

COMMUNITY-BASED CHILD PROTECTION MECHANISMS IN KILIFI, KENYA:

A RAPID ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY IN TWO RURAL SITES

*Kostelny, K., Wessells, M., & Ondoro, K.¹
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The views expressed in this report are those of the Initiative and should not be assumed to reflect the views of any partner organization.

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1. Overview of the Inter-Agency Learning Initiative

ABBREVIATIONS

AAC	Area Advisory Council
ANPPCAN	African Network for Protection and Prevention Against Child Abuse and Neglect
APHIA PLUS	AIDS Population and Health Integrated Assistance Plus
ARV	Antiretroviral drug
CBCPM	Community-based child protection mechanism
CBO	Community-based organization
CLAN	Children's Legal Action Network
CHW	Community health worker
CWC	Child Welfare Committee
DAC	District Advisory Council
DCO	District Children's Officer
DCS	Department of Children's Services
DO	District Officer
FPE	Free Primary Education
GBV	Gender-based violence
HIV/AIDs	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IICRD	International Institute on Child Rights and Development
ILI	Inter-Agency Learning Initiative
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KAACR	Kenya Alliance for the Advancement of Children's Rights
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KSH	Kenyan Shillings
LAC	Location Advisory Council
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCCS	National Council for Children's Services
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PEPFAR	U. S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
REPSSI	The Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative
SES	Socio-economic status
TBA	Traditional birth attendant
TPO	Transcultural Psychosocial Organization
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
VCO	Volunteer Children's Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A 2009 review of community-based child protection mechanisms, which are frontline mechanisms for responding to threats to children's well being, reported that externally facilitated groups such as Child Welfare Committees were often limited in their effectiveness and sustainability. This owed largely to the fact that they were not community owned and driven but were seen as projects of outside agencies. The same review reported that higher levels of effectiveness and sustainability were associated with community-driven groups such as endogenous, faith-based groups who had organized around helping vulnerable children. The report noted that Child Welfare Committees were frequently set up without learning about and building on the existing community mechanisms.

The purpose of this research was to learn about community-based child protection processes and mechanisms in two mostly rural areas of Kilifi, Kenya. The research is intended to complement and extend the learning that came from previous research by the Inter-Agency Learning Initiative in two urban slums of Mombasa, Kenya. By using a mixture of urban and rural sites, the Inter-Agency Learning Initiative, which guides this research, aimed to provide a glimpse of the diversity that exists within Kenya.

The ethnographic approach used in this phase of research aimed to learn about existing community-based child protection processes and mechanisms and how they are actually used and relate to aspects of the more formal (referred to hereafter as 'formal') child protection system in Kenya. In particular, the research sought to identify how local people understand children and childhood, what they saw as the main harms or risks to children, what CBCPMs existed and how they were used, what protective factors enabled children's positive coping and resilience, and whether and how the CBCPMs linked with elements of the formal, government led aspects of the national child protection system. Recognizing that people in the villages may be positioned in very different ways, the research aimed to disaggregate responses by age, gender, and socio-economic status.

This research aims to contribute to strengthening the national child protection system in Kenya. The effectiveness of the Kenyan child protection system should be gauged not only by how well the system supports children in urban areas but also in predominantly rural areas where many Kenyans live. By providing new, grounded knowledge about how people actually respond to child protection threats and about existing prevention mechanisms, the research provides a snapshot of the functioning system that Kenyans actually use and that can inform efforts to strengthen the national child protection system in Kenya.

Method

The research used rapid ethnography that focused on child protection and aimed to provide a rich, grounded picture of local beliefs, values, and practices in regards to children, their developing activities and social relations, and the community mechanisms for their protection

and well-being. To explore the actual functioning of CBCPMs, people were asked in multiple contexts what happens when a particular child protection issue arises—whom do people actually go to, who makes the decisions, which actions are taken, which outcomes are achieved, and how do stakeholders who occupy different social positions view the outcomes. People were free to identify any response mechanisms or processes, for example, indigenous processes, NGO committees, or formal aspects of the national child protection system. This was a bottom-up process of mapping the response pathways through which people respond to child protection risks.

Sites

The two research sites in Kilifi were Bamba and Marafa. Within Bamba, the two participating villages were Bimzogha and Kanyumbuni, which had populations of approximately 490 people and 400 people, respectively. Within Marafa, the two participating villages were Marafa Village and Deki Village, which had populations of approximately 600 and 300 people, respectively.

Research Design

The research used a mixture of narrative and participant observation methods, making it possible to triangulate different sources of information. The research design included planned contrasts according to the age and gender of the participants. For example, group discussions and in-depth, individual interviews were planned and conducted in a manner that learned systematically from eight subgroups:

- Women: Age 25 years and above
- Young women (*'makamu'* of marrying age): Age 18-25 years
- Teenage girls: Age 13-17 years
- Young girls: Age 5-12 years
- Men: Age 30 years and above
- Young men (typically not married): Age 18-30 years
- Teenage boys: Age 13-17 years
- Young boys: Age 5-12 years

In all activities, deliberate effort was made to learn from these different subgroups. For example, group discussions were conducted separately with different subgroups. This approach enabled participants to speak more openly and reduced the bias that might have occurred had the subgroups been mixed. Within a particular group, care was taken to include diversity. For example, a discussion group among teenage girls might have included a mixture of girls who were in school and girls who were out of school. Care was also taken by the researchers to avoid selecting for inclusion in a particular group only people who were related to a Chief or elder.

An intentional contrast was made in regard to people who had relatively low SES (70% of the population) and high SES (30% of the population). The SES of participants was identified according to multiple indicators such as type of housing materials, house size, location, and types of foods usually consumed. To allow analysis of the effect of SES differences, approximately 60-70% of the group discussions on risks and functional responses had participants of high SES,

whereas 30-40% of those discussions had participants of low SES. Variation in SES was also considered in the selection of participants for in-depth interviews. In other activities, care was taken to observe and listen for any differences according to SES.

Research Team

The research team consisted of six Kenyan researchers, who divided into two teams with one team per area. Each team consisted of one woman and two men. The team leader oversaw the data collection, mentored the researchers on an ongoing basis, engaged in the two week training for the national team, and participated in the data analysis. Also part of the research team were two international researchers who led the training, backstopping, and data analysis.

Research Tools

Eight tools were used to collect data from various sub-groups in each site:

(1) *Participant observation*: Researchers observed children in diverse contexts such as schools, markets, homes, and on the streets, and they took detailed field notes, and wrote observational records;

(2) *In-depth interviews*: Individual, flexible, open-ended interviews of approximately 60 minutes were conducted with teenage girls and boys, young women and young men, and older women and men; interviews included probing questions about children and childhood, harms to children, prevention of and response to harms, and when and why various mechanisms are used or not used;

(3) *Timelines*: Participants and researchers developed timelines that marked key events in children's development and identified boys' and girls' roles and responsibilities at different ages;

(4) *Group Discussions of Risks and Response Pathways*: Researchers facilitated discussions with approximately 7-10 participants (90-120 minutes) that identified and ranked in importance what participants saw as the main ('most serious') harms to children other than poverty and health issues. Next, the group outlined the two most typical pathways and mechanisms of response to each of the top two child protection issues, and discussed obstacles to the use of the formal system;

(5) *Group Discussions of Preventive Factors*: Researchers facilitated discussions with groups of approximately 7-10 participants (60-90 minutes), inviting participants to identify and rank order the things that help to prevent a particular harm at home, school, or in the community;

(6) *Children's Body Mappings*: To learn about young children's perspectives, the researchers invited small groups of 8-10 children, 5-8 and 9-12 years of age and grouped by gender, to answer questions such as 'What do the eyes see that they like?' and 'What do the eyes see that they don't like?' Similar questions regarding the ears, mouth, etc. elicited ideas about likes and also about harms to children in general, aside from case specific information;

(7) *Children's Risk and Response Mappings*: In groups of 8-10 boys or girls, children drew a map of the area around which they lived, drew in the places that were safe for children and areas that were unsafe for children, and answered questions about where children went, or who they went to, when they felt unsafe;

(8) *Key Informant Interviews*: In depth interviews were conducted with Chiefs, health workers, police, social workers, religious leaders, and child protection workers to learn their views about how harms to children were responded to and about the functioning of the formal aspects of the national child protection system.

Research Ethics

All phases of preparation and work included a focus on ethical sensitivity and reflection. The research was reviewed and approved by the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) as well as by the National Council for Science and Technology (NCST).

The researchers were governed by Save the Children's Child Safeguarding Policy, adapted for research purposes. Participants were asked not about specific cases or their own situation but about all the children in the area. Informed consent was obtained through careful procedures that did not involve coercion, and people whom the participants knew and trusted helped to explain the purpose of the research, the steps involved, and possible risks or benefits. Children's assent was also obtained together with the consent of their parents. The participants were free to end their involvement in an activity at any time. To protect confidentiality, the records contained no names or other personal identifiers. Throughout, care was taken not to raise expectations that the participants or their family or community would receive material benefits such as money as a result of their participation.

Data Collection and Work Plan

Each team of researchers lived and worked in its respective area for 4 weeks (with the team leader staying on an additional week in each area), and collected data during November and December, 2012. The first week of data collection consisted mostly of participant observations and group discussions in order to build familiarity and trust and to reduce concerns about strangers talking with people individually. Early on, body mappings were also used to collect data from children because they generated much excitement and interest. Subsequently, methods such as individual interviews became increasingly prominent.

The interviews and discussions with community members were conducted mainly in Mijikenda, the language of the tribal group, the Giriama, which comprised the areas studied. Interviews with officials from the government or international NGOs, who were not of the Giriama group, were conducted either in Kiswahili or English, depending on which they were most comfortable with. Systematic records in English were kept for all activities, and verbatim records of interviews and group discussions were made from voice recordings. To protect confidentiality, the voice recordings are kept in an encrypted file on a secure hard drive. The written records were modified to remove names and other individual identifiers. The Team Leader collected and reviewed the records, made suggestions for improvement, identified gaps, and took steps to fill those gaps. Overall, data were collected from over 1,200 people in the two areas.

Data Analysis

The researchers (Kostelny, Ondoro, and Wessells) did the main data analysis using a grounded methodology, reading the data holistically and inducing consistent categories and patterns, triangulating narrative and observational data throughout. The categories and patterns served as working hypotheses that were then checked by re-reading and further analytic discussion among the researchers. The analysis also used a method of contrasts to discern

differences by gender, age, and SES. In analyzing the group discussions, for example, frequency analyses were used to disaggregate the top-ranked harms to children according to differences in gender, age, and SES. Analysis of narratives, too, used the method of contrasts to identify systematic differences in the perceptions and lived experiences of teenage girls, teenage boys, adult women, and adult men. Consistent with this mixed methods approach, care was taken to obtain the most comprehensive understanding by integrating the insights from both qualitative and quantitative data.

Limitations

The short time frame of this research (6 weeks) limited the depth of what was learned by comparison with the thick descriptions provided by multi-year ethnography. Also, the research has limited generalizability since the areas studied did not comprise a representative national sample. The research did not attempt to measure the actual prevalence of various child protection risks. Instead, it aimed to clarify the perceptions, beliefs, and values that influence people's behavior in regard to children's protection and well-being.

Key Findings

In general, participants reacted positively to the research approach which centered on listening to people's views and learning from them. The findings are summarized by topic area below.

1. Childhood and Child Development

Most of the participants in Marafa and Bamba defined a child as being dependent on their parents for basic needs, physical support and being taught what is right and wrong. Children were seen as people who could not comprehend or do anything by themselves, and who had limited responsibilities. **Childhood stopped when one was able to provide for himself the basic needs and was in a position to make judgment and differentiate what is wrong and/or bad.**

Physical stature and age also figured in local views of childhood. Using physique as a criterion, some participants defined children as people who are still small in body size and appearance. Girls who did not have breasts were also considered children. Other criteria for defining childhood were going to school and being unmarried. Those who were still going to school were seen as children regardless of their age. In addition, those who were not married were considered to be children. A minority of participants who had received training on child rights said that a child is a person who is under 18 years of age, whereas others who used a chronological definition cited a wide variety of different ages.

Birth and the First Year of Life. Children were usually born at home. Following the birth of a child, a variety of rituals were performed. For example, for boys, the grandmother covered the child's umbilical cord to ensure that it did not touch his genitals lest he become infertile. For both boys and girls, a *pengu* (charm) was tied to the child to protect him/her from any evil spirits. On the first day of life, the traditional doctor gave the child traditional medicine made from local

plants to protect the child from evil intentions. The father was not allowed to enter the house again or to have sex with other women.

Around the fourth day, the child was given a name during the naming ceremonies by either their fathers, mothers, or grandparents. Between three and seven days after birth, the child was dressed and taken around for everyone to see. To celebrate, a goat or many chickens were slaughtered, and people ate, drank, and danced. Approximately five days later, the mother tied the child on her back with a piece of cloth and took the child to the farm, where she dug the earth in order to introduce the child to real life.

By three months of age, the child had learned to recognize his or her mother, father, and siblings. During the first three months, the child had begun to eat soft foods such as porridge, and by eight months of age, they also ate rice and cassava. By six months of age, the child had learned to sit. Typically, the child had begun crawling (*anabanda vindi* or 'breaks knees') by seven months of age. By twelve months of age, children had begun walking and had also begun talking 'baby talk' and called others by name.

One to Four Years. By two years of age, mothers had stopped breast feeding, and boys and girls had typically began to play with each other. At around three years of age, children were given small tasks such as fetching utensils, thereby beginning the engagement in household chores that increased as children grew older and larger.

Five to Seven Years. The circumcision of boys, which was an important marker, frequently occurred during this period, although circumcision sometimes occurred at later ages (up to nine years) as well. Boys' circumcision was done on some boys soon after birth, and for other boys at about three years of age. Having given the boy soup to drink, the mother then gave him a cooked chicken that had been prepared for the occasion. It was important that the boy not break the chicken bones as he ate them, as it was believed that the wound from the circumcision would not heal and would continue growing until the head of the penis fell off, causing girls not to love him in the future.

During this period, children were described as starting to 'have brains' and were given more complex tasks such as being sent to the shop to buy things. The gendering of chores was prominent at this phase. Girls learned to do the household chores of fetching water, cleaning the house, pounding maize, washing the dishes, and taking care of younger children. Boys began to help their fathers in the *shamba* with farm work, and they also learned how to graze the cattle. Boys learned these roles from their fathers and older boys, while girls were taught by their mothers.

Around age six, children started lower primary school. More boys than girls were sent to school as some parents prioritized girls' learning of 'wife duties' over education. For recreation, girls played jump rope and boys liked to play soccer. Starting around eight years of age, the child did not sleep with the parents in the same room.

Eight to Twelve Years. By the ages nine to twelve years, the child had become larger and was seen as knowing right from wrong and being able to take on additional responsibilities. For those who went to school, both boys and girls performed their chores before and after school. By this

time boys were providing a lot of help to their fathers in the *shamba* and with grazing the cattle. Girls had learned all the household tasks, including cooking, cleaning the house, washing the clothes, fetching water, and caring for younger siblings. Girls who did not go to school did household chores all day, such as fetching water, vegetables, cook food, and clean, while boys who did not go to school graze cattle or dig on the farm. By 12 years, boys were looking for casual jobs in the village to earn money. Gender differences became more pronounced physically during this time, as girls developed breasts and underwent menstruation, and boys developed pubic hair. While boys and girls played together while younger, during this age, 'boys play with boys and girls play with girls.'

Schooling was important during this period and throughout children's development, although girls' education was not as highly valued as was boys, and some parents did not send their girls to school. However, many children were 'chased' from school during this time because of parents inability to pay school fees. Even though Kenya has a Free Primary Education Programme, some schools require pupils to pay 'development money' to be used for school maintenance (including kerosene, water, and salaries for watchmen), exams, and activities such as sports and 'tuition' (mandatory after school tutoring by teachers).

For some girls, by 8 years of age, early marriages were arranged by their fathers, primarily as a way to get a dowry.

Thirteen to Fifteen Years. Between thirteen and fifteen years of age, children in school completed upper primary, usually by age 15. Only a few proceeded to secondary school--a boarding school-- as few parents could afford the fees. Children who did not go to school were considered 'grown up' and could be married. Girls cleaned house, picked vegetables, cooked for the family, gave younger siblings a bath and prepared them for bed, and 'do all the chores.' A girl may also have owned part of a farm where she 'would dig and harvest maize to roast,' and she helped with the main farm as well. During this period, many girls become pregnant. Boys at this age also impregnated girls, and if the boy accepted responsibility and married the girl, the boy then looked for employment to support his family.

Diverse markers indicated a transition from childhood to adulthood. Children were considered adults when they provided for themselves, were physically mature, or could perform the tasks of an adult. Girls who were pregnant or boys who had impregnated girls were also not considered children.

2. Harms to Children

Top-ranked harms. When the data were pooled across both research sites and all groups, lack of food was rated in the group discussions as the most serious harm (17.6% of participants), followed by early pregnancy (17.4%), and out of school (15.7%). Other harms included poverty (6.7%), poor parenting (6.4%), early sex (5.5%) that was transactional since the girls' needs had not been met, and drug and alcohol abuse (5%), among other harms such as orphans, HIV/AIDs, child beating, prostitution by girls, children's bad behavior, overwork, negative peer influences, rape, and witchcraft. It is interesting to note that the top-ranked item by all participants pooled together--lack of food--was not a child protection issue in the customary

sense. Participants consistently identified this harm despite the researchers' efforts to affirm the importance of poverty and unmet basic needs while keeping the focus on harms done by one person against another.

Out of school children was rated as a greater problem in Marafa than in Bamba, whereas poor parenting was rated as a greater problem in Bamba than it was in Marafa. In addition, when the top three harms were considered, the top three harms to children in Bamba were early pregnancy (44.8%; the pregnancies were said to stem from both consensual sex and transactional sex), out of school (38.8%), and negative influences (37.9%), followed by rape, drug abuse, and bad behavior by children, among others. In Marafa, the top three child protection harms to children in Marafa were out of school (44.7%), early pregnancy (28%), and overwork (18.4%), followed by drug abuse (16.8%), poor parenting (15.1%), and bad behavior by children (11.8%) such as deciding not to go to school, among others. Thus, negative influences and rape were of greater concern in Bamba than in Marafa, whereas problems such as overwork were of greater concern in Marafa than in Bamba.

Age and gender differences. Age and gender differences were visible in regard to all three of the top ranked harms to children. Young women and women were much more likely than young men and men to rate teenage pregnancy as one of the top three harms. In addition, teenage girls were far more likely than members of other sub-groups to identify being out of school as one of the top three harms. Most likely, this reflected the fact that teenage girls had many fewer opportunities to continue their education than did teenage boys, and people saw this as 'normal.' Also, teenage boys were far more likely than were young men or men, and also more likely than teenage girls and young women, to identify poor parenting as one of the top three harms to children. Teenage boy's concern might have occurred because teenage boys were more likely than girls to receive harsh corporal punishment, and men may have tended to see such punishment as a necessary form of discipline rather than as a harm.

In the qualitative data on harms to children, the participants attributed the lack of food mainly to poverty, desertification, and infertile soil, which led to crop failure and very poor yield. They viewed hunger as a major detraction from children's health and as a source of other problems such as children stealing other people's food in order to survive. Girls who lacked food traded sex for food and money from boys and men, especially the *boda boda* (motorbike) riders who were believed to have money. As a result, many girls became pregnant and dropped out of school at an early age.

Early pregnancy. With regard to early pregnancy, girls and boys reportedly engaged in sexual intercourse at an early age. Some girls were reported to become pregnant as early as nine years of age, although the more typical age for pregnancy was thirteen years and above. The participants indicated that the primary cause of early pregnancy was sex in exchange for food, money, or material items, including necessities such as sanitary pads. Also, *boda boda* drivers enticed girls with money, later demanding that the debt be paid with sexual favors. In addition, boys or men lied to or 'tricked' girls, treating them kindly until they became pregnant and then rejecting them afterwards. Another cause of early pregnancy was girls sleeping outside their homes in accord with local customs that dictated that girls who had entered puberty were not allowed to sleep in their parents' home (usually they slept at a neighbor's home). Also adults referred to children being 'addicted to sex' in that they seemed to need to have sex all the time).

Going to school also placed girls at risk of becoming pregnant, as teachers reportedly pursued girls for sex in exchange for school fees and passing marks. Girls also reportedly had sex with visitors and people in authority – police, NGO workers, and researchers – who enhanced the girls status, making them ‘famous’ in the eyes of their peers.

Early pregnancy had a number of negative consequences. Because the men who had impregnated the girls typically refused to take responsibility for their action, and the girls were stigmatized by their peers, pregnant girls often had abortions using unsafe methods that caused harm and even death. Pregnant girls frequently dropped out of school and were stigmatized. Feeling ashamed, some girls reportedly thought of or actually committed suicide.

Out of school children. Since most children valued education, being out of school was painful for them. Overall, the participants identified poverty as the primary cause of children being out of school. Other causes included lack of school fees, being bewitched, lack of food, early pregnancy, parental irresponsibility, drug abuse, peer pressure, and children dropping out of school due to their own decision. Some parents who thought that girls were meant to learn 'wife roles' did not take their daughters to school. Children who were reported to be undisciplined were also punished by not being taken to school. Physical and verbal abuse by teachers, and humiliation by other children for not having a school uniform were also causes of children not going to school. Children sometimes stopped going to school due to hunger, which made it difficult to learn in school. When parents were unable to pay school fees, some children ran away.

Some children were reportedly out of school due to 'bad behavior.' For example, some boys dropped out of school to look for money to buy mobile phones, which they used to seduce girls. However, most of the causes of children being out of school were attributed to the social environment. For example, parents who did not value education sent their boys to work rather than to school. Moreover, parents who did not value girls' education married their daughters early in order to obtain a dowry in hopes of sending the boy in the family to school. Some girls reportedly wanted to marry their boyfriends at a young age, and girls who became pregnant usually dropped out of school. Children also dropped out of school due to teachers' physical and verbal abuse, or because they lost hope that going to school would lead to a more positive life.

The participants also identified numerous other harms to children:

HIV and AID. Children who were born to HIV positive mothers often became HIV positive themselves. HIV was also contracted by boys who had sex with older, infected women, and girls frequently became HIV positive as a result of having had transactional sex with men who were HIV positive.

Orphans (children who had lost at least one parent, usually the father). Children often had become orphans due to the AIDS related death of a parent. Orphans were reportedly treated very badly by their step parents and relatives, who denied them food, did not take them to school, and overworked them.

Heavy work. Significant numbers of children dropped out of school and sought employment in order to support their families. Often they went to nearby towns to work in hotels, construction, the tea processing plant, or as house help. In the towns, girls who had been promised jobs reportedly were introduced to prostitution. The children who had stayed at home suffered from

being given 'too much work' by parents, although some children elected on their own to work in order to help feed their family or to obtain money to buy thins.

Forced early marriage. Parents often forced their daughters to marry men against their will in order to obtain dowry money. Parents frequently negotiated and even received dowry without the girl's knowledge, even before the girl had matured physically or completed school. Also, when girls got pregnant, they were usually forced to marry the boys or men who had impregnated them. In return, the parents sought a dowry.

Rape. Girls were reportedly raped at night time ceremonies, discos, while fetching firewood, and even on their way to and from school. The perpetrators, who were said to be diverse, included people from their village, outside their village, and people in power such as teachers and relatives. Girls were also 'taken as wives' by their fathers. It was also reported that people infected with HIV/AIDS deliberately wanted to infect girls in order to 'not die alone.'

Prostitution. Girls entered into prostitution to get money for food and things they needed. As a result of prostitution, girls also ended up pregnant and contracting HIV.

Drugs and alcohol. Use of drugs mainly affected boys and also some girls. Boys smoked bhang and cigarettes and drank 'mnazi' (palm wine) and were reported to have suffered cognitive impairment due to smoking bhang. Boys said that they had been lured into drug use by 'bad' peer groups as well as by having observing their parents.

Witchcraft. Belief in witchcraft and traditional medicine was very strong amongst villagers, especially for people who did not go to a church. People attributed physical and mental ailments to bewitchment, and they used bewitchment (through the work of a witchdoctor) to harm children of whom they were jealous.

Child beating/severe punishment. Children were beaten with canes and sticks--they were 'whipped properly' or 'thoroughly beaten'--as a form of punishment. Even a small child who had not completed the work requested by a parent was likely to have been caned.

3. Response Pathways

In regard to early pregnancy, the most typical pathway of response involved the mother initially noticing that her daughter was pregnant and telling the father. Together, they confronted the girl and asked or forced her through beating to tell who was responsible. Next, the parents took the girl to the boy's house, thereby confronting both the boy and his family. If the boy accepted responsibility for the girl's pregnancy, he was forced to marry the girl. The girl then went to live with the boy's family, and the boy dropped out of school in order to look for casual labor that could provide money he could use to support his new family. After giving birth, the girl usually dropped out of school.

If, however, the boy did not accept responsibility, the girl's parents reported the case to the police, who usually fined the boy's family and allowed the boy to go free. The girl went back home to live with her parents, and, after she had given birth, she may return to school. Yet most girls in such situations dropped out of school soon due to the shame and stigma attached to being an unwed teenage mother. A variation was that the parents of the pregnant girl went to the assistant chief if the boy had refused to take responsibility for the pregnancy. The assistant chief talked to the boy and girl and took a decision about what should happen. The usual outcome was that if the girl had been attending school, she gave birth at home and subsequently went back to school. If the girl was not going to school, then she was given to the boy, who married her.

A second pathway occurred sometimes when the first parents to learn of the pregnancy were the parents of the boy, who had heard from rumors or from the boy himself that their son had impregnated a girl. In this situation, the boy's parents usually rushed to the police and paid them 1,000 KSH, a huge amount of money by local standards, (more than could be earned in a week doing casual labor), as a bribe. Later on, the parents of the girl discovered that their daughter was pregnant and went to the police to report the violation. Having been paid off, the police did not follow up on this issue, and the matter died. A third pathway involved the girl getting an abortion before the pregnancy had been noticed. Because unsafe means of abortion were widely used, the not uncommon result was for the girl to die. If, however, the abortion succeeded, the girl returned to school.

In regard to children being out of school, the main pathway of response related to payment of the school fees -- the 'development money' set by the headmaster and management staff to maintain the school and various activities. These fees were usually collected in small amounts (20-50 KSH) on a frequent basis (in some cases every week). If a child's school fees had not been paid, the teacher 'chased the child from school' leading the mother to approach the teacher and ask that her child continue in class while the parents looked for money. Frequently this entailed the mother looking for extra income through *vipende* (digging in someone's farm) or some other form of casual labor. If the money needed was raised and the school fees paid, then the child was allowed to stay in school. However, if the parents were unable to pay the school fees over an extended period of time, the teacher chased the child away from school.

A different branch of the same pathway arose if the teacher denied the mother's initial request that the child be allowed to continue in school while money is being raised in order to pay the school fees. In that situation, the mother and child (and to a lesser extent the father) looked for casual labor to earn money for school fees. Or the child was expected to work in the *shamba* (farm) while not in school. In the weeks or months that it took to raise enough money to pay the school fees, out of school children often became demoralized and unlikely to return to school. Even though the parents sought extra income for school fees, there typically was not enough food, so any extra money earned went to food instead of the school fees.

4. Views of Young Children

The body mappings that children participated in revealed the varied things that children (5-8 and 9-12 years of age) liked and disliked. Both boys and girls of all ages liked good food such as sweets, fruits, and ugali, being clean, playing with friends, hearing good words from their mothers, teachers, and pastors, watching videos and television, listening to music, and having nice clothes, especially shoes.

Things that children did not like included touching or stepping on feces, eating 'rotten' and 'dirty' food, and being hungry. They also did not like people saying abusive words to them or hearing people quarrelling. They did not like diseases and jiggers [biting insects]. Nor did they like witches or witchcraft. They especially disliked being slapped, beaten, pinched, having their ears or hair pulled, being caned on their hands, feet and head, having sticks put in their ears, or having their hands burnt [all as forms of punishment]

The views of children varied according to age. Younger children (5-8 years of age) expressed distinctive dislikes for things such as demons and dangerous animals such as cobras, elephants, monitor lizards, and hippopotamuses, while older children did not like seeing dead people. Some younger boys reported not liking to be told to 'smoke bang' or 'go steal.' Younger girls did not like to fetch firewood or water, while younger boys did not like carrying heavy loads such as stones or charcoal. Some older girls reported liking certain types of work, such as washing and cooking, but not liking other kinds of work such as carrying heavy luggage, picking vegetables, and weeding. Older girls also did not like seeing boys with 'bad manners'. Older boys liked playing football, hunting and chasing wild animals, and did not like seeing people persecuted or tampered with.

5. Effects of Socio-Economic Status (SES)

When the group discussion data were pooled across different sub-groups and ratings of the top three harms were considered, low SES participants were far more likely to rank out of school children as one of the top three harms to children than were high SES participants. In contrast, high SES participants were much more likely to rate early pregnancy and poor parenting as among the top three harms to children than were low SES participants. This same pattern of results appeared also in ratings of which of the various harms to children was regarded as 'most serious.'

That low SES participants were more likely than were high SES participants to rank out of school children as one of the top three harms to children likely reflected the greater difficulty or inability that low SES people had to pay children's school fees, which was the main reason children were out of school. Since high SES participants were able to pay their children's school fees and their children more often went to school, high SES participants were less likely to rate out of school children as one of the top three harms.

For both low and high SES participants, early pregnancy emerged as a significant concern, yet early pregnancy was a stronger concern among the high SES participants than among the low SES participants. Although the cause of this difference is not entirely clear, one possible explanation pertains to differences of power and status. Having better economic circumstances, high SES families may have been able to keep their girls in school and to meet their needs for basic necessities, transportation, and other items. If a girl from a high SES family became pregnant early, it may have been seen as a stain both on herself and her family since the girl and the family had had the means to prevent it. In contrast, low SES families were unable to meet their daughters' basic needs and therefore to prevent early pregnancy. As a result, early pregnancy in a low SES family may have been seen as unavoidable and therefore as causing less status loss. In addition, early pregnancy may have been seen as a more 'normal' state of affairs among families having low SES.

The largest difference based on SES was in regard to poor parenting, which participants said included parents being drunk or abusive to their children, or parents not wanting their children to go to school. High SES participants were much more likely than low SES participants to rate poor parenting as one of the top three harms to children. These differences may have reflected

power and status differentials between high and low SES families. The engagement in poor parenting by high SES families may have caused a greater loss of status than it would have caused among low SES parents since the high SES families had the economic means to protect their children by meeting their basic needs, sending them to school, and teaching them proper values and behavior. Low SES families, on the other hand, might have suffered less status loss since their abject poverty made it impossible to send their children to school on a regular basis and to meet their basic needs in ways that would keep them out of harm's way. For this reason, bad behavior by their children might have been seen as a reflection of their economic circumstances rather than poor parenting per se. Another possibility is that over generations, the cycles of poverty and exposure to multiple sources of distress on low SES families had eroded patterns and skills of effective parenting. Alternatively, high SES participants may have seen low SES participants as having poor parenting skills. Distinguishing between these and other possible interpretations remains a task for future research.

6. Preventive Factors

With respect to early pregnancy, the protective factors reflected diverse parts of children's social ecologies, such as families, schools, and peer groups. In group discussions, the top ranked preventive factors were parental responsibility and advice (24.5), and family planning (15.5%), including the use of condoms. Other useful preventive factors were: peer education in youth groups or school (8.2%), having pregnancy tests in school (7.3%), girls going to school (6.4%), and children engaging in good behavior (5.0 %), among others.

Responsible parenting involved parents teaching their children good morals and advising them on the consequences of having early sex and of early pregnancy. Parents also used punishment such as beating girls who went to night celebrations and engaged in improper behavior, as a way to control girls and prevent them from engaging in further immoral behavior. Parents also provided girls with basic materials such as food and sanitary pads, thereby decreasing their need to engage in transactional sex as a means of obtaining those items.

Family planning included girls getting birth control 'injections,' 'peels' (patches), and 'pills.' Young girls were taken by their mothers to the hospital and clinic, while older girls went on their own. Condoms were also used, though less frequently. Schools, too, were seen as playing an important role in preventing early pregnancy. The participants said that girls going to school and 'concentrating in school' helped to avoid early pregnancies. Also, the participants reported that some schools conducted life skill lessons, and some conducted pregnancy tests that reportedly deterred girls from becoming pregnant.

Role modeling by older girls, who had made a commitment to abstain from sex until they get married, reportedly influenced some girls. In addition, the joining of youth groups was seen as a method of preventing early pregnancies through peer education and the learning of life skills. Football clubs, especially for girls, kept girls busy and away from boys. Participants also reported that the good behavior of children, such as modest dressing by girls, was instrumental in reducing early pregnancies.

