

**ASSESSMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY, GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND MAINSTREAMING IN
NYABIHU DISTRICT OF NORTHERN PROVINCE OF RWANDA**

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ABSTRACT

The development of strategies and intervention aimed at fighting gender based violence and improve gender equality in Nyabihu district of Western province of Rwanda that was to be done by Action pour le Développement du peuple (ADEPE) and its partners led to conducting an assessment with primary objective of providing reliable quantitative and qualitative information. This paper specifically assessed through desk review and field data collection sought not only measured the frequency of incidents of sexual gender-based violence experienced by women in Nyabihu district in their various life situations, but also analyzed the perceptions that the community has about the nature, causes and consequences of these incidents of violence and ascertaining the extent of gender equality and gender mainstreaming vis à vis education, health social protection and agriculture sectors in Nyabihu district. The assessment revealed that despite a number of achievements made in Nyabihu in line with gender promotion, some key challenges are still hindering the process of gender mainstreaming and gender equality. These include without limitation to patriarchal system continues to undermine gender equality and contribute to GBV, Lack of interest to report GBV cases, Weak GBV prevention and response mechanisms, limited trust of existing GBV prevention and response mechanisms, Suspicion of corruption within local leaders, overdependence on the perpetrators whom in this case have control over resources, limited knowledge about rights, GBV related services and referral systems and Limited capacity and skills on the part of duty bearers to manage GBV related conflicts. Concerning GBV prevention and response mechanisms available in the community, 26.8% of the respondents' reports that local leaders were in charge of the GBV cases. This was followed by 18.9% of respondents who reported that GBV cases were handled by Police or Rwanda investigation Bureau (RIB). Respondents scored low for courts and Civil Society Organizations in handling GBV issues. To address the above mentioned challenges, a number of recommendations were forwarded to mention but not limited to placing a strong focus on Peer mediation mechanism as an alternative to sentencing mechanism, ADEPE should also collaborate with other duty bearers to ensure that citizens are provided with safe spaces to report

not only their cases but also the potential suspicion of corruption for further investigation and adopt strategies that seek to dismantle patriarchal system by challenging power imbalance

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE)

Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE) is one of the areas in which Rwanda is globally recognized for its outstanding progress. In Rwanda, promoting gender equality and empowerment of women is primarily a human right issue, encompassing women and girls' equal rights, combatting discriminatory practices and challenging the roles and stereotypes that propagate inequalities and exclusion. The Rwanda's strong political will to mainstream gender into Government programs is underpinned by institutional and policy frameworks that have been key to Rwanda's progress in addressing gender inequalities. Over the past two decades, socio-economic outcomes have improved significantly and the country has emerged as a regional and global leader in advancing gender equality. With regard to legal framework (Indicator 5.1.1), the Constitution of the Republic on Rwanda enshrines the principles of gender equality and women's rights and provides for a minimum of 30% quota for women in all decision-making organs. Rwanda has also enacted a number of legal instruments for strengthening GEWE, including: The Organic Law N° 12/2013/OL of 12/09/2013 on State Finances and Property, the Law N° 43/2013 of 16/06/2013 Governing Land in Rwanda and the Law N°27/2016 of 08/07/2016 Governing Matrimonial Regimes, Donations and Successions. Furthermore, gender equality is a crosscutting area across Government policies and strategies at national and sub-national levels.

In the aftermath of the 1994 Genocide, different initiatives were undertaken in different domains by the Government of Rwanda (GoR) in collaboration with its partners and civil society organizations both national and international in order to rebuild the country whereby women are considered as necessary participants in the overall reconstruction process. As of today, Rwanda has made commendable advances towards promoting gender equality. For instance, the country has the highest percentage of female members of the parliament worldwide, women's representation in the cabinet has reached 50% (2019) from 36.8% in 2014. In the on-going term of 2018-2023, women parliamentarians stand at 61.2% in the lower chamber and 38% in the Senate. At decentralized levels, women's share in the leadership has improved during 2016 from 16.7% to 26.7% as District Mayors and 45.2% in District Councils. Both the Vision 2020 and the forthcoming Vision 2050 highlight Gender and Family promotion as one of the crosscutting areas.

As a result, the government of Rwanda has made remarkable strides in gender equality and women's empowerment over the past decade. In a record time, gender parity in education has been achieved and has also made praise-worthy advancements in reducing maternal mortality and providing antenatal care. The positive changes in women's education and health, has also had positive impacts on other developmental goals such as women in formal employment, and poverty reduction. The Government of Rwanda, accepting the crucial role of women in both private and public domains and in its efforts to stay abreast of targets set forth in the SDGs and carry the agenda forward; primarily Goal 5, on Gender Equality and Empowerment of women and its commitments to treaties such as the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has taken necessary steps.

2. Research objectives

2.1. General objective

The overall objective of the study is to provide relevant quantitative and qualitative data from which ADEPE and her partners will prepare strategies and actions to improve gender equality and mainstreaming and fight against gender-based violence in Nyabihu district of Northern Province of Rwanda.

