

# Just and Resilient Communities Project

Gender-based Violence and Child  
Protection: Diocese of Mt Kenya West  
November 2016



# **Evaluation Report**

***Imarisha maisha kwa kuzingatia haki na usawa***

**Just and resilient communities project:  
gender-based violence and child protection.  
Diocese of Mt Kenya West**

A project of the Diocese of Mt Kenya West and Anglican Overseas Aid which has received Australian Aid funding through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

**Tanya Caulfield  
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## Acronyms

<b>ACK</b>	Anglican Diocese of Mount Kenya West
<b>AOA</b>	Anglican Overseas Aid
<b>CP</b>	Child protection
<b>FGD</b>	Focus group discussion
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	Human immunodeficiency virus/ Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
<b>IDI</b>	In-depth interview
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and evaluation
<b>SBA</b>	Strength-based approach

## Acknowledgments

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Particular thanks to all those in the Imarisha Project team, who worked so hard behind the scenes to make the evaluation process a valuable one, particularly Mrs Florence Nderitu, Ms Millicent Wambugu, Canon Gerard Murithi and Amos Ndirangu.

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Particular recognition should be given to the women who have themselves experienced violent, abusive relationships and who were willing to share their stories. One man who had been violent towards his wife must also be noted for his honest acknowledgement of his family life.

Community meeting halls, offices of Chiefs, and Churches were all generously made available to enable the evaluation team to meet with as many community members as possible.

Warm thanks and appreciation to Anglican Overseas Aid for the opportunity to conduct the evaluation, and to listen to the perspectives and experiences of people in Nyeri County on these important issues of gender-based violence and child protection.

The initial findings of the evaluation were shared in public forums in both target communities, with all participants in the focus group discussions and key informant interviews were invited to attend these forums and respond to the preliminary findings.

The findings, conclusions and recommendations reflect the views of the evaluation team but the author takes full responsibility for any errors or omissions in the report.

All photographs taken by Alison Preston.

## Executive Summary

Gender-based violence is a human rights violation that undermines the health, security, dignity, and autonomy of its victims (1). It may include sexual violence, domestic violence, trafficking, forced/early marriage and harmful traditional practices' (2). Gender-based violence is a complex issue that is a consequence of the structural inequalities and power differentials between women and men; women are disproportionately vulnerable to violence due to their subordinate status to men in many societies (3). In Kenya, Department of Human Services (DHS) data indicates that 45% of women and 44% of men aged 15-49 have experienced physical violence since the age 15; 39% of ever-married women and 9% of men aged 15-49 have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence (4).

The Anglican Diocese of Mount Kenya West (ACK) is implementing the three year *Imarisha* project (2014 – 2017), with the goal to establish just and resilient communities with improved self-reliance and strategies that reduce vulnerability and improve quality of life for all. The budget for this three year project is AUD \$418,918. Through the project, ACK aims to reduce gender-based violence and improve child protection in Chaka and Thangathi communities in Nyeri County, a central region of Kenya. This project is a new phase of work for ACK, building on a 15-year focus on community-based HIV/AIDS prevention and response.

This report presents the findings of the 'Imarisha: Gender-based violence and child protection evaluation' undertaken from 5 September to 10 September 2016. The evaluation aims to assess the progress of the project against the project goal and objectives, to identify evidence of project impact in the community, and identify lessons learned to inform the design of future programs. The study summarises key project activities that have been implemented by ACK. Recommendations are offered to contribute to ongoing improvements and redesign of project activities.

The study used qualitative methods to examine the factors that have or have not contributed to reducing cases of gender-based violence and child exploitation in two communities. Prior to the evaluation, the project staff contacted potential informants to invite them to participate in the study. The study team were able to meet with a diverse number of people and groups who had been involved in project activities or were aware of different project activities.

### Findings and discussion

The findings are based on an analysis of the Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and In-depth Interviews (ID)) with different stakeholders. The findings are organised according to the themes identified: trainings; factors contributing to violence; reporting violence; incidence of violence; and group activities for economic improvement. The implications of the findings with regard to gender-based violence and child protection in the two sites are discussed.

#### *Training for community structures to prevent GBV and protect children*

A major component of ACK's project has been the delivery of training to specific community groups on topics such as rights under Kenyan law (paralegal), GBV and child abuse, Family Life, Strengths-based Approach (SBA), Memory Book, and systemic child counselling. Following training, ACK facilitated the formation of groups in the two locations, with the aim to strengthen community-based structures in order to reduce violence and abuse. These groups also provide an opportunity to strengthen self-reliance, through shared small business activities.

The primary target of ACK's training have been the Nyumba Kumi representatives, a community-policing concept initiated by the Kenyan government to improve security in both urban and rural areas across Kenya. Training was also provided to Chiefs and assistant

Chiefs, teachers, and men and women identified for particularly support in terms of domestic violence and family life. This approach has contributed to increased knowledge and awareness regarding GBV and child protection, perceived attitude and behaviour change, and has strengthened community structures to address different forms of violence. Nyumba Kumi members emphasised that the training had increased their knowledge about rights and provided a clear framework for responding to violence and abuse.

The Nyumba Kumi work closely with the Chiefs and assistant Chiefs responsible for their community. ACK also trained the Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs in the target communities. The Chiefs reported that their knowledge about legal rights had been increased and strengthened as a result of the training; the Chiefs and assistant Chiefs indicated that they are able to deal more effectively with GBV and child abuse cases.

To improve child protection, ACK worked in collaboration with the Teacher Service Commission, to train teachers from selected schools in systemic child counselling and children's rights. Follow-up consultations were held for peer-to-peer discussion about their experience of applying the training and key challenges and provide peer support to one another. Teachers reported that the training has provided them with the skills to counsel children identified as requiring support. A District Education Officer described the training as leading to positive "cultural change" in the schools under her responsibility.

ACK training programs for community groups have contributed to a perceived change in both attitudes and behaviour regarding GBV and child abuse at individual, family, and community levels. While some study participants stated that they had received some information about GBV and child protection through media forms such as radio, the majority of study participants claimed that the ACK training has provided knowledge that they have applied to cases of violence, abuse and neglect. The majority of study participants said this was due to an increased confidence about the rights of men and women, and children. In addition, many study participants indicated that more children with disabilities were attending school due to an increased awareness about the rights of people with disabilities.

The training and community follow-up delivered by ACK has contributed to strengthening community-based protection in both project sites. Community members and groups have taken on specific responsibilities and work to protect community members from acts of violence, abuse or neglect. All study participants stated that the Nyumba Kumi in both communities had taken a role in mediating and resolving issues in households as a result of the training, as well as reporting incidents of violence to the Chiefs and police. The role of the Nyumba Kumi was regarded as an important factor in developing and supporting cohesive relationships at all community levels.

One of ACK's stated objectives is to achieve 'communities and institutions that are gender sensitive, with structures that prevent and address gender-based violence and promote gender equality'. However the project design did not include plans to engage with church structures or church leaders – a very significant institution in Kenya. This evaluation has identified the opportunity for ACK to actively engage with churches through a theological framework that aims to both reduce the risks of GBV, and promote the safety and wellbeing of women, men and children.

#### *Incidence of violence*

The project's baseline data indicate a high rate of different forms and levels of GBV in project communities, with wife battering by husbands being the most common form of GBV (40%). Other forms of GBV in the communities included husband battering, rape, verbal abuse, child neglect and abuse, and psychological abuse (6). Although quantitative data was not collected during the evaluation, study participants perceived a reduction in the level of GBV in both communities since the project began. The majority of participants stated that

this was due to the work of the Nyumba Kumi. Many explained that the Nyumba Kumi have been trained to assist with cases of GBV and child abuse, with many people feeling confident to seek assistance from them as a result. Study participants emphasised that the reduction of violence in the communities was due to the trainings provided by ACK.

#### *Factors contributing to violence*

As the project is in phase one, changing or eliminating the factors that contribute to violence in communities was unlikely given the entrenched nature of gender inequality and unequal power relationships between men and women. Many study participants stated that contributing factors for violence remained similar to those before the project started. The majority said that alcohol and drugs were the most common cause of GBV in both communities. Many men were consuming alcohol and drugs as a way to relieve the stress of their financial situation; this often led to conflict between men and women. Additionally, many study participants also highlighted illiteracy and lack of knowledge as contributing to violence in the communities. The majority of study participants stated that women and children, in particular girls, were more at risk to violence in both communities. Gender inequality was said to be the main factor for women's and girls' increased exposure to violence.

#### *Reporting violence*

At project baseline, people were more likely to report to chiefs (34%), as well as village elders (20%) and the police (17%). Approximately 30% of households, however, were unsatisfied with the actions taken by authorities to address GBV. The majority of evaluation study participants stated that more people were reporting cases of violence since the project started. Many said this was due to the increased confidence in the Nyumba Kumi who had been trained to resolve problems in families and communities. In addition, study participants explained that many people were more aware of their rights and this has contributed to an increase in reporting; people are informed about the community structures that can support them with their problems.

#### *Group activities for economic improvement*

Men's and women's group members established through the project noted the various activities that had enabled them to improve their own socioeconomic situation as well as other community members. Thangathi groups have initiated group income generation activities with the objective of improving economic situation of its members. Both men's and women's groups were involved in farming activities, such as sweet potatoes and tree tomatoes. In Chaka, groups were now working together on their own activities such as farming, stone selling, tree seedling cultivation, casual crops, pottery, and fishing ponds.