In regard to out of school children, the main protective factors were parents, communities, and an international NGO. World Vision paying children's school fees, through sponsorship, was by far the most important factor that prevented children from being out of school. It should be noted, however, that World Vision was active in Marafa but not in Bamba. Parents also played a key role in preventing children from being out of school by, for example, taking young children to school. In order to obtain the money needed to pay school fees, parents sometimes dug in someone else's farm or engaged in other work. For parents whose children were sponsored or who could pay school fees, parents monitored their children's behavior. For example, they checked each night to see whether their children had 'marks' from their teacher in their books that indicated the children had in fact gone to school and done work. Also, parents went to school each week to check the attendance register, thereby insuring that children had gone to school rather than having skipped and engaged in delinquent behavior with peers. Parents were also seen as important in motivating children to stay in school.

The role of communities was visible as well since participants noted that peers often had a positive influence on keeping children in school, as did positive role models. Other community sources of prevention were the Chief punishing parents who kept their children out of school and the police beating children for having skipped school.

The preventive value of the school providing food is also noteworthy as it reminds one of the scarcity of food in the communities and the challenge of learning or having a positive experience in school on an empty stomach.

7. Linkages With the Formal Aspects of the Child Protection System

Numerous linkages between community-based child protection mechanisms and the formal system were evident.

Connectors. Primary among the connectors was the Chief, who was Government appointed and not only received various cases of child protection but also engaged in outreach at the community level. In Bamba, the Chief received reports of early pregnancy from teachers, village elders, and the Assistant Chief, and then addressed the case through other government stakeholders, working with the District Children's Officer (DCO), the District Advisory Council (DAC), and the Location Advisory Council (LAC) as well as the police. Also, the Chief helped with rape cases by advising parents, helping parents to report at the police station, and taking the perpetrator to court if he were found.

The Chief worked as part of a network of community authorities that included the village elder and also the Assistant Chief. In some locations, the Assistant Chief served as the main operating officer in receiving cases pertaining to harms against children. To address the problem of children out of school in order to work, the Assistant Chief convinced children to go to school, and engaged the teacher in making a special register so that he could monitor their attendance. In some cases, the Assistant Chiefs were women who played an active role in preventing early pregnancy. The elder was also a key connector, particularly in linking with parents and the police.

The Area Advisory Council was a multi-stakeholder forum that included government officers such as the DCO and the Chief, as well as key nonformal actors such as religious leaders. The AAC sensitized the community on children's rights and the importance of education, and they also rescued girls who had been married early by their parents. Beneath the AACs was the Location Advisory Council (LACs), a multi-stakeholder forum that operated at the location level and assisted in cases of children out of school, early pregnancy, early marriage, and child labor.

International NGOs were also local connectors who built the capacities of various partners, and received, referred, and helped to manage cases of child abuse. Also, one consortium of NGOs helped to support more than 50,000 orphans in the wider Kilifi/Malindi area. At community level, community-based organizations connected with international NGOs by helping them with advocacy and social monitoring of community projects. Also, community health workers served as connectors between the government health posts and clinics and the local community. In all the villages, religious leaders were highly respected figures who frequently engaged on community child protection issues and liaised with the groups and leaders identified above.

Formal stakeholders' views of harms to children. In general, there was good convergence between the views of Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs, elders, AAC members, and other formal system stakeholders with those of other citizens. The top harms to children identified by formal system stakeholders were out of school children, early pregnancy, poor parenting, sexual abuse, child labor, HIV/AIDS, orphans, early marriage, severe punishment, poverty, and lack of food. These items and views regarding their causes resonated well with those generated by ordinary citizens.

Of interest, some actors within the formal system reported that child rights were harmful to children. They noted that in the past, before child rights had been taught to local people, girls who became pregnant were unable to go to school. They saw this as a deterrent to girls becoming pregnant, and they believed that child rights, which held that even pregnant girls and young mothers had the right to education, tacitly encouraged girls to become pregnant by enabling the girls to give birth and go back to school. Other formal system actors saw child rights as having undermined people's ability to discipline children using methods of corporal punishment.

There were also several points of divergence between the views of stakeholders in the formal system and those of other citizens. Stakeholders in the formal system were more likely to identify incest and maltreatment of children with disabilities as significant harms to children than were ordinary citizens. This difference could have owed to the fact that workers in the formal system were more likely to receive reports of incest and maltreatment of children with disabilities and hence to know about them than were ordinary citizens. In addition, workers in the formal system were more likely than other citizens were to identify parents as the source of problems such as children not going to school, early pregnancy, and children's engagement in transactional sex. Whereas ordinary citizens did not tend to identify local culture as problematic, workers in the formal system tended to view culture as the source of problems such as early marriage, incest, child labor, and not sending girls to school.

Willingness to report child protection issues through the formal child protection system. Despite the diverse linkages discussed above and the existence of referral channels to the formal

system, there were visible limits on the willingness of people to use the formal system to report clearly statutory violations such as the rape of a child. In the case of rape of a child by a stranger, 76.1% of the participants in a sample of group discussions said that people would report the rape to a government official, whereas 23.9% of the participants said people would not report the rape. In the case of rape of a child by a relative, 67.6% said people would report the offense to a government official, compared to 32.4% who said people would not report. In individual interviews, participants expressed a much lower willingness to report rape by a relative.

The qualitative data revealed reasons why people would not report a case of child rape to government authorities. In the case of rape of a child by a stranger, participants said that it was a waste of time since no action would be taken. Even AAC members said nothing happened when they reported cases to the Chief, Assistant Chief, or Volunteer Children's Officer. In addition, participants reported that nothing would happen because the parents of the girl who had been raped were given money by the family of the perpetrator of the rape. Moreover, the participants feared that reporting a rape of a child might bring themselves under suspicion or evoke revenge by the rapist. A practical obstacle to reporting cases such as rape was the requirement of the parents to submit a P3 form, which cost 1,000 KSH (approximately \$12 to cover hospital costs), which is a large sum by local standards. Adding to that obstacle was the cost of the transportation to the hospital.

In regard to a case of rape of a child by a family member, people were reluctant to report because it was a shame and also a 'family matter' to be resolved by the family. Participants also said people would not report if the relative was a bread winner or provided support to the family. There were also indications that people would report sexual abuse of a child by a father only if everyone, including an opinion leader, knew about it. Even then, reporting was interfered with by practical obstacles such as the distance to reach the officer who received such reports. Overall, people preferred to solve such problems locally rather than go through the formal system. Seeking a local solution frequently entailed payment by the family of the perpetrator to the family of the girl, whereas in others it involved the conduct of a ritual.

Disconnects around child protection. The divergences identified above, coupled with significant unwillingness to report serious harms to children through the formal system indicated that there was a partial disconnect between the less formal (hereafter referred to as 'nonformal') and the formal aspects of the child protection system. For example, child protection workers (e.g., NGO workers from the region) and child rights proponents were quick to point out that early marriage is a significant harm to girls. In contrast, most local people did not view early marriage as a harm to children. According to one cultural practice (*kadzama*), a man could marry a young girl after having given her father eight bottles of palm wine. The disconnect was visible also in regard to children with disabilities, who under Kenyan law, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child are entitled to the full array of rights that extend to other children. In local practice, however, children with disabilities were frequently hidden away and denied their rights.

An equally serious disconnect was visible within the formal system itself, particularly in regard to child rights. On one hand, Kenyan laws and policies unequivocally support children's rights. In practice, however, some workers within the formal system engaged in practices such as child beating that violated children rights and even saw child rights as harmful to children. These

disconnects or tensions within the formal system itself need to be resolved if the Kenyan child protection system is to achieve its full potential.

Implications and Recommendations

The results of this research paint a picture of children's exposure to diverse harms and limited effectiveness of the current mechanisms of response and prevention. Overall, the picture is one of struggling nonformal and formal systems that at present are not adequate to achieve the protection of children in the predominantly rural areas of Kilifi. The main implications of the research are spelled out below, together with recommendations on how to move forward.

1. Poverty and structural violence were drivers of many of the observed harms to children.

Poverty was a root cause of many of the top-ranked harms to children--lack of food, being out of school, early pregnancy, engaging in exploitative sex, and others. However, the poverty was not evenly distributed, and the weight of the accumulating harms fell most heavily on children who were from relatively low SES households. To address these issues, it will be useful to integrate child protection work with the full range of economic and livelihoods support, which historically have been separate sectors. In particular, it will be useful to deliver economic supports, including social protection, with a child protection lens, thereby insuring that the benefits actually reach the most vulnerable children.

Recommendations:

1. Child protection practitioners should strengthen child protection practice by systematically integrating the full range of economic and livelihood supports, including social protection, with child protection and insuring that the benefits reach highly vulnerable children. This will likely require team based approaches in which child protection specialists and economists collaborate in a systematic manner.

2. The Kenyan Government and donors should make available economic and livelihood supports that will be deliberately designed and monitored so as to reach highly vulnerable children.

2. The views of harms to children varied according to gender, SES, and age.

The results of this research illuminated how the category 'children' is far from homogeneous, as the harms and their effects varied by the gender, SES, and age of the children. Gender differences were evident in the high ranking of early pregnancy as a harm to children, and being out of school was a more frequent problem for girls since many parents favored sending their boys to school. Being out of school was also a greater problem for children from low SES households, which were often unable to pay children's school fees. With regard to age, young children were more likely than were teenagers to express concerns about being pinched or hit, carrying heavy loads, stepping in feces, seeing people smoke bhang, or seeing people quarrel.

Recommendations:

(1) Practitioner assessments of child protection risks, resources, and mechanisms should use child friendly methods in order to include, compare, and contrast the voices and

perspectives of girls and boys at different stages of development and from high SES and low SES families;

(2) Practitioners should make girls' and boys' voices and views central in discussions of what are appropriate, desired outcomes of child protection mechanisms and the wider national child protection system;

(3) Practitioners should not use 'one size fits all' programs for children and should tailor interventions in a manner that meets the needs of different subgroups; and

(4) Practitioners should support a process of dialogue and increased understanding between children and adults on issues of child protection and well-being.

3. Being in school was a significant preventive factor in regard to harms such as sexual exploitation and early pregnancy, yet being in school was associated with harms such as beatings and discrimination.

The protective value of being in school for both girls and boys was a consistent finding in this research. Girls who were in school were less likely to get involved in work as domestic servants, which often led to sexual exploitation. Also, girls who were in school and who focused on getting an education were less likely to have an early pregnancy. Similarly, boys who were in school were less likely to be engaged in heavy or dangerous labor or to work as *boda boda* drivers, who frequently exploited girls and were at risk of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS. However, schools were also identified as places where children were harmed by beatings, humiliation and discrimination, and sexual abuse by teachers.

Recommendations:

(1) NGOs and civil society groups should strengthen advocacy efforts with schools and the Kenyan Government to ensure that vulnerable families are exempted from having to pay school related levies for their children;

(2) The Kenyan Government, NGOs, and community groups should provide livelihood supports such as access to social protection for vulnerable families in child friendly ways that improve children's access to schools and health care;

(3) Practitioners should support families in their efforts to keep children in school;

(4) The Kenyan Government should prioritize efforts to strengthen the schools as a protective environment for children, including the use of positive methods of discipline and the provision of sanitary towels for girls.

4. Preventive factors were identifiable yet had limited capacity and reach.

Preventive factors were identified at different levels such as family, peer group, school, wider community, and societal levels. For example, parents played a key role in protecting girls from early pregnancy by teaching good behavior and advising their daughters and also in keeping their children in school by paying school fees. Peers such as older girls who served as positive role models by not becoming pregnant out of wedlock reportedly helped to reduce early pregnancy. In schools, pregnancy tests helped to encourage girls to avoid early pregnancy, and the provision of food reportedly helped to prevent children from dropping out of school. At community level and beyond, international NGOs were active in preventing children from being out of school by, for example, helping families to pay their children's school fees. In protecting children and

supporting their well-being, it will be valuable to build upon these existing strengths. At the same time, however, it is important to note that these preventive factors were under strain and fell far short of being able to meet the existing needs.

Recommendations:

(1) Practitioners should include in assessments a mapping of preventive factors and other assets for different sub-groups of children;

(2) Practitioners should engage and collaborate with parents, youth groups, peer leaders, and school based groups in preventing harms to children;

(3) Practitioners should make prevention a high priority in programming by building on and strengthening existing preventive factors.

5. Local views regarding childhood and harms to children diverged in important respects from the views enshrined in international child rights standards and Kenyan national law.

There was partial overlap between local views of harms to children and those enshrined in international standards such as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and Kenyan national law. For example, local people's views about the importance of children being in school resonated with the right to education that is prominent in the African Charter. Such convergences, however, were overshadowed by a number of very significant gaps or divergences between local and international views. Whereas international child protection standards and also the new Kenyan Constitution (Article 29) prohibit harsh corporal punishment, many local people said that beating of children was necessary for teaching them good behavior. Even people such as Chiefs, elders, police, and teachers who worked within the formal protection system frequently used corporal punishment to discipline children. Similarly, early marriage (under the age of 18 years) is a concern by international standards and is prohibited by the 2013 Marriage Bill in Kenya, yet it was regarded as an acceptable local practice. More broadly, there was a gap in regard to the treatment of girls. Although the sexual exploitation of girls was seen as a harm, there was a tendency locally to see it as an unavoidable part of the lives of girls, particularly those from poor households. In contrast, international standards take a strong view against the sexual exploitation of girls.

In these and other respects, there is poor alignment between Kenyan law and international child protection standards and the child protection system that exists on the ground. A major concern in strengthening the national child protection system is to ensure that child protection laws are actually enforced in an appropriate manner. Existing evidence suggests that better alignment will not come through top-down approaches such as teaching about child rights but through dialogue oriented approaches that build upon the points of overlap between local views and those expressed in international child rights standards.

Recommendations:

(1) A high priority for the Kenyan Government and practitioners should be to reduce the widespread use of harsh corporal punishment that is evident in both the formal and nonformal domains of child protection;

(2) Practitioners should train parents on positive methods for disciplining children and support local groups in advocating for the use of positive methods;

(3) Practitioners should use respectful, dialogue oriented processes to introduce ideas of child rights and child responsibilities, with engagement of adults as well as children.

As these findings and recommendations suggest, a key to strengthening the child protection system in Kenya will be to learn from the lived experiences of children, families, and communities, thereby taking a grounded approach to system strengthening.

INTRODUCTION

In diverse contexts, community-based child protection mechanisms (CBCPMs) are front line efforts to protect children from exploitation, abuse, violence, and neglect and to promote children's well-being.² Defined broadly, CBCPMs include all groups or networks at grassroots level that respond to and prevent child protection issues and harms to vulnerable children. These may include family supports, peer group supports, and community groups such as women's groups, religious groups, and youth groups, as well as traditional or endogenous community processes, government mechanisms, and mechanisms initiated by national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Some of these supports--family and peer group supports, for example, are nonformal since they are not part of the Government led system of child protection. Other supports--such as Chiefs and elders in the Kenyan context--are arms of the formal, Government led system. Which aspects are formal or nonformal vary by context, and to make matters even more complex, particular structures or mechanisms may intermix Government led and civilian led elements, as might occur when a Child Welfare Committee included both civilians and a Chief who was paid by the Government.

In 2009, a global, inter-agency review of the effectiveness of CBCPMs reported a number of significant gaps in knowledge and practice pertaining to CBCPMs. For one thing, the evidence base regarding the effectiveness of CBCPMs was very weak, as few evaluations included robust designs or measures of actual outcomes for children. Having noted that among seven effectiveness factors, community ownership was the most important determinant of the CBCPM effectiveness and sustainability, the review noted that most NGO facilitated CBCPMs achieved only low to moderate levels of community ownership. Overall, there was a tendency to establish CBCPMs such as Child Welfare Committees as parallel structures that did not build upon existing community mechanisms. This approach not only resulted in low levels of sustainability but also caused unintended harm by weakening existing supports. The review also found preliminary evidence that one could strengthen CBCPMs by linking them with formal mechanisms such as district-level³ child protection networks and supports, thereby enabling effective referrals and also capacity building.

The Inter-Agency Learning Initiative

To address these gaps and to boost the effectiveness of CBCPMs in an era of strengthening national child protection systems, the Inter-Agency Learning Initiative embarked on a multi-country program of strengthening CBCPMs via community-driven action to develop effective linkages between existing CBCPMs and formal aspects of the national child protection system (see Annex 1). At present, the research is being conducted in two districts in Sierra Leone⁴ and also in Kenya. The initial step is to learn about and document existing CBCPMs in whatever varieties are present and functioning and about how they link or do not link with formal aspects

² Eynon & Lilley(2010); Wessells (2009).

³ The districts which had existed at the time during which this research was conducted were subsequently disbanded. Under the new system, the geographic units that are most similar to districts are counties.

⁴ Wessells (2011); Stark et al. (2012); Stark et al. (2013).

of the national child protection system. Next, a survey instrument is developed that will measure on a population basis various risk and well-being outcomes for children that reflect a mixture of local views and international child rights standards. Using a quasi-experimental design, the survey instrument will be applied to teenagers (13-17 years of age) in areas that are matched in regard to variables such as socio-economic status, prevalence and varieties of child protection risks, and access to diverse supports such as schools, social workers, police, and health posts. These baseline data will serve as a reference point for gauging the effect of a subsequent community-driven intervention with linkages to the formal child protection system. One of the sites will be selected on a random basis as the intervention condition, with the other site becoming the comparison condition. In Kenya, which has a well developed formal child protection system (see the box on the following page), there are many opportunities for such constructive linkages. The effectiveness of this bottom-up approach to strengthening the child protection system will be evaluated through reapplication of the survey instrument one and two years, respectively, following the baseline data collection.

Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this research was to learn about community-based child protection processes and mechanisms in two mostly rural areas of Kilifi, Kenya. The research is intended to complement and extend the learning that came from previous research by the Inter-Agency Learning Initiative in two urban slums of Mombasa, Kenya.⁵ As explained below, Kilifi and Mombasa were selected as sites in part because they are in the Coast area where child protection problems such as child trafficking and sexual exploitation are widespread.⁶ The inclusion of a mixture of urban and rural sites aims to provide a glimpse of the diversity that exists within Kenya. The research focused on diverse sources of vulnerability such as those related to HIV and AIDS as well as the issues that fit under the traditional child protection rubric.

To learn about existing community-based child protection processes and mechanisms, the research used an ethnographic approach in which national researchers who spoke Mijikenda lived and worked in the villages, making participant observation, conducting interviews and group discussions with diverse people, and engaging in activities with children. In particular, the research sought to identify how local people understand children and childhood, what they saw as the main harms or risks to children, what CBCPMs existed and how they were used, what protective factors enabled children's positive coping and resilience, and whether and how the CBCPMs linked with elements of the formal, government led aspects of the national child protection system. Recognizing that people in the villages may be positioned in very different ways, the research aimed to disaggregate responses by age, gender, socio-economic status, and, when possible,⁷ religious orientation.

This research hopes to contribute to strengthening the national child protection system in Kenya. The effectiveness of the Kenyan child protection system should be gauged not only by

⁵ Kostelny et al. (2013).

⁶ UNICEF (2006).

⁷ In the research as a whole, some sites were relatively homogeneous in regard to religious affiliations, making it infeasible or possibly stigmatizing to disaggregate responses by religious affiliation.

how well the system supports children in urban areas but also in predominantly rural areas where many Kenyans live. By providing new, grounded knowledge about how people actually respond to child protection threats and about existing prevention mechanisms, the research provides a snapshot of the functioning system that Kenyans actually use and that can inform efforts to strengthen the national child protection system in Kenya.

The National Child Protection System in Kenya

Kenya has a robust legal framework for the protection of children, who are defined by the Constitution as people under 18 years of age. The Constitution of Kenya guarantees all children the right to protection from abuse, all forms of violence, harmful traditional practices, neglect, inhuman treatment and punishment, and exploitative or hazardous labor. Kenya is a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. These international instruments were domesticated through the Children Act of 2001, which is the foundation for a wide array of child protection supports. Kenya has also ratified the Hague Convention on Inter-Country Adoptions as well as the International Labor Organization Conventions 138 (minimum age) and 182 (worst forms of child labor). Recently, the government has pledged to establish four new Child Protection Centers every fiscal year, with the aim of covering all the counties.

Overseeing children's issues are two key bodies housed within the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development. The National Council for Children's Services (NCCS) has the policy mandate for children's issues, and the Department of Children's Services (DCS) is its implementing arm which oversees the delivery of services for children. Together, these two bodies coordinate the work of different Government Ministries (e.g., the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning and National Development), the police and the judiciary, and private sector actors such as national and international NGOs, and faith-based organizations on child protection and welfare. Working with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, they also help to oversee the monitoring of children's welfare and the maintenance of records of cases of child rights violations.

Important delivery components of the system exist at District level and at lower levels as well. At District level, a District Children's Office organizes child protection services, facilitates referrals across services, and monitors and promotes children's welfare. At District level, Government trained social workers promote children's welfare. In addition, the NCCS organizes Area Advisory Councils (AACs), which support and monitor children's services, raise awareness on child rights, and develop strategic partnerships in support of children. The membership of the AACs consists of line ministries, NGOs, community-based organizations, faith based organizations, and representatives from the business community. These multi-stakeholder bodies exist not only at District level but also at location and sub-location levels, giving them grassroots reach. At sub-location and village levels, trained Volunteer Children's Officers (VCOs) who respond to violations, make referrals as needed, and help to promote awareness of children's rights. People can contact the VCOs or authorities such as the Chief (who is Government appointed) or the police in order to report violations.

Currently, the Government is highly active in strengthening the national child protection system and has been particularly active in linking its planning and budgeting processes and gaining support from diverse sectors and stakeholders. As stated by Professor Jacqueline Oduol, former Secretary of Children's Affairs, a systems approach aims to protect all children and to unite all actors to protect children through a long-term, coordinated approach that adapts to changing circumstances and problems (Oduol, 2012).

METHODOLOGY

The research used a methodology of rapid ethnography that focused on child protection and aimed to provide a rich, grounded picture of local beliefs, values, and practices in regards to children, their developing activities and social relations, and the community mechanisms for their protection and well-being. Recognizing the advantages of a mixed methods approach, the research also collected quantitative data regarding participants' ranking of various risks, the pathways of response, and the use of the formal, government led child protection system to respond to criminal violations such as rape.

1. Site Selection

Wider Site Selection

This research is part of a multi-site research process that includes Mombasa county, Kilifi county, and Kisii/Nyamira counties. These provinces and the sites within them were selected through a highly consultative process with diverse stakeholders who were concerned about vulnerable children. These stakeholders included (1) agency members of an in-country Reference Group coordinated by Save the Children and UNICEF, (2) networks of national and international NGOs working on problems of HIV and AIDS, for example, the APHIA Plus network organized via PEPFAR and USAID/Kenya, and (3) the Kenyan Government, including the AACs that intermix government and civil society leaders and are active at local and provincial levels. The site selection was also influenced by the global Reference Group, which wanted to learn about urban as well as rural sites.

The sites were not intended to provide a representative national sample but were viewed as offering strategic value by filling gaps in current understandings of child protection in Kenya. The counties selected were of interest in part due to the nexus of interacting child protection concerns there. Counties on the coast, including Mombasa and Kilifi counties, have a large child sex tourism industry that is believed to engage approximately ten to fifteen thousand girls,⁸ and it also presents other child protection problems such as early marriage,⁹ child labor, and child abuse.¹⁰ Kilifi county was selected in part because there was interest in learning whether and how Kilifi might serve as a 'feeder' for children's entry into sex tourism in Mombasa. Kisii county was selected because it has a very high rate of HIV and AIDS and offered the opportunity to study an area about which relatively little is known in regard to child protection.

Sites for This Research

Two areas—Bamba and Marafa—in Kilifi county were selected as the sites for this research. Before the research began, an effort was made to identify published or unpublished works that

⁸ UNICEF (2006).

⁹ International Center for Research on Women (2011).

¹⁰ Onyango (2004), ANPPCAN (2008).

provided statistics on the sites selected. However, very little useful information was found. Nevertheless, a process of extensive consultation with AAC members, NGOs, and various community leaders indicated that these two sites were broadly typical of areas within Kilifi. The key stakeholders judged that the two areas were comparable with regard to size, mode of living, SES, ethnicity, issues of children's vulnerability, access to resources such as hospitals and schools, and external child protection supports such as NGOs and Government Social Workers.

2. Context and Site Descriptions

The two research sites in Kilifi were Bamba and Marafa. As explained below, there were two villages within each site that were included in the research. The names of the villages have been masked for purposes of protecting confidentiality.

Bamba Division

Approximately 54,000 people live in Bamba division. The two villages within Bamba that participated in the research may be referred to as Village A and Village B.

Village A

Village A has a population of approximately 500 people, who live mostly in houses made of mud with grass thatched roofs. Village leaders estimated that 50% of the population were Christians, 20% are Muslims, and 30% practiced traditions such as conducting rituals for the ancestors or performing witchcraft that they believe will induce rainfall.

Although the village had been a subsistence farming area in the past, less than 5% of the population engaged in subsistence farming during the period in which the research was conducted. Even though having cattle is valued in the community, very few people in the village own cattle. Most of the men do casual work in Bamba center such as digging pit latrines, and working in the construction sites, and some men are hunters. Most women are housewives and do small business such as selling ropes, *mnazi* (palm wine), coconut, fish, or vegetables in the open air market in Bamba. Both men and women also work in people's farms by digging *vipande* (pieces of sub-divided farms), for which they are paid fifty shillings (approximately 60 cents U.S.) per *kipande* (4 ft. by 20 ft. section of the *vipande*).

The village is headed by a female elder and a deputy female elder, both of whom were elected by the community and report to the area Chief. According to the Chief, 'the village elder is the eyes of the Chief and the whole provincial administration in the village.' The village elders ensure peace in the community and help to resolve conflicts, although they do not handle criminal violations. In addition, they help to implement government policies such as Free Primary Education (FPE) by going door to door looking for children who are not in school and ensuring that they are taken to school. They also convene *barazas* (community meetings) and educate the community about government policies.

The village has no schools, but children attend the primary school located in a nearby village up to class 5. For class 6, 7, and 8, they attend Bamba primary school in Bamba center. Although there are five secondary schools in Bamba division, one of which was a boarding school, few of their students came from the village, where literacy rates are low. According to the village elder, education is still below the required standard, and only three out of ten households send their children to school.

The importance of traditions was visible in regard to funerals, which people viewed as 'escorting the dead.' Following a death anywhere in Bamba, regardless of the religion of the person who had died, economic activity halted and people travelled from all the villages to the funeral, for which they wore their best clothes. In a ritual called *pambia*, the people danced all night around the coffin to a mixture of traditional and contemporary gospel music. They viewed this as a means of keeping the dead company. Boys paid to dance with girls, and the money that was collected was given to the bereaved family to help them during the 'difficult time.' Also, a bull was slaughtered and people feasted. Each person was expected to participate in the funeral as a means of showing a sense of care and community spirit. Anyone who did not participate could be seen as not together with the people and might not receive help when they needed it. In this manner, funerals served to strengthen communal ties and the sense of belonging.

Village B

Village B has a population of approximately 400 people, many of whom adhered to traditional practices. Most of the houses in the village had roofs made from iron sheets, although some houses have cement roofs. Only a few houses had electricity, however. Although some small scale farming was practiced, most men worked at construction sites in Bamba or made charcoal. Men also worked in hotels in Mombasa. Women either worked in hair salons in Bamba center or did petty business activities such as selling deep fried potatoes, fish, and vegetables.

The village had a male village elder whom the villagers had elected. Most of the time, the village elder, who also works a community health worker, was busy coordinating and mobilizing the community for development projects for different NGOs. The village had few services itself since it was very near Bamba center. Children attended school in Bamba center. For health care, people used the government run Bamba Sub-District Hospital and a few private clinics that were in Bamba center.

Marafa

Marafa area is a popular tourist site since it has a depression known as 'hell's kitchen.' According to legend, a wealthy man who was a witch had lived there and had had so much food that he showered using milk while most people went without food for many days. God punished him by sinking the place, thereby killing him and his entire family. Local residents believed that there are people who still cook in the depression and that if you go there at lunch time, one will hear people screaming and cooking. This tourist attraction has unfortunate consequences for children, as some children have dropped out of school in order to beg money from tourists.

Village C

The village was located near the main business center in the area, and had an estimated population of 600 people. Most of the houses had iron sheet roofs, although some were cemented and have electricity connections. The village had a nursery school, a primary school and a secondary school. Approximately 50% of the people were Christians, but it was mostly the women and children who went to church. The majority of men and most of the boys practiced their traditional beliefs, and viewed going to church as something for women and children. Approximately 15% of the population were Muslims, and approximately 15% still practiced their traditions, such as going to traditional healers. There were several churches and one mosque in Marafa location.

The main economic activities were petty businesses such as selling fish, selling second-hand clothes, and owning small shops. The residents also practiced small scale subsistence farming. However, most of the people who stayed in the village did not own land in the village itself but in the interior parts of Marafa such as Moabasa. There were those who also practiced large scale farming in Mombasa where they grew pineapples in large quantities for commercial purposes.

The village was headed by a female elder who had been appointed by the District Officer. She had been involved in various community activities such as sensitizing the community on early pregnancies and the importance of giving birth in the health facilities.

Village D

The village had a population of approximately 300 people of the Giriama tribe. The majority of people were Christians, but it was mainly the women and children who went to church. The majority of men and most of the boys do not go to church. However, there were a few Muslims and also people who still believed in traditional practices.

Most of the people in the village were subsistence farmers. During the rainy seasons, people grew maize and cassava. But during the dry season, most people shifted to charcoal burning. Before, the majority of the people used to engage in timber sawing, but the practice stopped because all the trees were cut down. Some kept cattle like goats, cows or chickens.

During the rainy season, men worked in people's farms where they dug *vipande*. For each *kipande* they were paid 30 Kenyan shillings (approximately 40 cents U.S.). Each person could do a maximum of ten *kipande* per day. During periods of drought, they turned to charcoal burning, with one sack of charcoal selling for 200 shillings (approximately \$2.50 U.S.). Women also worked in people's farms during the rainy seasons.

The village was headed by a male village Elder, who was appointed by the Assistant Chief. The village elder was the head of the peace committee whose responsibility was to resolve disputes in the village. Some of the disputes arose when the cattle got into the farm and ate crops grown, and quarrels also occurred between individual members of the village. According to the Assistant Chief, the village elder's roles included: peace restoration, community policing, maintaining law and order, and initiating some development projects in the village. The village

elder was also responsible to pass information to the villagers, which he did by walking round the village hitting a metal bar and shouting the information he is conveying.

The village had only one private primary school that went up to class 5. Formerly there had been a nursery school, but it was closed down because the building collapsed and has not been repaired. The majority of children attended primary school in a nearby village. People received health services from the Marafa Health Center which is in Marafa center.

3. Study Population and Participants

The estimated study population consisted of the approximately 3,500 people who lived in the Bamba and Marafa sites combined. Participants were recruited with the assistance of community leaders, who helped mobilize groups for discussions and identify key informants. This strategy of working with the community leaders was important in demonstrating respect and also in building trust, which is necessary for the collection of accurate information. To prevent sampling bias that could have arisen from having the community leaders select the participants, care was taken to identify and recruit most of the participants without the involvement or advice of the community leaders. After the researchers had lived in or near the research sites and had worked there for some time, they became trusted and themselves identified participants through their day to day interactions with people, for example, in the market, at church, or walking through the community. As discussed below, the researchers attempted to engage with diverse people rather than speak only with those who were most convenient to talk with.

4. Research Design

Key Questions

The research was designed to address or answer the key questions listed in the box on the following page. These questions were addressed using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods (see section 6 of the methods section below). Following the ethnographic approach, the design included the use of flexible methods such as individual, in-depth interviews that followed respondents' line of thought about various child protection issues facing children (aside from poverty and health issues). During such interviews, the researchers asked probing questions that aimed to go deeper and to learn about the wider array of key questions as suited the informant and the situation. In addition to these narrative methods, the researchers collected observational data through participant observation. This design made it possible to triangulate the observational and narrative data and to identify illuminating divergences between what people said and what they were observed to do.