2.1.1. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. Identify social-cultural masculine factors that negatively affect the social integration of women and girls in the family and community;
2. Examining illegal or reported violence against women and girls' cases capturing new structures of inequalities;
3. Examining illegal or reported VAWG cases capturing new structures of inequalities;
4. To examine the status of women's rights violations that often occur in the Nyabihu community
5. Ascertaining the extent of gender equality and gender mainstreaming vis à vis education, health social protection and agriculture sectors in Nyabihu District.
6. To propose strategic interventions towards addressing the identified gender gaps in Nyabihu District.

2. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

2.1. Evaluation Design

The study involved both quantitative and qualitative data-collection processes. Data collection process was organized in two phases. The first focused on secondary data through an extensive desk review of documents, while the second phase consisted in primary data-collection. The exercise used a participatory approach, where all stakeholders including district authorities, project participants, and stakeholders participated actively in the process of carrying out the assignment through working sessions and discussions.

2.2. Qualitative approach

2.2.1 Desk Review

The consultants took on the duty of reading all of the project's important documentation. As a result, they reviewed all relevant public publications, books, and research firm reports on gender-based violence, gender equality, and women empowerment, including the National Gender Policy, Citizen Report Card from RGB, and other materials. Through a desk review, various sources were consulted, including but not limited to the NST1, 2018-2024; the two pivotal policies, the National Gender Policy, 2020, and the National Policy against Gender Based Violence, 2011; sector strategies, programs, sector monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and District Development Strategies (DDS).

2.2.2. Key Interviews

In-depth interviews (IDI) were conducted with district officials to mention Clinical Psychologist, Director of Education, Representative of Consultative council, Gender officer, Agriculture /cooperative officer, Director of good governance, District Police Commandant, Human Resource officer DCI/ RIB, Start Up Officer, District Planner, Health promotion officer, Disability mainstreaming officer, SME's and Cooperative Development officer, ICT officer, Director of health, Community Based Health Insurance officer, Environment officer, Land Administration officer, Statistician and the Director of Social development unity.

2.2.3. Focus Group Discussions

- Focus Group Discussion is a type of in-depth interview accomplished in a group, whose meetings present characteristics defined with respect to the proposal, size, composition, and interview procedures¹. FG permits richness and flexibility in the collection of data that are not usually achieved when applying an instrument individually; at the same time permitting spontaneity of interaction among the participants. 4 FGDs were conducted whereby each group had between 8 to 12 participants. FGDs gathered women, men and youth.
- The researchers ensured that everyone had an opportunity to express his/her views freely and the FGDs venue was to the proximity of the participants' area of residence where they feel comfortable. The qualitative material was taped and transcribed. The topic discussed for was about citizens' satisfaction with service delivery, proportion of who have information on what is budgeted in the District Imihigo, Major Constraints and Challenges for citizens' engagement in district planning and budgeting/ imihigo, Gender equality and women empowerment.

2.3. Quantitative Data Collection

2.3.1. Sampling Techniques

The survey was conducted through an approved approach, and with a representative sample of beneficiaries of the Public Policy Information Monitoring and Advocacy (PPIMA) project implemented by ADEPE, which are women, men and youth. The consultant anticipated using the Raosoft sample size calculator

¹ Feuritas H. et. al., The Focus Group, a Qualitative Research Method, ICSRC, Merrick School of Business, University of Baltimore, 1998, p.2-4

software in order to get the sample size. In order to determine the sample size, we used Raosoft sample size calculator formula:

$$n = (N (zs/e)^2)/(N-1)+(zs/e)^2$$

$z = 1.96$ for 95% confidence level

$s = p (1-p)$ $p =$ estimated proportion or $p =$ to 50%

$e =$ desired margin of error

$N =$ study population

The confidence level is of 95%, while the margin of error is 5%.

According to the recent researches the population of Nyabihu District is 306,152 with 160,424 females and 145,728 males (obtained from Nyabihu district website). By using the Raosoft sample size calculator with a margin error of 5% and a confidence level of 95%, the minimum sample size is equal to 160 respondents. For quantitative data collection, the consultants used a structured questionnaire, which will be designed in English and then translated in Kinyarwanda for the baseline survey. The selection of respondents was done using the systematic random selection for citizens involved in the PPIMA project.

3. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Table 1: Extent to which respondents agree/disagree with the following statements in relation to GBV

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	TOTAL
1. A man using violence against his wife is a private matter that shouldn't be discussed outside the couple.	0.0%	9.2%	50.9%	39.9%	100%
2. A woman should tolerate violence in the best interest of the child and to keep her family together.	0.0%	9.9%	52.5%	37.7%	100%
3. There is a time when a woman deserves to be punished by her husband or family member (for example when the woman is rebellious or disobedient)	0.0%	36.3%	36.9%	26.9%	100%
4. A man should be allowed to get another woman when his wife produce only girls	0.0%	1.8%	39.6%	58.5%	100%
5. A married woman cannot say no to sex	0.0%	54.3%	25.7%	20.0%	100%
6. It is okay for a man to hit his partner/ wife if he says sorry afterwards	0.0%	6.7%	44.5%	48.8%	100%
7. It is okay for a woman to hit her partner/ husband if she says sorry afterward	0.0%	0.6%	44.5%	54.9%	100%
8. It is okay for a man to ask for divorce if his wife cheats on him	0.0%	45.5%	39.6%	14.9%	100%
9. It is okay for a woman to ask for divorce if her husband cheats on her	0.0%	44.3%	38.0%	17.7%	100%

