



ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH LOCAL ACTION:

SCALING UP GENERATION EQUALITY IN KENYA

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KEY ELEMENTS/STRATEGIES FOR SCALING UP AT NATIONAL AND COUNTY LEVELS:

Kenya is co-leading the GBV Action Coalition.

1. Strong coordination and Governance structure

Through the GEF commitment number 12, Kenya established a very robust leadership structure that operates from the national to county levels :

- a. **National Advisory committee** which is the highest level that comprises office of the President, key Cabinet secretaries and UN agencies, whose role is advisory, resource mobilization, and political goodwill. It guides in the implementation of Kenya GEF commitments.
- b. **National Steering Committee** which oversees the implementation of GEF commitments at national level. It comprises the state department for Gender, Key ministries, partners, CSOs and private sector.
- c. **County GEF committees;** comprising both **state and non-state actors** who implement the GEF commitments at the community level. Importantly, they consolidate **quarterly reports** at the local level and submit to the national steering committee for further reporting.
- d. **The GEF Secretariat:** which coordinates all activities both at National and county levels, develops annual workplans, prepares quarterly meetings as well as preparation of GEF annual reports.

2. Engagement with the local council of elders:

- Generally, culture is the identity of a community. Elders are custodians of culture and their word and perception is what the rest of the community follows. We used this approach to have dialogues with the elders especially in communities that practice FGM. It resulted to signing of a declaration by Samburu council of elder and we are now at the final stages of signing another with Bungoma council of elders aimed at ending FGM.

3. Male Engagement:

- This approach has been very impactful as an inclusion strategy in the fight against GBV, FGM and child marriages.

4. Capacity building of duty bearers at local level:

- As a way of building capacity of communities on case management, the government has enrolled duty bearers (**police, health, education, children's officers**) and community leaders/CBOs into certified trainings on counselling, community policing, alcohol and substance abuse programs, which run for 8-10 months. This is a sustainable strategy to empower communities and build a cohesive environment.

5. Inter- county cross learning program

- Council of Elders and FGM cutters from regions with high incidences of FGM were taken to the counties that had signed declarations to have peer to peer learning experiences. Such forums have been very effective in convincing the other regions to abandon the harmful practices.

SUCSESSES/RESULTS

- **Good Coordination and collaboration framework** which brought many players together and worked collectively to implement GEF commitments.
- The county committees have been a major strength in tracking implementation of GEF at the local level.
- **Establishment of GBVRC** centers in all level 4 (county) health facilities
- Establishment of **Gender desks at police stations** across the country
- **Empowerment of survivors (Jasiri Fund):** In partnership with CSOs, implementation of the GBV survivors' fund has cushioned survivors from further vulnerability.
- **Engagement of cultural leaders** resulted to the elders signing declarations committing to support the government's effort in ending GBV/FGM. Many FGM cutters have surrendered their tools and practice.

- **Male engagement has** been a big success story. Some cultures condoned physical violence as a normal disciplinary measure. Through engagements with men, we have been able to create more awareness and change the cultural mindset.
- We have been able to hold successful dialogues with the Maasai ‘Morans’ on harmful effects of FGM.
- **Judicial reforms** have enhanced access to justice by locals (eg. GBV courts, Virtual court hearings, Witness protection boxes, etc.)
- **Capacity building and cross learnings** were a great success where council of elders in hotspot counties made exchange visits to share experiences with those that had signed declarations.
- **GEF County committees convening:** As I speak now, we have brought together 15 counties who are having a capacity building and cross learning workshop. This is very instrumental in counties sharing experiences as well as strengthen their capacity which is crucial in fast-tracking results.

Lessons learnt:

- E.g we faced an emergence in Technology Facilitated GBV, that has resulted to an increase in fatalities especially increased cases of femicides.
- We also saw an upsurge in medicalization of FGM as well as emergence of FGM cases among the elderly in communities that never used to practice the vice.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

- Persistent social cultural norms that needs a lot of sensitization to overcome
- Inadequate commitment makers at the local level to support the implementation of GEF commitments.
- Inadequate financial resources to effectively roll out localization; most counties do not allocate funds for GBV(or allocate very little that cannot implement an activity).
- Difficulties in coordination of all the multi-sectoral players in resource mobilization.
- Localization effort is at different levels as some counties are far ahead and making great progress, while others are struggling.
- Data management: Investment in research and data management is very low at the local level and is a big challenge.

Recommendations on scaling up GEF at national and county levels:

- **Political goodwill:** It is very important to have a good rapport with the political wing right from the beginning for buy in.
- **Budget allocation:** There should be adequate budgetary allocation for effective localization of GEF as it is a financially intense activity.
- **Adopt a multi-sectoral approach** by involving key stakeholders through a clear governance structure. This improves ownership and coordination as well as resource mobilization.
- Having **continuous engagements** and sharing of experiences like what is happening today is very important and highly recommended at all levels.
- **Engage with local cultural, religious and community structures**
- Involving the local structures to accommodate their viewpoint creates goodwill and the community feels respected.