Age and Gender

A key feature of the design was to learn from people who occupied different social positions within Bamba and Marafa. Age¹¹ and gender were recognized as determinants of harms to

¹¹ The exact age of children was not always known to either the parents or the children themselves.

children, responses to those harms, and steps taken to prevent such harms from occurring. For this reason,

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How do local people understand:
 - What is childhood and children's development?
 - What are girls' and boys' normal activities, roles, and responsibilities?
 - What are the main child protection risks or sources of harm to children, aside from poverty and health problems?
 - What processes or mechanisms are used by families or communities to support children who have been affected by various protection threats? What are the outcomes of those mechanisms, and how satisfactory are the outcomes in the eyes of different stakeholders?
- How do child protection risks vary by gender?
- How do child protection risks and responses vary by social class?
- Whom do girls or boys turn to for help when protection threat X arises?
- What is the influence of religion on children's protection and well-being?
- What are the main preventive factors that enable children's protection and well-being?
- Who are the natural helpers and what networks do they have?
- What are the indigenous, 'traditional' mechanisms of protection and how are they regarded by different groups?
- Apart from indigenous mechanisms, what groups or structures (e.g., Child Welfare Committees or CBCPMs facilitated by NGOs) exist in communities, counties or provinces? How are they perceived by local people? What are their roles, responsibilities, and functionalities?
- How are very sensitive/complex issues addressed ?
- Who has or does not have access to existing protection mechanisms (e.g., do the poorest of the poor or people not related to the Chief have access)?
- What do government and NGO actors see as their main roles and responsibilities in regard to CBCPMs?
- What are the linkages of community mechanisms with the national child protection system? How do communities perceive government mechanisms such as the police or legal system?
- What are the gaps in those linkages?

the initial design included specific steps to learn from and to contrast the views of eight sub-groups:

- Women: Age 25 years and above
- Young women: Age 18-25 years
- Teenage girls: Age 13-17 years
- Young girls: Age 5-12 years
- Men: Age 30 years and above

- Young men: Age 18-30 years
- Teenage boys: Age 13-17 years
- Young boys: Age 5-12 years

The categories of young women and young men were based on local understandings. Thus young women were *makamu* (of marrying age, typically 18-25 years of age), while young men were those who were typically not married and approximately 18-30 years of age. In all activities, deliberate effort was made to learn from these different sub-groups. For example, group discussions were conducted with members of only one of the subgroups. This approach reduced the problems of unwillingness of people to talk openly in the presence of more powerful others that might have occurred if, for example, teenagers had been placed in a group with adults or if women had been placed in the same group as men. In addition, within the teenage groups, separate groups were also conducted for those in school and those who had dropped out of school. Within a particular group, care was taken to include diversity. Care was also taken by the researchers to avoid selecting for inclusion in a particular group only people who were related to a Chief or elder.

The same sub-groups identified above were also represented in other methods such as in-depth interviews. Since individual interviews and group discussions are not a preferred or age-appropriate way of learning from young girls and boys, the design included the use of methods such as body mapping and risk mapping that work well with young children.

Socioeconomic Status (SES)

Most residents of the sites had food insecurity and a chronic inability to meet basic needs. In relative terms, however, some people were better off than others. An intentional contrast was made in regard to people who differed according to SES. The SES of participants was identified according to multiple indicators:

- Housing materials: High SES houses had cement walls and floors and an electricity connection, while low SES houses had less sturdy materials such as grass thatched roofs, walls made of mud, and earthen floors;
- House size: People of high SES had multi-room houses, while people of low SES typically had a one room house in which chickens and goat often slept during the night;
- Location: Low SES homes were farther from the business center, while high SES homes were in or near the business center;
- Business/employment: High SES people owned a shop or had full time employment, while low SES people sold small quantities of fish or vegetables in the market, worked on other people's farms, looking after their cattle, or were unemployed or looking for casual labor on a day-to-day basis;
- Type of food eaten: People of high SES were able to eat red meat, chicken and fish which people of low SES could not afford. Low SES households hunted birds for food, typically fed a household that had 4-6 children with less than one kilo of maize flour per day, which was less than enough for one meal.

The researchers documented these and other criteria, and decided SES based on multiple, converging criteria. The researcher's classifications were reviewed and confirmed by the team leader and/or the lead researcher, who determined the SES status.

By these criteria, approximately 70% of the people living in the sites were judged to be low SES. To allow analysis of the effect of SES differences, approximately 70% of the group discussions on risks and functional responses had participants of low SES, whereas 30% of those discussions had participants of high SES. Variation in SES was also considered in the selection of participants for in-depth interviews in order to avoid having all high- or low SES participants. In other activities, care was taken to observe and listen for any differences according to SES.

Religion

To learn about the effects of differences in religious orientation, key informant interviews were conducted with Christian and Islamic leaders. It was not possible, however, to use in regard to religion the approach that had applied to SES. Because Christianity was the dominant religion, the conduct of separate group discussions of Muslims or those who practiced traditional religion would likely have been perceived as stigmatizing. Instead, efforts were made to include Muslims, Christians and those who practiced traditional religion in all the activities and to observe and listen for any differences that might have owed to religious orientation.

5. Research Team, Organization, and Capacity Building

The research team consisted of six Kenyan researchers, who divided into two teams with one team per site. Each team consisted of one woman and two men. The team leader oversaw the data collection, mentored the researchers on an ongoing basis, engaged in the two week training for the national team, and participated in the data analysis. Also part of the research team were two international researchers who led the training, backstopping, and data analysis.

The international researchers were from the Columbia Group for Children in Adversity, which had the principal responsibility for the technical aspects of the research. The Columbia Group researchers in this phase included Dr. Kathleen Kostelny, the Lead International Researcher, and Dr. Mike Wessells (Principal Investigator). Dr. Kostelny worked closely with the national research team, backstopping their work, and checking the quality of the data. Overall, the Columbia Group was responsible for developing the ethnographic research design and methodologies, overseeing the collection of quality data, ensuring adherence to ethical standards, analyzing and interpreting the data, and preparing this technical report.

Save the Children and UNICEF/Kenya were important partners in this inter-agency research. Save the Children coordinated the Kenyan Reference Group and, via Sarah Lilley, did extensive work to develop an inclusive, collaborative process. The Reference Group advised on issues such as site selection and research ethics, and various members such as World Vision, which played a key operational role in the Kenya research, opened doors at local level and helped to identify

researcher candidates. At the national level, UNICEF/Kenya helped to open doors for discussions with the Kenyan Government.

To prepare the field researchers for their work, an 11-day preparation workshop was conducted in Kilifi 25 October - 7 November, 2012, immediately before the data collection began. The workshop used a highly participatory methodology that included vignettes, role plays, discussion of ethical dilemmas, group problem-solving discussions, and field experience in participant observation, group discussions, and in-depth interviews. These activities were guided by an action-reflection methodology wherein group reflection and problem-solving followed each activity. The workshop developed skills for using effectively the tools outlined below, with particular emphasis on how to ask probing questions. Also, the workshop sharpened ethical awareness and ability to manage challenges that frequently arise in the field. The first week of the workshop focused mostly on learning specific tools and developing skills of verbatim or near verbatim documentation. The second week field tested and finalized the Mijikenda research tools, with attention also to the local dialect.

6. Research Tools and Questions

The various research tools are summarized below and are available on request¹² in either English or Mijikenda.

Participant observation: The field researchers lived in their respective research sites over a period of four weeks (with the team leader spending additional time in the sites). Visiting schools, sharing meals, and talking with people in homes and in public spaces, they made first-hand observations of children in the context of family, peers, school, work, religious practice, and community life.

In-depth interviews: The field researchers conducted one-on-one interviews of approximately one hour duration in the local languages with diverse teenagers, young adults, and men and women. The interviews aimed to probe the questions outlined above, yet were conducted in a contextual, flexible manner that took into account the participant's gender, their situation and social position, and their interests and willingness to discuss particular topics. The interviews were open-ended in that they were not strictly scripted, and probing questions were used to follow the interests of the participants.

Timelines: Timelines were used to learn about how participants viewed the normal child development process and to identify key developmental milestones (e.g., naming, going to school, and getting married) and what marks the transition from childhood to adulthood. To learn about children's roles and responsibilities at different stages of development, questions were asked about the typical activities and responsibilities of children at different ages and the typical progression of development of children over time. On average, timelines took 40-60 minutes.

¹² Contact Kathleen Kostelny (kkostelny@gmail.com).

Group Discussions of Risks and Response Pathways: These were 90-120 minute, researcher facilitated discussions with approximately 8-12 participants who first identified and ranked in importance what participants saw as the main harms to children other than poverty and health problems. The main harms were those judged to be ‘most serious.’ Next, for each of the two main child protection issues, the group outlined the two most typical pathways and mechanisms of response. These were functional in that they were what people typically used, even if that was not intended by child protection workers. In order to learn about the use of the formal, government led system, the discussions ended with questions about rape and the response to a case of rape. The discussion participants came from a pre-defined sub-group such as teenage girls, teenage boys, women, and men.

The group discussions were the main source of quantitative data on, for example, the harms to children that were most frequently ranked among the top three. It should be noted that the question asked—‘Which of these harms is most serious?’—could have evoked rankings based on perceptions of the frequency of the harm, the magnitude of the harm, or some combination thereof. The question was asked in this manner because field tests had indicated that it was an effective means of identifying which harms were of greatest day-to-day concern for people. In contrast, questions about frequency and magnitude often failed to identify the harms that were of greatest everyday concern. For example, a harm such as child killing is high in magnitude, yet people might not have viewed it as a primary concern (that is, as ‘less serious’ in the local idiom) because it occurred infrequently. Similarly, a harm such as being out of school might have been seen as lower in magnitude than the killing of a child yet might have been of greater concern (‘more serious’ in the local idiom) since it occurred frequently or was viewed as a gateway to other harms.

Group Discussions of Preventive Factors: These 60-minute, researcher facilitated discussions with groups of approximately 8-10 participants invited participants to identify and rank order the things that help to prevent a particular harm at home, school, or in the community. The participants came from a pre-defined subgroup such as young women, young men, women, and men. At the end of the group discussions, participants were asked whether they would report to authorities a case of child rape by a stranger or a case of child rape by a family member. These questions were designed to help differentiate the responses to different kinds of rape and to shed light on the use of the formal aspects of the national child protection system.

Body Mappings: To engage young children and learn about their perspectives, the researchers conducted body mappings (typically for 45-60 minutes) with groups of children 5-8 and 9-12 years of age. Separate groups were conducted for boys and for girls, with ten children in each group. In this method, a child lay on a large sheet of paper while other children used crayons to trace an outline of his or her body. Having colored in the drawn figure and named it, the children were asked questions such as ‘What do the eyes see that they like?’ and ‘What do the eyes see that they don’t like?’ Similar questions were asked regarding ears, mouth, nose, head, heart, stomach, and feet, and hands. Care was taken not to probe what the children say since the intent was to avoid exploring the child’s own, possibly painful experiences.

Risk Mappings: This tool was used with groups of children to identify the main protection risks to children and the networks that support them (approximately 45-60 minutes). Separate groups

of girls and boys (approximately 10 children per group), 5-8 years and 9-12 years, respectively, were asked to draw a map of their community, including where are places that are safe for children, and where are places that are unsafe or where children are afraid to go. The children were asked which were the safe and the unsafe places for children, and who they went to for help if they felt unsafe or afraid.

Key Informant Interviews: Individual, in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants such as Chiefs, elders, religious leaders, etc. in order to learn about their views of child protection threats in the villages; the various mechanisms (e.g., endogenous, Child Welfare Committees, NGO facilitated mechanisms; government mechanisms) that may or may not be present in their area; and the linkages of community mechanisms with the national child protection system. Like the other tools listed above, these interviews were flexible and open-ended. Guiding the researchers' inquiries, however, were the questions listed in the box on page 35.

7. Research Ethics

The research study was reviewed and approved by the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) as well as by the National Council for Science and Technology (NCST).

The research recognized the ethical complexities and dilemmas associated with research on children.¹³ The researchers were trained on and agreed to abide by Save the Children's Child Safeguarding policy, the reporting requirement of which was adapted for research purposes. To avoid raising expectations, the researchers presented themselves as researchers who were from the Children's Learning Group. This name was intended to reduce any focus on the Columbia Group for Children in Adversity and to help manage the expectations of material aid or money that might have arisen had the researchers said they were associated with NGOs. Also, the researchers avoided making promises they could not keep. To avoid causing unintended harm, the questions asked to children and adults were general in nature and neither pertained to nor probed their personal situation. As a safety precaution, however, the researchers had identified nonformal sources of psychosocial support in advance of the data collection.

The challenges of obtaining the informed consent in the field have been well documented.¹⁴ Adding to the challenges was the Kenyan Government's requirement that the participants, most of whom are illiterate, give their consent (or assent for children) in writing. Local informants had cautioned that most people were fearful of written documents and the unknown implications that might follow from signing them. In dialogue with local people in the villages about how to address this problem, the national researchers learned that it would be appropriate to have a trusted local opinion leader such as a respected community member or a youth leader explain to prospective participants the purpose of the research, who the researchers were, why and how they were collecting data, how the data would be used, and what the risks and benefits of participation were. This procedure was followed, with care taken to avoid coercion by having the opinion leader explain systematically and in the local language that people were free not to

¹³ Alderson & Morrow (2011) ; Boyden (2004) ; Graham et al.(2013); Hart & Tyrer (2006) ; Morrow (2009) ; Schenk & Williamson (2005).

¹⁴ Alden et al. (2009); Mackenzie et al. (2009).

participate and that there would be no losses or repercussions if they chose not to participate. Even after people agreed to participate, they were free to end their involvement in an interview, discussion, or activity at any time.

To protect confidentiality, it was agreed that neither the records nor the research report would contain identifiers of particular individuals. Each researcher maintained the privacy of notebooks and recordings and kept password protected Word files on laptop computers. Also, all the informed consent forms, Word files, and other research records were kept in a safe place during the data collection and were subsequently stored in a locked room at the Save the Children office in Nairobi. Only the researchers have access to the research information. Over the long run, the data will be stored in a locked, secure place at either Save the Children or Columbia University, the home university of the Principal Investigator.

8. Data Collection and Work Plan

The interviews and discussions were conducted in Mijikenda, the dominant language spoken in the communities. During each interview, the researcher took jottings during the interview and recorded the interview, assuming that the participant had granted permission to record. Soon after the interview, the researcher used the jottings and the tape recording to prepare a compressed verbatim transcript of the interview in English. The group discussions were conducted by two researchers, with one serving as facilitator/interviewer and the other as note-taker. Shortly after the group discussion, the two researchers reviewed the jottings, filled in key points, and used the tape recording to develop the compressed verbatim transcript. Written records were also prepared following daily participant observation activities, and also following activities such as timelines. For body mapping activities, the researchers kept the body maps that the young people had drawn, took notes on which items the eyes, the ears, or other body parts liked or disliked, and then prepared a report that included all the responses.

To protect confidentiality, the researchers kept the audio recordings in their possession until they could be stored in a locked file at the Save the Children office, and the written records were modified to remove names and other individual identifiers.

Working in their respective areas, the two teams collected data in November and December, 2012, with the team leader collecting additional data in January, 2013. Each team included male and female researchers. To build trust and enable a reasonable depth of learning, the researchers lived and worked in their village area for four weeks. They frequently worked and interacted with their team leader, who oversaw the quality of their work and provided guidance for improvement. The team leaders reviewed the data and forwarded them to the international researchers for review and analysis.

An important part of the plan for data collection during weeks 1 and 2 was to emphasize participant observation, group discussions, timelines, risk mapping and body mapping, with greater emphasis on in-depth interviews in subsequent weeks. This phased approach aimed to build trust, show publicly what the researchers were doing, and reduce suspicions or feelings of exclusion that might have arisen if individual interviews had been conducted initially. Tables 1-4 presented on the following two pages summarize the activities conducted by the teams with

different subgroups and in the two sites. Although the initial plan had called for equal numbers of group discussions and participants each sub-group, this proved not to be feasible since it was difficult to assemble groups of teenagers, for example. Also, the number of participants in group discussions varied somewhat across groups. Still, over 1,200 people from the two sites participated directly in the activities conducted. In addition to community members, 29 key informant interviews were conducted by the international researcher and team leader with stakeholders at the district, county, or provincial level, including the District Children's Officers, the provincial Children's Officer, AphiaPlus, NGOs officers, police, and staff from the Child Protection Center .

Tables 1 through 5 below summarize the number of different activities conducted in each site and the number of participants.

Research Tool	Participants	Bamba		Marafa		Total	
		# groups	# people	# groups	# people	groups	people
Body Mapping	Girls 5-8	(n=4)	40	(n=3)	20	(n=7)	70
	Girls 9-12	(n=3)	30	(n=3)	30	(n=6)	60
	Boys 5-8	(n=3)	30	(n=3)	30	(n=6)	60
	Boys 9-12	(n=3)	30	(n=4)	40	(n=10)	100
Total		(n=13)	130	(n=13)	130	(n=26)	260
Risk Mapping	Girls 5-8	(n=1)	10	(n=1)	10	(n=2)	20
	Girls 9-12	(n=3)	30	(n=5)	50	(n=8)	80
	Boys 5-8	(n=2)	20	(n=1)	10	(n=3)	30
	Boys 9-12	(n=4)	40	(n=5)	20	(n=9)	90
Total		(n=10)	100	(n=12)	120	(n=19)	220
Grand Total						(n=39)	480

Table 1. Summary of the research activities conducted with young children.

Research Tool	Participant Type	Bamba		Marafa		Total	
		Groups	People	Groups	People	Groups	People
Group Discussions: Harms and Response Pathways	Women	(n=4)	36	(n=8)	107	(n=14)	143
	Young Women	(n=1)	7	(n=2)	22	(n=2)	29
	Teen Girls	(n=2)	16	(n=6)	88	(n=8)	104
	Men	(n=3)	26	(n=3)	36	(n=6)	62
	Young Men	(n=1)	8	(n=2)	26	(n=3)	34
	Teen Boys	(n=3)	23	(n=2)	25	(n=5)	48
Total		(n=14)	116	(n=23)	304	(n=337)	420
Group Discussions: Preventive Factors	Women	(n=3)	30	(n=3)	30	(n=6)	60
	Young Women	(n=0)	0	(n=1)	10	(n=1)	10
	Teen Girls	(n=0)	0	(n=3)	34	(n=3)	34
	Men	(n=1)	7	(n=4)	37	(n=5)	44
	Young Men	(n=2)	15	(n=2)	26	(n=4)	41
	Teen Boys	(n=1)	8	(n=0)	0	(n=1)	8
Total		(n=7)	60	(n=6)	137	(n=12)	197
<i>Grand Total</i>							617

Table 2. The number of group discussions that were conducted.

Research Tool	Participant Type	Bamba	Marafa	Total
In-Depth Interviews	Women	18	15	33
	Young Women	3	12	15
	Teen Girls	3	3	6
	Men	8	7	15
	Young Men	8	5	13
	Teen Boys	1	3	4
Total		41	45	86
Timelines	Women	13	14	27
	Men	7	10	17
Total		20	24	44
<i>Grand Total</i>				130

Table 3. The number of in-depth interviews and timelines that were conducted.

Number of Participant Observations		
Bamba	Marafa	Total
39	15	54

Table 4. The number of participant observations conducted in the two areas.

Participant Type	Bamba	Marafa	Total
Male Village elder	1	1	2
Female Village elder	1	1	2
Teacher	1	2	3
Voluntary Children's Officer (VC)	1	1	2
NGO/CBO /Children's Home staff	4	3	7
Pastor	2	2	4
Sheikh	1	1	2
Chief	1	1	2
District Officer (DO)	1	1	2
Youth Leader	1	1	2
Grand Total	14	15	29

Table 5. Summary of key informant interviews by type of participant.

9. Data Analysis

Two researchers (Kostelny and Ondoro) did the main data analysis using a grounded methodology.¹⁵ In an intensive process that included 60 person days, the two researchers read and reread the entire data set in a holistic manner until natural categories (e.g., types of child protection risks) and consistent patterns (e.g., pathways of response to particular risks) emerged. In addition, SPSS was used to analyze the quantitative data of the main protection harms that were identified in the group discussions on harms and response pathways.

The triangulation of data was a key part of this search for consistent categories and patterns. Verbal data were triangulated by looking for converging statements regarding, for example, the main harms to children, or the most typical pathway of response to a particular harm. If children and adults said that one of the main harms was out of school children, this view was compared with that of teachers, Chiefs, and elders since those were people who were in a position to know whether there were out of school children in the community. If a single participant said that

¹⁵ Charnaz (2004).

pathway X was what usually happened, whereas a large number of participants said that pathway Y was what usually happened, then pathway Y was selected as the more typical pathway of response for that particular harm. Similarly, narrative and observational data were triangulated whenever possible. For example, frequently heard statements such as ‘many children do not go to school’ were compared with direct observations. If one directly observed over numerous days and settings that significant numbers of children of school going age were not in school, that convergence boosted the credibility of the statements. Conversely, discrepancies between what was said and direct observations decreased confidence in the accuracy of the statements and sparked efforts to understand why the discrepancy occurred.

The common categories and patterns were defined inductively, that is, by observing them at whatever levels they appeared. These categories and patterns were checked through discussion among the researchers, and revisions were made as necessary. The categories and patterns served as working hypotheses that were then checked by re-reading and further analytic discussion among the researchers. To identify narratives that illustrated key categories and patterns, the two researchers identified and then discussed the representativeness of quotes from people in different areas. Moreover, the quantitative analysis of the rankings of the harms and protective factors identified in group discussions made it possible to further triangulate the patterns that had emerged in the in-depth interviews, timelines, and participant observations.

In addition to looking at commonalities and convergences in categories and patterns, the analysis also used a method of contrasts to discern differences by gender, age, and SES. In analyzing the group discussions, for example, frequency analyses were used to disaggregate the top-ranked harms to children according to differences in gender, age, and SES. Analysis of narratives, too, used the method of contrasts to identify systematic differences in the perceptions and lived experiences of teenage girls, teenage boys, young women, young men, and women and men. Consistent with this mixed methods approach, care was taken to obtain the most comprehensive understanding by integrating the insights from both qualitative and quantitative data.

10. Limitations

The short time frame of this research limited the depth of what was learned by comparison with the thick descriptions provided by multi-year ethnography. For example, it was not possible to document the different cosmologies that people in the research areas had or to identify the dynamic interplay between divergent beliefs, practices, and values. Also, the research has limited generalizability since the areas studied did not comprise a representative national sample. Nor did the research include the number and diversity of people with disabilities that might have been reached in a longer study.

This research did not attempt to measure the actual prevalence of various child protection risks, and no statistics were available in regard to the frequency of occurrence of various harms or difficulties in the functioning of the child protection system. The premise of this research is that it is important to understand the perspectives, beliefs, and lived experiences of children and adults in regard to child protection issues, responses, and preventive measures. An understanding of the subjective perceptions, beliefs, and meanings that influence people’s behavior can

illuminate how people view children and child protection issues, how they experience the formal child protection system, what resources and networks they use in responding to child protection issues, and what obstacles limit the use of the formal system. However, the research was not designed to answer the question such as ‘How many times did a particular protection risk occur in a specified period of time?’ Unless indicated otherwise, statements in this report such as ‘Many girls became pregnant by age 14’ were based primarily on the participants’ perceptions. Although such statements were triangulated with statements made by other, independent participants in order to decrease the influence of idiosyncratic views, they cannot be taken by themselves as accurate indicators of the actual frequency of the protection risks. Whenever it was possible, such statements were triangulated with direct observations, for example, of young teenage girls who were conspicuously pregnant or who were already mothers near the age of 14 or 15 years. The report indicates when direct observations by researchers corroborated the participants’ reports.

While it is important to keep these limitations in mind, it is also important not to reject out of hand people’s perceptions of the frequency of various risks. As a hypothetical example, even if the risk of a problem such as homicide were objectively low, it is helpful to know that young people worry extensively about getting shot or stabbed. In addition, perceptions of frequency can be indicative of the actual frequencies. For example, in a particular society, people may say ‘most girls are married by the time they have reached 20 years of age.’ Although such statements may not be backed by hard, statistical data, they may in fact be relatively accurate even if they are imperfect and subject to well documented biases.¹⁶

Much additional research is needed in order to identify empirically the actual incidence rates of various child protection risks and violations. Subsequent phases of the present research project aim to clarify the actual incidence rates.

¹⁶ Kahneman, D., Slovic, P., & Tversky, A. (1982).

KEY FINDINGS

1. Childhood and Child Development

Who is a Child

Most of the participants in Marafa and Bamba defined a child as being dependent on their parents for basic needs, physical support and being taught what is right and wrong. Children were seen as people who could not comprehend or do anything by themselves. Childhood stopped when one was able to provide for himself the basic needs and was in a position to make judgment and differentiate what is wrong and/or bad.

A person whose mind is not well developed, they are still told what to do, till when he/she grows up. (Man, in-depth interview, Marafa)

A child is a person who cannot do things by himself and when he do things the child cannot know what he has done. (Woman, in-depth interview, Marafa)

We take a child as a child, someone who is still under the parents care, someone who depends on the parents for so many things such as clothes and food. A child should respect the parents because they do so many things for them. (Man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

A child is a person who is small, who cannot cook, dig 'shamba' [farm] or fetch some water. In short it's a person who depends on the parent for living. (Young woman, in-depth interview, Marafa)

A child is a person who does not know anything and depends on his parents for food, clothes and everything. 'Kamanya madzo na mai' [does not know what's good or bad]. The child depends on the parents to control him/her, when playing, eating even others during the eating place they do not know which hand to use for eating, which one they should not use. They rely on their parents for everything they do. (Teenage boy, group discussion, Marafa)

A child is one who does not have responsibilities, does not have a job, can't help in anything in case of financial issues, can't buy food, clothes for himself or anything depends on his parents for everything. (Teenage boy, group discussion, Marafa)

One who does not know anything at all, you will do everything for the child. If he defecates, you will wipe him, wash him, wash his clothes that he has defecated on because he does not know anything. (Woman, group discussion, Bamba)

A child is small and young. He usually plays with other children. A child has so many ways of disturbing parents. They fight each other and come here crying. If you are a parent with a lot of anger, you will beat the other child. A child goes to school. A child

is that one who is disciplined. There is a small child who is between 0-5 years and big children from 7yrs and above. (Young man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

A person can do something but a child cannot do anything. For example a child cannot dig in the shamba, cannot fetch water, and cannot wash dishes or go to fetch water and anything else. But there are also children who are very big and can do all these things I have mentioned. (Young man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Physical stature and age also figured in local views of childhood. Using physique as a criterion, some participants defined children as people who are still small in body size and appearance.

A child is the one who is very small ... when you see their body, the way they appear, you definitely know that this is a child. (Man, group discussion, Marafa)

A child is a small kid; if she is a girl she has no breasts yet. (Woman, in-depth interview, Bamba)

One is a child from birth until 9 years old (Teenage girl, group discussion, Bamba)

In regard to age, numerous participants defined a child as someone below the age of 18 years. This view likely reflected training and advocacy by NGOs in the local area. However, some participants still defined a child as being various ages below 18 years.

A child is the one under 10 years because when he goes above ten years that's not a child. (Young man, group discussion, Marafa)

A child is anybody less than 5 yrs of age. (Teenage boy, in-depth interview, Marafa)

One is a child from birth until 9 years old (Teenage girl, group discussion, Bamba)

This is a young person who is less than 16 years old. (Teenage girl, in-depth interview, Marafa)

We say a child is the one who is from 1 year to 15 years. And an adult is from 16 years up to 35 years. (Young man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

A child is anyone who is below 18 years old. When he or she reaches the age of 18, he or she automatically becomes an adult. (Young woman, In-depth interview, Marafa)

Other criteria for defining childhood were going to school and being unmarried. Those who were still going to school were seen as children regardless of their age

Anybody who is still at school and was born by mother and father [is a child]. (Man, in-depth interview, Marafa)

When in class 3 to 8, and even can be more than 18 years, but because he cannot look for food [he is still a child]. (Man, group discussion, Marafa)

In addition, those who were not married were considered to be children.

Anybody who has no family or has not married not married at all [is a child]. (Teenage boy, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Children also had responsibilities to help their parents as they aged, and children who did not do this were viewed as irresponsible or even 'not counted' as one's children.

But the problem is that some boys go to Mombasa and they don't come back to see their parents. They disappear there and they leave their parents suffering here with nothing to eat and that is very bad. Those are children you don't even count as your children. (Man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Children's Development

Birth and the first year of life. Most children were born at home with the help of the grandmother or a traditional birth attendant, while for parents who had enough money, children were delivered at the hospital.

When the mother started *nasikira utsungu* (labor pains), the grandmother was called to come and prepare for the coming of the child. After the child was born, the child was pinched so that he cried to confirm he was alive. Special care was taken over the *lukovohi* (umbilical cord) with a special ritual:

We take a chicken's feather, spit on the umbilical cord and pass the feather over it several times while spitting on it. We stay and do it again in the evening. (Woman, timeline, Bamba)

If the child was a boy, the grandmother covered the child's genitals with a clean piece of cloth to ensure the umbilical cord did not touch the boy's genitals lest he become infertile.

The *mudzi* (placenta) was carefully taken and buried inside the house or at the *nzingo* (back yard of the house) by the traditional birth attendant or the grandmother. The placenta had to be spread so that it had four corners; otherwise, the mother was placed in danger. If the placenta was buried in the house, the child was washed at that spot for the next seven days. The grandmother warmed water to give the mother so she was able to wash, while some of the water was put in a cup, mixed with sugar, and given to the child to drink because the mother at that point was unable to produce milk.

Next, a *pengu* [charm] or *chinga* [string worn around a child's waist] was tied to the child by an old woman in the village to protect the child from 'evil spirits' or from 'bad eyes and bad hands' (being bewitched). Charcoal was sometimes applied to the child's forehead in order to provide protection from evil spirits. Following birth '*analungwa*' (extra special care and watchfulness) was given to the baby. On the first day of life, the traditional doctor gave the child

traditional medicine (roots) in order to protect the child from evil intentions. The father was not allowed to enter the house again or to have sex with other women. The traditional birth attendant or grandmother who had facilitated the delivery was also required not to have sex until the 'lukovohi' (umbilical cord) dropped. People believed that if these requirements were not met, the child would have abnormalities.

While the mother and child stayed indoors, the mother and grandmother took turns for at least three days staying awake in order to ensure that nothing was wrong with the child and that the child's umbilical cord did not touch his or her genitals. After three or four days, the umbilical cord was cut and tied with white thread, thereby preventing bleeding. During the first five days, the mother was not allowed to sleep with the baby, and the grandmother slept with the baby instead. No man was allowed to be in the house after the child has been born, and there was no sweeping of the house during the first five days. During this time, no fire was taken out from the house where the child had been born, and the fire remained lit.

Around the fourth day, the child was given a name during *kulunga mwana* (the naming ceremonies) by either their fathers, mothers, or grandparents. In most cases, boys were named after their grandfathers. Sometimes a village elder was called and asked to give the child a name. Children were also named according to the seasons or the place in which they had been born.

A celebration for the newborn baby (*vyalusa*) was held when the child is between three and seven days of age. On this occasion, everyone was welcomed to see and greet the child.

Everybody will know that a child has been born in the village. You will see your friends coming with firewood, water to come and greet the new child. (Woman, timeline, Bamba)

The child was dressed in heavy clothes and taken around the homestead for everyone to see. If a child had been named after someone who was still alive, that person would carry the child out of the house. Every person who was interested in holding the newborn baby was permitted to do so. Those who had gifts, such as soap and baby clothes, presented them to the mother. To celebrate, a goat or many chickens were slaughtered, and people ate, drank, and danced. Also, a container of palm wine (*Kadzama ya uchi*) was given to the elders to drink.

Approximately five days after the child has been taken out of the house for the celebration, the mother tied the child on her back with a *leso* [piece of cloth] and took the child to the *shamba* (farm), where she dug the earth in order to introduce the child to real life. At the same time, she conducted a ritual to ask the child to be well behaved and capable of carrying out his or her role in life.

On the eighth day early in the morning, you will take the child and 'mkambawatsini' [tie her to the mother]. You the mother also will take with you a jembe and a panga to a shamba. You will dig a bit and cut a shrub using the panga then you will talk your own words to ask the child to become a well behaved girl and who can do any activity that a girl is supposed to do. (Woman, timeline, Bamba)

By three months of age, the child had learned to recognize his or her mother, father, and siblings. During the first three months, the child had begun to eat soft foods such as porridge, and by eight months of age, they also ate rice and cassava.

By six months of age, the child had learned to sit. Mothers enabled this by digging a small hole the size of the baby and putting clothes around the baby for support and comfort. While the baby sat with the support of the clothes, the mother worked nearby, keeping an eye out for the child. If the child cried, the mother picked it up and carried it on her back.

Typically, children had begun crawling (*anabanda vindi* or 'breaks knees') by seven months of age. By twelve months of age, children had begun walking and had also begun talking 'baby talk' and called others by name.

One to Four Years. By two years of age, mothers had stopped breast feeding, and children had begun eating ugali with vegetables. Boys and girls typically began to play with each other during this period. Some of the play was gendered, as girls played with sand, 'vifudu' (coconut shells) and *udodo* (small dry sticks used as firewood), and they also pretended to cook. To keep children from getting into trouble, children are sent to 'baby class' (nursery school) starting at three years of age. At around three years of age, children were given small tasks such as fetching utensils, thereby beginning the engagement in household chores that increased as children grew older and larger.

The circumcision of boys, which was an important marker, frequently occurred during this period, although circumcision sometimes occurred at later ages (up to nine years) as well. Boys' circumcision was done on boys only during 'vuri' (the season with little rainfall and extensive sun) because the wound from the circumcision would not heal properly in rainy weather. Some boys were circumcised soon after birth, when the mother poured breast milk on the wound until it healed after a few days. Other boys were circumcised at about three years of age. Whenever the circumcision occurred, the mother slaughtered and cooked a '*kuku walwembe*' (chicken for circumcision) on the day of the circumcision. Having given the boy soup to drink, she then gave him the chicken meat with ugali. It was important that the boy not break the chicken bones as he ate them. Local people believed that if the boy broke the chicken bones, the wound from the circumcision would not heal and would continue growing until the head of the penis fell off, with the result that girls would not love him.