10. It's ok for a man to abandon his family if the wife is disrespectful.	0.0%	4.9%	51.2%	43.9%	100%
11. It's ok for a woman to abandon her family if her husband/partner is disrespectful.	0.0%	2.4%	52.4%	45.1%	100%
12. When women are economically empowered than men, it creates violence at home.	0.0%	19.9%	49.1%	31.1%	100%
13. It is disrespectful for a woman to talk in public	0.0%	9.2%	50.9%	39.9%	100%

Source: Results from the baseline survey February 2022

Table 1 shows how respondents reacted when they were asked to comment on statements related to Gender-based violence (GBV). According to information depicted in the table above, 54.3% agreed that a married woman cannot say no sex. About 45% of the respondents revealed that it was perfectly fine for a man to ask for divorce if his wife cheated on him. The respondents who said it is perfectly okay for a woman to ask for divorce if her husband cheated on her was 44.3%. Most of the respondents (94.4%) reported that it is not appropriate for a woman to hit her husband and over 93% said that it is appropriate for a husband to hit his wife if she says sorry afterward. On a statement that says if there is a time when a woman deserves to be punished by her husband or a family member, for example, when the woman is rebellious or disobedient, 36.3% of the respondents were found to be in favour of the statement. Rwanda has always been a patriarchal culture. In Rwanda, males have a substantial advantage in terms of attitudes, beliefs, and socio-cultural behaviors.

Until recently, boys/men were thought to be the family heirs, responsible for the survival of the family line. Patriarchy fosters gender-based inequities and inequality. Women are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence due to the institutional roles of men and women in society, as well as proportionally distinct and imbalanced responsibilities in the home. The table above demonstrates that patriarchy is entrenched and influences people's knowledge, attitude and practices. The findings reveal a strong need to focus on mindset change about gender and gender equality and how patriarchy shapes these narratives. Findings further reveal that with some stereotypes, more women were biased than men. Below is a summary of the views held by respondents per percentages disaggregated by gender.

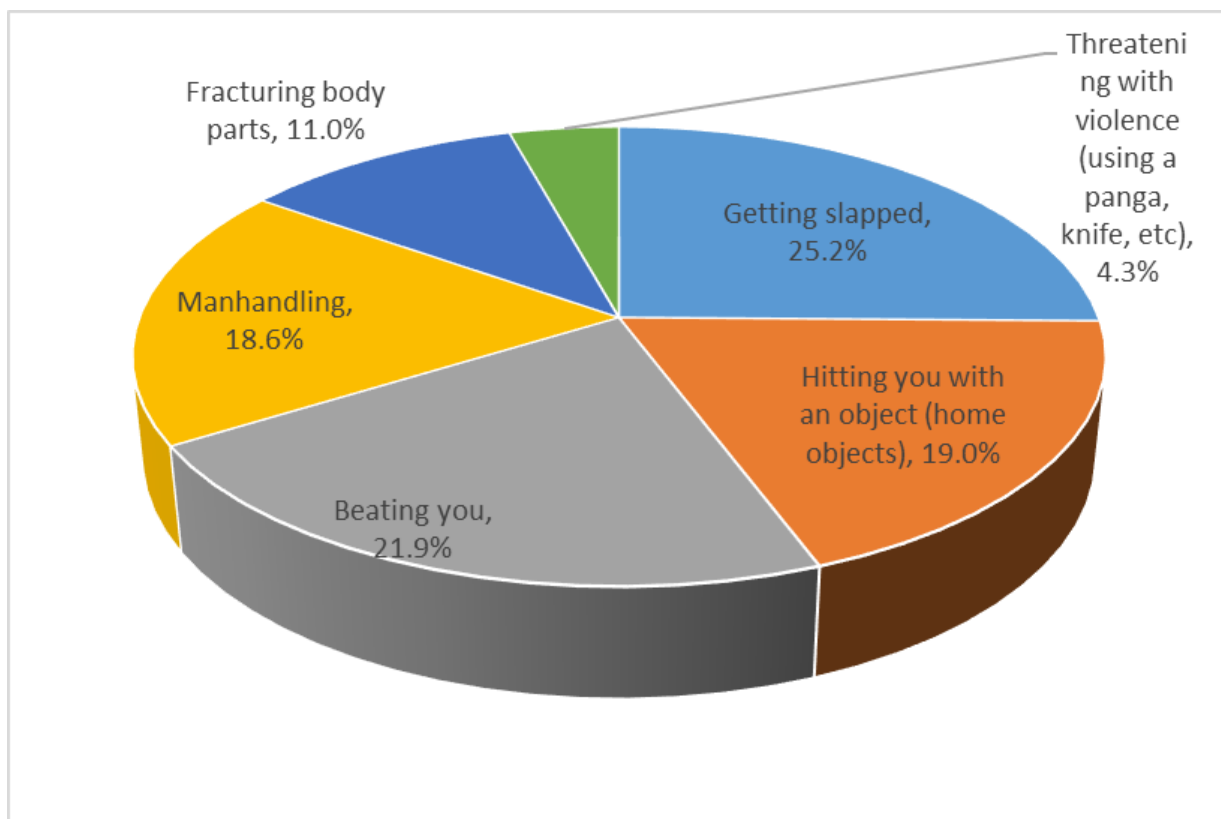
As per table 1 , more than 80% of respondents in Nyabihu district strongly agree or agree with all assertions about CSO. Improper gender stereotyping is a common source of discrimination against women and contributes to violations of many rights, including the right to health, an adequate standard of living, education, marriage and family relationships, work, freedom of expression, freedom of movement, political participation and representation, effective remedy, and freedom from gender-based violence. FGD and KII responses promote gender equality biased beliefs, knowledge, attitude, and behaviors and this was emphasized below;

