

## INTERVENTION PROFILE:

How strengthening children's agency within a supportive social ecology improved identification, reporting and response to Violence against children in Kilifi county, Kenya Coastal Region.

## INTERVENTION NAME:

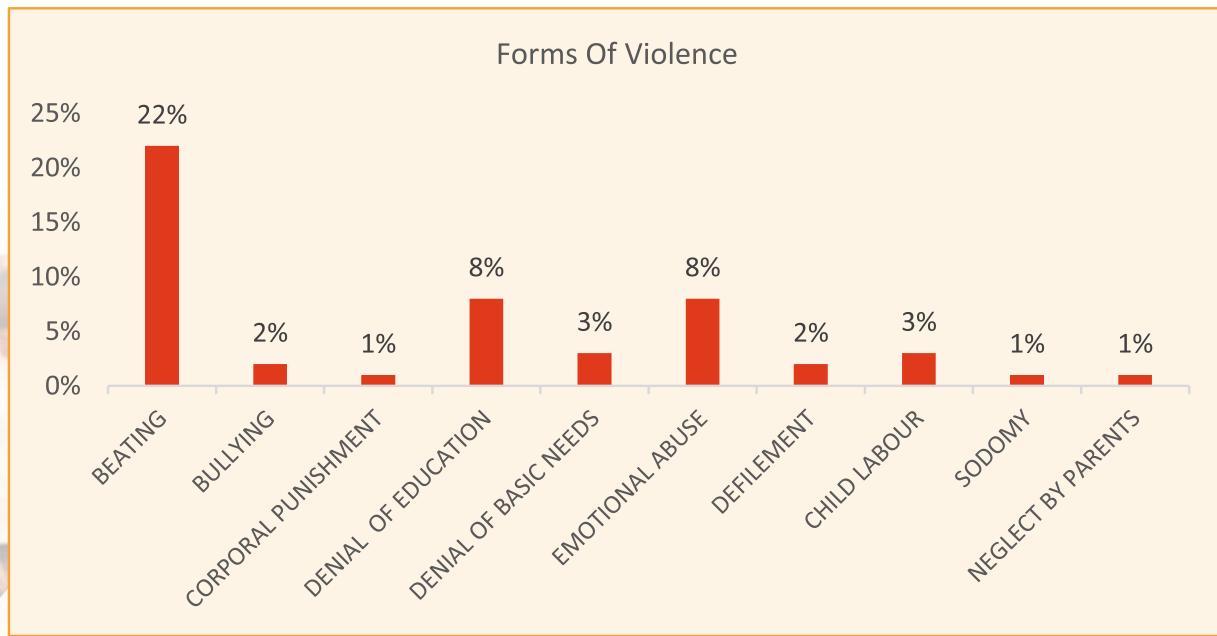
Prevention of violence against children in and out of school

## OVERVIEW

The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2014 report indicated that 6.5 percent of women aged 15 to 19 years had experienced sexual violence; and findings from UNICEF (2019) Kenya Violence against Children (VAC) surveys showed that females are more than twice as likely (16%) to experience sexual violence in childhood as males (6%). A 2021 contextual situation analysis of VAC in Kanamai, Kilifi County by Strategic Community Development Organization (SCDO), a Community Based Organization operating in Kenya

coastal areas established that multiple forms of VAC existed, with girls and boys equally affected. The most prevalent forms of violence were physical violence (particularly corporal punishment and child labor); Neglect (characterized by denial of basic needs and the right to education); Psychological abuse emanating from offenders' verbal outbursts; sexual violence (defilement, sodomy and commercial sexual exploitation); and child labour (families sent children into casual work to complement household income).

**Figure 1: Forms of Violence in Kanamai (source: SCDO 2021 analysis on the status of VAC and adolescents)**





Based on situation analysis findings, SCDO intervened to prevent VAC through a double-pronged empowerment program targeting school children and parents. School girls and boys were reached through child rights clubs and equipped with knowledge on their rights, violence against children as well as related referral pathways. On the other hand, community level duty bearers including parents were sensitized on their roles in prevention of VAC.

While the intervention is still ongoing, beneficiaries' feedback (children and community members particularly women leaders) in form of change stories received after six months of implementation showed an improvement in knowledge level about VAC prevention and reporting; as well behavioral change among children; for instance 5 new child rights clubs were established in schools, community reporting of child abuse increased after community sensitizations and trainings, and over 100 children who had dropped out of school re-enrolled into school.