Five to Seven Years. During this period, children were described as starting to 'have brains' and were given more complex tasks such as being sent to the shop to buy things. The gendering of chores was prominent at this phase. Girls learned to do the household chores of fetching water, cleaning the house, pounding maize, washing the dishes, and taking care of younger children. Boys began to help their fathers in the *shamba* with farm work, and they also learned how to graze the cattle. Boys learned these roles from their fathers and older boys, while girls were taught by their mothers.

Around age six, children started lower primary school. More boys than girls were sent to school as some parents prioritized their girls learning of 'wife duties' over education. For recreation, girls played jump rope and boys liked to play soccer. Starting around eight years of age, the child no longer slept with the parents in the same room.

Eight to Twelve Years. By this age, the child had become 'big' and knows many things.

When he grows he becomes a 'kibarubaru' [young boy in the village], then he grows to become again a 'ribarubaru' [grown up boy in the village] where is enlightened and knows everything like what is good or bad or what is right or wrong to him. (Women, In-depth interview, Marafa)

During this time, both boys and girls were learning and helping more and more with the tasks of adulthood. For those who went to school, both boys and girls performed their chores before and after school. By this time, boys had begun to help their fathers in the *shamba* with farm work, and they had also learned how to graze the cattle. Girls have learned all the household tasks, including cooking, cleaning the house, washing the clothes, fetching water, and caring for younger siblings. Girls who did not go to school did household chores all day, such as fetching water, vegetables, cook food, and clean, while boys who did not go to school grazed cattle or dig on the farm. By 12 years, boys looked for casual jobs in the village to earn money.

When they are at the age of being able to perform duties like 'ukimtosera ingwe anadima kuboza.' If given a portion of land to dig, will be able to finish. But at first will not perform the digging perfectly, leaves grasses behind, others undone, but as he grows will be performing duties perfectly. For girls if you see the cooking is perfect. They can prepare porridge slowly but well, can pound small amount of maize like 1kg then increases the amount to 2 kilos, then able to cook herself without supervision like ugali ... will cook well. (Woman, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Boys assist their fathers in cutting trees, slashing, sweeping the compound, grazing with older boy while girls they clean utensils, carry babies, can cook porridge, wash their clothes, and wash their young siblings. (Teenage boy, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Schooling was important in children's development. Children who had been in lower primary school, were 'upgraded' to upper primary school. However, many children were 'chased' from school during this time because of parents inability to pay school fees. Children who were able to do so went to school, and sat for their final exam, the Kenya certificate for primary education. More boys than girls sat for this exam, as most girls had dropped out of school by this time due to their parents' preferential treatment of boys.

Gender differences also became more pronounced during this time. While boys and girls played together while younger, during this age, 'boys play with boys and girls play with girls'.

They play together but they will separate in a certain time boys and girl and start to play boys you will see with fellow boys and girls with fellow girls. (Teenage boy, in-depth interview, Marafa)

By 12 years of age, girls were *abalehe* (adolescent) and underwent physical changes of menstruation and had developed breasts, though some reported that girls breasts started coming out at age eight. Mothers educated girls on *sikuzamwezi* (menstrual periods). For boys, a physical

change was the development of pubic hair. Boys at 12 years of age were quite social and gathered with other boys at shops as a means of recreation.

When girls' breasts had come out, they were allowed to dance traditional dances, and to engage in labor that would draw the attention of potential marriage partners. Traditionally, girls were married early, as young as eight years old, when their breasts had come out. And, while some were married to boys as young as 10 years, they also were married to old men.

They were even married to very old men because at times you would find that the father might be broke, so he would go to an old man with wealth [a lot of cattle] and say to him 'I have a girl who is still young, but I know that very soon men would start looking at her, so please help me. When my daughter gets married, I will receive dowry and then I will pay you back.' These old men most of the times got interested and then they would tell the father of the girl that they would like to see that girl. So they would go together with the father to see the girl. After that, they would tell the father that you don't need to pay me back, I will give you ten cows and when the girl reaches eight years, then the girl will be given to this old man. So he would give the father of the girl those ten cows and then he marries that girl. (Woman, in-depth interview, Bamba)

When girls had full breasts they were referred to as 'asichana' [a girl] and that is the only time that they were allowed to dance 'gonda' [traditional dance]. During that time, girls were also allowed 'kuhonda' [to pound maize] and they were also allowed 'kusaga' [using stones to grind maize]. When these girls started 'kusaga,' men would notice them and when a man had noticed a girl, he would come to the girl's village and then the girl would be told to go and see him. The girl would go and talk to this man. If she likes him, the man is told to go to the parents of the girl and say goodbye to them. This goodbye was not just the normal goodbye, it had a meaning. So the man would go to the parents of the girl and say: 'I have come to say goodbye, but my parents will come back.' In that way, the parents of the girl knew what was going on, they knew that a man had noticed their daughter and was wanted to marry her. The following day, the parents of this man would come with 'mnazi' [palm wine] and they should be accompanied by two brothers to the man's father, the wives of the man's father and other relatives, and they are supposed to come with 20 liters of 'mnazi' called 'kadzama' [kadzama means 'mnazi,' the local brew]. The girl will then be called to that sitting and someone would be asked to pour that 'mnazi' into a big 'mboko' [a traditional gourd used to drink 'mnazi]. After the 'mnazi' is poured into a big 'mboko,' then the girl takes that 'mboko' to her father. The father would then ask her 'where is this mnazi coming from?' Then the girl would say that man's name. After saying the first boy's name, the father would ask again for the surname and the girl would say the name of the boy's father. The father would then say to the girl 'I am going to drink this 'mnazi' and is that where you want to go to?' If the girl answers yes, then the father drinks the 'mnazi' and releases the boy's parents to go back and come with cows. Later on, the parents of the girl would come with ten cows and before the cow were allowed to enter into the girl's homestead, some relatives of the girl would be called to go and inspect the cows, to see if they were good cows. After checking those cows, they come back to the girl's homestead and say that they are fine, then the cow are allowed into the homestead.

After some time, the boy is told to come back later for 'kumhasa' [a blessing]... A goat would be slaughtered and then the head skinned. After skinning the head of the goat, the skin would be used to cover the girl's hand and tied using 'matzango' [a type of rope used to tie goat's skin]. The girl would wear beads on her neck and made to sit down. The father of the girl takes 'kaha' [a coconut shell connected to a stick] then he would scoop water using 'kaha,' drink it and then spit some on the face of the girl as he says 'My daughter, you are going to someone's village, leave our Giriama here, go and learn the Giriama there. If you even find that they are thieves, you shall steal with them.' [the girl should accept her in-laws the way they are and do whatever they do]. (Woman, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Thirteen to Fifteen Years. During this age, children in school completed upper primary, usually by age 15. Only a few proceeded to secondary school, which was a boarding school owing to the lack of school fees.

Children who were not going to school were considered 'grown up' and could be married. Girls cleaned house, picked vegetables, cooked for the family, gave younger siblings a bath and prepared them for bed, and 'do all the chores.' A girl may also have owned part of a farm where she 'would dig and harvest maize to roast,' and she helped with the main farm as well.

By the time a child reaches adolescence, the child is grown up 'mtotoakuavyo ndivyoatakuavyo' ...She should be able to do all duties at home... cook, wash utensils and fetch firewood. Washes her younger siblings, feed them... helps prepare place for them to sleep. (Woman, timeline, Bamba)

He is now a big boy and has brains. If the father had dowry, he would be given a girl to marry. Otherwise go to Mombasa to look for jobs and get money. Send some to parents and save the rest for dowry. (Woman, timeline, Bamba)

Gender roles were prominent during this time. Girls were given heavy work, while boys had more time for play and study.

Girls who are going to school are given a lot of work at home when they come back from school and only the boys get time to sit and study. So you find that a boy and a girl comes from school, the boy goes to play while the girl starts to fetch water, firewood, washes utensils and she works until late in the night. And during that time, the boy is studying...It is the parents who do that because they say that a boy can't go in the kitchen, it is a taboo to do that. But they also say that girl's education is not that important compared to boys because they will get married (Young man, Bamba)

During this period, many girls become pregnant. Boys at this age also impregnated girls, and if such a boy accepted responsibility and marries the girl, the boy looked for employment to support his family. If the boy and girl had been in school, both typically dropped out when a pregnancy occurred, although some children, mostly boys, continued with schooling.

Transition to Adulthood

Children were considered adults when they provided for themselves, were physically mature, or were able to perform the tasks of an adult. Girls who were pregnant or boys who had impregnated girls were also not considered children.

When he or she is able to provide for himself or herself, then he or she stops being a child, he or she becomes an adult. (Woman, in-depth interview, Marafa)

I: *When does this child become an adult?*

R: *When he has his own things to do like go for casual labor to fend for himself, 'Utoka naye mwirini mwako'... It means that if there is something he/she needs, he/she will not come to you for assistance. He will go do his/her casual labor and buy whatever he/she needs. Even if it is hunger, he can even assist you parent and you are home and you have raised him since young until he now has his casual labor to do. (Woman, in-depth interview, Bamba)*

Girls are considered adults when their breasts start coming out because it is only then that they were allowed to dance 'gonda' [traditional dance]. (Woman, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Children also became seen as adults when they had grown big and were strong enough to go to work on the farm.

A child is from birth to when he or she is old enough to work in the shamba 'Umufundishejembe' [teach him how to dig], cook food, 'kumuthangamusha' [to brighten up] and to look after the animals in the sake of boys. (Young woman, in-depth interview, Marafa)

2. Harms to Children

In discussion groups on risks and response pathways, people were asked to identify the harms to children (aside from poverty or health issues) and to identify and rank the three harms that they viewed as being 'most serious.' In selecting the most serious harms to children, participants may have considered the magnitude of the harm, the frequency of the harm, or both. No attempt was made to disentangle frequency and magnitude effects since the emphasis was on learning how concerning particular harms were on a day-to-day basis. Within each group, participants cast individual votes, making it possible to track the number and percentage of participants overall who voted for a particular issue as the most serious harm, the second most serious harm, and the third most serious harm. This section examines what participants ranked as the top harms to children overall and also differences in rankings between the two areas and also across different sub-groups.

The Top Ranked Harms to Children

In naming the most serious harms, participants often used a variety of terms to speak of issues that were related. For purposes of analysis, a decision was taken to combine issues that had a common theme into a single category. The category 'out of school' included children who had

dropped out of school, children whose parents could not pay school fees, and children who could not afford to pay for a school uniform. 'Bad behavior by children' included stealing, behaving badly, dressing immorally, cursing, idling, and being disrespectful. 'Poor parenting' included irresponsible parents and bad behavior by parents such as drunkenness, quarreling, neglecting their children, and having sex in front of children. 'Poverty' included lack of water, lack of clothes, lack of shelter and children not satisfied because their needs weren't met. 'Overworked' included children who were given heavy work, children sent away to work in another area, and children given too much work at home. 'Negative influences' included video, mobile phones (which were used to access 'pornography'), and disco matangas and night celebrations where children were exposed to and participated in sexual activity. 'Early marriage' included forced marriage. 'Girls needs not met' included lack of gender sensitivity, and lack of food, sanitary towels, and other necessities which caused them to engage in transactional sex. Orphans included single orphans (typically where the father had died), as well as children who had lost both parents.

Figure 1 (see below) shows the results of the voting for the most serious harm. When the data were pooled across both research sites and all groups, lack of food was rated as the most serious harm (17.6%), followed by early pregnancy (17.4%), and out of school (15.7%). Other harms included poverty (6.7%), poor parenting (6.4%), early sex/needs not met (5.5%), and drug and alcohol abuse (5%), among other harms such as children's bad behavior, overwork, negative influences, rape, and witchcraft. It is interesting to note that the top-ranked item--lack of food--was not a child protection issue in the customary sense. That participants cited this problem so frequently indicates the salience of this issue for local people, as it was expressed despite the

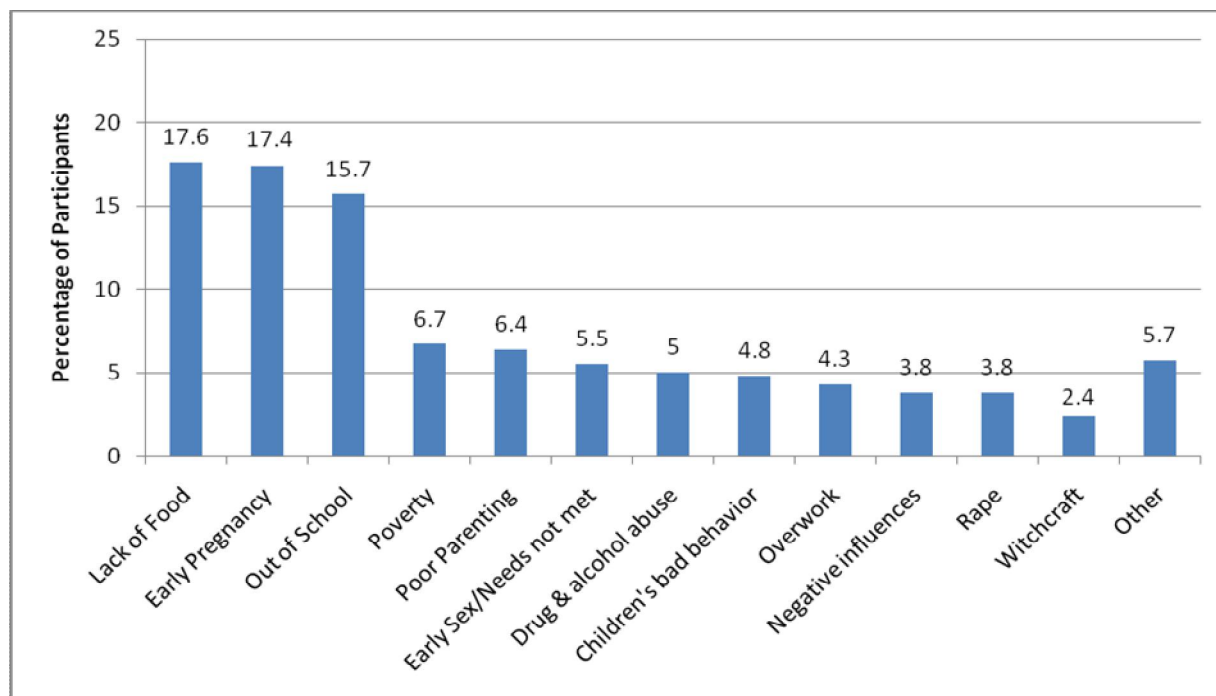


Figure 1. *The percentage of participants in all of the group discussions who voted for a particular issue as the most serious harm to children (n=420).*

researchers' efforts to affirm the importance of poverty and unmet basic needs while keeping the focus on harms done by one person against another. In the discussion below, the focus will be on the child protection harms.

There were also differences between Bamba and Marafa in regard to which harms were rated as the most serious harms to children. As shown in Figure 2, out of school was rated as a greater

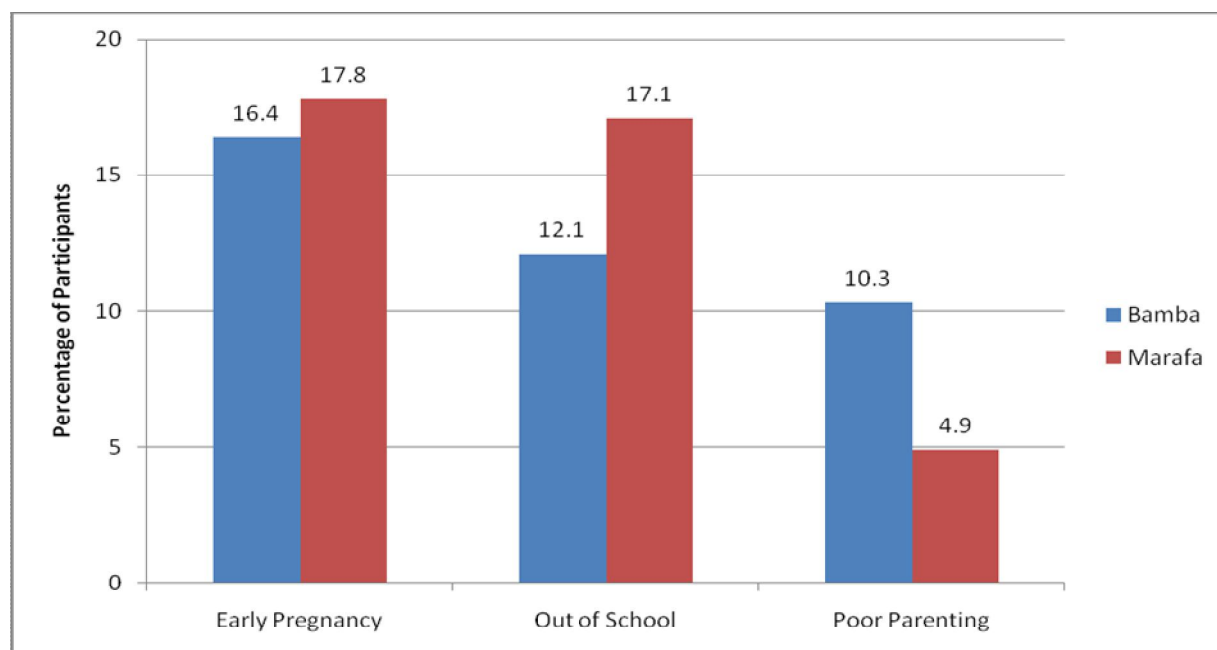


Figure 2. A comparison of group discussion participants' ratings of the most serious harm in Bamba and Marafa (n=420).

problem in Marafa than in Bamba, whereas poor parenting was rated as a greater problem in Bamba than it was in Marafa.

Other differences between Bamba and Marafa were apparent in the data concerning the top three ranked harms. These are useful to consider since even if a particular harm had not been ranked as the 'most serious,' it may have been rated consistently as the number two or number three harm, indicating that it was of considerable concern to local people. Table 6 below shows

Harm	n	Percent
Early pregnancy	52	44.8
Out of school	45	38.8
Negative influences	44	37.9

Rape	20	17.2
Drug abuse	20	17.2
Bad behavior by children	20	17.2
Poverty	20	17.2
Poor parenting behavior	14	12.1
Girl's needs not met	12	10.3
Lack of food	10	8.6
Diseases	6	5.2
Overwork	5	4.3
Early marriage	5	4.3
Peer pressure	5	4.3
Unemployment for youth	3	2.6
Orphans	2	1.7
Severe punishment	1	.9

Table 6. Issues identified as one of the three most serious harms to children in 14 group discussions with 116 participants in Bamba.

that the top three harms to children in Bamba were early pregnancy (44.8%), out of school (38.8%), and negative influences (37.9%), followed by rape, drug abuse, and bad behavior by children, among others. It is worth noting that particular items that did not receive high rankings in the group discussions overall were nonetheless identified as significant problems by child protection workers. A case in point was early marriage, which was rated by only 4.3% of the participants as one of the three most serious harms to children in Bamba.

Table 7 (below) shows that the top three child protection harms to children in Marafa were out of school (44.7%), early pregnancy (28%), and overwork (18.4%), followed by drug abuse (16.8%), poor parenting (15.1%), and bad behavior by children (11.8%), among others.

Harm	n	Percent
Out of school	136	44.7

Lack of food	92	30.3
Early pregnancy	85	28.0
Poverty	59	19.4
Overwork	56	18.4
Drug abuse	51	16.8
Poor parenting behavior	46	15.1
Bad behavior by children	36	11.8
Negative influences	25	8.2
Early sex	21	6.9
False accusations against children	11	3.6
Rape	10	3.3
Witchcraft	9	3.0
Forced marriage	8	2.6
Abortion	6	2.0
Poor leadership	6	2.0
Diseases	5	1.6
Child rights	5	1.6
No leisure time for youth	5	1.6
Orphans	2	.7
Drowning in river	1	.3
Severe punishment	1	.3
Stress to girls	1	.3

Table 7. Issues identified as one of the three most serious issues in 23 group discussions with 304 participants in Marafa.

Thus negative influences and rape were of greater concern in Bamba than in Marafa, whereas problems such as overwork were of greater concern in Marafa than in Bamba.

Effects of Age and Gender

Age and gender differences were visible in regard to all three of the top ranked harms to children. As Figure 3 (see below) shows, early pregnancy was much more likely to be rated as one of the top three harms by young women and women than by young men or teenage boys.

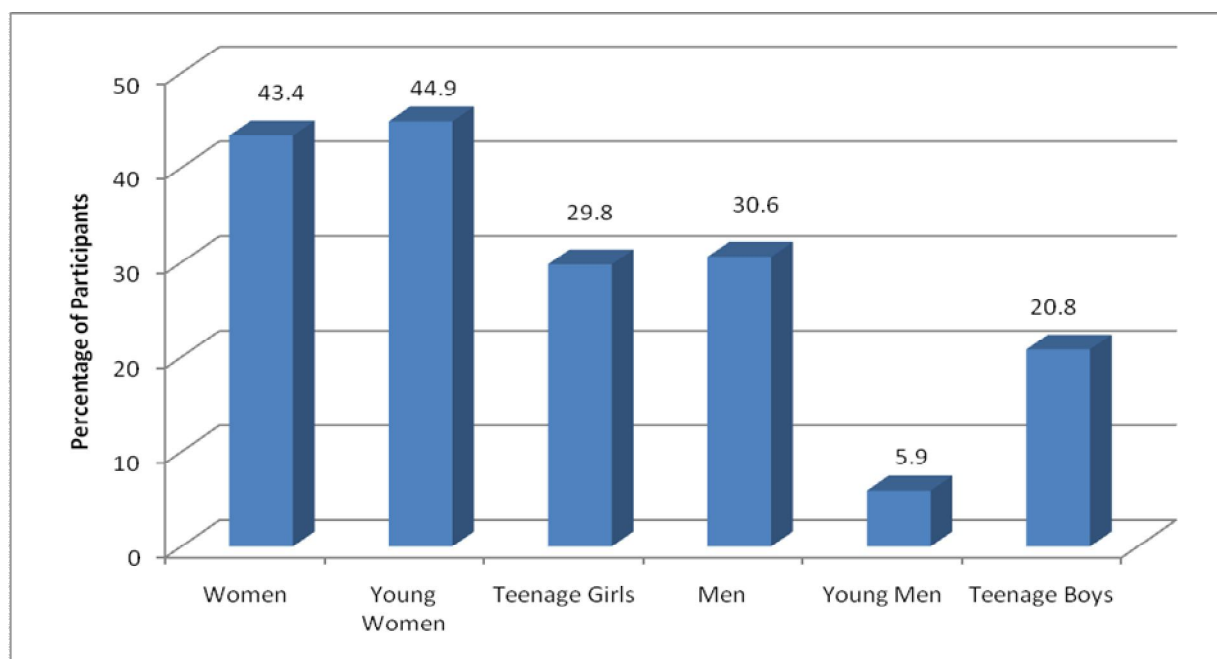


Figure 3. *The percentage of participants by age and gender sub-group that rated early pregnancy as one of the top three harms to children (n=420).*

A strong, combined effect of gender and age was evident in regard to out of school children. As Figure 4 (see the following page) shows, teenage girls were far more likely than members of other sub-groups to identify out of school as one of the top three harms. Most likely, this reflected the fact that teenage girls had many fewer opportunities to continue their education than did teenage boys, and people saw this as 'normal.'

With regard to poor parenting, too, gender and age effects were evident. As shown in Figure 5 (see the following page), teenage boys were far more likely than were young men or men, and also more than teenage girls and young women, to identify poor parenting as one of the top three harms to children. The causes of this difference are not apparent. One possibility is that boys were more likely to receive harsh corporal punishment than were teenage girls. Men may have had little concern over this since that was the social norm and because they were the ones who administered the beatings, whereas mothers showed concern over the beatings and were more

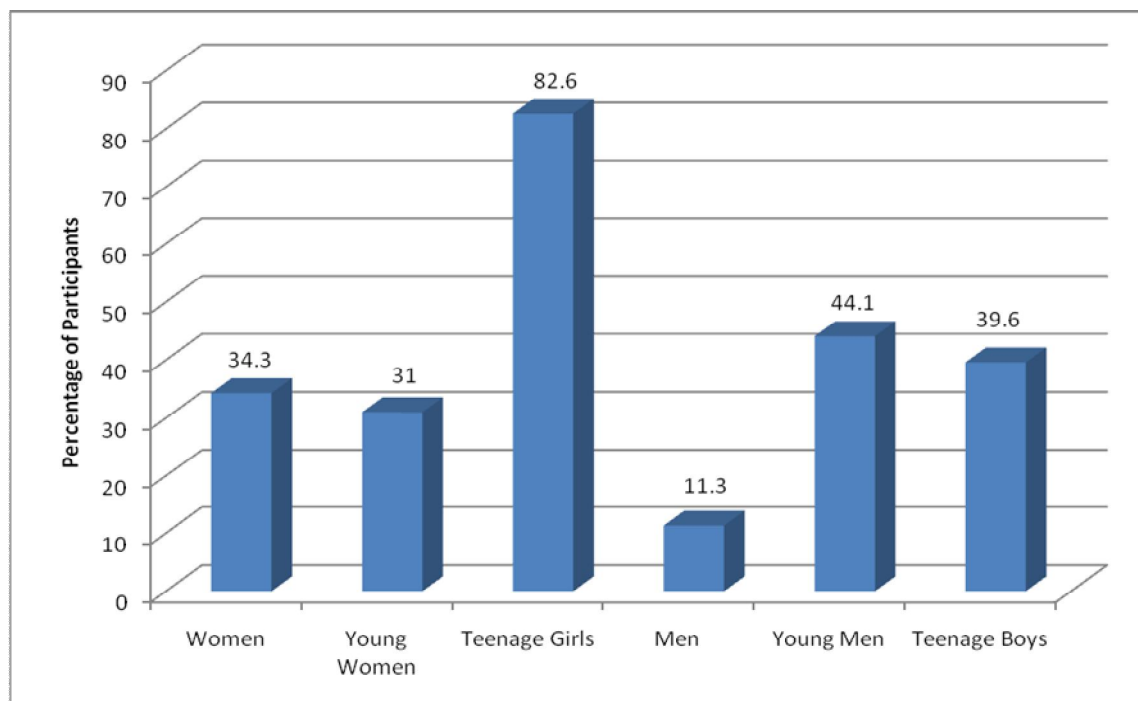


Figure 4. The percentage of participants by age and gender sub-group that rated children out of school as one of the top three harms to children (n=420).

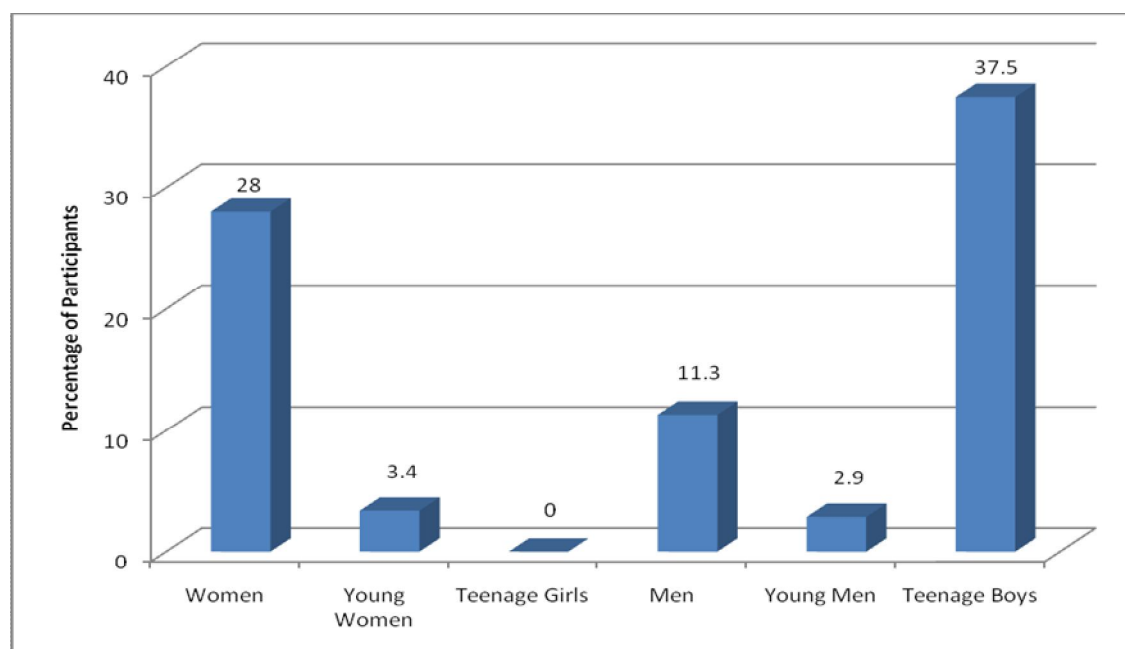


Figure 5. The percentage of participants by age and gender sub-group that rated poor parenting as one of the top three harms to children (n=420).

likely to regard them as a sign of poor parenting. Alternately, teenage boys may have been more likely to be subjected to overwork or verbal abuse. Additional research is needed in order to clarify the causes of these observed differences.

Below, each of the main harms is described together with representative narratives that illuminate the nature of the harm to children and the interconnectedness between the different harms.

Lack of food

The participants attributed the lack of food mainly to poverty, desertification, and infertile soil, which led to crop failure and very poor yield. Participants viewed hunger as a major detraction from children's health and as a source of other problems such as children stealing other people's food in order to survive.

The biggest harm in this area is lack of food for children. Here, children just survive with one meal in a day and there is no parent who would be happy seeing their children having only one meal in a day. This has also affected their health negatively and their health status have deteriorated so much. (Man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Everything in this village is caused by hunger. Sometimes children would also go to steal something from other people because of lack of food. So there is not much to be discussed as all these are caused by lack of food. (Man, group discussion, Bamba)

Lack of food was strongly associated with children not going to school. Children who lacked food either did not go to school or went to school but were unable to learn and follow what was being taught in class. In addition, children frequently dropped out of school in order to work and to feed themselves and their families.

R11: The child will not see the blackboard if he has not eaten.

R14: Sometimes if there is no food children may be forced to stay at home till when there is food at home. (Women, group discussion, Marafa)

Our parents are not employed permanently, they just do casual work. The money they get is not enough to cater for everything at home, they even do carpentry, others 'tsimba tano' [make charcoal to sell], then there are no customers for what they make. They end up coming home empty handed, children go to sleep hungry, and even others drop out of school. Children are not happy because you can't miss food and feel happy. Others are even forced to drop out of school and look for casual work to assist the family. (Teenage girl, group discussion, Marafa)

R10: If there is no food at home then it's not easy to concentrate at school. And this happens quite often in this village.

R11: And indeed sometimes you may faint because maybe you slept without eating the previous day, and the teacher does not understand this and he forces you to run round the building three times because he saw you dozing off. (Teenage girls, group discussion, Marafa)

R11: *Sometimes if there is no food children may be forced to cancel going to school and go to assist in cultivating 'vipande' [sub-divided pieces of land] in others' shambas [farms] so that you may get food for the family.*

R7: *The child doesn't feel nice definitely but they have to eat.* (Women, group discussion, Marafa)

And also food is a problem to so many families in this village as you will see some not going to school and instead they go to look for 'vipande' so as to fend for their young brothers and sisters. (Man, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Lack of food affects all the children in this village.... You see like me, I have to work hard so that there is enough food in our family, otherwise my young sisters will have to drop from school. You cannot go to school with your stomach empty. (Teenage girl, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Lack of food was also related to sexual exploitation and resulting pregnancies. Girls who lacked food traded sex for food and money from boys and men, especially the *boda boda* (motorbike) riders who were believed to have money. As a result, many girls became pregnant and dropped out of school at an early age.

You want me to not discuss poverty, but it is the main contributor of so many problems to our children. In that situation of a child wanting or wishing to have something then problems start there because these things are bought with money. At home, a girl may miss food and when she goes out there, a man or boy may offer to buy her food or give her money to buy food or other necessities and in the process the girl will get pregnant while she is still in school. (Man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

I would also like to add that lack of food is also a major cause of early pregnancies. When these girls miss food, they go and sleep with men in order to get money to buy food and in the process, they end up getting pregnant. There are even grown up women and mothers who sleep around with men to get food in return, or to be given money. And when these girls see their mothers doing these things, they also copy and practice what their mothers are doing, and before they know it, they are pregnant. You see now, when boys miss food, they become thieves, but for the girls, they start sleeping around with men and end up getting pregnant. (Man, group discussion, Marafa)

Early pregnancy

Among child protection issues, early pregnancy was ranked as the most serious harm to children in the group discussions in both Marafa and Bamba. Early pregnancy was viewed as a harm primarily when the girl was not married, as a married girl was viewed culturally as 'ready' for pregnancy. Girls and boys reportedly engaged in 'unhealthy relationships' where they engaged in sexual intercourse at an early age. Some girls were reported to become pregnant as early as nine years of age, although the more typical age for pregnancy was thirteen years and above.