Both Chaka and Thangathi groups had also started welfare assistance initiatives that aimed to help group members and/or community members who needed support during difficult periods. Group members contributed a specific amount of money depending on the need. All groups stated that they utilised table top or merry-go-round loan systems. The loans have assisted members to pay for necessary expenses, which they would otherwise not be able to meet.

### **Findings and DAC criteria**

The DAC criteria were used to guide the development of questions to understand the impact of the project. This section discusses the findings with regard to each criterion.

*Relevance:* The objective of the project is relevant to the needs of the community; the baseline survey indicated a high prevalence of GBV and child abuse in the project areas, along with high levels of poverty. The evaluation findings suggest that the various trainings and ongoing group-based facilitation provided by ACK to key community groups, in particular, the Nyumba Kumi, have contributed to improving relationships and

communication in families, and Nyumba Kumi are now more equipped act on cases of violence, abuse and neglect among their neighbours.

*Efficiency:* The study findings suggest that project activities reflect value for money. Primarily, the project has focused on equipping community-based structures and volunteers with knowledge and skills to address GBV and child protection. Despite the limited project staff numbers to implement project activities, the findings show improved and strengthened community structures and empowered volunteers that have influenced the ways in which communities address GBV and child abuse. ACK has consistently worked to deliver training in community settings, with a strong emphasis on a strengths-based approach that values the resources, assets and capacity already present in the community.

*Effectiveness:* Although the project is in its early stages of implementation, there are a number of positive outcomes identified by the study. The strengthening of community structures as a result of the training provided to the Nyumba Kumi, Chiefs and teachers has resulted in a perceived change in the levels of GBV in both communities. There are improved working relationships between the Nyumba Kumi and Chiefs Nyumba Kumis and community members are more confident in reporting cases of violence to the Nyumba Kumi, as well as some members of men's and women's groups. The training provided to teachers has also equipped them to manage the challenging role of counselling children experiencing abuse or neglect and schools are now perceived to be safe spaces for children.

*Impact:* The project has benefited a range of community members living in Chaka and Thangathi areas. From the increased awareness and knowledge of communities involved in ACK trainings and follow-up, community members have been able to transfer their knowledge to other members through community meetings and barazas. The findings also highlight that many have been able to apply their learnings from the trainings to their everyday lives, such as improved listening and communication skills with children and improved communication between spouses. ACK has primarily engaged with the Nyumba Kumi cells and Chiefs and assistant Chiefs by providing training to equip them to effectively address GBV and child abuse in the two project communities. The study's findings suggest that the training has enabled both to work together to deal with family problems and cases of violence and abuse effectively; many study participants stated that most cases were solved at the Nyumba Kumi level.

*Sustainability:* The project is working towards a system of community-based protection, strengthening accountability in the community for one another's safety, and equipping grassroots structures to act on violence, abuse and neglect. The findings suggest that this innovative approach to work with the Nyumba Kumbi is providing an appropriate and effective method to strengthen community-based protection systems. The sustainability of project activities has been strengthened by ACK's innovative approach of working with Nyumba Kumis. As an existing community structure, the knowledge and skills developed through the trainings and follow-up contributes to the effective management of GBV and child abuse cases in communities.



## Recommendations

The findings of this study highlight the lessons learned from the evaluation of the gender-based violence and child protection project in Chaka and Thangathi communities based on the experiences of a range of stakeholders. The following recommendations are offered for consideration for the ongoing improvement and sustainability of the project.

Priority area	Recommendations
1. Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Ensure that the new project design has greater clarity and focus on prevention of GBV and child abuse.</li> <li>1.2 All GBV response activities should be referred to organisations working in relevant areas such as counselling, health, and legal.</li> <li>1.3 Refocus environmental aspect of project to be considered as a cross-cutting issue</li> <li>1.4 Include church leaders and lay church leaders (eg parish link persons) as a target group for GBV and Child Protection training in the new project design, utilising contextually relevant, theological framework. This program should aim to reach a range of denominations (not just Anglicans), as reflected in the target communities.</li> <li>1.5 Ensure that the new project design has a stronger M&amp;E framework with relevant output and outcome level indicators.</li> <li>1.6 Update and strengthen all training manuals to focus on GBV and Child Protection.</li> <li>1.7 Strengthen the implementation of income generation activities as the project moves in to the second phase.</li> <li>1.8 Explore opportunities to establish and support a working group in target locations that include Nyumba Kumi, teachers, health workers, police, church leaders – to establish a ‘multi-disciplinary’ approach to community-based protection.</li> <li>1.9 Provide regular refresher trainings to key groups, particularly Nyumba Kumi, to ensure knowledge and skills are updated and reinforced.</li> <li>1.10 Create greater linkages and referral processes to ensure survivors of violence and abuse receive necessary healthcare at appropriate health facilities.</li> <li>1.11 Identify and establish a link with Kenyan child psychology providers to enable teachers to refer children requiring further support</li> <li>1.12 Examine a range of models for effective mobilisation of community-based volunteers to inform new project design.</li> <li>1.13 Explore opportunities to include youth in project activities to educate and influence young men and women regarding gender equality, and the impact of GBV and child abuse.</li> <li>1.14 Develop strategies to ensure the inclusion of community members unable to participate in women’s and men’s income-generation groups due to financial hardship.</li> <li>1.15 Ensure men are included in trainings related to rights/gender equality to increase men’s understanding about the benefits of gender equality.</li> </ul>

	<p>1.16 Explore opportunities to develop and strengthen partnership with National Police Service and to strengthen police accountability</p> <p>1.17 Engage police in training and information sharing activities regarding GBV and child abuse.</p> <p>1.18 Consider utilisations of a Community Scorecard Activity to strengthen the protection systems from community level to administration level (Nyumba Kumi, Chiefs, and Police) and to improve accountability of relevant administration level authorities with regard to GBV and CP.</p>
2. Organisational	<p>2.1 Utilise existing M&amp;E staffing capacities from other ACK projects to strengthen M&amp;E framework and project capacity.</p> <p>2.2 Utilise ACK Finance Officer to assist with logistics, coordination, and small business development.</p> <p>2.3 ACK to handover activities related to ‘response’ to relevant local organisations, such as counselling GBV survivors.</p> <p>2.4 Revise Family Life training manual to include and reflect a theological framework for gender equality and to more effectively address contemporary issues and dynamics experienced by couples in Kenya.</p> <p>2.5 Revise Memory Book training to include GBV focus.</p> <p>2.6 Share project information and develop feedback mechanisms with relevant stakeholders (churches, Nyumba Kumi, Chiefs, police, media) to create greater awareness of GBV issue in local areas</p> <p>2.7 Identify potential partner organisations working in GBV in Kenya to develop and strengthen local GBV networks, share good practice, and broaden referral opportunities, and provide partnership opportunities to develop a theological framework to address GBV and gender equality.</p>
3. Partnership	<p>3.1 AOA to work with and support ACK on developing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Design, July 2017 – June 2019</li> <li>• Theory of Change to strengthen project focus;</li> <li>• Development of M&amp;E framework</li> </ul> <p>3.2 AOA and ACK to reflect on evaluation findings and jointly agree on a TOR for revision of training material to reflect community context, contemporary issues in Kenya, and an appropriate theological framework.</p> <p>3.3 AOA and ACK consider developing a strategy to effectively document and evaluate impact of training for Nyumba Kumi to influence policy at national level, such as through research investment.</p> <p>3.4 AOA or an appropriate partner provide technical support to ACK regarding savings, small business development and entrepreneurship, including analysis of market opportunities, in order to develop greater focus on access to markets for future income generation activities.</p> <p>3.5 AOA to facilitate opportunities for collaboration and networking with potential international partners and alliances working on GBV, particularly from a faith-based perspective</p>

	<p>3.6 AOA and ACK to develop communication strategy which will involve a minimum of monthly meetings to ensure appropriate support for project implementation etc.</p> <p>3.7 AOA to work with ACK to identify opportunities for ACK staff to receive professional development training, particularly in ongoing learning about strategies for the prevention of gender-based violence, effective mobilisation of community-based volunteers, and models for promoting self-reliance through savings and entrepreneurial activities.</p> <p>3.8 AOA to support the development of ACK's skills to report on project impact.</p>
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## Conclusion

This is a new project that seeks to address complex community issues, however there is evidence that a number of positive outcomes have already been achieved in both target communities.

The study found that the training and on-going support through peer groups has been useful and relevant to both project communities and people have been able to apply the learnings and knowledge to their own lives.

ACK have applied an innovative approach in targeting Nyumba Kumi and Chiefs to equip them with the skills and knowledge to address GBV and child abuse in their communities. Community members indicated they are more confident to report cases of violence to the Nyumba Kumi, more confidence about the rights of men, women and children, and there is an improved working relationship between the Nyumba Kumi and Chiefs. This has contributed to changing perceptions about the normalisation of violence in homes.

Training for teachers has equipped them to respond more effectively in their role working with children experiencing abuse or neglect, is leading to 'cultural change' in target communities, and schools are now perceived to be safer spaces for children.

Recommendations have been provided to strengthen a second phase of this project. Greater engagement with the Police, strengthening referral networks, and a stronger focus on self-reliance activities will all be important for the second phase.

This project did not aim to engage with church leaders or to address theological perspectives that can lead to higher risks of gender-based violence. This report includes a recommendation that a second phase include engagement with Churches and Church leaders through a theological framework aims to reduce risks of GBV and utilise the influence of Churches in upholding the safety and well-being of women, men and children.

