



For the Strength of
Women; For the Strength
of Africa

Special Point of Interest:

“Positive Masculinity is the positive use of men’s characteristics for healthy relationships especially with women and girls in the society. It entails respect and upholding women rights and viewing women and girls as human beings worthy of love.”

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THE LINK

A NEWSLETTER BY WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT LINK
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NAIROBI WEST: Establishment of Dagoretti and Kangemi GBV Working Groups

Kibera, Dagoretti and Kangemi located in Nairobi West with a high population due to the informal settlements. Gender based violence has been recognized as a challenge to the well being of women and children. Women’s Empowerment Link (WEL) has once again joined hands with government and civil society stakeholders to promote women rights to health, protection as well as their social economic well being of women. This quarter saw the birth of two vibrant GBV working groups with membership from civil society and government. The partnership has seen the strategic action plans on prevention and response to SGBV in Dagoretti and Kangemi in a bid to network and improve & coordinate prevention and response to GBV in the areas.

WEL as the technical partner, took the GBV working group members through the key roles of the working groups. The key role is to address health, protection and security, psychosocial support and livelihood, legal assistance, education and training and research and documentation.

The emphasis on the establishment of the working groups among the members is ownership and ensure that the high rates of violations against women have been addressed at the community level. The group will select their leaders and further distribute duties and responsibilities. The group will develop terms of reference that will guide their interactions.

The group members from Kangemi and Dagoretti borrowed



Dagoretti GBV Working

a leaf from Kibera GBV working group that has been in existence for over one year. An exchange visit was organized where the members participated in the Kibera GBV working group.

“ Gender based Violence is a Community problem

and requires a Community based action

A Safe Spaces & Shelters Milestone in the Fight Against GBV

“We may still have a long way to go but we are somehow seeing the fruits of the fight against Gender Based Violence (GBV) in the Kibera Area” declares Amina, a safe space representative. She recounted a story of an ongoing case in which a girl was raped by a man whom she had broken up with. The lady agreed to meet him on request

to meet and discuss a few things .“He raped her, beat her up and left her in the dead of the night” she said.

The case was reported to the active members of the Kibera GBV working group and she was hosted in one of the safe spaces and the matter was pursued and is currently in court.

Unlike in many other regions Kibera has the advantage of an active community through a well coordinated GBV working group.

“Strengthening Community response and prevention to GBV; Enhancing safety for women”

“The Slum Made Me”



Betty, the Kangemi GBV Working Group Coordinator

Interesting, robust and a leader are the precise definitions that can be used to describe Betty Hamud, the Kangemi GBV working group coordinator and a leader in her own way to the people of Westlands constituency.

Born and raised in Mathare slum in Kasarani constituency, Betty says her growing up phase was very difficult as other children would always tease her because of her different skin colour and hair. She knew she was different as far as her skin colour and hair was concerned but all in all, they lived similar lives.

“My mother was Kikuyu whilst my father was of Arab origin, though he died when my mother was six months pregnant”, she says.

She says that growing up in the slum was a challenge on its own as drugs, drinking and prostitution were a daily occurrence and though her mother was not very educated, she pushed her to aim to be a better person in life.

Betty recounts how when she was 9 years old, she once stopped the Late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta’s motorcade, a feat she prides herself with up to date.

“I remember General Service Unit (GSU) officers beating and raping women in our slum, something that I once witnessed with my own eyes”, she says.

This event according to Betty motivated her to stop the Late President’s car during a protest

where she got a chance to address the President and tell him of the woes the people in Mathare slum face.

“The good thing that came out of the encounter with the Late President is that the beatings and raping of women by the GSU officers stopped promptly after the President invited us back to the State House and heard everything we had to say about the cruelty we faced in the hands of the people who were supposed to be protecting us” she muses.

Betty admits that helping solve people’s problems no matter the process or the cost helps make her community a better place to live in and also every solved case gives her the satisfaction that at least she tried and something positive came out of it.

“When a person is charged with the defilement of a girl under 14 yrs & the court is of the opinion that he’s not guilty of that offence but that he’s guilty of an offence under the SOA, he may be convicted of that offence though he wasn’t charged with it”

The Sexual Offences Act (2006)

Under the Sexual Offences Act, 2006; Sexual Offences include: Rape, Attempted Rape, Sexual Assault, Compelled or Induced Sexual Acts, Acts that Cause Penetration or Indecent acts done within the view of a Child or a Mentally Disabled person, Promotion of Sexual Offences with a child, Indecent Act with a Child, Gang Rape, Attempted Defilement, Defilement, Child Trafficking, Child Sex Tourism, Child Prostitution, Exploitation of Prostitu-

tion, Child pornography, Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation, Prostitution of Persons with Mental Disabilities, Incest by Male Persons, Sexual Offences relating to Position of Authority and persons in position of Trust, Sexual Harassment, Incest by Female Persons, Cultural and Religious Sexual Offences, Administering Substance with Intent, Distribution of Substance by a

Juristic Person, Deliberate Transmission of HIV or any other life threatening Sexually Transmitted Disease and Non Disclosure of Conviction of Sexual Offences all fall under the category of committing a sexual offence and strong punishments shall be meted out to criminals who purport these atrocities as they are violating the human rights of others.

Overcoming The Challenges

Challenges occur in our day to day lives and according to members of the GBV Dagoretti Working Group, were it not for such challenges, then the initiating of the GBV working group would not have been as timely .

The Dagoretti GBV network members are however quick to agree that the principal challenge so far has been coordination of efforts by partners in the region and financial resources to offer comprehensive Care to survivors of Gender Based Violence.