R6: *At 11 years, you will see a girl pregnant.*

R7: *11 years is too much. There are those get pregnant at 9 years.* (Young men, group discussion, Bamba)

Participants cited diverse causes of early pregnancy, chief among which was sex in exchange for food, money, or material items, including necessities such as sanitary pads.

I think we parents also are to blame. What do you think a young girl will do if you leave her without food? She will definitely follow men who will give her food... These girls do sex in exchange for goods or money to buy essentials that they cannot access from their parents. And the end results are the early pregnancies. (Man, group discussion, Marafa)

Some of the parents can't buy these girls things like 'Always' [sanitary pads] and some of them do not even have enough food to eat. So when it becomes too much for these children, they drop out of school and get into prostitution in order to survive.... Most of them just do it around here, but there are those who also go to Malindi to do it... Some girls would actually target some of the visitors like you who are coming to either do research, or those who work with the NGO's. You know around here, there are so many girls who have been sleeping with the police officers because they see it as fame. (Young woman, in-depth interview, Marafa)

There are also young girls who are getting pregnant at a very early age and most of these are caused by the parents' inability to provide for their children. If a parent can't buy even clothes, or shoes for her, she will definitely look for boys to buy for her those things, and the boys won't buy those things for free, they will demand to be paid in return and you just know what that means. (Young man, in-depth interview, Marafa)

A girl will be in need of some towels they use when they are in their monthly periods. The girl tells you the parent and maybe you don't have. The girl will see other girls are having them and when she asks them she is told that the boyfriend bought for her. That girl already knows that she can also get those things from boys. Or you will see a girl has been chased from school and she is just loitering around, then the boys will ask her, why are you not going to school? The girl will tell that boy. Even if the boy does not have the money he will look for the money and gives the girl. Later that boy will sleep with that girl because the girl has nothing else to pay back the money. That's when the girl gets pregnant. (Woman, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Girls also end up getting pregnant because they are not satisfied. When they go to Bamba town, they get boys there with money and those boys take them to the hotel and buy them food. Later on, the boys tell them that "I want to be paid." You know the girl had already eaten food and she has no money to pay back, so she ends up sleeping with these boys and they end up getting pregnant. So the children do not get satisfied in this community and that is the main reason why the girls will get pregnant and the boys becoming thieves. The girl will be with other girls and then the girl is taken to a hotel, she will eat there because she knows there is nothing at home. You will see the girl,

even where to sleep is not a good place. There is no bed and where she sleeps, there is no mattress. (Man, group discussion, Bamba)

The participants commented frequently that *boda boda* drivers enticed girls with money, later demanding that the debt be paid with sexual favors.

We have these 'boda bodas.' These people have a habit of luring the young girls with money and demand sex later. You know because of the poor economic status of so many parents here in this village, a lot of girls go to school without even breakfast in the morning. Now it reaches lunch time and they don't have money for buying lunch so they end up falling prey to these boys who are always willing to offer lunch for any girl who looks stranded. Then a relationship develops and the result is one getting pregnant. (Teenage girl, group discussion, Marafa)

However, it was not only the *boda boda* drivers who exploited girls, as it was reportedly common for boys and men to lie to and 'trick' girls.

But what is notorious here is the issue of boys giving young girls money and then they sleep with them and make them pregnant. They even lie to those girls that they will marry them, but when they get pregnant, they leave them and throw them out of their houses. Those are some of the things that I see happen to children in this village and they are not very good, and as you said, they make every parent sad and everyone in the community sad. (Woman, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Boys here also have the habit of seducing girls and then they impregnate them, and then both of them end up dropping out of school because the girl will get married to the boy and they have to look for money to take care of the child. So there are so many young girls who get pregnant while still in primary school. (Young man, in-depth interview, Marafa)

They need money from the boys--they are cheated with small money, the boys give you money for break then they won't accept the money if you give them back. They tell you 'you know what I want not the money' so you end up giving in for sex in return. (Teenage girl, group discussion, Marafa)

'Mtoto kupata mtoto [a child getting a child]. We should not jump this point because it is a very big harm in this village. A boy plays with your mind and lies to you that he will marry you and when you get pregnant he runs away and will not marry you. He assists you with money during the time you are having a relationship with you and treats you nicely but the moment you get pregnant it is like he does not know you. That time because you have nothing to give him and he is helping you with giving you money you decide to give him your body but later on he refuses to marry you if you are pregnant. (Teenage girl, group discussion, Bamba)

Early pregnancy was also associated with sleeping outside one's home, which occurred frequently since it was viewed as inappropriate for girls to sleep at home after their breasts had begun to show. In Bamba and Marafa, the houses were small and crowded, and girls

frequently slept at the homes of neighbors or at other places where they were at risk of being impregnated.

'Mimba za mapema' [early pregnancies] *come about through various reasons some of which are like when girls borrow places to sleep then those sponsors change mind and demand sex. If you have a boyfriend and then you go and ask for a place to sleep, the boy will not refuse knowing well that he will not just get a company but will get a wife, someone he will play sex with. And the results will be a pregnancy.* (Teenage girl, group discussion, Marafa)

In Marafa, adults reported that children were addicted to sex. Because their sex was unprotected, many girls became pregnant at an early age.

These girls of nowadays have 'kinyee' [strong sexual urges] *and cannot do without being 'kuchokolwa'* [having sex]. (Man, group discussion, Marafa)

R3: While the boys are getting spoilt with 'bang' smoking, the girls are on the other side being impregnated by the boys.

R2: You know here 'Ahoho manalupware' [children are sexually active]...*The girls here do make love recklessly while still young. They do things that we parents never did and because of that they get pregnancy prematurely and end up ruining their lives.* (Women, group discussion, Marafa)

In this village 'Ahoho madzalafuka' [children are crazy about sex] *and there are so many cases of early pregnancies that force some of the girls to drop out of school.* (Young woman, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Mimba za mapema [early pregnancies]. *Our girls here are 'madzalafuka'* [sexually crazy] *and this brings about girls getting pregnancies at a tender age.* (Woman, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Here in this village 'Ahoho mana njare' [children are sexually active] *and from now and then you hear so and so is pregnant. Within no time you hear that the same girl has either been married or even sometimes you hear that she has taken out the pregnancy [aborted].* (Woman, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Children involve themselves in love affairs and they can get pregnancies, for girls, they mostly get this at the night 'keshas' [crusades] *and ceremonies when they come in that morning no one will know that you have gone for the night ceremonies then you can pretend that you were at home... Now when the pregnancy grows, that's when the girl will be noticed by the parent. Now it will be good if the girl is affected by the pregnancy only, but not AIDS...* (Man, In-depth interview, Marafa)

Going to school also placed girls at risk of becoming pregnant. Teachers reportedly pursued girls for sex in exchange for school fees and passing marks.

Mostly those who impregnate them are teachers. Then instead of marrying them, they are added marks by the teachers, then they sleep with them. When they get pregnant their parents are given money to stop the issue or taking it further. (Woman, group discussion, Marafa)

Children especially the girls get pregnant while in school. This is caused by the teachers in the school. They tell the children to remain behind after the others are going home and then they have sex with the kid. Sometimes is a fellow student in the school. The child will tell you that he is going to fetch firewood and comes home late only to find that she had been in a boy's house all that long or they have met with the boy at the bush. Then they end up being pregnant. (Man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

If the girls became pregnant, the teachers reportedly paid off the parents to keep quiet about it. It was also reported that girls had sex with visitors and people in authority – police, NGO workers, and researchers – who enhanced the girls status, making them ‘famous’ in the eyes of their peers.

Teachers' sexual abuse of girls was seldom punished.

Those in boarding school, the teacher will go after her, have sex with her and make her pregnant. Your child will be chased from school while the teacher remains there and continues teaching (Woman, group discussion, Bamba)

R1: The other problem that we have is teachers. These teachers keep children in school up to very late and a lot of things happen in school. There was a child who was locked by a teacher in school for one week and every evening, that teacher would take that child to his house. When the child missed going home for one week, the parent got worried and went to school, that is when people knew that the child has not been going home, but instead, going to the teacher's house. so when we went there, we found the teacher locked in the office because people wanted to beat him and after a short while, the DO [District Officer] came with the police and took him to the police station, though the girl was left in the school. What surprised me is that the headmaster said that the matter didn't start that day, the relationship between that girl and the teacher started a long time ago and the mother somehow knew about it. Even when that girl was sick, it is that teacher who took her to 'mganga' [witchdoctor] for treatment.

I: How old was the girl?

R2: The girl is big though, she is around 15 years old

I: So what happened to the teacher?

Chorus: The teacher was transferred to another school. (Men, group discussion, Bamba)

Consequences of Early Pregnancy: Abortion, Suicide, Death, HIV and AIDS, and Running Away

The participants reported that early pregnancy had a number of negative outcomes. To begin with, the men who had impregnated the girls typically refused to take responsibility for their action, and the girls were stigmatized by their peers. This often led to girls having abortions

using unsafe methods that caused harm and even death.

R5: *Almost every girl has a boyfriend and it happens by mistake that you get a pregnancy.*

R4: *That is when you look for ways of taking out the baby before people know...*

R3: *It is painful but at the end of it all you will be free from the pregnancy.*

(Teenage girls, group discussion, Marafa)

Some of the children have become experts in 'kumbozamimba' [abortion] and they do it and then go back to school. You will just see a child has become 'tsee' [pale] and when you try to ask if she is sick, the girl will just say 'no,' but as a parent you will know that there is something... (Young woman, in-depth interview, Marafa)

But there was one thing that I was forgetting, most of the girls also after getting pregnant, they carry out an abortion and so many of them have died as a result of that abortion. Just last week, there is a girl who died as a result of abortion...

When the girl gets pregnant and she doesn't want anyone to know, she would organize with the man who has impregnated her and then they will both go to Malindi and the boy would pay the money for abortion. But they don't go to these known hospitals; there are some backstreet clinics where they go to do it. (Young man, in-depth interview, Marafa)

R7: *When a girl gets a pregnancy, she uses some things to take out the kid here.*

I: *What are those things they use for abortion?*

R1: *They (while looking down) use the roots of the neem tree.*

R7: *They also use Stoney [a type of soda].*

R4: *That one is very good in abortion. Once you take it and you are pregnant, then after about 30 minutes, then the baby comes out.*

R1: *There is even another one. You can use a new razor blade... You boil the razor blade for about half an hour until only very little water is remaining in the sufuria. You take that little water and let it cool a little then you drink. The baby comes out immediately. (Teenage girls, group discussion, Marafa)*

Even the girls, they also do those bad things and they end up contracting HIV/AIDS and getting pregnant...Just last week, a girl died when she was trying to do abortion. Two months ago, there was also a young girl who got pregnant and because she was still very young, she couldn't give birth through the normal means and she was taken for an operation, then she also ended up dying....So many girls are getting pregnant. You find a nine year old girl in class four or five, a very young child getting pregnant. (Young woman, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Dropping out of school was also one of the main negative consequences of early pregnancy. Stigmatized and feeling ashamed, some girls reportedly thought of or actually committed suicide.

Early pregnancies [are the biggest harm]. Sometimes you might do the action [have sex] for fun then you feel ashamed, you even drop out of school, you get a baby of which those are extra expenses to you, and you really suffer a lot. People will mock you. You

regret sometimes, you think of committing suicide. When you see your friends are not pregnant, then you end up admiring them. (Teenage girl, group discussion, Marafa)

When a girl gets pregnant, then they are not allowed to attend school again, they are abandoned, suffer a lot, This really hurts the youths in our village... The girls go ahead even to take 'shumu' [poison] and parents really feel bad about the whole issue, especially for the one whose girl has been impregnated and has taken poison. (Teenage boy, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Despite the heavy toll of suffering imposed by early pregnancy, the use of condoms was apparently not widespread. There were reports of girls having 'injections' for purposes of birth control, but men such as *boda boda* drivers reportedly did not want to use condoms.

R5: *And the 'boda boda' if you do not want to get pregnant, you will go for injection.*

R4: *It does not harm you. You will have to use that because he will tell you he does not want to use condoms.*

R5: *He wants it 'kavu kavu' [dry dry].*

R4: *He says 'sitaki skuma ya maji' [I do not want kales which has water].*

(Young women, group discussion, Marafa)

Out of School

Poverty was reported to be the main cause of children being out of school. However, a plethora of other causes were identified. These included lack of school fees, being bewitched, lack of food, early pregnancy, parental irresponsibility, drug abuse, peer pressure and children dropping out of school out of their own will. Some parents who thought that girls were meant to learn 'wife roles' did not take their daughters to school. Children who were reported to be undisciplined were also punished by not being taken to school. Physical and verbal abuse by teachers, and humiliation by other children for not having a school uniform were also causes of children not going to school. Some participants were grateful for World Vision paying school fees for some children, especially 'bright' children, but the number of children who still did not have fees was reported to be a significant problem. Below is a description of some of the main causes (beyond poverty) of children being out of school.

Hunger

Hunger caused children not to go to school since they were unable to concentrate in school. Hunger also forced children to look for casual work instead of going to school.

Children drop school not because they like or they are happy about it but because of hunger mostly. You are forced to drop out of school to go look for casual work to get money and buy food for the family. You can't go to school with hunger so the only option which is remaining is that of dropping school go get a casual work to assist your parents. They will start with absenteeism, they go to school today and tomorrow they are absent. Another week they go while the next week they are already absent until they leave school completely. (Teenage boy, group discussion, Marafa)

He will not go because imagine he has slept hungry. In the morning, he does not know what he is going to get. The day goes and evening comes, the mother has tried here and there and gets something but is not sure whether it's going to be porridge or ugali. Ugali brings happiness, not porridge. Porridge is meant to be taken in the morning...Money is a problem. You need a job or a business to make money. Business here comes only once a week, that is during the market day. One day a week--will that really help? That is where you get money to take children to school and also buy food at home! It is difficult. There is a lot of hunger in our village. (Woman, in-depth interview, Bamba)

School Fees

Inability to pay school fees was the most significant cause of children being out of school. Parents talked of having to choose between feeding the child or paying the school fees, which included exam fees, money for the teachers' salary, and 'development funds' to maintain the school. The latter, which were set by the headmaster and management staff, consisted of fees that were usually collected in small amounts (20-50 KSH) on a frequent basis (in some cases every week). Children were 'chased away' from school on a daily or weekly basis if their fees had not been paid. Even children in nursery school were sent away from school when their fees had not been paid.

Children in this village are sent out of school. Walk to every house and show me a child who has not been sent out of school and I will give you a cow to go and slaughter with your family when you get back. Children are sent out of school and parents have nothing to give them so that they can go back to school. Children here like going to school and are willing to go to school but the parents are not able to take them to school.... The parents have nothing, I tell you. We struggle but at the end we give up. It is so painful to give up but what will we do? (Woman, in-depth interview, Bamba)

They are sent home for school fees, exams money, chef's fee, teachers who have been employed by the parents, desks, or any school project like building a latrine. (Young woman, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Lack of school fees...You remain at home while others are at school, you feel so sad and maybe even the parents can't assist, when you get back home you're told to go and assist in the 'shamba' or do casual work to get money, and even sometimes when you get the money and you want to go back to school, there is no food at home so you take the money to go and buy food for home. (Teenage girl, group discussion, Marafa)

If you don't have a school uniform you cannot go to school and you will not be able to read. That also leads to school dropout because when the child goes to school will be laughed at by friends and as a result decides not to go to school. (Teenage girl, group discussion, Marafa)

I want to tell you another big issue is about education. Some don't want to go to school and others are sent home to take money even in nursery level. Now just think that scenario... he is still in nursery. (Young woman, group discussion, Marafa)

R22: Life has become so difficult and education is also becoming very expensive. You may find that you have about four children all in secondary school and you have to pay for all of them. This becomes rather difficult for one person at a time.

R14: Sure. If it were not for these organizations that we have here, I tell you, many children would be staying at home. But thanks to organizations like world vision that has been paying for fees for the bright children around here. (Women, group discussion, Marafa)

R3: We parents contribute money to give teachers to transport food for the children from Kilifi to Bamba. Then parents again contribute 50 shillings for each child whereby 30 shillings is for the watchman who guards the food, 20 shillings pays the cooks. If imagine if you have 6 children in school. You have to pay for all of them because you cannot pay for one child and leave others and we do not have money. What is the government doing?

R4: There is money for exams, 30 shillings for nursery exams. 45 shillings for standard 4 exams. Then there is 10 shillings for transporting the food and the 50 shillings as discussed. You pay for one issue and leave others, Wanga will be cooked in school, other children will be given the food and yours will not be given. He will come home crying.. (Women, group discussion, Bamba)

School fees are an issue in our village. As much as you want us not to talk about poverty but I say poverty contributes a lot. You will find that a student has been enrolled in form one and misses classes for a whole month. Some subjects if you miss once you really miss a lot. So someone fails not that he is not bright at school, but just because he misses classes. (Teenage boy, group discussion, Bamba)

Parents have no ability to pay school fees. They also do not have money to feed the children so well so you will find that the children drop out of school because of school fees or sometimes because they miss some meal before or after going to school or both. No one will be comfortable if you are in a class hungry and listening to the teacher. Also if you are sent out of school for school fees almost every week then you will get bored and completely drop out of school. This is something which affects and affected even some of us here. (Teenage girl, group discussion, Bamba)

When parents were unable to pay school fees, some children ran away. Parents described children not understanding and becoming angry when they were not able to continue with school.

When you get a child, you want the child to go to school. Now the child has done well in school, then you the parent don't send the child to school [because of school fees]. Some children become angry and they can run away. The child disappears completely and goes to Mombasa and will be there because the child feels the parent refused to

educate the child. The child won't come back and will not bring anything to you.
(Woman, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Bad Behavior By Children, and Children Not Wanting To Go To School

Some children were described as having 'bad behavior' since they did not want to go to school. Some boys dropped out of school to look for money to buy mobile phones, which they used to seduce girls.

You know most of those boys who use drugs end up dropping out of school, and that means that they will not have a bright future. There is also the issue of children not going to school because they go and look for 'vipande' [sub-divided pieces of land] to dig and get money. And this they do because sometimes you find that there is no food at home, and the parents are also unable to provide that food for the whole family. So they see it better to drop out of school and start looking for jobs so that they can also support themselves and their family. (Young man, in-depth interview, Marafa)

R2:*Children dropping out of school with no good reason if you try to find out they tell you, 'you can as well attend school if you wish'. They end up taking drugs and roaming around with no good intention...I think its peer pressure they imitate what others are doing they didn't school well they have become beach boys they have 'wazungus' [whites] and others those with good luck they are driving so they want to be like them. If you try to ask they say 'so and so didn't go to school and is living a good life.'*

R4:*Even girls they copy what other are doing they drop school and follow their peers in towns and they end up being employed as house girls or they even sell in shops.*
(Women, group discussion, Marafa)

R9:*The children themselves also do not want to go to school. You tell them to go to school they don't want.* (Woman, group discussion, Bamba)

There are boys who finished with their studies and got employed in the towns. They buy mobile phones and come with them to the village. Those are still in school if they see that they stop going to school and look for a job so that they buy a phone to come and cheat ladies with it. So the phone becomes the reason for this child not to go to school and start working to buy it. (Teenage girl, group discussion, Bamba)

Other children just lie to the parents that they are going to school, but in essence, they are not. So they leave home in the morning that they are going to school and then they hide somewhere in the bush and come back home in the evening without going to school. So the parents also have to be careful in checking children who are not going to school. (Young man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Children do not want to go to school. The parents want them to go to school but they do not want to go. They want to spend the time in the village and roam around and eventually become thieves. When you force them they do not reach to the school, they hide themselves in the bush until that time when others who are at school come back

home. Mostly the boys they follow those other boys who refused to go to school and they are also want to be like them. (Man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Low Value Placed By Parents On Education

Some parents did not value education and sent their boys to work rather than to school. Most parents who did not take their children school had no formal education and tended to see education as unimportant. Teenagers who were going to school considered these parents 'ignorant' of the importance of education.

When you are going to school and then the parent tells you to stop going to school and go and look after the cattle really makes us unhappy. You find that the same parents don't want to give you time to read and at the end of the term, you get very poor results and you are forced to repeat a class. Every evening from Monday to Friday, your father just tells you to go and look after the cattle. (Teenage boy, group discussion, Bamba)

Other boys are not schooling because their parents refuses to take them to school and it's not that they don't have money but they just decide not to take them to school. They just go in towns like Malindi and Mombasa provided that will work to earn something for themselves. The boys also get employed as 'boda boda' for working at this town. Some go to town to start working as constructors and masons. (Young man, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Some parents do not support education so you get a very big child who has not yet joined school and if he/she is going to school sometimes the child misses school the parent is not even bothered. Because the child still young and does not know the loss of missing school he/she derives pleasure from missing school so instead of the parent to take the child to school you will find that they tell them to take animals to the field to graze or take a jembe to go to the shamba to plant or dig. (Teenage boy, group discussion, Bamba)

We also have parents here who do not want to educate their children and leave them to loiter around. If you walk around this village you will see young girls with babies on their backs instead of carrying books to school. (Man, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Discrimination Against Girls

Girls' education was not viewed as important or necessary by all parents, particularly among low SES families (see pp. 97-98). In some cases, girls were married early to obtain a dowry in order to enable the boy in the family to go to school. In other cases, girls reportedly wanted to marry their boyfriends at a young age, and girls who became pregnant usually dropped out of school.

People in this community ...value male children more than the female children. Most girls are not taken to school, even when they are taken to school; they are not left to

complete class eight. They are always married off so that parents can get dowry. (Teenage boy, group discussion, Bamba)

Some parents in this village also have the behavior of taking to school one child...They take the boy to school and force the girl to get married so that they get fees for the boy child. This happens and it is very bad. It pains the girl child. (Young woman, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Another big issue is that there are parents who don't take their children to school and this has mostly affected girls in this village. Most parents do not want to take girls to school, so girls stay at home and boys are taken to school. But now they are being taught the importance of taking girls to school and at least things are changing now, it has reduced a bit, though not so much. (Man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Here, education is a problem. Some girls just want to be married; they get spoilt and eventually marry very early. This can be caused by death of parents or irresponsibility of the parents to their children. (Man, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Verbal and Physical Abuse By Teachers

Children were also demoralized by the physical and verbal abuse of teachers, which discouraged them from going to school.

...At school teacher telling you 'bahakala wazyalwa kuku' [it's better you were born a hen] because you can't perform well at school. You are attending school but it's better you don't attend at all. This is discouraging, especially if coming from the teachers and even some drop school. (Teenage boy, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Lack Of Job Opportunities After Education

School did not seem to be a pathway toward a hopeful future for all children. In fact, some children lost faith that going to school would help them, leading them to drop out.

You will also find that so many children go to school but they do not get employed. So these other children also say that if so and so went to school and has no job why should I go to school. Instead of going to school, the child will go to Mombasa to look for job...the girls will be looking to be house maids. The boys you will see them at the bus station selling groundnuts and other things. (Man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Other Harms to Children

In addition to the main harms discussed above, other harms emerged that caused distress to children and their caregivers. These included HIV/AIDS, orphans, forced early marriage, heavy work, rape, prostitution, alcohol and drugs, beating, and witchcraft.

HIV and AIDS

Some children were born to HIV positive mothers and were themselves HIV positive, yet parents did not take them for treatment.

The infected mothers don't go to hospital, they infect their children, they give birth to infected children making them to be unhappy, unhealthy 'kunyauka na kushononeka' [with retarded growth and unhappy]. Most mothers in this community do this a lot, they don't go for check-up when pregnant, they don't go for HIV testing and this all affects the children. (Young woman, in-depth interview, Marafa)

There those women who are HIV positive and they continue to give birth when they give birth the child may be affected so the parent do not take proper care for the child but herself uses ARV'S medicines. (Woman, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Those who have no knowledge about it, they end up making children suffer because they don't know that a child can be protected even if the mother is a victim, then after some time the child dies or he/she suffers a lot ,become sick frequently, unhealthy and many children suffer a lot in this community. (Women, group discussion, Marafa)

'Ukimwi' [HIV]. Young children are infected, they become pregnant at a tender age of 12 years, but then after birth, they are allowed to go back to school and continue with their education. Parents complain a lot, they feel hurt and they are so sad about these scenarios. After giving birth, the school girl will be forced to go back to school and they leave their baby behind. (Woman, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Young boys who had had sex with older women who were HIV positive also became infected with HIV.

There are also young boys who are having sex with older women and you might find that that woman is HIV positive, so the boy also ends up contracting the same and they suffer a lot. Even the girls, they also do those bad things and they end up contracting HIV/AIDS and getting pregnant. In fact, this issue of young children getting pregnant is what we were just talking about when you walked in. Just last week, a girl died when she was trying to do abortion. Two months ago, there was also a young girl who got pregnant and because she was still very young, she couldn't give birth through the normal means and she was taken for operation then she also ended up dying. So my grandmother was just telling me that I should be careful not to get pregnant because I might end up dying like the rest of the other girls. So many girls are getting pregnant. You find a nine year old girl in class four or five, a very young child getting pregnant. The same girls also smoke cigarettes and drink alcohol, just the same way as boys. There are also older girls who lie to these younger girls and then they take them to Malindi to practice prostitution. The funny thing is that these children even don't get paid much, these older girls who take them there are the ones who get paid and then they just give something small to these children. (Young woman, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Infection by HIV was also attributed to 'sex addiction' and to prostitution and transactional sex. Contracting HIV was seen as the main effect of engaging in sex.

So many children here are addicted to sex and most of them end up contracting 'bad disease' [HIV/AIDS] and young girls end up getting pregnant. (Young man, in-depth interview, Marafa)

There is the leisure... Many boys will involve themselves in leisure activities which lead them to diseases like HIV and other diseases. (Young man, group discussion, Marafa)

There are people who are infected with HIV/AIDS and these boys normally infect others, especially young girls, because they do not know after getting the disease from the old women. (Man, in-depth interview, Marafa)

A boy goes to follow a girl and has sex and that girl maybe is sick then the boy gets HIV/AIDS. (Woman, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Children's use of drugs reportedly contributed to children contracting HIV, as their judgment was blurred and they did not use condoms.

Some boys involve themselves in drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes and when they do that they go for any lady they find around. Some even go for old women who might be having HIV/AIDS and the boys will not use condoms so they get diseases like the ones mentioned. (Men, group discussion, Marafa)

The participants also identified transactional sex as a venue through which children contracted HIV and AIDS.

R5: There is this other disease which came. This new disease: HIV/AIDs. This disease also causes problems to our children in this village.

R6: A child may go a day without food and the following day also without food and is a girl child who goes to school. She starts to develop the habit of borrowing so that she can get something to eat. There are those who understand the situation that this person has problems so they help, but there are others whose intent is not good. He reasons that because this child has borrowed from me this kind of money, so let me tell her to follow me to my house. When she reaches at his house, he lures her and gives her milk to cook tea and drink together, then asks to have sex with him before giving her 100 shillings. If the child has been given the money, she will also think about her other children who are also hungry at home and she will come with the money at home and tell the parent that she has picked the money on the way. ...She will do that to any person who will be willing to help and she will see it as a job which helps her. In the process she gets AIDS.

I: Is this something which happens here in this village?

R: (All). Yes! (Men, group discussion, Bamba)

Orphans

The participants said that there were many orphans, primarily as a result of parents having died from HIV/AIDS. Orphaned children (which included children who had lost one of their parents, especially their father) were reportedly treated very badly by their step parents and relatives, who denied them food, did not take them to school, and overworked them. The orphans who went hungry at home reportedly stole food in order to eat.

Orphaned children--they really suffer a lot. They are left with step mothers, they are mistreated. They are denied food, they are dirty. They have to sell brooms to buy food otherwise they will sleep hungry. They are discriminated in the village. They do the kind of work that is not of their age while the other children who are not orphans cannot perform such kind of duties. They end up dropping out of school to look for casual labor like selling brooms to get money and buy food When they attend school they cannot concentrate. They are not happy--especially those whose father is the one who has been left behind. (Women, group discussion, Marafa)

R1: Orphaned children are mistreated by their step mother or the guardians. They do hard jobs compared to their age; they are the only ones who perform duties at their families; they have no right to say or suggest an issue at home; and they use brooms to get money and buy food. Others even are forced to drop out of school to find for jobs and get money to even assist their young siblings. They even look old compared to their age, they feel unhappy and they are always having low self-esteem they can't speak an issue when affected by something. They really suffer a lot. They are impregnated early because they have no option that have the money as incentives boys give them and in return they become pregnant for boys they do casual work, dig peoples farm, assist contractors in building houses other go to Malindi and sell in shop to get money

I: What do the fathers do?

R4: They have no option because they married another wife and they have no say in front of their wives, they can't say anything to assist the child instead they are speechless and if they think they can assist their children a lot the children can even be poisoned by the step mother. (Women, group discussion, Marafa)

There are those children who lost their parents due to sicknesses. These children really suffer because of lack of food, school fees. Sometimes those people they stay with are really bad people who beat them without any proper reason... You know these orphans just stay with relatives and sometimes they are mistreated. Because their parents died, they have to do anything they are given by the older people they are staying with. You will see them in tattered clothes; they sleep in a very dirty house which is leaking during the rains. (Teenage girl, in-depth interview, Marafa)

These are children, sometimes the children do not have parents and the person who is looking after them do not take good care of them well. These children are unhappy always and do not grow well. (Woman, group discussion, Bamba)

We also have so many children whose parents have died, and they are left alone with the relatives to take care of them. These relatives always mistreat these children so badly and that is not good at all for the child, it makes those children unhappy. Some

are given a lot of work at home, they don't have time to play and even relax. Some relatives who are mostly left with these children don't even take them to school, they don't buy them clothes, so you will find them in very torn and tattered clothes. The issue of orphans is a problem here and they are not treated well at all. Some of them are always beaten even when they just do a small mistake. (Man, group discussion, Bamba)

There are children who are really suffering because of their parents' death. You see when parents die, those children are left alone to take care of themselves. So most of them end up dropping out of school because of lack of school fees, others drop out because they have to work and provide food for the younger ones...There are so many of them, and it is not only because their parents have died, others are left because the father may be went to Mombasa and disappeared there. When the father disappears, the mother also decides to run away and she leaves children behind to survive by themselves. (Young man, group discussion, Bamba)

Sometimes these children have no parents. Maybe the parents died a long time ago, and the children are left with their grandparents who are supposed to take care of them. These grannies are not able to provide for these children. That's why they go to steal food to eat. (Teenage boy, group discussion, Bamba)

Those children who have lost their parents are always sad. They are not happy at all. They lost the bread winners so they do not even have food to eat. When they get food they eat and if they do not get they sleep hungry and the latter happens frequently. (Woman, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Heavy Work Given to Children

Due to poverty, significant numbers of children dropped out of school and sought employment in order to support their families. Often such children went on their own, were sent by parents, or were taken by relatives to nearby towns where they sought employment in hotels, construction, the tea processing plant, or as house help.

Some children who had dropped out of school and stayed at home, yet they were given 'too much work.' Girls fetched water and worked on the family farm or in other people's farm, while boys fetched firewood, made charcoal, and grazed cattle. When children complained of the heavy work, they were punished by being denied food by their parents or being severely beaten.

R6: There is also this issue of young children being employed. You find a child who is 10 years old working and not going to school.

R6: Most boys are employed to look after the cattle.

R6: Most girls work as house helps.

R5: There are also those bad things that happen to these girls where they are employed to work as house helps. Some of them are raped and some end up getting married by their employers when they are still very young. (Men, group discussion, Marafa)

The child may demand something from the father, but the father will tell the child go and work for food so the child will stop schooling and go for jobs in towns and even the parent demands some money from the child. (Young man, group discussion, Marafa)

The boys also end up doing a lot of hard labor in search of money to fend for their young ones as the fathers are always irresponsible. (Woman, group discussion, Marafa)

Some parents also overburden their son by forcing them to work in construction sites after which the fathers take all the money and leave the children without anything, and this sometimes make these children to suffer from chest problems. If you complain you end up being thrown out of the homestead. (Teenage boy, in-depth interview, Marafa)

When you have been given some work which is so hard and you can't do it but they expect you to do it. So you must do it because you have no option 'unaskira kiguguta' [you feel so bad], and even sometimes you are denied food just because you can't perform that work. (Teenage girl, group discussion, Marafa)

We are overworked, especially girls. You will be forced to dig large portion of the farm with limited time or you may see a small child given big gallon to go and fetch some water. And if you complain you are denied some food and remember that after finishing you will also be required to go and dig for somebody to get some money. (Teenage girl, group discussion, Marafa)

Some parents are overworking their children in such a manner that other children cannot grow properly you will find children going to the 'shamba' [farm] from morning to evening without rest and even children become stunted growth and affected by other diseases. (Young man, group discussion, Marafa)

Children were sometimes taken to town by relatives or people who knew them well and offered promises of a good job. Yet when the girls arrived in the towns, they were introduced to prostitution.