The project is working towards a system of community-based protection, strengthening accountability in the community for one another's safety, and equipping grassroots structures to act on violence, abuse and neglect. The findings suggest that this innovative approach is providing an appropriate and effective method to reducing violence against women, men and children, and promoting safer, more resilient communities.

## 1. Background

Gender-based violence is a human rights violation that undermines the health, security, dignity, and autonomy of its victims (1). Gender-based violence can be defined as ‘any harmful act directed against individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of their gender. It may include sexual violence, domestic violence, trafficking, forced/early marriage and harmful traditional practices’ (2). Gender-based violence is a complex issue that is a consequence of the structural inequalities and power differentials between women and men; women are disproportionately vulnerable to violence due to their subordinate status to men in many societies (3). In Kenya, DHS data indicates that 45% of women and 44% of men aged 15-49 have experienced physical violence since the age 15; 39% of ever-married women and 9% of men aged 15-49 have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence (4).

The Government of Kenya has enacted several laws and has policies and regulations to prevent various forms of gender-based violence and to uphold the equal rights of women, men, and children. These include: the Constitution of Kenya (2010) which provides protection for women, men and children from all forms of violence; Sexual Offences Act (2006); Children’s Act (2001); Penal Code (2009); Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2011); and the National Gender and Equality Commission Act (2011). Kenya is also a signatory to several international and regional conventions and treaties that seek to prevent gender inequality and discrimination, which are contributing factors to gender-based violence in Kenya.

The Anglican Diocese of Mount Kenya West (ACK) is implementing the project *Imarisha maisha kwa kuzingatia haki na usawa*, which focuses on gender-based violence and child protection in Chaka and Thangathi communities in Nyeri County, central region of Kenya. Transitioning from a 15-year project that focused on HIV/AIDS in 2014-15, *Imarisha’s* project goal is to establish just and resilient communities with improved self-reliance and strategies that reduce vulnerability and improve quality of life for all. To meet this goal, the project’s objectives include:

- Communities are economically empowered through improved livelihood strategies
- Communities and institutions are gender sensitive, with structures that prevent and address gender-based violence, and promote gender equality
- Communities and institutions of learning have structures that protect children from harm, and promote children’s rights
- Vulnerable community members are able to access care and support
- Organisational capacity is strengthened to deliver project goal.

Following the baseline study undertaken in 2015, Chaka and Thangathi were chosen due to the very high incidence of violence in both communities. Chaka is a peri-urban setting and is classified as an arid and semi-arid land (ASAL) area, where unreliable and inadequate rains limit productive farming; the mining of stones largely drives the economy. The majority of the population are migrants from other areas in Nyeri County, as well as western Kenya. Thangathi is a rural setting where many farmers have relied on coffee as their main economic crop. The area is rich with natural resources and the climatic conditions are ideal for a diverse range of other farm-based enterprises (5).

A primary focus of the project has been the work with the *Nyumba Kumi* cells or ‘ten households’, a community-policing concept initiated by the Kenyan government to improve security in both urban and rural areas across Kenya. ACK has trained *Nyumba Kumis* in each community in topics such as rights under Kenyan law, Family Life<sup>1</sup>, gender-based

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<sup>1</sup> Family Life training aims to address dysfunction that is evident in many households and to promote stable and safe homes.

violence and child protection, strength-based approach (SBA), and systemic child counselling<sup>2</sup>. Nyumba Kumi cells consist of male and female volunteers from different age groups, and through the project ACK aims to mobilise these volunteers to address gender-based violence and child abuse in the communities. The Nyumba Kumi had received minimal training prior to the project.

ACK have also provided trainings to chiefs and assistant chiefs (paralegal), married couples who have been experiencing relationship conflict and/or challenges (Family Life), survivors of gender-based violence (Memory book<sup>3</sup>), and teachers (systemic child counselling). Family Life training was also provided to Nyumba Kumi members so they could be role models of constructive household relationships. Men's and women's groups have been established to improve the economic situation of households in both communities through the identification and initiation of sustainable livelihood activities; however the livelihood objective has not been strongly addressed to date.

Although implemented by a community development team of the Anglican Church of Kenya, this project has not specifically engaged with any church-based organisations or leaders. Nyeri County is a predominantly Christian community, with many people involved in project trainings also involved with various church denominations. There is evidence that faith leaders do hold significant influence in the lives of many people in Kenya, particularly on matters related to family life, marriage, and perspectives on gender roles. During FGDs, some cases were referenced where women sought advice from their religious leader about whether to remain with a violent husband or partner. In some cases it is evident that religious leaders were encouraging women to remain in high-risk relationships in order to maintain their marital vows. There is considerable scope for ACK to engage with religious leaders in relevant ways to uphold the safety and wellbeing of men, women, and children, and to challenge rigid gender norms and theological perspectives that place women and children at higher risk of violence.

## 2. Purpose of Study

This report presents the findings of the 'Imarisha: Gender-based violence and child protection evaluation' undertaken from 5 September to 10 September 2016. The evaluation aims to assess the progress of the project against the project goal and objectives, to identify evidence of project impact in the community, and identify lessons learned to inform the design of future programs. The study summarises key project activities that have been implemented by ACK. Based on study findings, recommendations are offered to contribute to ongoing improvements and redesign of project activities.

## 3. Methods

The study used qualitative methods to examine the factors that have or have not contributed to reducing cases of gender-based violence and child exploitation in two communities. Prior to the evaluation, the project staff contacted potential informants to invite them to participate in the study. The study team were able to meet with a diverse number of people and groups who had been involved in project activities or were aware of different project activities; the study team spoke with approximately 300 people in Chaka and Thangathi communities.

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<sup>2</sup> Systemic child counseling given to a male and female teacher from selected schools. The training is a one-week intensive program including basic counseling techniques, child development, and identifying children at risk to abuse or exploitation. Teachers refer specific cases of abuse or exploitation to head teachers that require further administrative management.

<sup>3</sup> Memory book is an approach that enables a person to tell their own story of violence, to communicate information to children that might be difficult to speak about in person. The approach also includes the recording of a family tree, which can be useful in the context of family separation.

Focus group discussions (FGDs) and semi-structured in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted to understand the perceptions of key informants about the successes and challenges of different areas of the project and how project activities had contributed or not to reducing gender-based violence and child abuse in the two communities. Ten FGDs were conducted with Nyumba Kumis, assistant chiefs, teachers, and community men and women in each community. In addition, 17 IDIs were conducted with women who had experienced violence, a male perpetrator of violence, education officers, police officers, and ACK project staff.

The FGDs and IDIs explored similar topics including: training received, community members at risk to violence, challenges in addressing violence, factors contributing to violence, livelihood activities, and reporting mechanisms. All FGDs and IDIs were facilitated by the consultant and AOA's International Program Manager and translated by ACK staff members or a research assistant employed for the study. Handwritten notes were taken during each discussion by both the facilitators and research assistant. Each discussion took approximately one hour each. In addition, a review of relevant documents was undertaken to provide relevant background information about the program.

Following data collection, a thematic analysis of the data was done, using a deductive and inductive approach. The different data sources enabled the data to be triangulated, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the impact of project activities as well as validating the data collected.

**Table 1: Study participants**

<b>Informant group</b>	<b>Data collected</b>
Nyumba Kumi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chaka – 1 FGD</li> <li>• Thangathi – 1 FGD</li> </ul>
Assistant Chiefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chaka – 1 FGD</li> <li>• Thangathi – 1 FGD</li> </ul>
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chaka – 1 FGD</li> <li>• Thangathi – 1 FGD</li> </ul>
Community women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chaka – 1 FGD</li> <li>• Thangathi – 1 FGD</li> </ul>
Community men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chaka – 1 FGD</li> <li>• Thangathi – 1 FGD</li> </ul>
Women who experienced violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chaka - 6 IDIs</li> <li>• Thangathi – 5 IDIs</li> </ul>
Male perpetrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thangathi – 1 IDI</li> </ul>
Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chaka – 1 IDI (2 officers)</li> </ul>
Education officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chaka – 1 IDI</li> <li>• Thangathi – 1 IDI</li> </ul>
ACK staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project coordinator – 1 IDI</li> <li>• Community Development Facilitator – 1 IDI</li> </ul>

### **Study limitations**

The study has some limitations. First, the time available to conduct the evaluation did not allow the study team to collect quantitative data based on the baseline study to measure change as a result of project activities; quantitative data would have enabled a clearer understanding of the impact of the project to-date.

Second, social desirability bias may have influenced some responses; some people may have responded to questions in a way that emphasised favourable results of the project and under-reported the negative outcomes.

## 4. Findings and discussion

The findings are based on an analysis of the FGDs and IDIs with different stakeholders. The findings are organised according to the themes identified: trainings; factors contributing to violence; reporting violence; incidence of violence; and group activities for economic improvement. The implications of the findings with regard to gender-based violence and child protection in the two sites are discussed.

### 4.1 Trainings

A major component of ACK's project has been the delivery of training to specific community groups on topics such as paralegal, GBV and child abuse, Family Life, Memory Book, and systemic child counselling. The primary recipients of ACK's training have been the Nyumba Kumi cells, as well as Chiefs and assistant Chiefs, teachers, and community men and women. The training has contributed to increased knowledge and awareness regarding GBV and child protection, perceived attitude and behaviour change, and strengthened community structures to address different forms of violence in communities.