"(...) In families we also find sexual and gender-based violence; A man goes to drink in a bar, takes a bottle of local brew, even eats pork, then comes back home satisfied... the wife and children spent a day without food...or sometimes eat sweet potatoes...then instead of asking for sex in a mature manner, he starts demanding forcefully even before reaching the living room. You can see that this is violence (...) and this exists so much in villages. (A participant in FGD in Kabatwa sector/Nyabihu district)

“The investment in gender equality was not enough. This because there are many issues related to gender such as sexual violence cases o If we consider the teen-mothers, they are many. They live in extreme Poverty and their parents are not supporting them. They hide information. They negotiate with the perpetrators who some tine gives promises to marry their daughter. Another problem is about minors who get married illegally and separate immediately. Sometimes left person (in most cases woman) want to be given 50% of the their “broken marriage” assets but this becomes impossible because the marriage is not legally as long as these people aren’t legally recognized, capable people to contract marriage.”- Gender officer in Nyabihu district.

Figure 1: The common types of GBV most experienced in your community

1) Physical violence related GBV (any other physical confrontation)



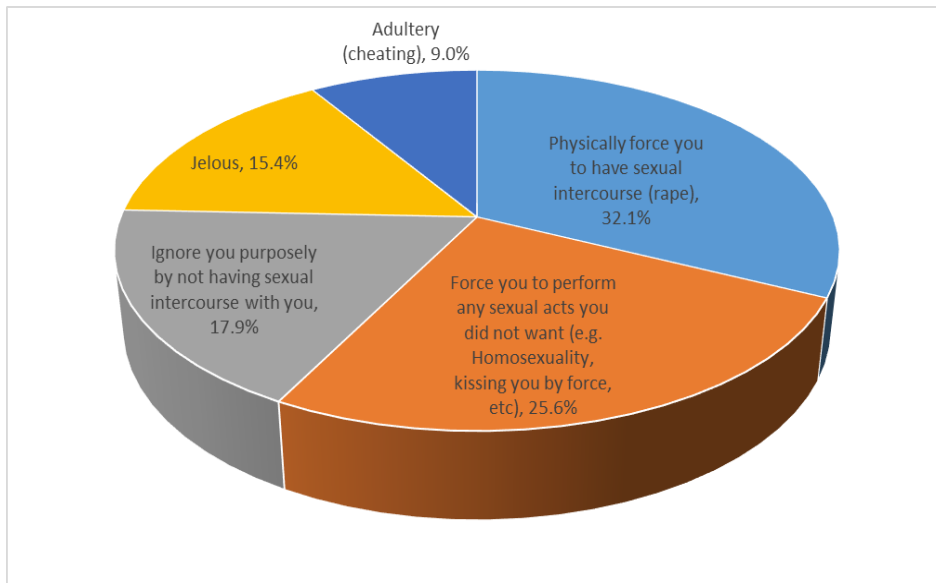
Source: Results from the baseline survey, February 2022

The chart above indicates types of physical gender-based violence that is commonly found in the community. From the chart, respondents indicated that 25.2% of individuals were slapped; 21.9% were beaten and 19% hit with home objects. Other types of gender-based violence included manhandling fracturing body parts and threatening with home objects like panga, knife, among others. Domestic violence and marital conflict are a sensitive topic that may concern the private domain having some cultural taboos.

The aspect of Rwanda culture makes that not all conjugal conflicts or all domestic violence cases should be taken to the professionals because of fear or shame. Spouses in conflict or victims of domestic violence in Rwanda choose to keep quiet instead of reporting the situation because the culture doesn’t allow wives to

talk about what happens in their homes. On these cases, more other common reasons may arise to mention but not limited to feeling that denunciation will change nothing, fear of stigma, dependence on the perpetrator, arrangement between the families, fearing the person who violated the victim due to his influence in society, insignificance of the case of violence and ignorance of reporting. In line with the quantitative findings, the focus groups and key informant interviews showed that physical violence was prevalent in all three areas where the study was performed. While the data above show that female respondents were more likely to confirm the prevalence of physical violence, both female and male respondents agree that women are the more susceptible to physical attack in households.