One funny thing is that these children are always taken to those places by people who know them very well, sometimes they are even taken by relatives. They come to the parents of the girl and tell them that they are going to give those girls very good jobs and the parents agree to give them their daughters because they think that their children would send them money when they start earning salary. When they get there, some are introduced into prostitution. (Man, group discussion, Marafa)

In addition to going to other towns to work, children are also given heavy work at home.

Children are given a lot of work by parents. At home they are sent to fetch water with a very big 'boya' [jerry can of 20 liters]. Now a child of 12 years carrying that jerry can, its tiresome.. The children may become stunted. Most parents are saying that when they don't give them the work they became lazy. (Teenage girl, group discussion, Marafa)

It was not always parents or relatives who got children involved in doing heavy work. Some children sought work on their own, either to help bring food for siblings, or to have money of their own.

There are families which have small children and big children. Now, the big children will see the small children are hungry, and the father or the mother can't provide for them all. The big children get angry. They drop from school to go and do casual jobs like digging 'vipande' [sub-divided pieces of land someone digs to get money]... The girls do house work as house help. They carry children. They can get the jobs there at Bamba town or Mombasa or Kilifi. The boys produce charcoal here in the village and sell them; they uproot some stumps to make the charcoal. (Teenage girl, in-depth interview, Bamba)

There is also another system here where during the school holidays, children are given firewood by their parents and then they are told to come and sell it here in the market. This kind of practice introduces children to money early in life, and after they have known that they can actually cut firewood, they come and sell it here and make money. They drop out of school. Some of them even argue that why should I go to school when I can start making money right now--they now don't see the importance of education. That is when the girls go to Mombasa in clubs and look for money. They go to Mombasa because there are big clubs there where they can make money very easily. (Woman, key informant interview, Bamba)

I am sorry to say this, but this is actually what happens.. Most girls in this village like prostitution, and that is the work which they do. When they don't have money and they feel like they need more money, they sleep with men and they are given money. I know that is not good, but that is what they do. (Young man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

There are also children who are given work that is more than their age. They are mostly employed as house helps and in some tea processing plant in Kilifi. Like there was a time some people used to come here and recruit young men and promise them that they are going to give them jobs in that processing plant and they would tell you that they are going to pay you very well, only to get there and you are given a lot of work with very meager pay. Some children even used to drop out of school to go and work there, only to get there and find that things are very difficult, not as they expected. (Young man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Forced Early Marriage

Affected by severe poverty, parents sought dowry money or wealth and frequently forced girls to get married to men against their will. As one participant put it, girls were 'being sold forcefully,' and those who refused were severely punished through food denial and other means.

You know some girls are taken to their husbands still very small and in fact the girl will not be able to know that [she]has been married. She will just see something coming to her like gifts. She will be told that that's your grandfather. When now the girl has

grown, she will be told that now you need to go and sleep with your husband the one whom she used to call a grandfather. Now when that happens, mostly the girl has nothing to do because already the father took cows as dowry or some money and he cannot take the money back, so the child has to remain with the man. (Teenage girl, group discussion, Marafa)

Early marriages among girls, the child is still young but will be taken to husbands so that the parent can get food through the dowry. (Young man, group discussion, Marafa)

Poverty contributes a lot to girls being sold forcefully. The parents even deny food for the girl who has refused to be married for about three days. The girl starves. She is mistreated at home so she remains with no option than just accepting to be married by the man. (Teenage boy, group discussion, Marafa)

Some participants attributed the quest for dowry to parental greed and laziness.

'Tamaa' [greediness]. They need money to drink alcohol, eat well without struggling for it. (Woman, group discussion, Marafa)

Also, some parents used the dowry from their daughter's forced marriage to finance the marriage of her brother, who needed to pay a dowry.

If a brother wants to marry and does not have dowry, they can force the girl to get married so that the dowry paid for her will be used by the brother to marry. (Young man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Quite often, parents negotiated and even received dowry without the girl's knowledge, even before the girl had matured physically or completed school. For example, fathers who needed money borrowed money from an older man and then promised to pay back the debt by giving the man his daughter, without her knowing about it. In some cases, the brothers and sisters of the girl who would eventually be married forcibly ate well and did not realize that the money for the food had come as dowry.

R4: Girls are being forced to marriages. The fathers take dowry for their girls even when the girl is still at school and she won't even know what is happening. She will be told the day she is supposed to go to the husband. Girls really suffer a lot, others even have to run away from their homes. They are forced to go to places they even don't know--they go to relatives they think can assist them like uncles, aunts. We just see good food like chapatti and meat every day without knowing it's our sister's dowry.

R2: Mostly it's the old men or even boys from other villages. The fathers find a husband for the child.

I: Why do you think they force the girls to get married? (Teenage girls, group discussion, Marafa)

Girls face a lot of problems in this village. You will find that when a father has no money, he will go to somebody who has money and tell that person to give him money.

He will then tell that man that he will pay using his daughter, and that is what has led to these early marriages. These children get married when they are still very young and people do nothing about it. (Man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Because early marriage was against the law and punishable, most parents sought to hide it.

Nowadays you can get arrested easily when you are found to have married a young girl or as a parent when you marry off your child at a very young age. So most people try to hide, though it still happens. (Woman, key informant interview, Bamba)

Also, when girls got pregnant, they were usually forced to marry the boys or men who had impregnated them. In return, the parents sought a dowry. If the boy or man did not pay the dowry, the parents went to the boy or man and retrieved the girl.

If he goes to school and he has done that [impregnated a girl], that child will be forced to marry that child. That's when his school work is destroyed. He goes and become a matatu tout in order to provide for the girl. The girl is taken to the boy and the boy is given a wife. (Woman, in-depth interview, Bamba)

The father can be having someone's debt, maybe of 15,000 shillings [approximately \$170] and he does not have the money to pay it back. So he goes and tells the one he owes money to, 'I have my daughter who 'adzaiva' [is ripe] so I can give you the girl'. If the man has a son then he is given the girl as his wife. If he does not have a son, then he can opt to marry the girl as 'mche mhoho' [a second or third wife or whatever number]. Then the debt will be settled and the man who has taken the girl as his wife may be told to add just something small as dowry. (Teen boy, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Rape

Girls were reportedly raped at night time ceremonies, discos, while fetching firewood, and even on their way to and from school. The perpetrators, who were said to be diverse, included people from their village, outside their village, and people in power such as teachers and relatives.

In fact, the issue of rape is very serious in this village. We tell these girls not to go to Bamba town at night, or to go to the discos, but they don't listen at all. (Man, group discussion, Bamba)

R8: Our children are going to school. Now a child is raped when she is on her way as she is going to school...

R1: most of the time, the person has been wanting this girl for some time and has not been successful to get the girl, so he does that. (Women, group discussion, Bamba)

When the girls go and fetch firewood, they are attacked and forced to have sex. (Man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

The girls are raped. The girls can get pregnant, and the boys will continue going to school and the girls will be at home. Like the girl who was raped--the ones who did that were boys who attacked the girl. The girls suffer more than the boys. (Man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

There is this issue of rape. There are always cases of rape in this village. ..You know, they are mostly raped by people we don't know and so it is difficult to trace them later on. (Young man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

You will find that a school girl has been raped by a gang of people--about ten of them. This girl's life is destroyed, and she does not want to go to school because of mockery from other students. The students laugh at her and eventually she stops going to school. (Teenage boy, group discussion, Bamba)

R9: A girl child can go to school, then she is told things by the boy to do--things that she does not want. The boy will go and wait on the girl by the road side and do those things she did not want to do by force. Our girls are 'gwavukirwa' [being raped].

R9: It happens on the roads or foot path ways. It can be by school boys out of school boys. Maybe a girl is from the shop a bit late in the evening....

R4: They even need 12 year old girls, even 10 year old girls. They will use knives as long as they get a way to enter her. (Women, group discussion, Bamba)

R4: Rape, children are being raped.

R1: In primary schools

R4: Others in standard seven...It is done by people older than them. (Women, group discussion, Bamba)

It was also reported that girls were raped while living on the streets after having been punished and chased out of the house, particularly by step-mothers.

R2: You are told to sleep outside then there are these 'sungu sungu' [a group of people maintaining security in the villages] pass by and rape you

R4: These 'sungu sungu', when they pass by, and they see you have been chased out of the house and you are sleeping in a vegetable kiosk, when they see you they can rape you. (Teenage girls, group discussion, Bamba)

Even though it was taboo, and people did not talk about it in public, girls were also 'taken as wives' by their fathers.

Others are even raped by their fathers...It happens along roads or home. Mother leaves to go and look for money. Back at home, the father does his own things. (Woman, group discussion, Bamba)

It was also reported that people infected with HIV/AIDS deliberately wanted to infect girls in order to 'not die alone.'

You know, there are those who rape children because they are HIV positive and they do it because they don't want to die alone, and they go to children because they are easy to get. They mainly rape these children on their way from school in the evening. (Man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Prostitution

Girls entered into prostitution to get money for food and things they needed.

I am sorry to say this but this is actually what happens. Most girls in this village like prostitution, and that is the work which they do. When they don't have money and they feel like they need more money, they sleep with men and they are given money. I know that is not good, but that is what they do. (Young man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Most girls go to Mombasa to work as house helps, but some of them end up in doing 'vitu za kidunia' [earthly things]. Some go to Mombasa and then they fail to get jobs, and you know life there is not easy--they have to pay rent and put food on their table. So they end up engaging in prostitution, because they have no other ways. But others are just influenced by their friends in towns who are already doing those bad things. (Young man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

As a result of prostitution, girls also ended up getting pregnant and contracting HIV.

For the girls, it's even worse. Some girls get into prostitution even here in Bamba, they don't go to Mombasa. During the market days, because there are so many people coming to the market, they look for men there. So you will find them just hanging around the market, and most of them end up getting pregnant at a very early age. Some get infected with HIV because they don't use condoms, you know they are still young and they don't know a lot about condoms. (Young man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Another harm to children is 'kujingiza na mambo ya mapema' [prostitution]. The girl drops out of school and goes to Mombasa to seek employment. When she is there, she is used by the bosses and is given small tokens in exchange for sex favors. This continues until she gets used to having sex for money. She will start to do that with other people, and if she misses one day she will take that to the streets and be a prostitute. They also befriend people who are already into that business, and they end up being prostitutes. This happens in the towns like Mariakani, Kilfi and Mombasa. Some girls come from this far, and because they have no education they end up being prostitutes. (Teenage boy, group discussion, Bamba)

Some girls were deceived into prostitution by relatives or 'aunties.

R7: *Girls are taken here that they are going to work not knowing that they are going to be given 'husbands.'*

I: *What do you mean by being given 'husbands?'*

R7: *They are given men to sleep with.*

I: *Who gives them men?*

R7: *Those people who take them there--some are women who are already doing the business of sleeping with men, I hear they are called 'aunties.' So it is those women who take them to towns, look for men to sleep around with them, and they are the ones who get paid. They only give a small amount of money to these children... After a short while, she comes back home pregnant again, gives birth, and then she goes back to Malindi. And you will not know the father of these children, you will just see children coming.*

R2: *There are so many young girls who are taken to Malindi and get employed to work as prostitutes. The problem is those who come here and they come to you and tell you that they are going to give your daughter a good job, but they don't do that. Instead, they take them to Malindi and make them prostitutes. At times, it is difficult to notice if your daughter is working as a prostitute because when they come home, they don't do it here. But when they go back to town, they dress badly, and it is those 'aunties' who show them how to dress and how to make money to buy dresses, bread, and all those good things. So she will tell her, 'Wait I will bring you a man and tell you how to make money.'*

I: *At what age are these girls when they are taken by these aunties?*

R2: *As long as their breasts start coming out. So they take them to Malindi and they are given men, then the child starts to be touched on the breasts and she gets high, then they have sex and she [the child] comes home with samosas.*

R5: *So those are some of the jobs that our children do when they are still very young, some even drop out of school to do those kinds of jobs. (Men, group discussion, Marafa)*

Drugs and Alcohol

Use of drugs mainly affected boys and also some girls. Boys smoked bhang and cigarettes and drank 'mnazi' (palm wine). While high, boys often engaged in unsafe sex and did not attend school. Some children were also reported to have suffered cognitive impairment due to smoking bhang.

Boys in this village smoke bhang and cigarettes a lot. The bhang they smoke change their minds a lot--some even become crazy out of that. They end up dropping out of school, and instead of going to the shamba, they end up doing other things like stealing, raping young girls, answering or arguing with their parents rudely. Their health is harmed and they suffer from tuberculosis. (Teenage boy, group discussion, Marafa)

When a boy starts smoking bang, you can't tell them anything. They feel they are superior to others, they drop out of school, and they can become thieves. They become mentally affected some become even mad. Their health is affected. (Teenage girl, group discussion, Marafa)

Children here also have a habit of drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes. They go to 'mangwe's' [palm wine den] and drink mnazi there. You'll get a good boy and once he joins a bad group, he starts smoking and drinking alcohol and his brain gets completely spoilt. He can't even continue going to school. (Woman, in-depth interview, Marafa)

First and foremost is the issue of drug abuse. They drink alcohol, chew 'miraa' [khat], smoke bhang and cigarettes. You know most of those boys who use drugs end up dropping out of school and that means that they will not have a bright future. (Young man, in-depth interview, Marafa)

R4: Even small boys do smoke bhang here. They don't fear smoking even before girls...

R5: If they smoke bhang, their brains become rotten. They as well fail exams at school. (Teenage girls, group discussion, Marafa)

R5: Children in this village are spoiled by drugs. You will see very small kids smoking bangi here. When they do this, they start misbehaving and missing out on school.

R3: We have some sellers here who are even well known to the administration, but they sell this thing to the children. No action is taken against them. The police men here harass the boys who consume the drugs instead of dealing with the sellers. (Men, group discussion, Marafa)

R: We have some other children who drink mnazi and also smoke 'bangi' especially during the holidays when they go to either for weddings or attend 'matanga' [burials and funerals]... They do a lot of drinking these boys. They even smoke bangi but when you see them do this, they say 'Enda na rako' [mind your own business].

I: Do the teachers know that these children do these things?

R: Yes they know, but the teachers are also tired of telling them so they have been left alone. Furthermore, the teachers are saying that it is their own problem since they will fail exams. (Teenage girl, in-depth interview, Marafa)

The same girls also smoke cigarettes and drink alcohol, just the same way as boys. (Young woman, in-depth interview, Marafa)

Boys said that they had been lured into drug use by 'bad' peer groups as well as by having observing their parents. In contrast, parents attributed boy's use of drugs not to parental influence but to negative peer influence.

Parents send their children to buy mnazi and cigarettes. So when a child has bought his father a cigarette, you will hear the father telling that child 'please light it for me,' and you will see the child putting that cigarette in his mouth and lighting it up, then he makes two or three puffs before giving it to his father. And this mainly happens to the boys. When they are also sent to buy alcohol, they taste this alcohol along the way and they get used to it. Next time, when he gets money, he will just walk to the same and buy alcohol and start drinking. So the child becomes addicted to these drugs at a very early age. (Young man, group discussion, Bamba)

Children in this village smoke bhang, cigarettes, drink alcohol and they spoil their lives. When good children start hanging around with bad children, they get spoiled and start drinking alcohol and smoking bhang. There are also those children who after

completing school, they become idle and they start using these drugs because they have nothing to do. Some even become thieves. (Young man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Yes after the child has failed his exams he goes to Bamba town and start associating with the matatu drivers and touts and start using drugs through peer influence. He goes on like that until he runs away from home and becomes like 'chokoraa' [street child] in town. (Teenage boy, group discussion, Bamba)

The child goes to school and sees other children smoking. Then the child tries to smoke and spoils the head. The child will not follow and concentrate on his school work. The child starts smoking and because of that he starts following girls instead of studying. The child spoils himself. (Man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Witchcraft

Belief in witchcraft and traditional medicine was very strong amongst villagers, especially for people who did not go to a church. Bewitchment was believed to cause a variety of physical and mental ailments. It was reported that, out of jealousy, people bewitched children when they were doing well in school or prospering, in hopes of causing them not to do well. When a child had been bewitched, it was necessary to take him or her to a 'witchcraft' (witchdoctor or traditional doctor). While the practice was common, only a few people said that it was harmful.

Children here fall sick. Jealousy among the homestead or village members is high. One family will hate another family or its members because the family has many children or the children are going to school. Jealousy equals witchcraft. There is a lot of witchcraft in this village. The children who go to school fall and faint here in the village or even when they are in school. The children grow with a lot of fear because when they faint, they feel like they will die. (Woman, in-depth interview, Bamba)

When the child is performing well in school, he is 'kutengezerwa vidzo' [bewitched] so when he is in school reading or writing, his eyes tear up and he cannot see well. It is done by 'mudhambi' [a sinner]. (Woman, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Another thing is when 'mhoho adzaikirwa kitu kibaya' [the child has been bewitched]. It ruins the child's development. The child becomes sick always and loses weight to the extremes. The face becomes skinny. When this happens, the parent of the child goes to report to the 'ubiga mburuga' [traditional doctor]. Most likely and this is what happens -- the traditional doctor will unfold the situation of the child and the person who bewitched the child is known. The traditional doctor will give some directions and conditions to be followed. All the people in the village will be told what the traditional healer has uncovered and the conditions to be followed. (Man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Parents also believed that diseases such as malaria were caused by witchcraft, and took their sick child to the witch doctor rather than a hospital.

On matters concerning health, there are parents who do not take their children to the hospital. They go to the witchdoctors for treatment and in some instances there are children who have died because they were not taken to the hospital, that is very bad, you know (Man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

It was also reported that parents sometimes bewitched their own children when the child had misbehaved or been disrespectful.

Maybe it is your child and you are always warning the child not to do a certain thing, but whenever you go and come back the child has done it. There are words which you can say to that child which may harm the child. You may tell the child 'I do not know if I am the one who gave birth to you, but if I am the one you will listen to me.' The child may go to his/her work place, and the following day he/she is gets fired. Whatever the child does his/her things do not go straight. The child will start to change physically 'na kudhohofika' [becomes weak]. The child will start to ask him/herself 'why did my father tell me this?' Then people will start to say that the child was in good health but now may be he/she was bewitched. (Man, group discussion, Bamba)

In some cases, parents reportedly gave their children 'completely' to the witch doctor (often called a 'witchcraft') as a means of cleansing a child born out of adultery. In other cases, parents offered a children as a contribution (even a sacrifice) to the witchcraft in order to have the demons help them prosper in life..

There are these witch people. They can do something to the child which you will not understand like 'motto kuchukuliwakivuli' [the witchdoctor shows everything for the child]. There are also these women who get pregnant with another person who is not her husband. The mother and the man who did that must go to the witchdoctor to be given the child officially. Without that, the child will be harmed..The mother and the man should tell the witchdoctor all the truth. The child is then 'washed' by the traditional doctor. (Young man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Like when people go to buy 'majini' [demons] from the witchcraft, there has to be a child who 'anawekwa kwa kiti' [put on a chair], the child is given like 'sadaka [a contribution]. So the child will be abnormal, he will turn to be mad person because he or she is given as a contribution to the witchcraft. The witchcraft always tell you that you have to give your child who you love the most as a contribution in order for the demons to work, and for you to prosper in life. So most people give their children as sacrifice. (Man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Child Beating/Severe Punishment

Children were beaten with canes and sticks --they were 'whipped properly' or 'thoroughly beaten'--as a form of punishment. Mostly it was mothers, especially step-mothers--who did the beating, although teachers, village elders, and employers also beat children.

R7: *There are children who are thoroughly beaten by their parents even when they do just a simple mistake. Like there's a child who was thoroughly beaten by his mother because he took a machete to go and cut a tree in the bush to play with.*

I: *What do you mean by 'thoroughly beaten?'*

R7: *He was caned severally and the whole of his body was swollen... They used a very huge cane that doesn't break easily. (Teenage boys, group discussion, Bamba)*

When the child refuses to do the work, it is punished through beating the child with a cane. We have so many canes here, and children really suffer..You may find that a small child is given a 20 liters jerry can and told to carry it home just because the house is not far from the water pan. If the child refuses then it is locked inside a house and whipped properly until one part of the body feels pain. (Young woman, in-depth interview, Bamba)

R4: *For example the mother passed on or has travelled and the child is left with the step mother... They are given all the work to do like washing clothes, washing utensils, fetching water. They cannot do all that alone and so when the step mother sees s/he has not done all the work, she becomes very angry.*

R2: *She is beaten thoroughly.*

R4: *Beaten, slapped. (Teenage girls, group discussion, Bamba)*

Children in this village are beaten so badly. Beating is not bad but there is beating which even the neighbor feels sorry for the child. Children may be sent to the shop and on the way the child loses the money. You will not believe it how the child will be beaten. Sometimes a girl may also be sent to the hop, and when she takes a long time to come back she will be whipped severely. However, to the girls this is right because if you do not whip them then they will bring you a child. Girls tend to meet their boyfriends when they are sent to the shops. When they meet them, they go to the bush or the boy's house and have sex. After some time, the girl gets pregnant and that marks the end of her going to school. By that time you have lost your money which you used to take the child to school because the girl will not be helping you in the future. Instead, she will increase further the burden to you. (Young man, in-depth interview, Bamba)

Parents beating their children also happens but with some reasons and most of the time the mothers are the ones who do that. (Man, group discussion, Bamba)

3. Response Pathways

The pathways of response presented in this section are not what is 'supposed' to happen but rather the actual pathways through which people responded to the two main child protection harms to children: early pregnancy and children being out of school.

Early Pregnancy Pathways

Three main pathways were identified in response to early pregnancy, and each of these in considered in turn below.

Dominant Pathway

As shown in Figure 6 (see the following page), the most typical pathway of response involved the mother initially noticing that her daughter was pregnant by observing signs such as changes in her body or behaviors such as not going to school. Also, mothers sometimes became aware of their daughters' pregnancy by hearing rumors in the community. However mothers found out, once they learned about the pregnancy, they told the father. Together, they confronted the girl and asked or forced her through beating to tell who was responsible.

Next, the parents took the girl to the boy's house, thereby confronting both the boy and his family. The parents of the boy asked him whether he was responsible for the pregnancy. Alternately, the parents reported the pregnancy and the boy to the village elder, who called both sets of parents and also the girl and the boy for a meeting, at which the boy's parents asked the boy whether he was responsible. Either way, if the boy accepted responsibility for the girl's pregnancy, he was forced to marry the girl. The girl then went to live with the boy's family, and the boy dropped out of school in order to look for casual labor that could provide money he could use to support his new family. After giving birth, the girl usually dropped out of school.

If, however, the boy did not accept responsibility, the girl's parents reported the case to the police. Typically, the police fined the boy's family, and the boy went free. The girl went back home to live with her parents, and, after she had given birth, she may return to school. Yet most girls in such situations dropped out of school soon due to the shame and stigma attached to being an unwed teenage mother.

A variation (not shown in Figure 6) was that the parents of the pregnant girl went to the Assistant Chief if the boy had refused to take responsibility for the pregnancy. The Assistant Chief talked to the boy and girl and took a decision about what should happen. The usual outcome was that if the girl had been attending school, she gave birth at home and subsequently went back to school, although she usually dropped out. If the girl was not going to school, then she was given to the boy, who married her. A less frequent variation was that the girl's mother, having learned about the pregnancy, reported the case to the village elder, Chief, and headmaster. In this situation, the boy was forced to care for the child until the child had reached 18 years of age. If the boy did not accept responsibility (which was usually the case), the boy then ran away, and he was subsequently punished if he returned to his village.

In another pathway, if the girl could not be married, the girl was left to care for the child on her own as it was a burden for her parents. To support herself and her child, she resorted to transactional sex.

They say that's a burden to them and they leave that girl to take care of her child. So what the child does is that she will look for other men to help her take care of her child. She will sleep with those men in exchange for money that she will use to buy food and other needs for her baby. Such children even if they go back to school, they don't

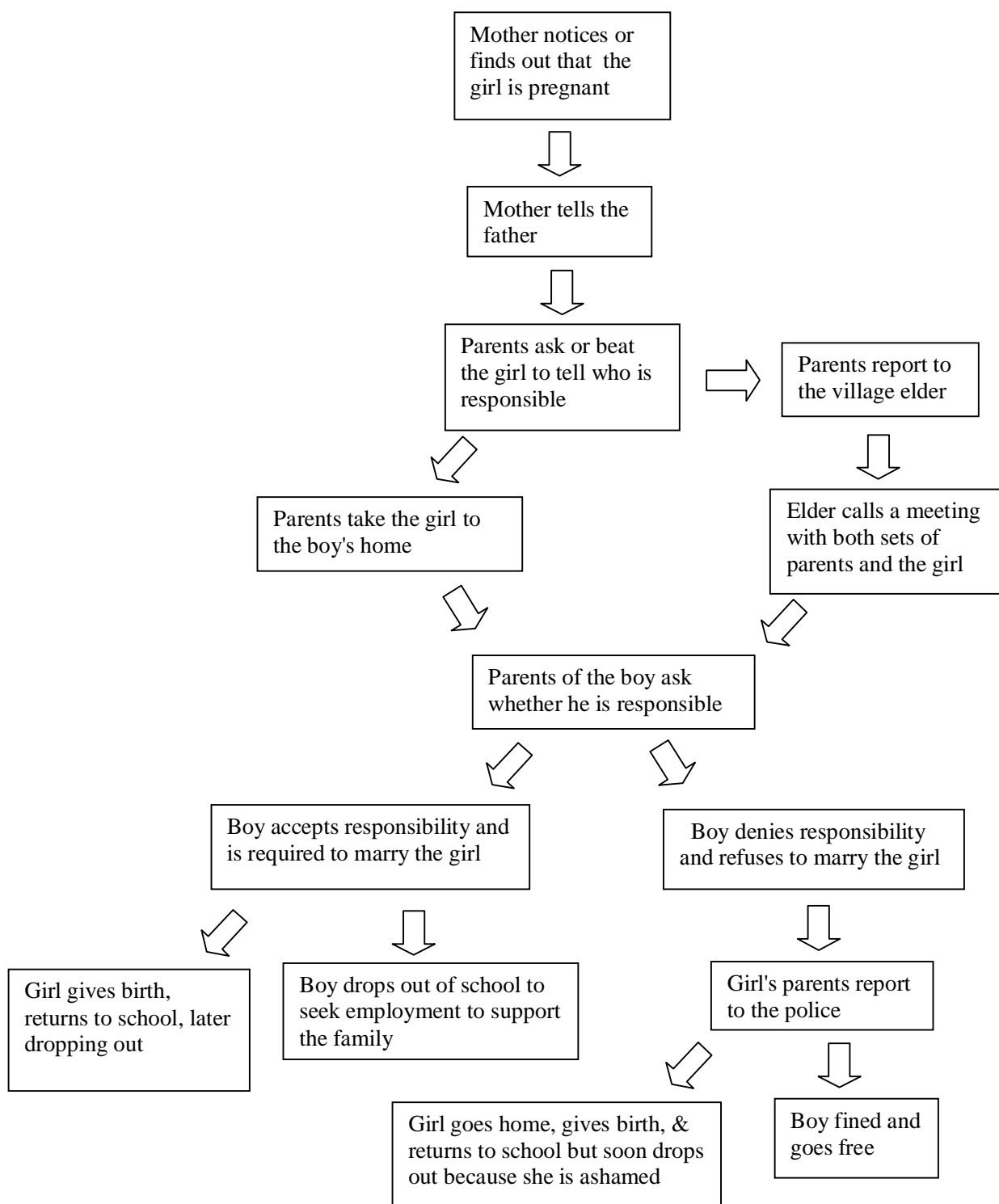


Figure 6. The dominant pathway of response to early pregnancy.

concentrate in class work and most of them just end up dropping out of school. (Key informant interview, Bamba)

Pathway Two: Bribery

A second pathway occurred sometimes when the first parents to learn of the pregnancy were the parents of the boy, who had heard from rumors or from the boy himself that their son had impregnated a girl. In this situation, the boy's parents usually rushed to the police and paid them 1,000 KSH as a bribe. Later on, the parents of the girl discovered that their daughter was pregnant and went to the police to report the violation. Having been paid off, the police did not follow up on this issue, and the matter died.

Pathway Three: Abortion

A third pathway involved the mother, who had noticed that her daughter was pregnant, advising the girl to get an abortion before it is noticed. In giving such advice, the mother usually did not inform the father. Unfortunately, because unsafe means of abortion were widely used, the not uncommon result was for the girl to die. If, however, the abortion succeeded, the girl returned to school.

Out of School Pathways

Inability to pay school fees was the main cause of children being out of school. If a child's school fees had not been paid, the teacher 'chased the child from school.' When that happened, the mother usually went to the teacher and asked that her child continue in class while the parents looked for money. Frequently this entailed looking for extra income through *vipende* (digging in someone's farm) or some other form of casual labor. If the money needed was raised and the school fees paid, then the child was allowed to stay in school. However, if the parents were unable to pay the school fees over an extended period of time, the teacher chased the child away from school (see Figure 7 on the following page).

A different branch of the same pathway arose if the teacher denied the mother's initial request that the child be allowed to continue in school while money is being raised in order to pay the school fees. In that situation, the mother and child (and to a lesser extent the father) looked for casual labor to earn money for school fees. Or the child was expected to work in the *shamba* while not in school. In the weeks or months that it took to raise enough money to pay the school fees, out of school children often became demoralized and unlikely to return to school. Even though the parents sought extra income for school fees, there typically was not enough food, so any extra money earned went to food instead of the school fees.

4. Views of Young Children

The body mappings that children participated in revealed the varied things that children (5-8 and 9-12 years of age) liked and disliked. Both boys and girls of all ages liked good food such as sweets, fruits, and ugali, being clean, playing with friends, hearing good words from their

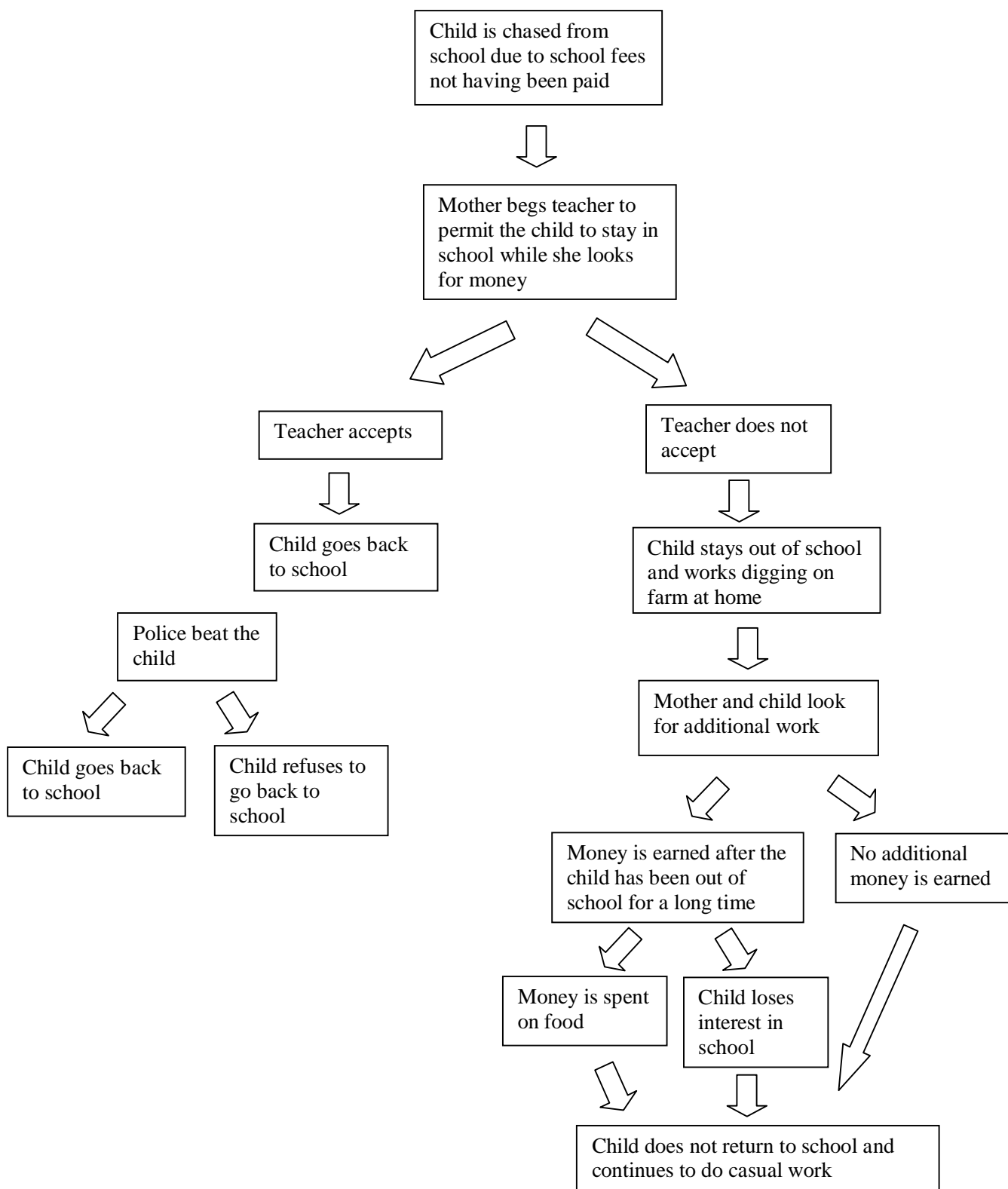


Figure 7. Pathways of response for out of school children due to inability to pay school fees.

mothers, teachers, and pastors, watching videos and television, listening to music, and having nice clothes, especially shoes.