**Increased knowledge:** The Kenyan Government formed the Nyumba Kumi initiative in 2013 to respond to the increasing threat of terrorism and extremism, as well as violence and robberies occurring in many Kenyan communities; the Government, however, did not provide training to the Nyumba Kumi on how to respond to these acts of violence. With the aim to reduce incidences of gender-based violence and child abuse in Chaka and Thangathi communities, ACK provided training to Nyumba Kumi cells in rights under Kenyan law, Family Life, child counselling, SBA, and GBV and child protection. The majority of Nyumba Kumi members stated that the training had contributed to increasing members' awareness about basic human rights and the role of the Nyumba Kumi in ensuring the rights of all community members are respected. All Nyumba Kumi members stated that they had participated in each training only once but emphasised that the training had increased their knowledge about rights. Those trained had a far greater knowledge of rights under Kenyan law and the Kenya Constitution 2010, with regard to GBV, CP, inheritance laws, and other matters of family law.

Our awareness of our basic rights has been increased and this has been vital in improving family communication. We have been able to give our spouses and children their rights and this has improved the communication within our families. Because of our increased knowledge, we have also been able to sensitise others within our communities on these rights, which have enabled community members to report to us when their rights have been violated. (Nyumba Kumi FGD, Chaka)

Many Nyumba Kumi said that before the training, members would rely on their own experiences when trying to resolve problems of violence in the communities; after the training, they claimed that they could now manage the cases in ways relevant to the issues. One female elder stated:

Before we were trained, I was an elder and people would come to me with their problems but I didn't know how to handle the cases but now I can; before I just advised based on my own experiences. (Nyumba Kumi FGD, Chaka)

Similarly, Chiefs and assistant Chiefs in both communities participated in trainings in paralegal, GBV and child abuse and Memory Book. All Chiefs and assistant Chiefs said that their knowledge about basic laws had been increased and strengthened as a result of the

training; the Chiefs and assistant Chiefs indicated that they are able to deal more effectively with GBV and child abuse cases. Many claimed that this was the result of their working relationship with the Nyumba Kumi.

The Nyumba Kumis have the knowledge now. They have made our work easier for us. We can delegate matters to them and they can represent us. We give them a chance to use their knowledge as we have confidence in them. (Chiefs and assistant Chiefs FGD, Thangathi)



*Chiefs in the violence-prone community of Chaka have been equipped to more effectively respond to gender-based violence and child abuse.*

Men and women in both communities participated in trainings on SBA, Family Life, Memory Book, and GBV and child abuse. In addition, some men and women in the groups had received paralegal training due to their involvement in the Nyumba Kumi. The male and female study participants stated that they had received one or two trainings in each area. All study participants claimed that the different trainings had contributed to increasing their knowledge about their rights and how to manage violent situations. It is difficult to know the impact of the training with regard to participants' knowledge as other factors and/or activities such as peer support groups, dialogue days, media, and information provided by government may have contributed to community awareness also.

We had training in Family Life. This training was given once and went for five days. We found it very useful as we have seen the change in our homes as a result. When learning about our children, before, we didn't let them speak but now we give them the opportunity to speak and they developed as a result. We have also learnt about the roles of men and women in the home and have learnt about communication



between husband and wife. We have also learnt how to manage the violence if it is in our homes – we know who to get help from. (Women FGD, Thangathi)

“Family life (training) has totally improved my life. I used to live in a customary way, where I was the dictator. I would speak, others listen. But the family was bitter. The word sorry never existed. Now we talk about everything. Now I can even apologise to my children. I now feel good because my children feel like my friends, and they are open to talk.” (NK/Chief, FGD, Chaka)

Similarly, male study participants in Thangathi maintained that the trainings have helped them to manage problems in their own homes and developed an awareness regarding men’s responsibilities in the home. It is significant that men have begun to take more responsibility in the home as leaders; however women’s increasing contribution to family income and household decision-making as a result of changing socioeconomic and environmental contexts have contributed to the shifting nature of gender roles in families and communities. Subsequently, the training materials will need to provide a more nuanced approach that reflects the flexibility of acceptable roles for men and women in the family.

We can share problems with each other, which helps to solve problems at home. As men we are homemakers and we need to be role models within the family. We need to take the role as leader of family and need to take responsibility of family needs seriously. Before women took the lead in the family because men were absent but now we are taking the role seriously. (Men FGD, Thangathi)

In collaboration with the Teacher Service Commission, ACK trained teachers from selected schools in both communities in systemic child counselling. Teachers said that the training has provided them with the skills to counsel children who are identified as requiring support. The teachers indicated that they had received only one training but have follow-up meetings to discuss specific cases and challenges. All teachers stated that the training has helped them to create awareness in the schools about child protection and have contributed to changing other teachers’ behavioural responses to problematic behaviour of some children. Some said that they now know how to protect children and comfort them when they are in difficult situations.

The training has been very useful as we get to create awareness [about child protection] so that when teachers identify a case, they can refer to us counsel teachers. We have learnt to know if a child is behaving in a certain way that they might be acting like that because of their background or situation at home. ... We can also follow-up with correct processes in how to counsel children. Our training has helped other teachers as they’ve stopped caning children and are trying to find out the cause of the child’s behaviour. (Teacher FGD, Chaka)

**Perceived attitude and behaviour change:** The trainings provided to community groups have contributed to a perceived change in both attitudes and behaviour regarding GBV and child abuse at individual, family, and community levels. While some study participants stated that they had received some information about GBV and child protection through media forms such as radio, the majority of study participants claimed that they have been able to apply the knowledge gained from the ACK trainings to cases of violence, abuse and neglect; the majority of study participants said this was due to an increased confidence about the rights of men and women, and children. Male study participants stated that they have been able to apply their knowledge to improving relationships with their wives and children; men have learnt to respect the rights of women and children and include women in decision-making processes.

“We used to burden women a lot. Now we can share our money with the family and not keep it to ourselves. This has reduced GBV in the family. Initially men would spend time in bars but now we go home early to be with the family. Before women at home were at risk if theft would happen. Men would be drunk and could not respond. There used to be conflict between women and men about land and inheritance but now women know their rights to property and inheritance. We are now writing wills – before we used to think we would die if we wrote a will.” (Men FGD, Thangathi)

An education officer with oversight for the school zone that includes Thangathi noted her observation that the training is leading to behaviour change and even cultural change in schools in terms of how discipline is addressed, and is directly improving the safety and wellbeing of children.

“I have seen evidence of a cultural change in schools through this training. Before, teachers would quickly punish misbehaving children through caning or harassment. Now they are taking the time to learn the cause of the misbehaviour. There was a case where a girl was misbehaving, and the teacher discovered that her mother had recently died. Before there would just have been punishment and withdrawal or misbehaviour by the child. Now we have a strategy in each school to improve child protection, and we have made a way for a teacher to always have a private place to talk with a child.” (Curriculum Support Officer, KII, Thangathi)

“For some children, school is a safer place than home. Before the training, the teachers did not see it as their role to take on the burdens of the child. They felt that their responsibility was only to the parent and the community. Now they have learning that they are responsible to protect the children. The children have realised that someone is willing to listen to them, and there is someone who cares for them.” (Curriculum Support Officer, KII, Thangathi)

In addition, the rights of people with disabilities has also been recognised as a result of the training. Although not a specific focus of the trainings, community members have realised the rights of people with disabilities and have worked to ensure these are applied. In both Chaka and Thangathi, community members have successfully advocated for children with disabilities to attend school and to receive necessary healthcare.

“There are some children with disabilities in the community and their parents could not assist them. Through the training, we learnt about the rights of children with disabilities so we talked to the parents who hide their children inside the house. Now they are willing to mix their children with others.” (Nyumba Kumi FGD, Chaka)

“A blind child was taken to the Thika School for the blind, where he is now studying. Another child with a disability is now about to undergo surgery to rectify the situation.” (Nyumba Kumi FGD, Thangathi)



*Catherine is a Nyumba Kumi who supports women and children affected by violence or abuse to report their experience to police.*

Some recipients of the trainings have been able to apply their knowledge by educating other community members about GBV and child abuse. Community awareness has been increased through community meetings or *barazas* initiated by the Nyumba Kumi and members of men's and women's groups. As a result, study participants suggested that community perceptions about GBV and child abuse have changed with many claiming that GBV is no longer perceived as normal; baseline data indicated a large proportion of the population thought GBV at the household level to be normal or culturally acceptable (6).

"The Nyumba Kumi has reduced violence through knowledge and educating the community. We have tried to interact with communities through meetings where we have been able to educate them about their rights. The sense of security that the Nyumba Kumi provides helps to reduce violence, as people are aware of the security living next door to them." (Nyumba Kumi FGD, Chaka)

"I have heard information about GBV on the TV, in *barazas* and through community meetings. I haven't been involved in the ACK training but have heard about them from the chiefs and Nyumba Kumi. I am able to respond to violence better now as I now report it to the relevant authorities such as the Nyumba Kumi or chief. Before I didn't have that empowerment and I took violence to be a normal part of life." (Woman who experienced violence IDI, Chaka)

In addition, the development of skills and knowledge of teachers in child guidance and counselling has contributed to creating schools as safe places for children; guidance and counselling teachers have worked with head teachers, teachers and parents to respond to child protection issues. Most teachers stated that children, parents and other teachers now seek their advice and assistance in addressing cases of child abuse and neglect (Teacher FGD, Chaka).

**Strengthening community structures:** The training delivered by ACK has contributed to strengthening community structures in both project sites. Community members and groups

have taken on specific responsibilities and work to protect community members from acts of violence, abuse or neglect. All study participants stated that the Nyumba Kumi in both communities had taken a leadership role in mediating and resolving issues in households as a result of the training. The role of the Nyumba Kumi was regarded as an important factor in developing and supporting cohesive relationships at all community levels.

