project is supposed to be dealing with gender equality as part of the mandate. However, it is being depicted as though gender issues are only about girls and women. A KII indicated that about 30% of boys and men suffer from GBV the same way girls and women do. The project should therefore endeavour to see that issues concerning boys and men are also addressed.
2. The project is seen as a preserve of elites and people who are conversant with the English language which excludes those who do not understand the language well.

3. The project was to be implemented in both Kisii and Nyamira counties but this has not happened due to various reasons, including staffing challenges and the Covid-19 pandemic.

In spite of these, the project has opportunities for growth due to linkages with other relevant stakeholders which enables issues to be handled appropriately. The dialogue meetings present an opportunity for enhancement of capacity building for both staff and the MGF Steering Committee as well as other actors in the two counties. The ISF project is the only initiative having addressing gender issues. This gives it advantage in seeking more donor funds, working with people at the community level to empower them as well as act on the presidential decree on FGM, and establish an additional rescue centre.

The biggest impediment to implementation of the project is politics. Politicians would want to hijack the project to pursue their own interests. They see the organized groups as ready-made forums for them to articulate their development agenda. This is in addition to the patriarchal culture where women are not allowed to make their own decisions. Deliberate steps should be taken to ensure meetings are taking place at the community level to remedy the perception that the MGF is an urban initiative.

4.5 Sustainability

The way the MGF project has been designed is a novel way of engaging the community and specifically change agents. FGD and KII participants felt that the deep-rooted culture of male dominance had to be dealt with as a priority. According to one KII the dialogues that are usually held are a threat to the “family peace”. He was of the opinion that instead of focussing on girls and women empowerment, boys/men should be included in the project. The concern was what would happen to the boys and men when their counterparts have been empowered and become “*kichwa ngumu?*”. i.e., strong headed. This will result into increased divorce rates and single parents who would not want to be dictated to as is the norm in the community. This kind of thinking or beliefs is a threat to the sustainable existence of the project after the funding cycle. In order to overcome this way of thinking, it is suggested that sustained gender equality and women empowerment education should be offered not only to those regular dialogue attendees but broadly to the community gatekeepers. They are also known as community opinion makers.

For the continued implementation of the project goals and objectives, respondents were of the view that the dialogues should be taken to the grassroots and have selected or volunteer ambassadors. They should be people of high standing in the community in the way they run their families. In addition, data which could later be used to lobby for more funding after ISF support comes to an end should be collected. The achievements so far should be shared with development partners and invite their participation, or get into partnerships with them.

Students from institutions of higher learning should be given a chance to practice what they have learned in class at the grassroots. By involving them, they can be able to carry out research and generate more information that can be of help to the community. Manuals or best practices from the MGF dialogues on GBV should be developed and disseminated. The manuals could be produced electronically to suit the ever-changing readership habits of the present generation. It was also recommended that political back-up should be sought to address cultural issues. One example that came out was to have politicians utilize the funding under their offices to address gender equality and women empowerment. The county politicians should be invited and their support sought for the development and implementation of policy documents that speak out on gender issues in the counties.

4.6 Summary and Recommendations

Expected outcomes	Key Findings	Key Recommendations
Intermediate Outcome 1 Increased availability and key stakeholders' exposure to gender-based information in different sectors to promote knowledge and behavioural change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most actors in the field of gender equality and women empowerment are informed on what constitutes GBV albeit the differences in Kisii and Nyamira counties. • Stakeholders at the community level like chiefs have not been reached. • There is a push back from patriarchy apologists who view the project as a threat to the status quo. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target community leaders at the grassroots like chiefs and pastors for participation in MGF sessions. • Develop and implement a male engagement strategy. • Develop and implement strategies for promotion of inclusivity and diversity to ensure even groups like PWDs and the elderly participate.
Intermediate Outcome 2 Enhanced, effective and harmonized coordination among concerned stakeholders to address gender inequality in key sectors of Kisii and Nyamira	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National and county governments are in charge of organizing gender equality meetings. • Effective facilitation and coordination of meetings by ISF is evident. The geographical reach of MGF events is limited to urban locations. • Political interest could subvert the purpose of MGF events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a road map for development and implementation of key gender equality and women empowerment laws and policies. • Establish and strengthen partnerships to cultivate political good will. • Map geographical areas and sections of the population that have not been reached through MGF activities for targeted intervention.
Intermediate Outcome 3 Increased visibility of Muungano Gender Forum among various stakeholders in the two counties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MGF staff and the Steering Committee were the main source of information about the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop/review the communication plan for the MGF project to align with the Covid-19 context and expand participation of specific target groups. • Explore use of community focused communication strategies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social media was mainly used to invite people to the forums.	<p>like Magnet Theatre and Community Action Teams for the visibility of the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Train project staff on communication for development.
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5. References

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