2) Sexual related GBV



Source: Results from the baseline survey, February 2022

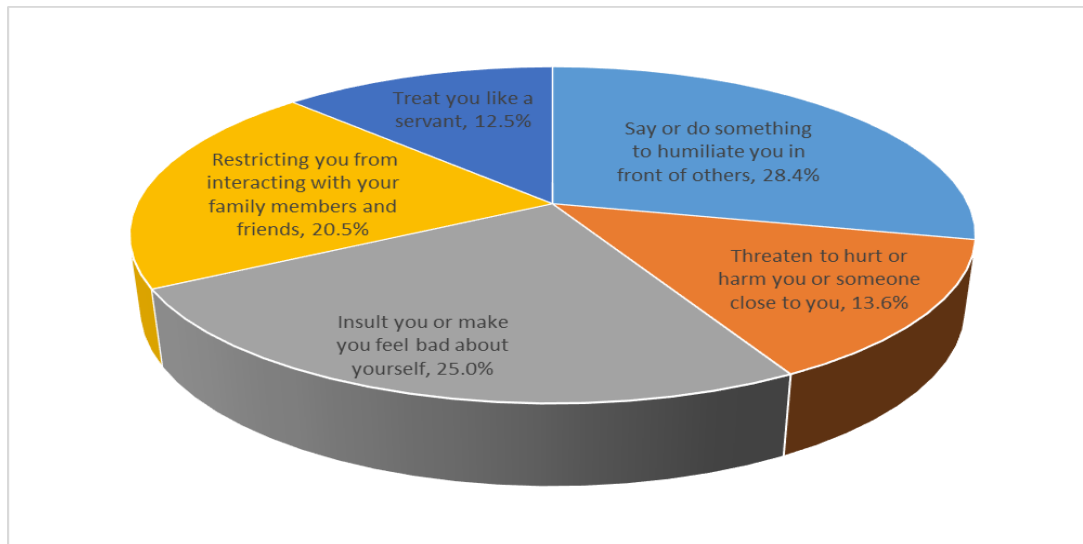
For sexual related GBV, that chart shows that 32. % of the respondents reported that women are physically forced to have sexual intercourse. It is also clear from the chart that 25.6% of the respondents said that individuals are forced to sexual acts that they did not want, for example, homosexuality and kissing by force among others. Other forms of sexual related forms of violence reported by respondents included denying partners' sexual intercourse as well as cheating among others.

According to feedback from FGDs and KIIs, jealousy and suspicion of adultery (cheating) manifested primarily through behavioral activities such as monitoring spouses/partners phone messages, changing work habits such as coming home late, declining intimacy, becoming secretive, avoiding answering any strange phone call if the partner is nearby, deleting phone messages frequently, and lying about significant things, and having a lot of reasons to skip family meals. FGDs and KIIs both verified the importance of marital rape as well as compelling a spouse to do other sexual activities such as stroking, kissing, touching, and so on.

Sexual and Gender Based Violence exists especially during this COVID19 pandemic where most adolescent girls are getting unwanted pregnancies, and also most people have misbehaved during

COVID 19. What I can say is that the evening parental forums were very helpful, because we could sit and advice how a parent should talk to his/her child, though there is plans to revive the evening parental forums soon. I believe that the perpetrators should face punishment to serve as examples to others.
(Female Participant in FGD, Jomba Sector of Nyabihu District)

3) Emotional /psychological Conflicts (Threaten to hurt or harm you or someone close to you)