“The paralegal knowledge has enabled us to have meetings with the community to talk about problems. We have established the community as a unit and have taught the community about violence. We can also arbitrate issues between people, which has solved problems. We tell them if they don’t listen to us, they can be taken to court. The community is supporting us to do our work. We are taking children who are abused to homes where they can be cared for. We are also working with partners such as the police and the Chiefs.” (Nyumba Kumi FGD, Chaka)

Since the training, the community work performed by the Nyumba Kumi has supported the role of Chiefs and assistant Chiefs. Most study participants indicated that most community problems are referred to the Nyumba Kumi as they have the appropriate knowledge and confidence. Members of the Nyumba Kumi said that their role is to be ‘the bridge between the community and government’ (Nyumba Kumi FGD, Chaka). This link was recognised by Chiefs and assistant Chiefs who stated that the Nyumba Kumi play a significant role in ensuring community members are protected from different forms of violence.

“After the training, the Nyumba Kumi have supported us a lot. The Nyumba Kumi generally act as our representatives now and we delegate some of our work to them. This has reduced our workload considerably as the Nyumba Kumi are better able to handle the issues presented to them than us. We have confidence and trust in the Nyumba Kumi. Before the training, they didn’t have appropriate knowledge on GBV and child abuse and took cases that came to them as normal; this has since changed ... We join hands with the Nyumba Kumi in sensitising community members on human rights during community barazas, which has enhanced community knowledge and awareness. ... The Nyumba Kumis are highly respected by community members.” (Chiefs and assistant chiefs FGD, Chaka)

In addition, men and women involved in SBA groups indicated that they provided different forms of support to community members experiencing violence, such as conflict management. Group members said that community members sometimes contact group members, who then refer cases to the Nyumba Kumi.

“Our group supports members in the community who are experiencing GBV. We usually act as a bridge as when we find a woman who is experiencing GBV, we can connect the women to the Nyumba Kumi. Sometimes women will also come to one of our group members for support.” (Women FGD, Thangathi)

**Challenges:** Despite the increased knowledge and perceived change in attitudes and behaviour, many study participants said they require further training in specific areas to increase their knowledge and confidence in managing different cases of violence or neglect. For example, the Chiefs and assistant Chiefs suggested they required refresher training in paralegal areas due to the constant changes and amendments in constitutional provisions, as well as additional training in child rights; ‘we need to be very confident as we are responsible for these matters more broadly’ (Chiefs and assistant Chiefs FGD, Thangathi)

The Chiefs and assistant Chiefs highlighted that not all Nyumba Kumi cells in the project sites had been trained and that there were noticeable differences in the communities that did

not have trained Nyumba Kumis with regard to responding to GBV and child abuse. 'Not all Nyumba Kumi were trained through this program and there is a very clear difference between those trained and those not trained' (Chiefs and assistant Chiefs FGD, Thangathi). Training more Nyumba Kumi would contribute to improving the ways communities address violence. In addition, some Nyumba Kumi members stated that they do not have the skills to deal with the health outcomes of specific cases of violence and do not know how to work with mothers who are unable to support children with disabilities. Many Nyumba Kumi members stated that further training is required to equip them with the skills and knowledge to manage the different cases brought to them.

The role of guidance and counselling teachers in identifying and working with children experiencing abuse or neglect at home has contributed to increasing awareness in schools about child protection, as well as counselling children in need. Despite this, the teachers maintained that they require further training to confidently manage the complexities of children's experiences.

We only had basic training so we need further training in counselling. It is vital to know the rights of the child so we know how far we should go and also our own limits. We need to know how to deal with cases involving technology. We also need training in proper counselling as we are not only dealing with children but parents, teachers and other stakeholders. (Teachers FGD, Chaka)

In addition, many participants identified other sources of support accessed by people who are experiencing violence, including the church and other community members. While some study participants maintained that these supports had been useful, others indicated that the advice received from some sources, such as church leaders, perpetuated the problems people experienced; these sources had not been involved in the training provided by ACK.

I have received some information about GBV from the Orthodox Church about family life. I tried to implement this information but failed. I learnt to be submissive to my husband as the Bible says this. I now go to an outreach church where I saw a pastor when I was having problems but he says to pray and he will also pray. This is the only information I have received. (Woman who experienced violence IDI, Thangathi)

This project did not aim to engage with church leaders or to address theological perspectives that can lead to higher risks of gender-based violence, such as a strong emphasis on submission by a married woman to her husband even if he is violent. Although this project did not target church leaders, some did participate in the training through their role as a Nyumba Kumi and some noted the significant impact of the training in the way they now respond to GBV. Across Kenya, including Nyeri County, church leaders hold roles of significant influence and authority, and this poses an opportunity for ACK to both reduce risks of GBV and promote a theological framework that upholds the safety of women, men and children.

I am a pastor, and a woman came to me recently for advice about her marriage. She told me that her husband is threatening to kill her, that he is keeping a knife under the mattress, and that he is using ganja (marijuana). I told her that her safety is important, and that she must get away from that danger. Before the training, I would have told her that it was her Christian duty to submit and persevere. Now I know that I can hold the bible and the law together. (Nyumba Kumi, FGD, Thangathi)

Fulfilling the role of protecting communities from violence has created some challenges for Nyumba Kumi members. Some Nyumba Kumi highlighted that they were often faced with

members of the community who were violent. Some suggested that they require implements such as batons or torches to protect themselves from potential harm.

We were dealing with a child abuse case where a 70-year old man gave some very suggestive words to a very young girl. When we asked about this, the old man became very violent and we were at risk of being beaten up. It is a volunteer job but it is risky – we have our own families we have to think about. (Nyumba Kumi FGD, Chaka)

Also, some Nyumba Kumi members mentioned that they often use their own money to pay for phone calls made for work or to pay for essential items for people in need; they stated that this was challenging since they had limited money of their own. 'You are forced by your heart to take money from your own pocket to pay to help other children in need' (Nyumba Kumi FGD, Chaka).

## 4.2 Incidence of violence

Gender-based violence and child abuse is not limited to specific regions, social status, or religious or ethnic groups. It is often prevalent in societies, which have rigid gender roles or in patriarchal contexts where the masculine identity is deeply engrained (7). Approximately 45% of Kenyan women and 44% of men aged 15-49 have experienced some form of physical violence since they were 15. This violence contributes to a significant amount of health burdens, intergenerational effects, and demographic consequences (4).

The project's baseline data indicate a high percentage of different forms and levels of GBV in project communities with wife battering by husbands being the most common form of GBV (40%). Other forms of GBV in the communities included husband battering, rape, verbal abuse, child neglect and abuse, and psychological abuse (6). Although quantitative data was not collected during the evaluation, study participants perceived a reduction in the level of GBV in both communities since the project began. The majority of participants stated that this was due to the work of the Nyumba Kumi. Many explained that the Nyumba Kumi have been trained to assist with cases of GBV and child abuse, with many people feeling confident to seek assistance from them as a result.

The Nyumba Kumi has helped a lot; they are the point of focus for these matters. They live among us so they know the problems and they've been trained on these issues so they can help. It is easier to access the Nyumba Kumi and they have contacts for referrals if needed. The composition of the Nyumba Kumi is that they are of different ages so people can go to someone who is their peer to take their problem to. Some of them are like parents who you can talk to. (Women FGD, Thangathi)

Many study participants emphasised that the reduction of violence in the communities was due to the trainings provided by ACK. Most participants agreed that the awareness of the community had been increased to a level, which contributed to people realising their entitlement to specific rights. Men in Chaka explained that 'GBV in this community has reduced as more people are aware of their rights. The training has helped – if it came 20 years ago, the situation would have been different' (Men FGD, Chaka).

The perceived reduction in violence was understood to be the result of improved communication between spouses; the majority of participants stated that there is now a greater understanding about roles for men and women in families which they attained during the training provided by ACK. 'There has been a reduction in violence because we have learned how to talk to each other – husband and wife ... We know about our rights and communication in family so that has helped reduce violence in family' (Women FGD, Thangathi).

Some community members also recognised the government's contribution to reducing violence in the communities with the tightening of laws regarding home brewing of alcohol and drug dealing; community members said that they were now notifying authorities about illicit substances in communities as a means to curb the practice.

The government has also constituted that alcohol brewing and drinking is illegal and they are hunting down the drug dealers. The community is encouraged to speak up about those illegal substances; this has helped reduce the violence in this community. (Women FGD, Thangathi)

### **4.3 Factors contributing to violence**

While the factors contributing to different instances of violence vary, the overarching factors for GBV can be attributed to gender inequality, unequal power relations, and discrimination based on gender; these factors interconnect with other causes and contributing factors to influence the prevalence of GBV in different contexts (8). Similarly, child abuse, violence or neglect often occurs in communities where inequality, poverty, and unemployment are highly concentrated (9).

At baseline, the main factor for GBV in the project communities was due to alcohol and drug abuse (37%). Other factors included poverty or inadequate resources (19%), neglect of responsibilities (12%), and infidelity (11%). Baseline data suggests that economic deprivation that is manifested through increasing poverty levels and inadequate productive resources and opportunities contributes to both men and women to alcohol and drug abuse (6).

As the project is only in its early stage, changing or eliminating the factors that contribute to violence in communities was unlikely given the entrenched nature of gender inequality and unequal power relationships between men and women. Many study participants stated that many contributing factors for violence remained similar to those before the project started. The majority said that alcohol and drugs were the most common cause of GBV in both communities. Studies suggest that there is a stronger relationship between alcohol use and violence in communities that have higher acute levels of acute alcohol intoxication than communities where drinking occurs more moderately (10). Many men were consuming alcohol and drugs as a way to relieve the stress of their financial situation; this often led to conflict between men and women.