## **VAC CONTEXT:**

The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2014 report indicated that 6.5 percent of women aged 15 to 19 years had experienced sexual violence. Similarly, findings from UNICEF (2019) Kenya Violence against Children (VAC) survey showed a gender inclination in VAC as females were more than twice as likely (16%) to experience sexual violence in childhood as males (6%). The UNICEF study further identified perpetrators of VAC as parents, motorbike operators, older men, relatives, family members, male youth, teachers, and other community members; and causal factors of VAC ( poverty, parental neglect, alcohol and substance misuse and harmful social cultural norms). A situation analysis of VAC in Kanamai, Kilifi County undertaken by SCDO alongside an asset mapping exercise involving the local community generated contextual information on existing forms of VAC, the perpetrators and ongoing intervention measures.



## INTERVENTION DESCRIPTION:

In view of the prevalent levels of VAC and multiplicity of causal factors, SCDO initiated a school- based intervention on strengthening children's agency to address VAC. The children's agency intervention is a movement of young people in Kenya, that advocates for, and supports children's platforms to enable children's voices on VAC to reach mandated authorities for action. The initiative involves creation of school clubs for children where children are enrolled and sensitized on different forms of violence to enable them identify different types of VAC. School child rights clubs enroll children in the age range of 9-18 years who must be students either at primary school or high school. The club members are involved in various community programs (e.g. volunteering in community social programs such as visiting children homes, and encouraging children out of school to rejoin school), leadership and promoting learning. SCDO staff trained children to lead child rights clubs and focal teachers to support with monitoring the progress of club activities.

SCDO with support of teachers empowered children on their rights and responsibilities, created platforms (child rights clubs) in schools as an avenue for children's training, open discussion, peer to peer sharing, and reporting of VAC incidents to teachers.



The trained teachers played a central role in reinforcing children's knowledge on VAC and referring reported VAC cases to relevant structures in the formal child protection system. Children in child rights clubs were encouraged to share experiences and support each other as peers.

After the training, children were issued with books to serve as journals for recording cases of VAC that featured both at school and in the community, type of case and reason for forwarding it for action. A teacher specially trained by SCDO as a school club patron served as custodian of the book used as a central register for all cases reported by children.

**Table I: Monitoring data from SCDO CRC clubs (after 6 months of implementation)**

	<b>Case reported</b>	<b>Reason for reporting</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Number</b>
1	Negligence	Children staying without food, parents coming home late, children with torn uniform, children loitering in the community without supervision	School	5
2	Defilement	Child defiled by a fellow child	Community	2
3	Absenteeism	Children not attending school	Community/School	15
4	Child labor	Children working during and after school hours- hawking, carrying water for income, children working as boda boda riders, house helps	Community/School	10
5	Corporal punishment	Children receive severe beating making them sick	Community/ school	10
6	Teen pregnancy	Pregnant	School	1

Other alternative channels for reporting VAC included guidance and counselling sessions with teachers, a suggestion box as well as local leaders and chiefs, which broadened reporting channels for VAC that happened within and outside school. Some children reported violations to village chiefs and elders and some of these cases redirected to the attention of SCDO which enabled SCDO to follow up and support with the referral process.

At community level parents and caregivers especially, young mothers (aged 14-24 years with children in the early childhood development stage) are targeted since SCDO works with this stakeholder category on other child care programs and so improving their knowledge on children's rights, forms of violence, how to identify VAC and effects would enhance their parenting role. In addition, child rights protection champions are identified from within the local community, trained on VAC and encouraged to form small groups of child rights clubs for out of school children as a platform for advocating for continued sensitization of the community on children's rights.

The intervention of school child rights clubs is implemented in collaboration with different stakeholders including Government Departments with a mandate on child wellbeing.

**Table II: SCDO - child rights clubs multi -stakeholder collaboration**

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Support role SCDO - School child rights Clubs</b>
Education Department	Grants SCDO permission to work in the schools, and teachers to serve as patrons of the clubs
Children services Department	Supports in sensitizing children on their rights and is a referral point for child abuse cases.
Health Department	Builds capacity of club members on Sexual and Reproductive Health services
Police Department	Records and investigates reported child abuse cases and submits cases requiring Justice to the justice system
Local authority	Act as community watchdogs to ensure SCDO programs with children are befitting.
Political leaders	Acts as influencers in different spaces and enact policies that protect children, and serve as mentors.
Civil society organizations and networks	Technical support to SCDO and strategic linkages that have strengthened networking within the child protection referral pathway inclusive of VAC response services such as legal support and temporary safe shelter for child survivors of violence.