Things that children did not like included touching or stepping on feces, eating 'rotten' and 'dirty' food, and being hungry. They also did not like being abused by people or hearing people quarrelling. They did not like diseases and jiggers, and did not like having sticks, stones and other objects put in their ears. Nor did they like witches or witchcraft. They especially disliked being slapped, beaten, pinched, having their ears or hair pulled, being caned on their hands, feet and head, or having their hands burnt.

The views of children varied according to age. Younger children (5-8 years of age) expressed distinctive dislikes for things such as demons and dangerous animals such as cobras, elephants, monitor lizards, and hippopotamuses, while older children did not like seeing dead people. Some younger boys reported not liking to be told to 'smoke bhang' or 'go steal.' Younger girls did not like to fetch firewood or water, while younger boys did not like carrying heavy loads such as stones or charcoal. Some older girls reported liking certain types of work, such as washing and cooking, but not liking other kinds of work such as carrying heavy luggage, picking vegetables, and weeding. Older girls also did not like seeing boys with 'bad manners'. Older boys liked playing football, hunting and chasing wild animals, and did not like seeing people persecuted or tampered with.

The main dislikes that children reported by age group are shown in Tables 8 and 9 on the following two pages.

Body Part	Girls 5-8 years		Boys 5-8 years	
	Bamba	Marafa	Bamba	Marafa
Eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - crying - pricked - seeing beating - seeing snakes - seeing firewood to be fetched 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - see dead people - see people crying - see dirty things - see mother angry - see dirty home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seeing dirty things - being poked - having soil enter - seeing monitor lizard - seeing elephant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seeing dirtiness - seeing diseases - seeing snakes - seeing people cry - seeing mother cry
Ears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - being pulled - being pinched - having sticks put in - noise - having demons enter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - having sticks put in - having stones put in - having sores - being dirty - hearing bad words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - having sticks put in - having pain - being dirty - noise - told to 'go steal' - told to 'smoke bang' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - being pinched - having sand put in - having sores - hearing terrifying stories
Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - slapped - beaten - hair pulled - carrying water - hot sun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - slapped - having sores - having headache - carrying big bucket - carrying heavy luggage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - beating - being hit - wounds - ringworms - carry heavy things like stones and charcoal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - being hit - being cut with panga - headaches - having sores
Heart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - being beaten - being kicked - feeling pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - being abused - seeing people hungry - crying - witches - quarreling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - people doing bad things - quarrelling - criminals - stealing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - being abused - hear people crying - hear people quarrelling - being persecuted - having pain - mosquitos
Hands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - touching feces - pricked by thorns - being beaten - carrying water - carrying jugs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - touching feces - touching fire - touching dirty objects - being burnt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - touching dirty things - being hit - being broken - being tied - beating a person - carrying jerrycans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - touching feces - touching dead animals - being pinched - touching fire - being cut - bedbugs
Feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - walking without shoes - stepping on feces - jiggers - being beaten 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stepping on feces - stepping on nails - walking at night - bitten by scorpion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stepping on feces - going to latrine without shoes - stepping on cow dung - stepping on thorns - being caned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stepping on feces - stepping on cow dung - walk at night - bitten by snake

Table 8. The things that the body mappings indicated young children (5-8 years) do not like.

Body Part	Girls 9-12 years		Boys 9-12 years	
	Bamba	Marafa	Bamba	Marafa
Eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seeing dirty things - pricked with stick - scorching sun - seeing fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seeing dirty things - seeing dogs, snakes, baboons - seeing people smoke bhang - seeing boys with bad manners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seeing dirty things - seeing people uprooted - being poked - seeing people cry - seeing feces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seeing dirty things - seeing dead people - seeing people cry - seeing mad men - seeing fighting - seeing people tampered with - witchcraft
Ears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - water put in ears - being pulled when wrong - aching - dirty things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - injections - dirtiness - sores - pain - dirty words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hearing abuses - being pinched - hearing dirty things - having pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hearing abuses - being dirty - have insects enter - having pain
Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - being beaten - pulling hair - being knocked - being in sun - carrying heavy luggage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - being hit - being hit with stone - headache - wounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - being hit - having pain - being beaten - being knocked - being sick - scratched til blood oozes out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - being hit - having headache - having skin disease
Heart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - being beaten - having pain - having a hole - dirty things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - being abused - abuse others - being persecuted - see person being beaten - hear quarreling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to die - to see people die - to be hit hard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - being sad - being scared - people persecuted - people suffering - people crying - witchcraft
Hands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - touching feces - beating someone - being beaten - carrying big luggage - weeding - picking vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - touching feces - being beaten - being burned - being cut - touching blood - touching dirty things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - touch dirty things - hit friend - be burned - be beaten - have pain - have thorn prick 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - touching feces - being beaten - being caned - being tied - being cut - having sores
Feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - going to latrine without shoes - step on feces - stepping on hot ground - being broken - jiggers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - step on feces - being cut - stepping on cow dung - having worms - going to forest - bitten by snakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - step on feces - step on dirty things - wounds - be burnt - pierced by thorns - walk long distances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - step on feces - bit by snake - step on cow dung - being pricked by thorns - being cut - being caned

Table 9. The things that the body mappings indicated older children (9-12 years) disliked.

5. Effects of Socio-Economic Status

SES differences were analyzed mainly using the rankings obtained from group discussions, which were triangulated with the qualitative data from individual interviews. When the group discussion data were pooled across different sub-groups and ratings of the top three harms were considered, low SES participants were far more likely to rank out of school children as one of the top three harms to children than were high SES participants (see Figure 8 on the following page). In contrast, high SES participants were much more likely to rate early pregnancy and poor parenting as among the top three harms to children than were low SES participants. Not shown, this same pattern of results appeared also in ratings of which of the various harms to children was regarded as 'most serious.'

That low SES participants were more likely than were high SES participants to rank out of school children as one of the top three harms to children likely reflects the greater difficulty or inability that low SES people had to pay children's school fees, which was the main reason children were out of school. Since high SES participants were able to pay their children's school fees and their children more often went to school, high SES participants were less likely to rate out of school children as one of the top three harms.

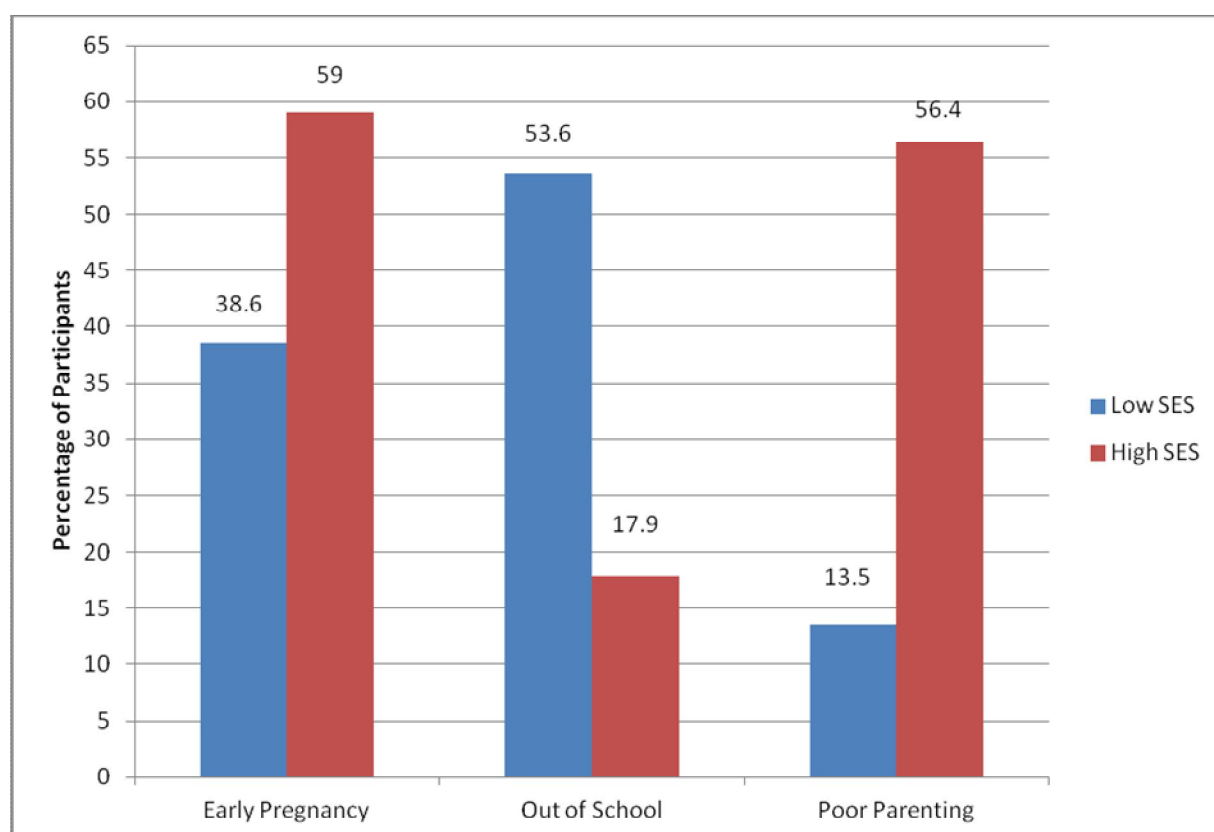


Figure 8. *The percentage of participants by SES that rated various issues as one of the top three harms to children (n=420).*

For both low and high SES participants, early pregnancy emerged as a significant concern, yet early pregnancy was a stronger concern among the high SES participants than among the low SES participants. Although the cause of this difference is not entirely clear, one possible explanation pertains to differences of power and status. Having better economic circumstances, high SES families may have been able to keep their girls in school and to meet their needs for basic necessities, transportation, and other items. If a girl from a high SES family became pregnant early, it may have been seen as a stain both on herself and her family since the girl and the family had had the means to prevent it. In contrast, low SES families were unable to meet their daughters' basic needs and therefore to prevent early pregnancy. As a result, early pregnancy in a low SES family may have been seen as unavoidable and as causing less status loss. In addition, early pregnancy may have been seen as a more 'normal' state of affairs among families having low SES. Alternatively, relatively high SES participants may have been more likely to regard early pregnancy as a form of 'bad behavior,' whereas it may have seemed to be an inevitability to low SES participants. Additional research is needed to identify which explanation is most appropriate.

The largest difference based on SES was in regard to poor parenting. High SES participants were much more likely than low SES participants to rate poor parenting as one of the top three harms to children. Here, too, the differences may reflect power and status differentials between high and low SES families. To have engaged in poor parenting by high SES families may have caused a greater loss of status than it would have caused among low SES parents. After all, the high SES families had the economic means to protect their children, send them to school, and teach them proper values and behavior. Low SES families, on the other hand, might have suffered less status loss since their poverty made it impossible to send their children to school on a regular basis and to meet their basic needs in ways that would keep them out of harm's way. For this reason, bad behavior by their children might have been seen as a reflection of their economic circumstances rather than poor parenting per se. Another possibility is that over generations, the cycles of poverty and exposure to multiple sources of distress on low SES families had eroded patterns and skills of effective parenting. Still another possibility is that high SES participants, who were relatively well off, were more likely to attribute harms to children to poor parenting than were low SES participants. Being very poor, low SES participants may have been more likely to attribute harms to children to poverty and difficult economic circumstances than to poor parenting per se. Distinguishing between these and other possible interpretations remains a task for future research.

6. Preventive Factors

In group discussions on preventive factors, the participants identified what they saw as the main means of prevention for the top ranked harms that had already been identified in the research. Below, the results are presented for the two top-ranked child protection issues--early pregnancy and out of school children--with the data pooled across both sites.

Early Pregnancy

With respect to early pregnancy, the protective factors reflected diverse parts of children's social ecologies, such as families, schools, and peer groups. The top ranked preventive factors were parental responsibility and advice, and family planning, including the use of condoms (see Table 10). Other useful preventive factors were: peer education in youth groups or school, having pregnancy tests in school, girls going to school, and children engaging in good behavior, among others.

Preventive factor	n	% Reporting
Parents being responsible, advising children, attending to girls needs	54	24.5
Family planning, using condoms	31	15.5
Joining youth groups, peer education in school, advice from role models	18	8.2
Pregnancy tests in schools	16	7.3
Girls going to school	14	6.4
Children's good behavior	11	5.0
Punishment by parents	10	4.5
NGOs	9	4.1
Girls using self-control	8	3.6
Guidance and counseling in schools, life skills training in schools	8	3.6
Getting married	7	3.2
Teachings in churches and mosques	7	3.2
Abortion	4	1.8
Laws punishing boys/men who impregnated girls	3	2.3
Girls going to work to avoid being lured with money	2	.9
Other	18	8.2

Table 10. *The number and percentage of participants in group discussions who rated particular items as the top preventive factor in regard to early pregnancy in Marafa and Bamba (23 group discussions; n=220).*

For both communities, responsible parenting was the primary preventive factor in preventing early pregnancy. Parents taught their children good morals and advised them on the consequences of having early sex and of early pregnancy.

Parents sit with their children, advise them on the effects of having sex at an early age, the effects of early pregnancy, and they also guide children on the good morals to be well behaved and avoid early pregnancies. (Woman, group discussion, Marafa)

Parents also used punishment such as beating girls who went to night celebrations and engaged in improper behavior, as a way to control girls and prevent them from engaging in further immoral behavior. Some parents reported that they burned down a night disco because most of the pregnancies are a result of the 'night ceremonies' and discos. Parents also contributed to prevention through economic support. In particular, families provided girls with basic materials such as food and sanitary pads, thereby decreasing their need to engage in transactional sex as a means of obtaining those items.

Family planning, which 15.5% of the participants identified as the most important means of preventing early pregnancy, included girls getting birth control 'injections,' 'peels' [patches], and 'pills,' and boys and girls using condoms. Young girls were taken by their mothers to the hospital and clinic, while older girls went on their own. Condoms were also used, though less frequently.

R5: The girls are taken by their mothers to the hospital to go get injected family planning medicines. They also take family planning tablets.

R7: Apart from family planning tablets there are E-pills which they buy at the chemistry and take them after they have had sex and have ejaculated inside the girl. (Women, group discussion, Bamba)

Most girls in this community they use family planning. They go to the hospital asking for family planning pills. They sometimes cheat their parents because they are illiterate to take them to hospital and then they take the peels. (Man, group discussion, Marafa)

Girls are using family planning peels. They go without anybody's consultation. (Teenage girl, Group discussion, Marafa)

Nowadays boys use condoms... You cannot go hunting with a catapult without marbles. This has helped to prevent getting pregnant in my opinion. (Young man, group discussion, Bamba)

Schools, too, were seen as playing an important role in preventing early pregnancy. The participants said that girls going to school and 'concentrating in school' helped to avoid early pregnancies. Also, the participants reported that some schools conducted life skill lessons, while guidance and counseling were also used in schools in an effort to prevent early pregnancies. At some schools female teachers conducted pregnancy tests (with parental permission), and parents reported that this had a deterrent effect since girls did not want to be detected as being pregnant.

Peer influence was also seen as important. Role modeling by older girls who had made a commitment to abstain from sex until they get married reportedly influenced some girls.

We have some girls in this village who really decided that they will not have any sexual relationships until they got married. These sometimes come to use here and try to encourage us to chill. (Teenage girl, group discussion, Marafa)

In addition, the joining of youth groups was seen as a method of preventing early pregnancies through peer education and the learning of life skills. Football clubs, especially for girls, kept girls busy and away from boys.

In Bamba, laws reportedly served as a deterrent for boys having sex with girls.

Laws, like in this village, if you impregnate a girl the laws of the village say that you should pay seven heads of goats and that has made many boys or men to be afraid. The laws of the government also say that you will be jailed for such mistakes, and that makes a person not to play with the ladies. (Woman, group discussion, Bamba)

Particularly in regard to girls, the practice of good behavior by children seen as helpful in preventing early pregnancies. Good behavior by girls included dressing modestly so ‘they wouldn’t arouse boys’ desires,’ avoiding night celebrations (disco matangas and discos), and coming home early. The church was reported to help in reducing pregnancies through teaching girls good behavior.

Out of School

In regard to out of school children, the main preventive factors were parents, communities, and an international NGO. World Vision paying children’s school fees, through sponsorship, was by far the most important factor that prevented children from being out of school (see Table 11 below). Although the participants were grateful for World Vision making it possible for their

Preventive factor	n	Percent Reporting
World Vision paying school fees	29	31.9
Providing food at school	10	11.0
Taking children to school when young	10	11.0
Parents monitoring children	9	9.9
Digging in someone’s farm, finding other jobs, work at school	8	8.8
Bursaries	7	7.7

Parents motivate	5	5.5
Parents punish	4	4.4
Peer education	4	4.4
Role models	3	3.3
Chief punishing parents	3	3.3
Police beat children	1	1.1

Table 11. The number and percentage of participants in group discussions who rated particular items as the top preventive factor in regard to out of school children in Marafa and Bamba (8 group discussions; n=91).

children to go to school, issues emerged of only the ‘bright’ children being sponsored, or only one person from a family being sponsored, resulting in jealousies and other children in the family not being able to go to school.

Parents also played a key role in preventing children from being out of school by, for example, taking young children to school. In order to obtain the money needed to pay school fees, parents sometimes dug in someone else’s farm or engaged in other work. For parents whose children were sponsored or who could pay school fees, parents monitored their children’s behavior. For example, they checked each night to see whether their children had ‘marks’ from their teacher in their books that indicated the children had in fact gone to school and done work. Also, parents went to school each week to check the attendance register, thereby insuring that children had gone to school rather than having skipped and engaged in delinquent behavior with peers. Parents were also seen as important in motivating children to stay in school.

The role of communities was visible as well since participants noted that peers often had a positive influence on keeping children in school, as did positive role models. Other community sources of prevention were the Chief punishing parents who kept their children out of school and the police beating children for having skipped school.

The preventive value of the school providing food is also noteworthy as it reminds one of the scarcity of food in the communities and the challenge of learning or having a positive experience in school on an empty stomach.

7. Linkage With Aspects of the Formal Child Protection System

This research identified the connectors who serve as points of linkage between the community people and the formal child protection system in Kenya. These connectors play a potentially important role since they are in a position to strengthen child protection response and prevention. In addition, a national child protection system would likely suffer serious challenges of alignment and congruence if there were a paucity of appropriate connectors across the formal

and nonformal aspects of the national system. If few or no linkages existed, there would be few channels through which cases involving violations against children—including statutory violations—would enter the formal system that was intended to handle such cases.

A method of contrasts was used to obtain a picture of whether and under what circumstances local people went to the connectors for help in regard to responding to or preventing harms to children. This method is useful since if one were to look only through the perspective of a Chief, for example, one might obtain a different picture whether and when people went to the Chief for support than might have been obtained by asking the same questions of a broad cross-section of people, as was done using the various methods that were featured in this study. This method of contrasts also made it possible to discern why people did not use a particular aspect of the formal system.

The Connectors

Chief

Primary among the connectors was the Chief, who was Government appointed and not only received various cases of child protection but also was engaged in outreach at the community level. In Bamba, the Chief received reports of early pregnancy from teachers, village elders, and the Assistant Chief, and then addressed the case through other government stakeholders, working with the District Children's Officer (DCO), the District Advisory Council (DAC), and the Location Advisory Council (LAC) as well as the police.

I receive information from very many stakeholders like the village elders, assistant chiefs. I also receive letters from the head teachers informing if a girl is pregnant... I report to the police and we work closely with the DCO [District Children's Officer] to handle the case. We also have a committee called DAC [District Advisory Council] that looks at children's welfare and we meet quarterly. At the location level, we have the LAC [Location Advisory Council]. The role of LAC is to look at the overall children's welfare, the rights of children, to ensure that children's rights are not abused.... We have educated parents on the rights of children, the right to education, food and shelter. We have also been educating them on early pregnancy and how to take those who make their children pregnant to court. We just assist the parents on what they need to do, the procedure and how not to interfere with the evidence. I can also go to court if need be.
(Key informant interview, Bamba)

Also, the Chief helped with rape cases by advising parents, helping parents to report at the police station, and taking the perpetrator to court if he were found.

I can receive the report from the parents of the child, from the village elder or from the neighbor. When we receive the reports, we educate the parents on how to preserve evidence like blood stains. We also tell them not to wash the child's clothes and just put them in a polythene paper and keep them. We also advise the parents to go to the doctor and get drugs before 72 hours elapse, so that the child can be protected from HIV/AIDS, just in case. I also help the parent to go and write a statement at the police

and I also ensure that the culprit, if found, is taken to court. When the rapist is not found, then the issue becomes difficult to proceed with. (Key informant interview, Bamba)

The Chief worked as part of a network of community authorities that included the village elder and also the Assistant Chief .

Assistant Chief

In some locations, the Assistant Chief served as the main operating officer in receiving cases pertaining to harms against children.

I receive a lot of cases in this office. There is no case that can go to court without passing this office. (Key informant interview, Marafa)

To address the problem of children out of school in order to work, the Assistant Chief tried to convince children to go to school, and engaged the teacher in making a special register so that he could monitor their attendance. Such attempts to convince children, however, were not widely effective, particularly in regard to children whose families were unable to pay the school fees.

The other issue is that there are so many boys who are involved in child labor.... Some were employed to look after cattle and others were employed in these small hotels you see around here. So what I did is that I called them and talked to them and I made them commit that they will go back to school. I also called the head teacher and told him to have a separate register for them so that I can also monitor if they are going to school and I am happy that they are now all in school. (Key informant interview, Marafa)

In some cases, the Assistant Chiefs were women who played an active role in preventing early pregnancy.

Most of the girls don't fear getting pregnant because the law protects them. That is why we came together as 'ladies chiefs.' All the women Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs in Bamba came together and we started girls' education in schools. So we always go round the community and visit all the schools where we talk with girls and advise them to concentrate in education and how to avoid getting pregnant while still going to school (Key informant interview, Bamba)

Village elder

The village elder was also a key connector in responding to harms to children, such as early pregnancy and children who were out of school, as well as linking with parents and the police.

There are a lot of cases of children refusing to go to school. So when a parent reports to me that a child has refused to go to school, I go to them and threaten them to go to school or else I will take them to the police. I even write their names down and tell them that I am taking their names to the police... I had some children who didn't want to go

to school because some of them had started riding 'boda boda' and money was becoming too sweet for them. So their parents came and reported to me and I went to their home at six o'clock in the morning and found them when they were still sleeping. I knocked on the door and ordered them to come out of the house. When they came out, I wrote their names down and told them to dress up and go to school or else I am taking their names to the police, and they all went to school and their parents were happy. (Key informant interview, Marafa)

R: You know when a child starts to smoke bhang, there are so many issues that come up. He can drop out of school and so on.

I: How do you handle such cases when you receive them?

R: I just advise the parent to go to the police.

I: And do they go to the police?

R: Yes. And those children get disciplined...They are made to wash the administration block for two weeks. (Key informant interview, Marafa)

Area Advisory Council

The Area Advisory Council (AAC) operated at the area level and included government officers such as the DCO and Chief, as well as key nonformal actors such as religious leaders. The AAC sensitized the community on children's rights, including the importance of education. They also rescued girls who had been married early by their parents.

We sensitize on children's rights, that parents should give them food, not given hard jobs. We go door to door and also to schools and madrasa... (Key informant interview, Bamba)

There are children who left school just without any reason and when we got the news, we called a meeting, called the parents and talked to them, then talked to those children and then they went back to school. We told the parents the importance of taking their children to school. We also told those children that education is very important and they should take it seriously, then they went back to school. There were also children who got married early, and we took them from where they were married back to their parent's home and we also ensured that they go back to school. (Key informant interview, Bamba)

AACs also formed groups in schools to address children's issues.

In each school, we formed groups of ten children per group. This group is responsible for identifying children's problems in schools and trying to find solutions to those problems. They have their own leaders whom they have elected. If there is any problem that they feel they cannot solve, then they take the issue to the head teacher, and there are changes in some schools as we speak. (Key informant interview, Bamba)

In working with parents, we use the school committee meetings and 'barazas' [community meetings]. For children, we mainly target schools and during the school

holidays, we take two children from each school to Kilifi and we train them on life skills. (Key informant interview, Bamba)

When cases of rape and early marriage failed in court due to an inability to verify the age of the girl, the case was referred back to the AAC, who then worked with the education office, which brought in trained teachers to counsel the girl and advise her to return to school.

I: What happens if you take a case to court and the child doesn't have a birth certificate?

R: We take the child to the hospital for age assessment and if the parent is defeated to pay, there is no way the case can proceed. We just bring them back here and we do counseling for them. We advise them to go to school after giving birth because there is nothing we can do

I: How do you advise them?

R: When the case fails to proceed in court, we refer the case to the AAC. The AAC will then connect with the education office because it is only the education office that has teachers who are equipped with enough skills to counsel children. So we sit as a committee [AAC] and call the child. The teacher will then counsel the child in front of the committee until the child realizes that she did a problem. We do the same to children who get pregnant, we also call them in the committee and the teachers counsel them. (Key informant interview, Marafa)

Beneath the AACs were Location Advisory Councils (LAC), which as multi-stakeholder forums resembled the AACs but operated at the location level, assisting in cases of children out of school, early pregnancy, early marriage, and child labor. The LAC in Bamba, known locally as *Hakiya Watoto* (children's rights), educated parents on children's rights to education, food and shelter, as well as how to take those who make their daughters pregnant to court.

District Children's Officer

The District Children's Officer (DCO) was a key connector who handles cases involving rape of children, early marriage, out of school children, and neglect, among others. The DCO worked closely with government officers such as Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs, as well as international and national NGOs. The DCO coordinated the AAC, and worked to bring criminal cases such as rape and serious physical abuse to court.

International NGOs

International NGOs were also local connectors who built the capacities of various partners, and received, referred, and helped to manage cases of child abuse. World Vision sensitized on early marriage and children's right to go to school, as well as provided sponsorships so some children could attend school.

We [the NGO] support the AAC by facilitating their meetings as well as offering training to them. We also support children in school, both in secondary and primary schools. So far, we have 4000 children who are being supported here in Bamba.... We

work together with the DCO and rescue the child [who has been married early]. There are also issues of rape, or what is normally referred to as defilement to children. We mostly receive some of these cases from the VCO and if they are cases of sexual abuse like rape, we refer to the DCO. In all our work, we work closely with the DCO. In child defilement and early marriage cases, we network most of the time with the DCO and also involve the local administration, like the Chiefs to follow up. The challenge is that we have these informal ways of solving issues in the village where most of these issues get solved without involving the relevant authority. You find that when a child is raped, they rarely report, they try and solve all those at the village level. Some parents are also willing to report but they can't afford transport from Bamba to Kilifi to go to the DCO's office, so they just keep quiet. (Key informant interview, Bamba)

AphiaPlus, a consortium of NGOs, helped support more than 50,000 orphans in the larger area of Kilifi and Malindi (the governments of which estimated that there were more than 200,000 orphans). They also worked with the local community health workers who monitored children's situation.

Community Based Organizations

Community based organizations connected with international NGOs by helping them with advocacy and also with social monitoring of community projects. One CBO focused on empowerment and health issues of people with disabilities, giving goats to caretakers of children with disabilities, providing wheelchairs and clothes to children, and advising them on their rights. Similarly, the Marafa Community Development Program heightened awareness about HIV and AIDS, and advocated on child labor and education for girls.

Community Health Workers

Community health workers served as connectors between the government health posts and clinics and the local community. Some of the community health workers who were supported by Aphia Plus checked on children's well being, gave them mosquito nets, water guards to purify water, and flour to make porridge.

We go check on the children, if they are fine, if they are going to school. You go to the home and ask if they are being treated well or not...This work is voluntary--there is not payment. (Key informant interview, Bamba)

Religious Leaders

Religious leaders were respected, significant community figures in their own right. They played an important connecting role since their work frequently engaged on community child protection issues and liaised with the groups and leaders discussed above. The Bamba Pastors Fellowship worked with World Vision in their child supportive projects. In addition, the Catholic Church supported orphans with school fees and constructed houses for some of the children. Muslim leaders went door to door in order to sensitize parents on children's rights.

Harms Identified By Stakeholders in the Formal System

In general, there was good convergence between the views of the Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs, elders, AAC members, and other formal system stakeholders with those of other citizens. The top harms to children identified by formal system stakeholders were out of school children, early pregnancy, poor parenting, sexual abuse, child labor, HIV/AIDS, orphans, early marriage, severe punishment, poverty, and lack of food. In addition, there was good agreement between stakeholders in the formal system in regard to the causes of various problems. For example, like ordinary citizens, stakeholders in the formal system viewed HIV/AIDS as the primary cause of orphans, who were universally seen as being subjected to maltreatment.

However, there were also numerous points of divergence between the views of stakeholders in the formal system and those of other citizens. For example, although ordinary citizens and workers in the formal system identified being out of school as a harm to children, community members tended to attribute this harm to not being able to pay school fees. In contrast, some workers in the formal system acknowledged school fees were a problem, whereas others reported that the culture, which did not value education, was to blame.

Parents who don't see the need of taking their children to school. You know in this area most parents have not seen the need to take their children to school. (Key informant interview, Bamba)

These problems of poor parenting and local culture are highlighted below.

Poor Parenting

Overall, stakeholders in the formal system placed greater emphasis than did other citizens on poor parenting as a source of harms to children such as early pregnancy and transactional sex.

The other harm to children are the parents. Children get affected with the fights between husbands and wives, and there is a lot of gender based violence here. Parents fight a lot in front of children, and that affects children negatively and teaches them bad behavior that people are always fighting. The same parents are the ones who don't take their children to school, so parents do a lot of harm to children. (Key informant interview, Bamba)

Here, parents are very big harms to children. Parents are not taking their responsibilities as parents--they don't want to play their part in the development of their children. The girls are the most affected. You know when girls start menstruating, parents don't buy them sanitary pads and therefore they have to look ways of getting them so they start begging from other people. Of course they will get people to help them but in exchange for something, and that is what leads to early pregnancies. Men will buy them those sanitary pads in exchange for sex. (Key informant interview, Bamba)

First and foremost, I would say that the problem in this area is the parents. There are many children who don't go to school because people marry many wives and they get many children and it therefore becomes difficult for those parents to take their children to school because they can't afford to pay school fees for all of them. So you find children just staying at home, they don't even attend nursery school and if they happen to go school, they start school very late. There are also these 'sherehe za usiku' [celebrations at night] like discos in funerals and weddings. It the same same parents who allow their children to go to these celebrations at night. An early pregnancy is another issue. Even though we are trying to teach children about early pregnancy, parents don't care. (Key informant interview, Bamba)

Parents in this area are not responsible at all, they don't even provide essential things like under wares to their children, they don't provide them with things like 'Always' [sanitary pads] or even simple cosmetics for the grown up girls. So, these children always try and find ways of getting all these things by themselves, and the easiest way to do it is to get men to buy these things for you because they don't have jobs, and some of them are still very young to even get employed or look for employment. So on that, I will put a big blame on the parents. (Key informant, Marafa)

In my opinion, parents are the root cause of everything; I totally blame the parents, not even these children. There are so many children who drop out of school. In this community, you will find that if a girl drops out of school, she automatically gets married when they are still very young and we have had so many incidences of these young girls dying when giving birth. You will find a 13 year old girl pregnant and you wonder what is wrong? (Key informant, Marafa)

Parents always collude with some of their relatives in Mombasa to look for jobs for their girls as house helps. So most of these girls go to work in Mombasa as house helps. I have also heard of some other cases, though I don't have evidence to this, that some of the girls also end up becoming prostitutes there.... Prostitution business is thriving there and most of these girls are lured to drop out of schools because there is a lot of money involved. (Key informant interview, Bamba)

In contrast to ordinary citizens, the stakeholders in the formal system viewed parents not sending young children to nursery school as an enabler of future harms. Girls who had been kept out of nursery school frequently started primary school late and came into puberty while still in early levels of school, where they were impregnated by schoolmates or teachers. Similarly, boys were said to be more susceptible to bad peer influences if they had not been taken to nursery school. However, the fact that nursery schools were not free prevented poor parents from sending their children to these schools.

Culture as a Problem

Another point of divergence was that stakeholders in the formal system identified culture as a problem, whereas ordinary citizens did not. For example, workers in the formal system tended to

see the local culture as a source of problems such as early marriage, incest, child labor, and not sending girls to school.