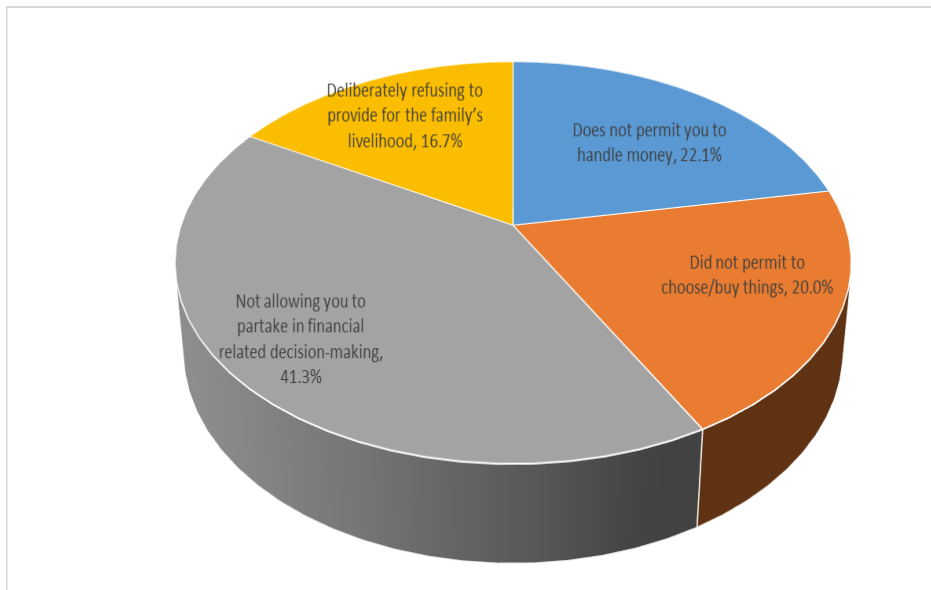


Source: Results from the baseline survey, February 2022

Other forms of emotional or psychological conflicts reported by respondents included saying or doing something that is humiliating (28.4%), insult (25%), restricting your partner from interacting with their family members and friends (20.5%), threatening to hurt partners or people close to them (13.6%) and finally treating individuals as servants (12.5%). Traditional gender norms in which males see themselves as patriachs are a prevalent contributing element, according to an analysis of how psychologically associated GBV appear. This is most visible in men's attitudes and actions that regard women as subordinates. During focus groups and interviews, individuals provided several examples of psychological abuse. However, verbal insults, humiliation, harassment, and verbal threats were the most often mentioned. It was stated that these psychological assaults culminate in victims feeling helpless, angry, upset, and demoralized, resulting in confrontations.

“...Some women still lack confidence, even the culture of some men oppressing women, still with a perception that women have no right to speak, considering men as family heroes. Still, men scared away women and left them to think they only need to be at home. However, one of the causes of this is about men who drink too much, leaving a woman always threatened to speak, with fear that she will be punished for that. You find a woman with no freedom of expression, but this is also due to lack of self-confidence - Key Informant in Bigogwe Sector in Nyabihu District.

4) Financial Conflict

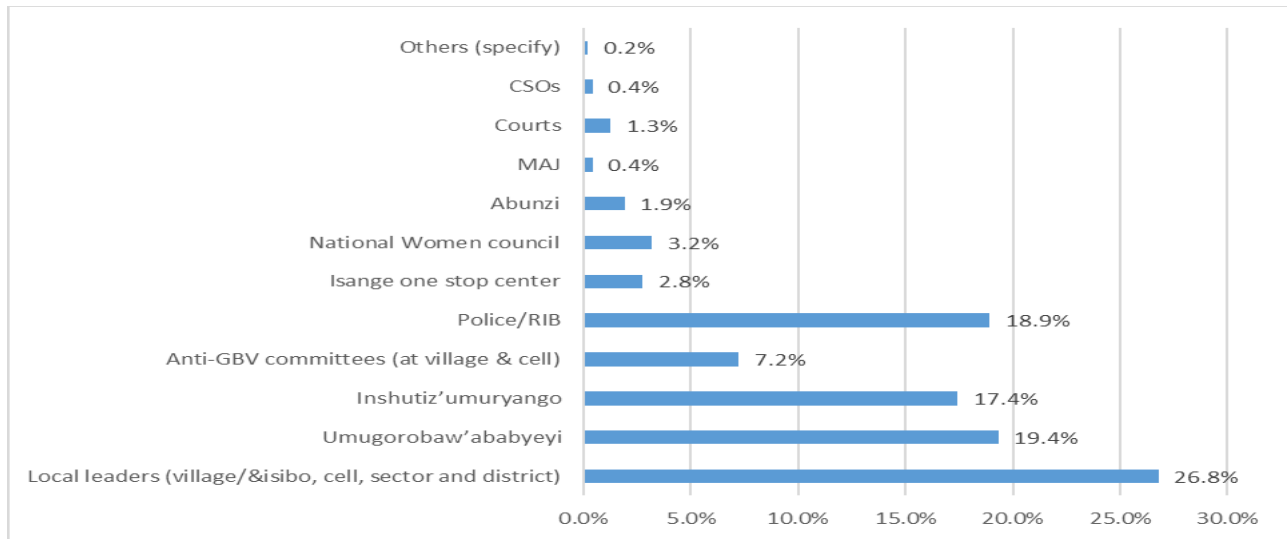


Source: Results from the baseline survey, February 2022

Respondents in Nyabihu district reported forms of financial-related violence. It is important to note that 41.3% of the respondents reported violence of not allowing an individual to participate in financial related decision-making; 22.1% of respondents reported another financial related violence where people are not allowed to handle money; 20% of respondents reported that individuals are not permitted to buy items; and finally 16.7% refused to provide livelihoods for their families.

“In general here in Nyabihu (...) it is about women oppressing men (...). There are ladies who oppress men to the extent that a man losses dignity and right over shared property with his spouse; where a woman controls everything and this leads to a man leaving the home. Instead of being jailed for harming the wife, the man decides to shift, leaves the home... many have left. In general, they claim having gone to look for jobs, but the root cause is about having lost the right to family property. - A participant in FGD in Kabatwa sector/Nyabihu district.

Figure 5: Existing GBV prevention and response mechanisms available in your community



Source: Results from the baseline survey, February 2022

Concerning about GBV prevention and response mechanisms available in the community, 26.8% of the respondents reports that local leaders were in charge of the GBV cases. This was followed by 18.9% of respondents who reported that GBV cases were handled by Police or Rwanda investigation Bureau (RIB). Respondents scored low for courts and Civil Society Organizations in handling GBV issues.