## RESULTS

**Basis of Evidence:** Professional, expert and user Opinion

SCDO relied on change stories to track intervention results and monitoring intervention activities in line with set objectives. Stories of change by children in their own handwriting on how child rights clubs impacted and changed their lives were shared with SCDO where a profile of case studies and most significant change stories were maintained.

Overall, change stories received by SCDO from children and communities indicated an improvement in awareness about VAC, reporting violence against children, and more efforts in prevention of VAC. Nevertheless, monitoring data showed persistence of physical abuse and minimal change in violence occurrence in the home location. It is therefore not surprising that reporting of violence through caregivers and teachers dropped as additional reporting channels notably community leaders and elders were introduced.



**Table III: Results on SCDO CRC performance indicators**

Indicator	Baseline Value			Mid line (2022)		
	(2021)		Total	Male		Female
	Male (%)	Female (%)		(%)	(%)	Total
Number of children in child rights clubs	40	60	<b>100</b>	45	55	<b>100</b>
Number of children reporting physical violence	15	20	<b>35</b>	25	20	<b>45</b>
Number of children reporting emotional violence (psychological abuse)	7	10	<b>17</b>	10	5	<b>15</b>
Number of children reporting sexual violence	5	30	<b>35</b>	3	20	<b>23</b>
Number of children neglected	25	20	<b>45</b>	15	15	<b>30</b>
Number of children in hazardous labor	30	25	<b>55</b>	20	10	<b>30</b>
Number of children reporting violence experienced at home	5	8	<b>13</b>	7	5	<b>12</b>
Number of children reporting violence experienced at school	10	25	<b>35</b>	7	15	<b>22</b>
Number of children reporting violence experienced in the community	10	30	<b>40</b>	7	22	<b>32</b>
Number of children reporting violence incidents through parents and caregivers	15	15	<b>30</b>	10	8	<b>18</b>
Number of children reporting violence incidents through school teachers	5	10	<b>15</b>	3	5	<b>8</b>
Number of children reporting violence incidents through community leaders and elders.	5	15	<b>20</b>	10	12	<b>22</b>

SCDO intervention monitoring data showed that the number of school child rights clubs increased to 15 (10 in schools and 5 out of school clubs) from the initial 10 that existent prior intervention. In addition, school child rights club approach enabled children to discuss issues that affect them, share experiences and report cases of violence; and the increase in child-led forums in schools and communities. Besides, Child rights student leaders acquired additional leadership skills enabling several to be selected among schools' representatives to participate in County Children Assembly programs; as well as school and county policy planning activities.

SCDO intervention on children's clubs broadened the space for children voices about the right to protection from violence resulting in strengthened reporting mechanisms for cases on violence against children by children themselves. Additionally, there was an increase in community reporting of child abuse after community sensitizations and training. SCDO further broadened reporting channels by opening a facebook page to purposely serve as a reporting channel on VAC.

Consequently, on average SCDO received four VAC cases daily from different parts of Mombasa and Kilifi County which were referred to different Government Children departments. Parental involvement in child protection increased commitment by parents and the community in ensuring that children join and stay in school leading to re-enrolment in school of over 100 children that had dropped out.

The Child protection response and referral mechanism was further strengthened through established linkages with formal child protection systems and other service providers. For instance, child reports on violence referred to the formal justice system were handled in accordance with the law; and networks with FIDA and Clear Kenya afforded the intervention legal services on pro-bono basis.

## CHANGE STORIES

**Story 1:** A primary boy aged 15 years who used to stay with her grandmother and was often abused by close relatives and neighbors was at the verge of dropping out of school due to the humiliation he was getting but School child rights Club activities encouraged him to stay in school.