GBV occurs when people are unable to meet their family's obligations as a result of poverty. This has caused many men to be engaged in alcohol and drug abuse as a result of their hopelessness and desperation. The consistent use of these substances results in addiction and the permanent failure of those men to meet their responsibilities. This then triggers GBV and child abuse, which can lead to separation and HIV/AIDS. (Men FGD, Chaka)

Overwhelmingly, women who had experienced violence said that drugs and alcohol had played a considerable role in contributing to the violence. Some said that this was due to their husbands' inability to support the needs of the family.

I had an abusive relationship with my previous husband who was always drunk and had no money for maintaining the family. When I demanded money for the family's upkeep he became violent. I didn't know whom to turn to. I experienced abusive and physical violence and he also abused the children. ... Drugs and alcohol contributed to this. We used to live in a rented house but he couldn't pay the rent so the landlord

harassed us ... My husband worked in a quarry but got little money but would use it all on drugs, alcohol and prostitution. (Woman who experienced violence IDI, Chaka)

My husband becomes violent to escape his responsibilities. I pay for everything. When my children went to Form 1, I had to find the money. ... Whenever he goes for labour, he just drinks the money away and doesn't bring home food. I have been forced to borrow books from other so that my children can take them to school. (Woman who experienced violence IDI, Thangathi)

Many study participants also highlighted illiteracy and lack of knowledge as contributing to violence in the communities. People said that many community members were ignorant and this contributed to a lack of communication between family members. 'Illiteracy and lack of knowledge is also a cause for GBV and child abuse. People who have not received information about human rights are more likely to violate others' rights, as well as being involved in GBV' (Nyumba Kumi FGD, Chaka).

Study participants in Chaka indicated that the breakdown in the extended family system and community support has contributed to GBV and child abuse. Chaka is a peri-urban area populated by people from different tribes. The population diversity has resulted in a breakdown of cultural traditions that previously united community members.

Before it used to be only one culture but now we are living with many different cultures coming to the city. Cultural traditions have become less important – there is no courtship period as there is no marriage these days – they are more 'come we stay' relationships. Men and women do not get to know one another so this creates conflict. Before there was no child abuse but now children are working in hotels and shops. Before a woman couldn't leave her child alone in a house but now if there is separation or when she goes to look for work the child is at risk of being left alone at home. Before children used to be taken to the guardian to take care of them; there used to be the extended family so if a woman leaves, another family member would take care of the children. (Nyumba Kumi FGD, Chaka)

Although the factors contributing to violence still persist in both communities, all study participants indicated that there was a reduction in the incidence of violence since the project began; this was said to be the result of the training provided by ACK. 'Before the cases of violence were rampant. Drugs and alcohol were produced at home and it was normal to beat your wife. Due to the training and sensitisation by ACK, there has been a reduction in violence' (Men FGD, Thangathi).

**Community members at risk:** The majority of study participants stated that women and children, in particular girls, were more at risk to violence in both communities. Gender inequality was said to be the main factor for women's and girls' increased exposure to violence. DHS data indicate that women's experience of violence decreases when the number of decisions they are involved in increases (4). Increasing women's decision-making capacities and utilising their potential in economic activities can contribute to improving the inequalities between men and women.

Women are more at risk to violence. Also, children especially the girl child as they are taken to be the weaker sex by men. We are not included in decision-making in the house, which causes problems. Women don't have ownership of the house or household items – nothing belongs to the women and women can't say anything. (Women FGD, Thangathi)

Some male study participants stated, however, that women have learnt about their rights and, subsequently, have started to demand their rights at home. Men explained that men



have been left out of the training, which has contributed to problems at home. They suggest that men need to be involved in training about women's rights too. 'Women are demanding their rights as a result of the training in rights. Women have received the training but men have been left out – the focus has been on women's rights so now they are talking back to men, which is causing problems' (Men FGD, Chaka). Ensuring men are included in trainings about rights and equality is essential for reducing the potential for violence. In addition, many participants stated that the boy child has been neglected in development training due to the focus given to the girl child. 'The Kenyan Government has had a girl child initiative which has impacted boys negatively as there has been so much focus on girls but nothing for boys' (Nyumba Kumi FGD, Chaka).

#### 4.4 Reporting violence

In Kenya, like many countries, many women are socialised into tolerating and justifying the violence they experience by their husbands with many remaining silent about the violence when it occurs (4). DHS data shows that less than half of Kenyan women (44%) who had experienced any type of physical or sexual violence from anyone sought help to stop the violence; 41% women never sought help and never told anyone and 11% never sought help but told someone about the violence (4). At project baseline, people were more likely to report to chiefs (34%), as well as village elders (20%) and the police (17%). Approximately 30% of households, however, were unsatisfied with the actions taken by authorities to address GBV.

The majority of evaluation study participants stated that more people were reporting cases of violence since the project started. Many said this was due to the increased confidence in the Nyumba Kumi who had been trained to resolve problems in families and communities.

When the community own you, they trust you so people are coming to us to report violence. More people are reporting as people have gained more trust in us as we have been trained in this. ... When they come to us, we provide advice and information to them. Before people would go to village elders but they didn't have the knowledge to deal with their problem. (Nyumba Kumi FGD, Chaka)

Some men in our group are part of the Nyumba Kumi and they are respected in the communities. They have had systemic child counselling and people know this so they come to those particular men. The group will discuss the problem with the Nyumba Kumi member and the group will do arbitration if possible, but if the case needs referring, we refer to the relevant authorities. As paralegals, we are meant to be neutral and not biased and ensure the rights of everyone are respected. (Men FGD, Thangathi)

In addition, study participants explained that many people were more aware of their rights and this has contributed to an increase in reporting; people are informed about the community structures that can support them with their problems.

More people are reporting because mostly women have learnt about our rights; we have more confidence in going to the administration to report problems. We go to the Nyumba Kumi, chiefs, and sub-chiefs. Mostly we go to the Nyumba Kumi first as we feel comfortable reporting to them as they are part of the community and the community is confident they can help. The Nyumba Kumi will then talk to the husband and wife and if that doesn't help, they will send the case to the administration. ... Most cases are being solved at the level of the Nyumba Kumi. (Women FGD, Thangathi)

**Challenges:** Some study participants highlighted some challenges in reporting violence to relevant authorities. Nyumba Kumi members stated that some men do not want to disclose that their wives have beaten them; there was a sense of shame or embarrassment for men due to sociocultural norms related to masculinity ideals, which make it difficult for men to report. In addition, some women were reluctant to seek help due to the stigma or shame associated with violence. 'Before my husband wasn't taking alcohol and drugs when the business was going well but after it failed he started drinking and taking drugs. There were issues in the family – my husband wouldn't sleep with me and he neglected me a lot. I couldn't talk about these issues with anyone' (Woman who experienced violence IDI, Chaka).

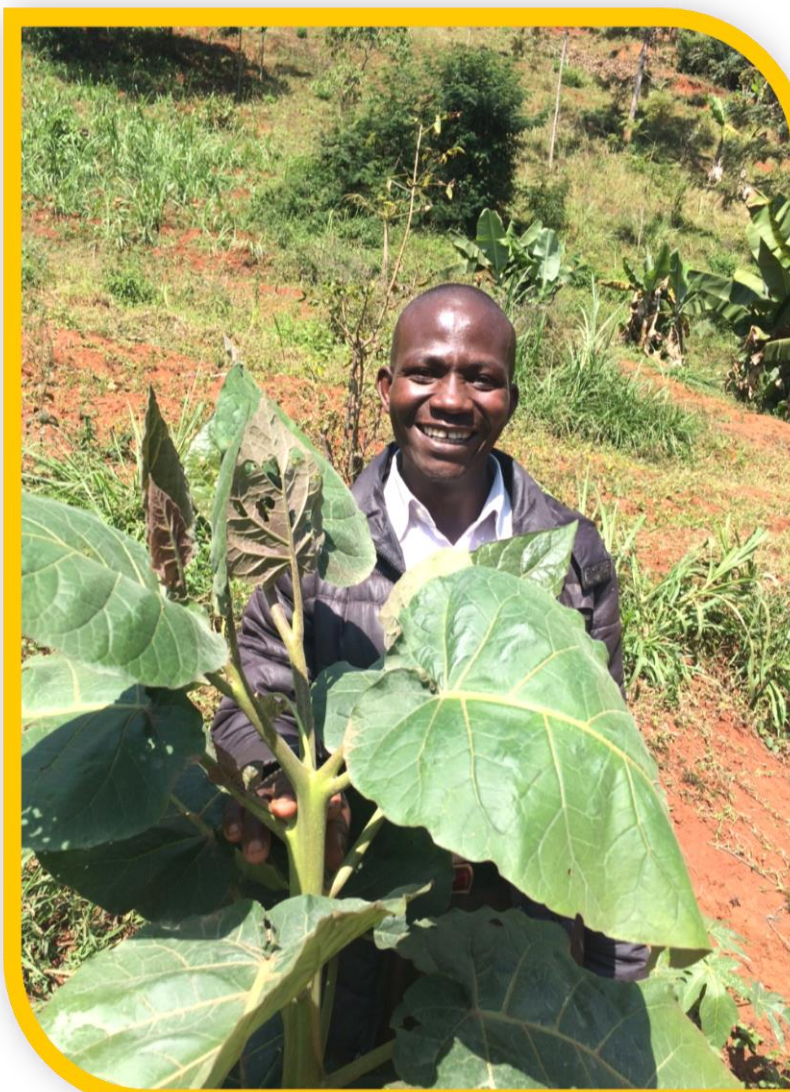
In addition, the police were also perceived to be a challenge for people reporting violence. Some study participants suggested that police were unresponsive and demanded money to deal with cases of violence.