The insufficient one stop centers/GBV recovery centers has slowed down the response to cases It’s inevitable that the government should allocate resources to comprehensive care to survivors of SGBV in all the counties. Members feel there is need for more community education in addressing child abuse cases, especially because parents cover up for their spouses/ relatives.

The members also decried that most youth are not willing to volunteer in

matters of GBV unless monetary compensation is involved making it difficult to control the vice as most youth are the perpetrators of GBV.

The working group members are however proud of the fact that they have come together in a bid to make their community one free of GBV.

Working in Dagoretti and Kangemi? Join us in the effort to end SGBV

Call 0711907132 or email

info@wel.or.ke for the next meeting

International Women's Day—Kibera

Pomp and colour graced the day as the people of Kibera came out in drones to celebrate the International Women's Day (IWD) at Laini Saba, Kibera.

The IWD which is celebrated worldwide every year on the 8th of March marks the economic, political and social achievements of women, past, present and future and the Kibera GBV working group in collaboration with Women's Empowerment Link (WEL), MSF Belgium, CARE, Office of Human Rights Kibera, and GVRC and other stakeholders organized the 2011 IWD. This day which also marked the

Global centennial celebrations of the IWD was celebrating the theme: "Equal Access to Education, Training and Science & Technology: Pathway to decent work for women.

The event which was highly attended by representatives from the Provincial Administration, Women's Enterprise Fund, Africa Youth Trust, Doctors without Borders, CARE Kenya, Kibera Women for Peace, the Kibera GBV working group and not forgetting WEL was an occasion to review how far women have come in their struggle for equality, peace and development.

The DO 1 and WEL Director emphasized to the attendants the importance of women embracing science and technology so as to be able to tap into the many opportunities like networking, accessing the international market and this was key in enhancing economic growth for the women through the use of Short Message Service (SMS), Facebook, Twitter and E-mails to reach a larger market for their unique products.

Tapping into women's entrepreneurial Potential



Members of KWFPF entertain guests during the IWD

Facts on Gender Based Violence

The roots of gender-based violence (GBV) lie in power inequities based on gender roles, which are marked by the domination of men and the subordination of women. Violence may be physical, sexual, psychological, economic or socio-cultural, perpetrated in private or in public settings.

GBV can occur throughout a woman's lifecycle, starting with infanticide, early childhood marriage and female genital mutilation, and evol-

ving into sexual abuse, domestic violence, legal discrimination and exploitation of widows.

Acts of GBV violate a number of principles enshrined in constitution, international and regional human rights instruments, including the right to life, equality, security of the person, equal protection under the law and freedom from torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment.

GBV has psychological, social, medical and legal implications. Many survivors will not report rapes and others may feel powerless to do so. In cases where survivors do report, their rights and needs should be preeminent, in terms of access to respectful and supportive services, guarantees of confidentiality and safety, and the ability to determine a course of action for addressing the GBV incident—courtesy RHRC Consortium

"27(3) Women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres" (The Kenyan Constitution)

"High Inflation Affecting the Spaces and Shelters"

During gatherings of coordination meetings for the safe spaces and shelters, one thing is definitely apparent, the safe space and shelter representatives have gelled together greatly where when one has a problem, the rest know about it and they all work together to help solve whatever the problem may be.

According to Amina, repre-

sentative from Rehma-Ta-Allah safe space, meaning "Grace of God", the hustles and bustles they come across are many and demanding thus the need for the representatives to work together to better the lives of the survivors they rescue and the abused women from the Kibera community as a whole.

Amina says that however,

the rising costs of food and fuel are proving more of a challenge since the meager rations of food they had for the survivors are now next to one.

She on the other hand adds that the safe spaces and shelters work with the chiefs of office and the Provincial Administration sometimes provides food for the safe houses when it's available.



Amina Adam, Rehma-Ta-Allah Safe Space Representative

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ABOUT WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT LINK

Women's Empowerment Link (WEL) is a non-profit, non partisan non-governmental women rights organization committed to empowering women and girls to realize their potential, worth and strength politically, socially and economically through advocating for opportunities that explore their potential.

WEL recognizes that the survival of women and girls is increasingly being challenged by economic dependency, illiteracy, Sexual & gender based violence (SGBV), HIV/AIDS, gender inequalities & marginalization, conflict, insensitive laws & policies which underscore WEL's purposeful programming on five key thematic areas:-

- Women Economic Empowerment
- Access to Education
- Reproductive health and rights
- Sexual & Gender based violence & HIV/AIDS
- Transformative leadership & Governance

WEL's Mission: To empower women to realize, exercise their rights and freedoms, and access opportunities and privileges towards gender equality.

WEL's Vision: A society that is gender sensitive where women and men have equal rights and opportunities for a just society

A Word from WEL's Organizational Director

Gender-based violence continues to be a problem faced by women and girls in all parts of the country and has continued to widen the gap in gender inequity.

Unfortunately, it is an experience shared by many women from all parts of the world. The challenges in comprehensive care is overwhelming to the few practitioners who have put their resources to address this.

The government of Kenya has an obligation to the women to offer adequate structures for protection and security as provided for in the constitution. This includes developing legislation that promotes shelters and safety nets for the



**Grace Mbugua, WEL's
Organizational Director**

women subjected to violence. The Family Protection Bills have been pending for many years which further deny women adequate legal framework to address violence against women and girls especially in the private

According to the United Nations, Progress to protect and promote women's rights has become quite popular but the rights and opportunities compared to those of men are not the same.

WEL has adopted an integrated approach to promoting gender equality by ensuring the key aspects of the well being of both girls and women are considered effectively especially on prevention and response to GBV and it's link to HIV; Access to Education; Economic Empowerment; Sexual & Reproductive Health and involvement and participation in Transformative leadership.