Mama yangu aliniwacha nikiwa  
na umri mdogo na sijawahi kuona and i have  
never seen my father too ata simjui ikabidi niishi na  
nyanya yangu ambaye she is very old, kuna wale relatives  
ambao wali take advantage na kuanza kuninyanyasa na sikuwa na  
mtetezi sababu nyanya ni mtu mzima sana my relatives alinifanya ata  
niweze kukosa kwenda shule siku nyininge. My relatives wangeninyima ata  
chakula kama nyanya hana chochote na nilikuwa na shida sana na sikuwa na  
mtu wa kumuelezea. Shida zilinilemea na kuna wakati nilitaka kuwacha shule na  
kujiunga na vikundi haramu ili tu kutorokea shida nilizokuwa napitia. Kupitia shirika  
la strategic wenye walikutembelea shule yetu na ku form child right clubs nilikuwa  
moja wa Watoto waliofaidika na kikundi hicho, I was offered guidance and counselling  
na kufunzwa haki zangu na jinsi ya kuripoti dhuluma dhidi ya watoto na pia ata  
nikafunzwa aina ya dhuluma dhidi ya watoto. Shirika hili lilisaidiana na viongozi wa  
Kijiji kuhakikisha kuwa relatives waliokuwa wakinidhulumu na huhakikisha kuwa  
they face the law na saa hizi mimi ni champion wa children rights. Nashukuru  
sana shirika la strategic kwa kuja shulen i kwetu na wameweza kuwa wa  
msaada mkubwa kwangu, saa hii najua haki zangu na ata niko na  
ufahamu Zaidi wa kuripoti kesi za dhuluma dhidi ya watoto na pia  
hata na elimisha watoto wenzangu.

**Male child, 15 years, Mombasa.**

Story 2: A mother in the community for a long time had ignored reports from her two children about corporal punishment in school and occasional verbal abuse by the neighbor as she took it simply that children were being disciplined, until she attended SCDO sensitization on VAC and its consequences, then she realized the children were being abused.

Mimi

watoto wangu kwa muda  
mrefu wamekuwa wakinilalamikia kuhusu  
wanvyochapwa na pia jirani ambaye angewatusi na  
kuwarushia rushia maneno yanayo wadhalilisha, lakini mimi  
sikuona ubaya wowote maan anilijua ni hali ya kuwekwa nidhamu  
kwa hivyo sikuwahi tilia maanani malalmikshi ya watoto wangu. Kupitia  
shirika hili la strategic liliweza kutuletea mafunzo kijijini na nikafunguka  
macho kuwa watoto wangu wamekuwa wakidhulumiwa kwa muda mrefu na  
iliweza kuniuma sana kwamba sikuwa na sikiliza kumbe watoto wanaumia. Shirika  
hili lilienda paka kwenye hiyo shule na kufanya maongezi ya kina na walimu wa shule  
hiyo na naona dhuluma zimepungua maana ata watoto wangu siku hizi hawaniletei  
malalamishi na ata siwaoni na alama zo viboko kama ilivyokuwa hapo mbeleni.  
Niliweza pia kuripoti jirani aliyekuwa akidhulamu watoto wangu kwa kuwarushia  
maneno ambayo yalikuwa yakiwaumiza na kuwadhalilisha wanangu kupitia wazee  
wa vijiji na tukaweza kukaa na kufanya maongezi na saa hii nina furaha kuona  
watoto wangu wakifurahia na ata mimi ni mmoja wa wanaharakati wa vijiji  
wanaopigania haki za watoto. Shirika hili limekuwa la umuhimu na msaada  
mkubwa sana kwetu wanajamii waliweza kutembelea shule hiyo na  
kuangalia malalamishi ya watoto na piua wameweza kutufunza  
mambo mengi kuhusu haki za watoto kama wanajamii na  
nafurahia mabadiliko haya.

**Female caregiver, Maweni Ward Kilifi,  
County.**

## PROGRAMMING LESSONS

In a supportive safe environment with an adult mentor; children can articulate their agency as active participants in VAC identification, response and referral. With this learning, SCDO has developed an expansion strategy for school child rights club intervention into two other communities in Mombasa i.e. Mnazi Moja community in Nyali and Moroto slums in Mvita.

## REFERENCES

1. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. Kenya Demographic Health Survey Key Indicators, 2014.
2. Strategic Community Development Organization, (2021) Situational analysis on the status of violence against children and adolescents in Kanamai, Kilifi, Kenya
3. UNICEF (2019) Violence Against Children Survey Report -Kenya

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**Alignment to INSPIRE Seven strategies:** Education and Life skills

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