Fewer people are reporting to the police, as they demand money so more people go to the men's groups or the Nyumba Kumi to solve the problem. People prefer arbitration in the family as the Nyumba Kumi do not demand money but for the more serious cases, such as rape and defilement, we have to go to the police. (Men FGD, Thangathi)

## 4.5 Group activities for economic improvement

Men's and women's group members talked about the different activities that had enabled them to improve their own socioeconomic situation as well as other community members. Some groups stated they were involved in income generation activities.

Both men's and women's groups in Thangathi were involved in farming activities, such as sweet potatoes and tree tomatoes. The women's group had not received any training but group members stated that sweet potatoes were usually grown at home for private use and all had experience in growing the crop; one group member gave a plot of land for the initiative. Members saw the need for marketing skills and knowledge about different potato varieties. 'We need marketing skills as well as knowledge about different varieties and how to plant them. Generally the potatoes cost around KES30-50 but we want a better price than this' (Women FGD, Thangathi).



*John and fellow members of a savings and support group have planted tree tomatoes, following advice from a Ministry of Agriculture technical advisor on high-profit opportunities for small agribusiness ventures.*

The men's group planted tree tomatoes but want to expand into other crops such as pawpaw. The group had received training from a government agricultural officer who provided advice and regular talks on different topics. A group member provided the plot for the plants. The group had sold seedlings, which had brought an income that covered the cost of manure and fertiliser.

"We haven't harvested yet but we have sold some seedlings to neighbours and each member buys 20 seedlings from the group. The income from this covers input costs such as manure and fertiliser; we sell each seedling for KES20. We already have a buyer for the stock, as the demand for tree tomatoes is high. We have a plan to start paw paws, with 50 trees on a demonstration plot. (Men FGD, Thangathi)

In comparison, Chaka men were occupied in their own activities such as farming, stone selling, tree seedling cultivation, casual crops, pottery, and fishing ponds. The members of men's group said they had not received any training in income generation but recognised the need for training in how to undertake successful businesses.

We do need training in entrepreneurship on how to undertake successful businesses and we need start-up capital as we are living in poverty; because the amount we get only takes care of subsistence needs and not to undertake successful enterprises. (Men FGD, Chaka)

Both Chaka and Thangathi groups had also started welfare assistance initiatives that aimed to help group members and/or community members who needed support during difficult periods. Group members contributed a certain amount money depending on the need. Women group participants in Chaka stated that 'we have formalised a welfare group, Umoja wa Chaka that has enabled the Nyumba Kumi to scale up their reach and win community support. The welfare group takes care of our welfare and financial needs. We have included other community members in the welfare group' (Women FGD, Chaka).

All groups stated that they utilised table top or merry-go-round loan systems. The loans have assisted members to pay for necessary expenses, which they would otherwise not be able to meet.

We have a loan system where the member contributions are loaned to other members of the group who might need the money for something. The loan has a 10% interest on repayments. The member who wants the loan must establish the need before the group agrees to loan the money. (Men FGD, Chaka)

An alternative to this system was the purchasing of items for all group members through the merry-go-round system. Women in Thangathi contributed money to the group, which enabled the group to buy items, such as blankets and cups for all group members.

We have the merry-go-round system where we buy blankets, cups or items for the house with the money for all of us. We contribute 50 shillings each month. We first bought cups then we bought 100 blankets for the group members. Depending on the item wanted determines the amount we contribute each month. The merry-go-round is a common activity so we thought it would be a good way to motivate members. (Women FGD, Thangathi)

As most individuals did not have access to loans from formal banking institutions, most study participants stated that the group loan systems have assisted group members to meet household expenses.

The group activities have helped because when we go to the group to borrow for specific activities, we can do the activity we have planned for because the money is flexible and it is not like at the bank, which is a difficult process. The needs of each member may be different so we prioritise whom the money goes to first depending on the need. The money helps to pay for school fees when children go back to school, or for food, clothing and medication, and the rest of the money can go to our enterprises. It depends on the particular needs in each household to how we spend the money; the money has improved household finances. (Men FGD, Chaka)

Furthermore, men's attitudes regarding women's involvement in group activities had changed with many men now supporting and recognising women's contribution to household finances. 'At first men didn't see the point of our group but now they have started to realise

the advantage of the group as we were serious and have been contributing to household finances so they have been supporting us through encouragement' (Women FGD, Thangathi).

Men's change in attitude had also increased women's participation in decision-making about household finances with men involving women in determining how money will be spent. 'In our group, there is a rule that a spouse must be part of the decision-making about how money will be used and they have to sign the loan documents so the spouse knows what the money is to be spent on; so the spouse is part of the decision-making' (Men FGD, Chaka).

It is evident that project activities had contributed somewhat to changing customary beliefs about acceptable roles for men and women in both communities.

"Our family had realised that money (income) can come from others in the household, not just the man. Before, the whole economic burden was on the husband, and this led to much conflict in the family. Now (through a project-initiated poultry business) even if my husband is away I have money to pay for what we needs. Now my husband is putting money towards education. (Women FGD, Chaka).

Before the family life training, my husband and I did not share our money. I was responsible for all the household costs, and he kept his salary to himself. There was a lot of fighting about money, even between my children and their father. Now we are sharing all the resources, my husband is sharing his salary with the family. (Women FGD Chaka).

"Initially I thought that empowering women was a bad thing, but now we are encouraging women to start businesses and seek money for their households." (Nyumba Kumi, FGD, Thangathi)

## **5. Findings and DAC criteria**

The DAC criteria were used to guide the development of questions to understand the impact of the project. This section discusses the findings with regard to each criterion.

### **5.1 Relevance**

The objective of the project is relevant to the needs of the community. The baseline survey indicated a high prevalence of GBV and child abuse in the project areas, along with high levels of poverty. The project aims are relevant for this context: to improve community self-reliance and strategies that reduce vulnerability and improve quality of life for all. The evaluation findings suggest that the various trainings and follow-up provided by ACK to key community groups, in particular, the Nyumba Kumi, have contributed to improving relationships and communication in families and people are able to act on cases of violence, abuse and neglect among their neighbours. As a result, there has been a perceived reduction in the levels of violence and abuse as reported by the majority of study participants. In addition, the economic activities of women's and men's groups have relieved some burden of household expenses; however it is important that the income generation activities are developed and strengthened further to ensure livelihoods are sustainable.

### **5.2 Efficiency**

The study findings suggest that project activities reflect value for money. Primarily, the project has focused on improving community knowledge and awareness regarding GBV and child protection through the delivery of training and follow-up. Despite the limited project staff numbers to implement project activities, the findings show improved and strengthened community structures that have influenced the ways in which communities address GBV and child abuse. Due to the small project team, ACK have utilised experienced practitioners to deliver a range of training to relevant community members. In order to improve the efficiency

and availability of project staff with regard to implementation of specific activities, it would be beneficial to engage ACK's Finance Officer for logistical and coordination activities where possible.

With the resignation of the project's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer, the project does not have an M&E framework with which to capture data related to project outputs and outcomes. This data is important for improving and strengthening current project activities, understanding new community priorities as well as contributing to improved communication and documentation of project outcomes. The development of a M&E framework with relevant data collection tools would assist the project's effectiveness and relevance; utilising the M&E resources within other ACK projects would be a useful way to fill this gap in the project.

To date, project staff have been involved in activities that are not outlined in the project design, such as counselling of GBV survivors and children. While this is highly commendable, these activities have an impact on staff well-being and require a considerable amount of staff time; these activities are also not captured in project reports. Defining the project as a GBV prevention project and developing referral mechanisms to direct women and children to appropriate support systems would be a positive strategy to mark clear boundaries for staff and project activities as well as creating a stronger focus for the project.

ACK have utilised local community halls, churches and schools as cost-effective meeting places, which also enables learning to happen within the local context. The project has trained members of the Nyumba Kumi who are each responsible for ten households; this directly impacts approximately 6,000 people in the community. The SBA training provided to community members includes a strong emphasis on identifying and utilising resources and skills within the community, rather than relying on external input and resourcing; this approach is efficient and can contribute to sustainable outcomes.

### **5.3 Effectiveness**

Although the project is in its early stages of implementation, there are a number of positive outcomes identified by the study. The strengthening of community structures as a result of the training provided to the Nyumba Kumi and Chiefs has resulted in a perceived change in the levels of GBV in both communities. There are improved working relationships between the Nyumba Kumi and Chiefs Nyumba Kumis and community members are more confident in reporting cases of violence to relevant community groups. The trainings provided to teachers has also equipped them to manage the challenging role of counselling children experiencing abuse or neglect and schools are now perceived to be safe spaces for children.

Income generation activities of women's and men's groups are relatively new but the different loan systems, such as table top banking has shown to be an important way for people to work together and offer one another support; there has also been a perceived improvement in being able to meet household expenses as a result. Future training related to income generation activities would improve and strengthen livelihood initiatives as a means to increasing household finances.