Issues like early marriage and early pregnancies are their cultural practice where girls were married early as soon as their breasts started coming out. So some of them still practice them to date (Key informant interview, Bamba)

Even though the practice [early marriage] has reduced a bit now, but so many people still do it. But they hide it, they don't want people to know because they know that they might get arrested...There's nothing that people do. The parents will receive dowry and they will be happy. (Key informant, Marafa)

The Giriama culture is a big harm to children. The girls are overworked while the boys just relax, they do nothing at home. So many girls are affected in school because of a lot of work at home, she works the whole night, fetching water long distances, pounds maize, cleans the house, cooks, everything. Girls literally do everything. So when they go to school, they are very tired, they doze in class, they don't even concentrate and some of them end up failing and dropping out of school. In the same culture, girls' education is also not emphasized, only boys are taken to school. Parents say that there is no need of taking girls to school because they will get married and even the girls have now grown up with that mentality and they are also not interested in going to school. Before it was early marriage, but that has gone down. Nowadays, it is that parents do not want to take children to school. (Key informant, Bamba)

I also wanted to mention that there are some cultural factors that contribute to some of the risks to children in this community. There are night ceremonies like 'matanga' [funeral related ceremonies]. There are so many children who engage in sexual activities in these ceremonies and so many girls end up getting pregnant. Once a girl has attended these celebrations, there is a high probability that she will engage in sex. She will either be forced by boys and her friends to do it, or she will willingly do it and they do it without using condoms. That is why most of these children get pregnant very early. Another way is that when parents go to these 'matangas,' they leave their children at home and boys take advantage of the situation. So they will go to these girls' homes and sleep with them when their parents are not there. (Key informant interview, Bamba)

In general, the stakeholders in the formal system were much more likely to identify incest as an issue than were other citizens.

There are also issues of incest in this area. Though there are few, but they are there. (Key informant interview, Bamba)

The stakeholders in the formal system were also more likely than were other citizens to cite money and power as related to sexual abuse.

The other harm is here are these 'boda bodas'. Most of the 'boda boda' riders are school drop outs and most of them have money that they use to disturb [entice into sexual

activities] girls and even the girls end up dropping out of school. (Key informant interview, Bamba)

There are also these BOG [Board of Governors] teachers who are employed when they have just completed college. These teachers are very young boys and when they go to these schools, they see some of the girls in school as their age mates and they have sex with them and ends up impregnating them. But the teacher's association always help teachers whenever they are accused of impregnating girls, there are teachers who even get lawyers from these associations and there is no way you can defeat them in court. Even recently, there is another teacher who murdered a child. He was arrested and released just after a few hours and he is still in school teaching (Key informant, Bamba)

Abuse of Children With Disabilities

Yet another area of divergence was in regard to children with disabilities. Whereas the situation of these children was not raised by ordinary citizens, stakeholders in the formal system expressed considerable concern over children with disabilities. The formal system stakeholders reported that children with disabilities were considered a curse, were not taken to school, and were hidden in their homes. Also, children with disabilities were abused by their families, and experienced sexual abuse because they were unable to defend themselves or report the violation to authorities.

Just to visit again the issue of children with disability, children were not taking their children to school because they believed that they are bad omen. I have heard of some rumors that some were killed, though I don't have evidence to support my claim. But what I am sure of is that most of them were hidden. When you go to these primary schools that we have, you will not find these children with disabilities, but they are there in the villages. They were not even taken to hospitals, even for immunization and most of them have really suffered. (District officer, key informant interview, Bamba)

R: I will start by talking about children with disability. Children with disability in this community face so many challenges their care takers have neglected. Almost all of them are malnourished. They are left naked and they are hidden inside the houses. Through awareness that we have tried to do, at least the situation is slightly better now. Some of these children are sexually abused

I: How are they sexually abused?

R: There are those who have been raped because you know most of them can't even walk and they can't even run away. So some people take advantage of them because they are helpless. In Bamba, there are very few special schools that can serve disabled children. Those children are not taken to school because it is a burden to their parents. They also need special facilities to move around which the parents can't offer. There are also cases where these disabled children are locked into small rooms because the parents say that they are a shame to them, especially when the visitors come. Some of these children, I wish you would have a chance to see them, some of them are like wild animals.

I: *What do you mean they are like wild animals?*

R: *They are completely not taken care of--they have dirty clothes, they have very shaggy hair, they are dirty and the moment they see human beings they literally run away, they hide because they are not used to seeing human beings. They are always locked inside the house....*

R: *People believe that a child with disability is a curse.* (Teacher, key informant interview, Bamba)

To start with, children with disabilities are so much disadvantaged in this community. On education, these children are not taken to school, some of them are hidden inside the house and not taken out of the house because in this community, people believe that having a disabled child is a curse and people are ashamed of having them. (Key informant, Bamba)

Child Rights

Of interest, some actors within the formal system--the very people who were mandated to promote and protect children's rights--viewed child rights as harmful to children. They noted that in the past, before child rights had been taught to local people, girls who became pregnant were unable to go to school. Viewing this inability to attend school as a deterrent to girls becoming pregnant, they saw child rights and associated Kenyan laws that empowered pregnant girls to attend school as tacitly encouraging girls to become pregnant.

The law says that they should give birth and go back to school. This 'haki za watoto' [children's rights] is a big challenge. Though majority of these children feel shy to go back to school after giving birth and they end up dropping out, but most of them don't fear getting pregnant because the law protects them. (Key informant, Bamba)

But I will say again that this 'haki za watoto' have contributed immensely to this issue of early pregnancies. Nowadays these children don't fear getting pregnant, they know very well that they will give birth and go back to school and there's nothing that parents can do to them. (Key informant, Bamba)

Children who are going to school love to have fun and so many girls end up getting pregnant. Those people who are talking about 'haki za watoto' have really spoiled children in this area. Giving birth to these girls have now become fun, and they don't care. They just give birth and go back to school because haki za watoto says that they should give birth and then go back to school. So these children just continue doing these and they are not told their wrong side. They are not told that what they are doing is wrong. They are just told 'give birth and go back to school', that's all. (Key informant, Bamba)

Other formal system actors saw child rights as having undermined people's ability to discipline children using methods of corporal punishment.

Before, we used to tell the parents to beat them thoroughly, but today that is not possible because of this 'haki ya watoto.' The children's rights people are on our neck and so many children nowadays know their rights, you don't just beat them like that... You might find yourself in court and losing your job. So what we do is that we just counsel them. (Key informant, Marafa)

Willingness to Report Child Protection Issues Through the Formal Child Protection System

As discussed above, the participants were willing to report various harms to children such as children being out of school to authorities such as elders or Chiefs. An important question for any child protection system, though, is whether people were willing to report statutory violations against children. To address this questions, the participants in some of the group discussions¹⁷ on prevention activities were asked whether people living in their community would be willing to report to government officials (1) a case of child rape by someone outside the child's family, and (2) a case of child rape by someone 'within the family.' The former was widely understood to be a statutory crime that citizens were required to report through the formal system. The latter case was included because sexual abuse within families was reportedly widespread, yet evidence from the UNICEF KAP survey in 2011¹⁸ had indicated a lower willingness to report rape of a child in the family context. A decision was taken to include such a case here because the unwillingness to report such a crime has potentially serious implications for the national child protection system.

In the case of rape of a child by someone outside the family, 76.1% of the participants said that people would report the rape to a government official, whereas 23.9% of the participants said people would not report the rape. In the case of rape of a child by a relative, 67.6% said people would report the offense to a government official, compared to 32.4% who said people would not report (see Figure 9 on the following page). However, in individual interviews, participants expressed a much lower willingness to report rape by a relative. Overall, the discussion data on this issue were likely affected by group biases. Even though the participants were not discussing what they would do personally, the knowledge that the law required the reporting of criminal offences could have made participants reluctant to say in a group setting that most people would not report.

The qualitative data revealed reasons why people would not report a case of child rape to government authorities. In the case of rape of a child by a stranger, participants said that it was a waste of time since no action would be taken.

Sometimes you report, but no action is taken. (Teenage girls, group discussion, Marafa)

Some people also say that the police would do nothing. (Men, group discussion, Bamba)

¹⁷ Some of the group discussions were not included because one of the researchers did not follow the research protocol.

¹⁸ UNICEF (2011).

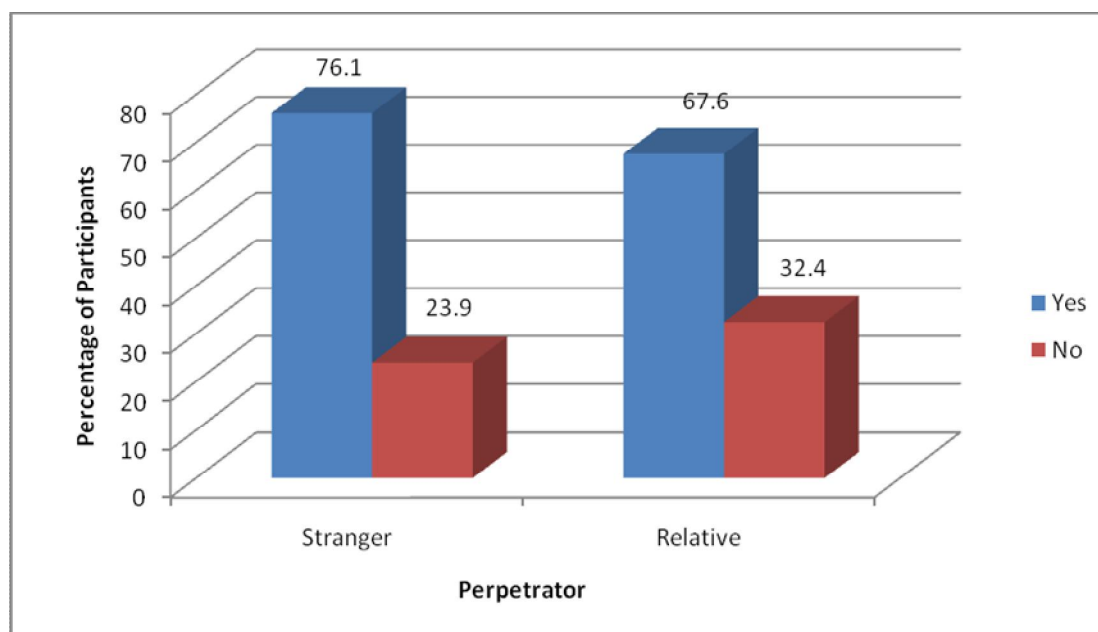


Figure 9. Participants' responses (n=71) when asked 'Are people here willing to report a case of child rape to government officials?'

Because even if you report it, the matter will not be solved. The police will come and pretend that they are doing the investigations and the matter just disappears like that. So you better take your child to the hospital and make sure that she is treated instead of wasting your time to go to the police. (Men, group discussion, Bamba)

Even AAC members said nothing happened when they reported cases to the Chief, Assistant Chief, or Volunteer Children's Officer.

I have personally reported a case of four boys who had dropped out of school but the case hanged... I reported to the Acting Chief and he said that he will take action but nothing happened. At as we speak, all those boys are not going to school... They were 16 and 17 years old. One of them now rides boda boda and the other three went to Malindi... There were also girls who dropped out of school and I reported the case to the VCO but nothing happened. (AAC member, key informant interview, Marafa)

One of the reported reasons for inaction following the reporting of a rape was that the parents of the girl who had been raped were given money by the family of the perpetrator of the rape.

The problem we have here is that when our children start seeing their breasts coming out, they can't control it. Recently, a standard seven went home late and her mother brought her here. When I asked her where she was, she openly said that she had a man- she didn't deny. So what I did is that I forwarded the matter to the doctor at the hospital to check whether the girl had been engaged in sexual activities so that we could proceed with the case to court. The girl is 17 years old. The mother also wanted to proceed with the case to court, and we agreed that they should come back the

following day. When she came back the following day, she said that she is not proceeding with the case to court because she had talked to the parents of the boy and they had come to an agreement... I learnt that the parents of the boy had paid her some money... Apparently, the girl had been forced to have sex by this boy. But they decided to solve it by themselves. (Key informant interview, Marafa)

Fear also contributed to a lack of reporting. For example, the participants said that to report a rape of a child might bring themselves under suspicion or evoke revenge by the rapist.

R4: When you are not related to the child, the police might suspect you as one of the people who were involved, and you might end into trouble, so you better keep quiet. (Young men, group discussion, Bamba)

R1: Sometimes you report, then that person is arrested and jailed. When he comes out, he comes to rape you too.

R5: The police may not even take action and then you are followed by the rapist. (Teenage girls, group discussion, Marafa)

A practical obstacle to reporting cases such as rape was the requirement of the parents to submit a P3 form, which cost 1,000 KSH (approximately \$12, which is a large sum by local standards). Most parents were unable to pay this amount, although some families received support from World Vision and other NGOs to make the payments.

The Children's Act is clear on that, the problem is just the requirements. When a child is defiled, raped, impregnated or gets married early, for that person to be arrested and for the case to proceed well, he should be over 18 years and I should make sure that the parents of the girl get a P3 form. For you to get a P3 form, there are payments that have to be made of about one thousand shillings. After completing that P3 form, it has to be taken to the police, at the gender desk, and it is the police who have to write an arrest warrant to go and arrest this person. The problem comes in when the parents cannot raise that money for the P3 form and they end up withdrawing. When they withdraw, there's no way you can arrest that person. Although there are some NGOs that have come in to assist... We have World Vision and they have tried to come in and pay all those charges whenever there are those issues that I mentioned earlier. But World Vision just works in a few locations like in Marafa, Bungale, Hadu, but the other places have not been lucky enough to get that support. At times we are even forced to pay our own money in order for the parent to get that P3 form and to travel all the way to Malindi and it's a burden to us because we also have our own families to support. (District officer, key informant interview, Marafa)

Turning next to the case of rape of a child by a family member, people were reluctant to report because it was a shame and also a 'family matter' to be resolved by the family.

R1: Some people are just ashamed to report such cases.

R4: They say that people would start talking bad about their families.

R7: You cannot go in between affairs of a family. (Teenage girls, group discussion, Marafa)

R1: *If it is your brother, there is no way you can report your brother to the police, you will just sit down as a family and solve it.*

R8: *When you report it, everyone will know and it will be a shame to the family. So you better solve it as a family.*

R2: *You just sit down as a family and warn that person not to do it again. (Young men, group discussion, Bamba)*

Participants also said people would not report if the relative was a bread winner or provided support to the family.

The rapist might be the only person in the family who supports the education of every child in that home, so when you take him to the police, then you may be hated by all in that home. (Teenage girls, group discussion, Marafa)

There were also indications that people would report sexual abuse of a child by a father only if everyone, including an opinion leader, knew about it. Even then, reporting was interfered with by practical obstacles such as the distance to reach the officer who received such reports.

There are also issues of incest in this area. Though there are few, but they are there. When a father for example rapes a child, it is never reported, you will never hear about it. They always try to solve them 'kienyeji' [traditionally]. Incest cases are only reported if the whole village becomes aware of it and an opinion leader in the village, or the VCO gets to know about the matter. Otherwise, they don't report such cases. The biggest challenge in handling some of these defilement and incest cases is that there is only one DCO who is supposed to be stationed in Ganze, but most of the time he is in Kilifi where the court is. (Key informant interview, Bamba)

The participants indicated that in general, people preferred to solve problems locally rather than go through the formal system.

But sometimes you find that they don't report some of these cases, they just solve them down there in the village. (Key informant, Marafa)

Seeking a local solution frequently entailed payment by the family of the perpetrator to the family of the girl. The rape would only be reported to the chief or to police when no payment was made.

The only problem we have here in trying to handle some of these cases is that people tend to solve some of these issues 'kienyeji' [locally] because they come from the same village. People find it hard to report each other or accuse someone of doing so and so, instead, they just sit down and solve it by themselves... We don't handle criminal cases like rape, defilement and when we receive these cases, what we do is that we refer them to the relevant office. If they are under 18 years, we refer them to the DCO; we don't leave them to the elders to handle them. But sometimes you find that they don't report some of these cases, they just solve them down there in the village. When I receive a case of a child who has been raped, I advise the parents to take that child to the hospital immediately and then go to the police to take a P3 form. But most people here

report those cases to the village elder and they try and solve it down there. Those cases will only reach my office when there's no payment made...When the family of the boy who has raped the girl fails to pay the parents of the girl, that is when they will come to me. And most of the time they come when it is too late, when even the evidence has been interfered with and there's nothing you can do about it. (Key informant interview, Marafa)

I: So how do you handle cases of children being raped when they are reported to you?

R: When I receive a case of a child who has been raped, I advise the parents to take that child to the hospital immediately and then go to the police to take a P3 form. But most people here report those cases to the village elder and they try and solve it down there. Those cases will only reach my office when there's no payment made

I: What do you mean when there's no payment made?

R: When the family of the boy who has raped the girl fails to pay the parents of the girl, that is when they will come to me. And most of the time they come when it is too late, when even the evidence has been interfered with and there's nothing you can do about it. (Key informant, Marafa)

Moreover, some young men indicated a preference for delivering justice themselves in cases of rape by someone outside the family.

You stone the animal to death. He does not deserve to live. (Young men, group discussion, Bamba).

Key informants from the formal system reported that even when the formal system was used, local methods were used to follow up if the girl tested positive for HIV. In such a case, the girl was forced by her parents to marry the rapist. However, if the girl tested negative, then the girl was told to go back to school and the rapist was arrested if he had been identified and apprehended.

R: The child is immediately taken to the hospital and tested for HIV. If the girl tests positive, then people start looking for the rapist. If he is caught, then he is taken straight to the police and then the boy is forced to marry that girl because he has already slept with the girl and infected her with HIV.

I: Who forces the boy to marry the girl?

R: The girl's parents and they will threaten the boy that they will take him to the police if he doesn't marry the girl.

I: And if the girl tests negative?

R: Then they just take out the sperms at the hospital and then she is told to go back to school. If the rapist is known, then he's arrested and taken to jail. (Key informant, Marafa)

In some cases, the local solutions sometimes involved the conduct of rituals as well.

The perpetrator is asked by the clan members to produce a sheep, which is slaughtered and the feces mixed with some medicine and sprinkled all over the whole village so as to cleanse them of any calamity that may want to befall them because of that curse...If

that is not done, then you may have this disease called 'kumwaga nu kuhahika' [diarrhea and vomiting], and this kills so fast. (Teenage girls, group discussion, Marafa)

Other Problems in the Functioning of the Formal System

The stakeholders in the formal child protection system identified other obstacles to the effective use of the formal system. In regard to early pregnancy, a significant problem was the lack of birth certificates, which made it difficult to prove that a girl was under 18 years of age. To determine a girl's age, the parents had to pay a 2,000 KSH fee, which many families could not afford. Also, parents were often unwilling to report if the girl could be married or if the parents received compensation.

I receive so many cases of early pregnancies, but the challenge is that so many children do not have birth certificates so when you go to the hospital for the age to be determined, you are told that the girl is 18 years, who is an adult. (Key informant interview, Bamba)

And the birth certificate is what determines how these cases of early marriage and early pregnancies proceed in courts. If the certificates are not there, we will have to do what is called age assessment, and this age assessment costs two thousand shillings which so many parents cannot pay. There's serious need for children to have birth certificates in this area because when you go to court, they will tell they want evidence, and the evidence is the birth certificate, not just a mere talk. (Key informant, Marafa)

Other challenges in regard to early pregnancy were the lack of a Rescue Center and the parents' lack of cooperation with authorities.

On the issue of early marriage, we get so many cases here, but the only challenge is that we don't have a Rescue Center. What we do is that after rescuing that child from the husband, we have to take her back to her parent's home, to her family. In most of the times, because this marriage is always an arrangement between both parents, the parents of the girl always take these girls back to their husbands and at times, they even run away and go to either Malindi or Mombasa and you can't find them. (Key informant, Marafa)

R: *With the early marriage, I also receive reports from the Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs and the head teachers. When I get such cases, we retrieve those girls and take them back to their parent's homes. The only challenge is that we get very little support from parents*

I: *What do the parents do?*

R: *Because it is mostly the parents who marry these children off, they are always not willing to take the matter to court and even if the matter gets to court, they always insist that they are above 18 years old. And according to the law, that's an adult and there's nothing you can do about it (Key informant, Bamba)*

These problems notwithstanding, workers in the formal system said that they usually solved early pregnancy cases between families or with the village elder, who reported it to the Assistant Chief. In turn, the Assistant Chief reported the matter to the District Officer (DO). The DO gave the man punishment and told him to take full responsibility of the child.

The DO will discipline the man who made the girl pregnant... He is just given a slight punishment, he might be caned...by the DO's police officers. Then the girl will go back to school after giving birth, but the man is told to take full responsibility of the child.
(Man, key informant interview, Bamba)

This pattern of divergence between what families preferred to do--settle matters of early pregnancy themselves--and what workers in the formal system thought should happen, hints at a wider disconnect between local beliefs and practices and those enshrined in the formal system.

Disconnect Between Local Beliefs and Practices and the Formal System

The disconnect between local practices and those enshrined in Kenyan law and the formal child protection system was visible in the patterns of response to harms to children. Broadly, the participants favored the use of the less formal or nonformal pathways of response through the extended family and nonformal aspects of the community. With regard to a criminal offense such as the rape of a child, however, many people were willing to report through the formal system, although significant numbers of people preferred to handle the matter through the nonformal system. In this respect, the disconnect was partial.

The disconnect, however, had other dimensions as well, particularly in regard to views of what counted as a harm to children. For example, child protection workers and child rights proponents were quick to point out that early marriage was a significant harm to girls. As discussed earlier, most local people did not view early marriage as a harm to children. According to one cultural practice (*kadzama*), a man could marry a young girl after having given her father eight bottles of palm wine.

The culture here is a bit cruel on the girl child and even the practice of 'kadzama' is a cultural practice. After the father is given 'kadzama,' which is just 8 bottles of palm wine, the child automatically becomes married... Most girls are married at a very early age while they are still very young, some are even taken out of school to go and get married. You know early marriage is a cultural practice and it has been difficult to get rid of it. There are girls as young as 13 years old getting married, and it is their fathers who facilitate everything. When they go to the 'mangwe' [palm wine den] to drink 'mnazi' [palm wine], they take this 'kadzama' in exchange for their daughters... The father would go to the 'mangwe' to drink and someone would just offer to buy him palm wine in exchange for his daughter. So they would have an agreement there at the 'mangwe' and finalize everything. When the father comes back home, he just gives his daughter to the man who had bought him the palm wine. So if he has so many daughters then he would just be drinking and giving away his daughters. (Key informant interview, Marafa)

The divergence between the formal system and local beliefs and practices was notable also in regard to other harms such as corporal punishment, the sexual exploitation of girls, and the maltreatment of children with disabilities. As discussed above, each of these practices was widespread and embedded in local social norms, but each was illegal under Kenyan national law and was incongruent with international child rights standards.

A disconnect also existed within the formal system itself, particularly in regard to child rights. Whereas Kenyan laws and policies unequivocally support children's rights, some workers within the formal system engaged in practices such as child beating that violated children's rights and even saw child rights as harmful to children. These cases, which reflect a gap between local social norms and the formal system, remind us that much work is needed to resolve these disconnects, change local social norms that cause harm to children, and improve the alignment between the formal and the nonformal parts of the child protection system.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this research paint a picture of unaddressed child protection harms and limited effectiveness of the current mechanisms of response and prevention. Overall, the picture is one of struggling nonformal and formal systems that at present are not adequate to achieve the protection of children in the predominantly rural areas of Kilifi. Although the results are perhaps less dramatic than those of the preceding study of two urban slums in Mombasa,¹⁹ they nonetheless have important implications for understanding the current situation and guiding efforts to strengthen community-based child protection mechanisms and child protection systems. These are presented below in a spirit of dialogue, together with recommendations on how to move forward.

1. Poverty and structural violence were drivers of many of the observed harms to children.

It was telling in this research that, despite the researchers' efforts to keep discussions focused on child protection harms rather than issues such as poverty per se, the latter intruded in a consistent and illuminating manner. Lack of food, which emerged as the top ranked harm to children, related directly to poverty. Also related to poverty were the second and third ranked harms to children. Early pregnancy related to poverty since girls frequently used sex as a means of obtaining necessities such as food and sanitary towels that their families were unable to provide. Similarly, significant numbers of children were out of school because of their families' inability to pay school fees. However, it was noteworthy that the poverty was not homogeneous, as approximately 30% of the residents in the villages included in this research were relatively well off in terms of socio-economic status. In this respect, it is useful to think not only about poverty alone but about the wealth gap that made the children of some families much more susceptible to problems such as going hungry, being out of school, or engaging in exploitative sex.

To address these issues, it will be useful to integrate social protection and child protection work. Historically, these approaches have been independent and have been conducted as separate sectors or silos in the humanitarian arena. Yet there are two powerful reasons for bringing them together in the service of supporting vulnerable children and families. First, child protection work by itself has frequently been unable to address some of the most serious child protection issues because it has not adequately included economic dimensions such as sustainable livelihoods. Without the inclusion of robust economic dimensions, it will not likely be possible to address problems such as out of school children and early pregnancy. Second, existing evidence indicates that the benefits of social protection activities such as cash transfers to vulnerable families seldom reach the most vulnerable children.²⁰ A promising approach is to integrate social protection with a child protection lens in a manner that insures that benefits actually reach the most vulnerable children.

Recommendations:

¹⁹ Kostelny et al. (2013).

²⁰ Child Protection Livelihoods and Strengthening Task Force (2013).

1. Child protection practitioners should strengthen child protection practice by systematically integrating the full range of economic and livelihood supports, including social protection, with child protection, insuring that the benefits reach highly vulnerable children. This will likely require team based approaches in which child protection specialists and economists collaborate in a systematic manner.

2. The Kenyan Government and donors should make available economic and livelihood supports that will be deliberately designed and monitored so as to reach highly vulnerable children.

2. The views of harms to children varied according to gender, SES, and age.

The results of this research illuminated how the category 'children' is far from homogeneous and includes a diversity that needs to be taken into account in efforts to support child protection and well-being. The fact that child protection issues varied by gender was visible in the ranking of early pregnancy among the top harms to children. In addition, although being out of school was viewed as a serious harm for both girls and boys, the burden of this problem was heavier for girls since many parents favored sending their boys to school.

The views of which harms to children were most serious also varied by SES. In particular, people from low SES households, who were often unable to pay children's school fees, were more likely than were people from high SES households to rate out of school children as the top ranked harm to children. Also, people from high SES households were more likely than were people from low SES households to identify early pregnancy as a top-ranked harm, possibly because people from high SES households were in a better position to prevent early pregnancy and would likely have suffered greater status loss had an early pregnancy in their household occurred.

Age effects were also conspicuous. For example, young children were more likely than were teenagers to express concerns about being pinched or hit, carrying heavy loads, stepping in feces, seeing people smoke bhang, or seeing people quarrel. The fact that there is no monolithic 'child' and that children have very diverse perspectives and lived experiences according to age, gender, and SES cautions against attempts to take a 'one size fits all' approach to child protection programming.

Recommendations:

(1) Practitioner assessments of child protection risks, resources, and mechanisms should use child friendly methods in order to include, compare, and contrast the voices and perspectives of girls and boys at different stages of development and from high SES and low SES families;

(2) Practitioners should make girls' and boys' voices and views central in discussions of what are appropriate, desired outcomes of child protection mechanisms and the wider national child protection system;

(3) Practitioners should not use 'one size fits all' programs for children and should tailor interventions in a manner that meets the needs of different subgroups; and

(4) Practitioners should support a process of dialogue and increased understanding between children and adults on issues of child protection and well-being.

3. Being in school was a significant preventive factor in regard to harms such as sexual exploitation and early pregnancy, yet being in school was associated with harms such as beatings and discrimination.

The protective value of being in school for both girls and boys was a consistent finding in this research. Girls who were in school were less likely to get involved in work as domestic servants, which often led to sexual exploitation. Also, girls who were in school and who focused on getting an education were less likely to have an early pregnancy. Once girls were out of school, they became susceptible to a host of interacting harms such as early pregnancy and sexual exploitation as a means of meeting their basic needs. Similarly, boys who were in school were less likely to be engaged in heavy or dangerous labor or to work as *boda boda* drivers, who frequently exploited girls and were at risk of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS.

Although keeping children in school emerged as a preventive factor, it should also be noted that many participants, including children, identified schools as places where children were harmed by beatings, humiliation and discrimination, and sexual abuse by teachers. For these reasons, work to keep children in school should be coupled with efforts to make schools safe, supportive environments for children, as has been done in UNICEF's Safe Schools initiative.

Recommendations:

(1) NGOs and civil society groups should strengthen advocacy efforts with schools and the Kenyan Government to ensure that vulnerable families are exempted from having to pay school related levies for their children;

(2) The Kenyan Government, NGOs, and community groups should provide livelihood supports such as access to social protection for vulnerable families in child friendly ways that improve children's access to schools and health care;

(3) Practitioners should support families in their efforts to keep children in school;

(4) The Kenyan Government should prioritize efforts to strengthen the schools as a protective environment for children, including the use of positive methods of discipline and the provision of sanitary towels for girls.

4. Preventive factors were identifiable yet had limited capacity and reach.

Ecological approaches to children's protection and well-being feature the importance of factors at different levels such as family, peer group, school, wider community, and societal levels. In this research, preventive factors were visible at diverse levels. For example, parents played a key role in protecting girls from early pregnancy by teaching good behavior and advising their daughters. Families played a key role in preventing children from being out of school by paying school fees, or, when that was not possible, taking on additional work in order to earn the money needed to pay school fees and keep their children from being out of school.

The protective value of peer influences was visible in, for example, the effects of older girls who served as positive role models by not becoming pregnant out of wedlock, or the effects of youth groups that provided peer education that aimed to reduce early pregnancy. In schools, pregnancy tests helped to encourage girls to avoid early pregnancy, and the provision of food reportedly helped to prevent children from dropping out of school. At community level and beyond, international NGOs were active in preventing children from being out of school by, for example, helping families to pay their children's school fees.

In protecting children and supporting their well-being, it will be valuable to build upon these existing strengths. At the same time, however, it is important to note that these preventive factors were under strain and fell far short of being able to meet the existing needs. The poorest families had very limited ability to keep their children in school or to avert their daughters' early pregnancy. Peer influences were valuable, yet they were not capable in and of themselves to keep children in school in all cases or to prevent early pregnancy. The support from international NGOs was highly valued by parents and community members yet did not extend to all the most vulnerable families in a community or to all the communities in which children were at risk of being out of school.

Recommendations:

- (1) Practitioners should include in assessments a mapping of preventive factors and other assets for different sub-groups of children;***
- (2) Practitioners should engage and collaborate with parents, youth groups, peer leaders, and school based groups in preventing harms to children;***
- (3) Practitioners should make prevention a high priority in programming by building on and strengthening existing preventive factors.***

5. Local views regarding childhood and harms to children diverged in important respects from the views enshrined in international child rights standards and Kenyan national law.

There was partial overlap between local views of harms to children and those enshrined in international standards such as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and Kenyan national law. For example, local people's views about the importance of children being in school resonated with the right to education that is prominent in the African Charter. Such convergences, however, were overshadowed by a number of very significant gaps or divergences between local and international views. Whereas international child protection standards and also the new Kenyan Constitution (Article 29) prohibit harsh corporal punishment, many local people said that beating of children was necessary for teaching them good behavior. Even people such as Chiefs, elders, police, and teachers who worked within the formal protection system frequently used corporal punishment to discipline children. Similarly, early marriage (under the age of 18 years) is a concern by international standards and is prohibited by the 2013 Marriage Bill in Kenya, yet it was regarded as an acceptable local practice. More broadly, there was a gap in regard to the treatment of girls. Although the sexual exploitation of girls was seen as a harm, there was a tendency locally to see it as an unavoidable part of the lives of girls, particularly

those from poor households. In contrast, international standards take a strong view against the sexual exploitation of girls.

In these and other respects, there is poor alignment between international child protection standards and Kenyan national law and the child protection system that exists on the ground. This research suggests that the poor alignment owes in no small part to the strength of social norms and cultural practices that run counter to Kenyan laws and international child protection standards. These findings complement others that show that although Kenya has a relatively comprehensive set of child protection laws, those laws have sometimes been implemented in ways that unintentionally harm children.²¹ A major concern in strengthening the national child protection system is to ensure that child protection laws are actually enforced in an appropriate manner. Existing evidence suggests that better alignment will not come through top-down approaches such as teaching about child rights but through dialogue oriented approaches that build upon the points of overlap between local views and those expressed in international child rights standards.²²

Recommendations:

(1) A high priority for the Kenyan Government and practitioners should be to reduce the widespread use of harsh corporal punishment that is evident in both the formal and nonformal domains of child protection;

(2) Practitioners should train parents on positive methods for disciplining children and support local groups in advocating for the use of positive methods;

(3) Practitioners should use respectful, dialogue oriented processes to introduce ideas of child rights and child responsibilities, with engagement of adults as well as children.

As these findings and recommendations suggest, a key to strengthening the child protection system in Kenya will be to learn from the lived experiences of children, families, and communities, thereby taking a grounded approach to system strengthening.

²¹ Cooper (2012).

²² Wessells (2009). For an example of dialogue oriented approach, see Wessells (2011), p. 106.

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