Table 2: Rates of the effectiveness of GBV prevention and response mechanisms

	Very effective	Effective	Average	Not effective	Don't know	TOTAL
i. Local leaders (village/&isibo, cell, sector and district)	78.0%	17.7%	3.7%	0.6%	0.0%	100.0%
ii. Umugoroba w'ababyeyi	79.3%	13.4%	5.5%	1.8%	0.0%	100.0%
iii. Inshuti z'umuryango	38.4%	29.9%	14.6%	14.6%	2.4%	100.0%
iv. Anti-GBV committees (at village & cell)	32.3%	39.6%	20.7%	5.5%	1.8%	100.0%
v. Police/RIB	32.9%	40.2%	19.5%	6.1%	1.2%	100.0%
vi. Isange one stop center	23.8%	36.0%	24.4%	14.0%	1.8%	100.0%
vii. National Women council (NWC)	25.6%	37.2%	23.2%	12.2%	1.8%	100.0%
viii. Abunzi	20.7%	40.2%	22.6%	15.2%	1.2%	100.0%
ix. MAJ	62.8%	27.4%	9.1%	0.6%	0.0%	100.0%
x. Courts	34.8%	34.1%	21.3%	6.7%	3.0%	100.0%
xi. CSOs	15.2%	38.4%	29.3%	12.8%	4.3%	100.0%

Source: Results from the baseline survey, February 2022

Table 2 show how respondents rated different structures on their effectiveness in preventing GBV and response mechanisms. Local leaders and Umugoroba w'Ababyeyi were highly rated by respondents as

structures that were effective at preventing Gender-Based Violence. Over 90% of respondents indicated that these two structures were effective at preventing GBV. Abunzi, courts and CSOs were found not to be as effective as other structures in preventing GBV.

According to FGDs and KIIs, formal structures such as the police/RIB, courts, Isange one stops center, MAJ were scored as effective because those structures are permanently established in the districts and address the complaints to their finality while CSOS were scored least because very few CSOS operate in these districts and even those that have interventions have less focus on GBV prevention and response.

In fact, there is a recently established institution that is helping us settle cases related to violence, it is called RIB. When you go to RIB, when you call them they come, and solve the problem immediately; they solve the case immediately. RIB is among the first institutions I commend - A participant in a FGD in Bigogwe/sector Nyabihu district. "Thank you. Most of the time we get help from "ADEPE" most people take it to be an international organization; whenever one gets a problem, thinks of going to the organization. Most people think they are lawyers but when they come here, some of them give advice to people who end up reconciling - A participant in a FGD in Bigogwe sector/Nyabihu district.

Table 3: Stereotypes against gender equality and women empowerment are common in this community.

Against gender equality	Percentage
Equality between women and men is impossible	25.0%
Gender equality is contributing to divorce rate in this community	10.4%
Gender equality means that women are becoming superior to men	37.8%
To have equal rights (50% for men and 50% for women) on immovable properties is causing problems in marriages	26.8%
Grand Total	100.0%
Against women economic empowerment	
Educated girls/women are difficult to manage in family and community	17.1%
Girls' higher education is not important	13.4%
Women have to do every agricultural activities but harvest is managed by men	16.5%
Women money is family money but men money is his money	26.8%
Women/girls who do cross border trading cannot be good wives	26.2%
Grand Total	100.0%
Against women leadership	
Between men and women I prefer men leaders	57.3%
Voting women for a high position is risky	16.5%
Women leadership is fake	26.2%
Grand Total	100.0%
Positive thinking provoking women's empowerment	
What are positive thinking about gender equality and women empowerment in this community?	
a. For gender equality	

Equality between women and men is good for family and community development	62.2%
Gender equality is helping families to change economically	14.6%
Gender equality is human rights	10.4%
To have equal rights to family property is women rights and I support it	12.8%
Grand Total	100.0%
b. For women economic empowerment	
Girls' higher education is so important for family and community development	53.0%
Married women and men have equal voice on their assets including incomes	9.8%
Women are capable I vote them for a high position without problem	12.2%
Women have right to manage harvest from agricultural activities	10.4%
Women leadership can be good or bad depending on the individuals	5.5%
Women leadership is not different from men leadership	5.5%
Women/girls doing cross border trading are contributing to family and community economy	3.7%
Grand Total	100.0%
Negative Masculinities Against Women Empowerment	
Beating a wife is not a problem	3.0%
Family planning is men affaire not women	1.2%
Men are the head of the family, every task concerning children are women affairs	62.2%
Reproductive health issues are managed by a man: no discussion before sex	1.8%
To marry a second wife is not a problem	3.0%
When a man says something, a woman can't argue	21.3%
When a woman/a girl is sexually abused is a secret no one has to disclose it	7.3%
Grand Total	100.0%

Source: Results from the baseline survey, February 2022

Table 3 depicts the stereotypes against gender equality and women empowerment in the communities of Nyabihu district. Regarding gender equality, 37.8% of respondents indicated that they understood gender equality as women becoming superior to men. The fact that women have 50% right to immovable assets is causing problems in marriages as reported by 26.8% of the respondents. Interestingly, 25% of respondents reported that gender equality between men and women is impossible and according to 10.4% of respondents, gender equality is contributing to divorce in communities. For women economic empowerment, 26.8% of the respondents reported that women's money is family money but men's money is their money. According to the Table above, 26.2% of respondents reported that women/girls who do cross boarder trading cannot be good wives. Also, 17.1% of the respondents said that educated women are difficult to manage at home and the community and shockingly, 13.4% of respondents reported that girls' education is not important.