### **5.4 Impact**

The project has benefited a range of community members living in Chaka and Thangathi areas. From the increased awareness and knowledge of communities involved in ACK trainings, community members have been able to transfer their knowledge to other members through community meetings and barazas. The findings also highlight that many have been able to apply their learnings from the trainings to their everyday lives, such as improved listening and communication skills with children and improved communication between spouses. ACK has primarily engaged with the Nyumba Kumi cells and Chiefs and assistant Chiefs by providing training to equip them to effectively address GBV and child abuse in the

two project communities. The study’s findings suggest that the training has enabled both to work together to deal with family problems and cases of violence and abuse effectively; many study participants stated that most cases were solved at the Nyumba Kumi level. Teachers have also benefited from the systemic child counselling; teachers stated they were able to identify and respond to children who were experiencing different forms of abuse or neglect and were managing children’s problematic behaviour without corporal punishment.

Some study participants indicated that they had received support and advice from other sources such as the church, which provided advice contrary to that promoted by ACK; greater engagement with the church would contribute to supporting individuals experiencing violence more effectively as well as delivering consistent messages and information to communities. In addition, engaging with the police through trainings and information sharing would increase the awareness and knowledge of local officers about GBV and child protection to be able to respond to cases appropriately.

Some study participants highlighted that there are some high-risk groups in the communities, which are not involved in project activities to date; the project could also consider ways to identify and include the most vulnerable community members in trainings and opportunities for income generation activities.

## 5.5 Sustainability

The project is working towards a system of community-based protection, strengthening accountability in the community for one another’s safety, and equipping grassroots structures to act on violence, abuse and neglect. The findings suggest that this innovative approach is providing an appropriate and effective method to strengthen community-based protection systems. The sustainability of project activities has been strengthened by ACK’s approach of working with Nyumba Kumis. As an existing community structure, the knowledge and skills developed through the trainings contributes to the effective management of GBV and child abuse cases in communities. Ongoing trainings and refresher trainings will increase the likelihood of the positive changes continuing.

## 6. Recommendations

The findings of this study highlight the lessons learned from the evaluation of the gender-based violence and child protection project in Chaka and Thangathi communities based on the experiences of a range of stakeholders. The following recommendations are offered for consideration for the ongoing improvement and sustainability of the project.

Priority area	Recommendations
1. Programming	1.19 Ensure that the new project design has greater clarity and focus on <i>prevention</i> of GBV and child abuse. 1.20 All GBV response activities should be referred to organisations working in relevant areas such as counselling, health, and legal. 1.21 Refocus environmental aspect of project to be considered as a cross-cutting issue 1.22 Ensure that the new project design has a stronger M&E framework with relevant output and outcome level indicators. 1.23 Update and strengthen training manuals to focus on GBV and Child Protection. 1.24 Strengthen the implementation of income generation activities as the project moves in to the second phase.

	<p>1.25 Explore opportunities to establish and support a working group in target locations that include Nyumba Kumi, teachers, health workers, police, church leaders – to establish a ‘multi-disciplinary’ approach to community-based protection.</p> <p>1.26 Provide regular refresher trainings to key groups, particularly Nyumba Kumi, to ensure knowledge and skills are updated and reinforced.</p> <p>1.27 Create greater linkages and referral processes to ensure survivors of violence and abuse receive necessary healthcare at appropriate health facilities.</p> <p>1.28 Identify and establish a link with Kenyan child psychology providers to enable teachers to refer children requiring further support</p> <p>1.29 Include church leaders and lay church leaders (eg parish link persons) as a target group for GBV and Child Protection training in the new project design. The program should ensure the training is offered to church leaders from a range of denominations (not just Anglicans), as reflected in the target communities.</p> <p>1.30 Explore opportunities to include youth in project activities to educate and influence young men and women about the impact of GBV and child abuse.</p> <p>1.31 Develop strategies to ensure the inclusion of community members unable to participate in women’s and men’s income-generation groups due to financial hardship.</p> <p>1.32 Ensure men are included in trainings related to rights/gender equality to increase men’s understanding about the benefits of gender equality.</p> <p>1.33 Explore opportunities to develop and strengthen partnership with National Police Service and to strengthen police accountability</p> <p>1.34 Engage police in training and information sharing activities regarding GBV and child abuse.</p> <p>1.35 In the new project design, include a Community Scorecard Activity to strengthen the protection systems from community level to administration level (Nyumba Kumi, Chiefs, and Police) and to improve accountability of relevant administration level authorities with regard to GBV and CP.</p>
2. Organisational	<p>2.8 Utilise existing M&amp;E staffing capacities from other ACK projects to strengthen M&amp;E framework and project capacity.</p> <p>2.9 Utilise ACK Finance Officer to assist with logistics, coordination, and small business development.</p> <p>2.10 Provide staff with training on GBV and Child Protection to strengthen their skills and knowledge to strengthen implementation of activities relevant to project goal.</p> <p>2.11 ACK to handover activities related to ‘response’ to relevant local organisations, such as counselling GBV survivors.</p> <p>2.12 Revise Family Life training manual to include and reflect a theological framework for gender equality and to more effectively address contemporary issues and dynamics experienced by couples in Kenya.</p> <p>2.13 Revise Memory Book training to include GBV focus.</p>



	<p>2.14 Share project information and develop feedback mechanisms with relevant stakeholders (churches, Nyumba Kumi, Chiefs, police, media) to create greater awareness of GBV issue in local areas</p> <p>2.15 Identify potential partner organisations working in GBV in Kenya to develop and strengthen local GBV networks, share good practice, and broaden referral opportunities.</p>
<p>3. Partnership</p>	<p>3.2 AOA to work with and support ACK on developing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Design, July 2017 – June 2019</li> <li>• Theory of Change to strengthen project focus;</li> <li>• Development of M&amp;E framework</li> </ul> <p>3.2 AOA and ACK to reflect on evaluation findings and jointly agree on a TOR for revision of training material to reflect community context, contemporary issues in Kenya, and an appropriate theological framework.</p> <p>3.9 AOA and ACK consider developing a strategy to effectively document and evaluate impact of training for Nyumba Kumi to influence policy at national level, such as through research investment.</p> <p>3.10 AOA or an appropriate partner provide technical support to ACK regarding savings, small business development and entrepreneurship, including analysis of market opportunities, in order to develop greater focus on access to markets for future income generation activities.</p> <p>3.11 AOA to support the development of ACK's report writing skills.</p> <p>3.12 AOA and ACK to develop communication strategy which will involve a minimum of monthly meetings to ensure appropriate support for project implementation etc.</p> <p>3.13 AOA to work with ACK to identify opportunities for ACK staff to receive professional development training, particularly in ongoing learning about strategies for the prevention of gender-based violence, effective mobilisation of community-based volunteers, and models for promoting self-reliance through savings and entrepreneurial activities.</p>

## 7. Conclusion

The impact of GBV and child abuse affects the health and wellbeing of men, women, and children in all communities. Nearly half of all women and men in Kenya aged 15-49 have experienced some form of physical violence since the age of 15 (4). Addressing GBV and child abuse requires structural inequalities and power differentials between men and women is essential to the prevention of the different forms of violence.

The Imarisha gender-based violence and child protection project in Chaka and Thangathi communities has trained community members to equip them with the skills and knowledge to effectively address GBV and child abuse in their communities.

Although the project is only in its early stages, there have been a number of positive outcomes achieved during this time. ACK's innovative approach to training Nyumba Kumi and Chiefs in gender-based violence, child-protection, and rights addressed in the Kenyan Constitution has resulted in a perceived change in the levels of GBV in both communities.

The project has also trained a range of community groups on topics such as paralegal, GBV and child protection, systemic child counselling, Family Life, and Memory Book. The study found that the training and on-going support has been useful and relevant to both project communities and people have been able to apply the learnings and knowledge to their own lives.

Community members are more confident in reporting cases of violence to the Nyumba Kumi, and there is an improved working relationship between the Nyumba Kumi and Chiefs. The combination of training and on-going action through peer groups appears to be a successful, community-based approach, with people interviewed consistently reporting that they have been able to apply the learnings and knowledge to their own lives.

Training for teachers has equipped them to respond more effectively in their role working with children experiencing abuse or neglect, is leading to 'cultural change' in target communities, and schools are now perceived to be safe spaces for children.

People's confidence about the rights of men, women and children has increased and this has contributed to changing perceptions about the normalisation of violence in homes, willingness to act when there are incidents of violence, and has also contributed to greater protection and support for children with disabilities.

While the study identified a number of challenges related to both programming and organisational areas, the recommendations based on the findings described here can contribute to the strengthening and development of future project activities that aim to achieve resilient communities with improved self-reliance and reduced vulnerabilities.

A key recommendation for future programming would be to ensure a comprehensive three year project design focused on prevention of GBV is developed, including a theory of change, and monitoring and evaluation framework.

This project did not aim to engage with church leaders or to address theological perspectives that can lead to higher risks of gender-based violence, such as submission by a married woman to her husband even if he is violent or abusive. Churches and Church leaders in Kenya hold roles of significant influence and authority, and engagement with this issues from a theological framework poses an opportunity for ACK to both reduce risks of GBV and uphold the safety and well-being of women, men and children.

Greater engagement with the Police and implementation of activities to strengthen the accountability of Police to communities would make a significant contribution to increasing community-based protection. Strengthening referral networks and collaborative partners, and a stronger focus on self-reliance activities will also all be important for a second phase.

The project is working towards a system of community-based protection, strengthening accountability in the community for one another's safety, and equipping grassroots structures to act on violence, abuse and neglect. The findings suggest that this innovative approach is providing an appropriate and effective method to reducing violence against women, men and children, and promoting safer, more resilient communities.

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