Regarding stereotype against women in leadership, 57.3% of respondents reported that they would prefer men leaders to women leaders. In addition, 26.2% of respondents considered that women leadership as fake. It is important to highlight that 62.2% of the respondents reported that gender equality between women and men is good for family and community development. Only 10.4% of the respondents agreed gender equality is human rights. On girls' education, 53% of respondents reported that their education is important for family and community development and only 3.7% of respondents said that women/girls doing cross

boarder market contribute to family and community economy. Regarding negative masculinities against women, it is stunning that 62% of the respondents reported that men are household heads but all tasks concerning children must be handled by women. In addition, 21.3% of respondents reported that when a man says anything, a woman should not argue.

5) Persistent challenges to gender equality and GBV prevention and response

- ✓ **Patriarchal system continues to undermine gender equality and contribute to GBV:** GBV exists in a social and structural environment that facilitates power imbalance born out of patriarchal system. These dynamics produce and reproduce an environment that exposes women and girls to the forms of violence that replicate, reinforce and recreate the norms and power dynamics of the societies, communities and families around them.
- ✓ **Lack of interest to report GBV cases:** Most GBV cases are either not reported or are reported late. Some spouses do not report their family issues until the situation escalates. The main reasons mentioned for not disclosing include lack of confidence to report, fear to lose means of livelihood because the perpetrator controls the victims' means of livelihood and survival, and not wanting other members of the community to know and lack of trust in the conflict resolution mechanisms to fairly address the matter.
- ✓ **Weak GBV prevention and response mechanisms:** The interviews and focus group discussions also revealed that GBV prevention and response mechanism are still weak. Respondents revealed that some mediators hardly make a follow up after discussions and negotiations with conflicting partners. Yet, the process of conflict resolution is not a one-time event, it requires the mediator to make a follow up to find out if the issues agreed upon are being implemented.
- ✓ **Limited trust of existing GBV prevention and response mechanisms:** respondents in FGDs and FGDs revealed that local structures responsible for resolving family level conflicts cannot be fully trusted with family matters because they lack confidentiality and professional management of cases brought to them.
- ✓ **Suspicion of corruption within local leaders:** Respondents to this study revealed that victims of violence mostly women did not trust local leaders with GBV cases because of suspicion of corruption. According to testimonies shared in the preceding sections of this report, some local leaders are acquaintances of perpetrators with whom they share alcohol.
- ✓ **Overdependence on the perpetrators whom in this case have control over resources:** most victims especially women are vulnerable and depend on men for survival. Men are almost always the bread winners and reporting them to local leaders especially for GBV cases that result into the imprisonment is always seen by the victims as self-defeating.
- ✓ **Limited knowledge about rights, GBV related services and referral systems:** during the FGDs, it appeared that some of the respondents did not even know where to instantly report a case of GBV as well as the referral processes. This confusion is common to psychological related GBV as well as economic violence. This was because citizens' as well as local leaders' understanding of GBV is mostly limited to physical and sexual violence.
- ✓ **Limited capacity and skills on the part of duty bearers to manage GBV related conflicts.** While some actors depending on the levels; such as Isange one stop center and RIB have the capacity and skills to manage GBV cases, it was pointed out that other local structures at cell, village level are unable

to help resolve GBV related conflicts. As mentioned above, some have not even basic understanding of some types of GBV.

Recommendations

- Concerning lack of interest to report cases of GBV, this study recommends placing a strong focus on Peer mediation mechanism as an alternative to sentencing mechanism. Mediation of intra-family conflicts by peers (spouses who successfully resolved their own GBV cases) was said to be one of the effective strategies to resolving GBV cases.
- Fighting corruption in services delivery chain particularly in GBV prevention and response should be a priority of ADEPE interventions and advocacy. ADEPE should collaborate with other duty bearers to ensure that citizens are provided with safe spaces to report not only their cases but also the potential suspicion of corruption for further investigation.
- ADEPE is recommended to adopt strategies that seek to dismantle patriarchal system by challenging power imbalance. This can be achieved through among others by; developing communication models and tools that promote positive masculinity and promoting actions that bring positive influences on both men and women;
- To overcome overdependence on perpetrators of GBV, ADEPE is recommended to continually promote and advocate for women economic empowerment opportunities including access to resources to enable them generate income and reduce over dependency on men.
- To promote better understanding of gender, and increase knowledge about GBV, ADEPE is recommended to actively engage men and women, boys and girls about the true meaning of gender, gender-based violence and its prevention and response measures.
- To reinforce capacity and skills of duty bearers, ADEPE is recommended train or advocate for the training of actors involved in GBV prevention and response at grassroots level. Trainings should focus on ethical issues about GBV prevention and response, follow up of GBV mediation and reconciliation efforts until cases are fully resolved and where applicable on relevant key laws such as family law, property laws and land related rights.

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