

REPORT ON THE TWO-DAY STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLE AND POLICY DIALOGUE ON THE REVIEW OF THE KILIFI COUNTY ANTI-GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE POLICY (2024-2028)



Stakeholders present during the review of the Kilifi County Anti-GBV Policy 2024-2028



VENUE: Kibaoni Social Hall, Kilifi Town, Kilifi County
DATES: 8th – 9th June 2026



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Come Together Widows and Orphans Organization (CTWOO), through the Fanikisha Mjane Project, convened a two-day Stakeholder Roundtable and Policy Dialogue on the Review of the Kilifi County Anti-Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Policy (2024–2028) on 8th and 9th June 2026 at Kibaoni Social Hall, Kilifi Town, Kilifi County.

The dialogue brought together approximately forty (40) participants with representation from Kilifi County Government i.e. Office of the Deputy Governor Kilifi County, Kilifi County Attorney General Office, CECM Gender, Youths and Sports Dr. Dama Masha, Director State Department for Gender, Kilifi County, Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW), Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), Federation of Women Lawyers Mombasa Branch Kenya (FIDA), Sema Nami Mama Foundation, Maendeleo Ya Wanawake-Kenya, GROOTS Kenya, Kenya Power Care, Adonai Widows Mombasa County, Hopes and Dreams CBO, Ombudsman Kenya, project beneficiaries and the kayas (community leaders). The meeting was officially opened by the Deputy Governor for Kilifi County H.E Flora Mbetsa Chibule.

The primary purpose of the stakeholder dialogue was to critically assess the responsiveness of the Kilifi County Anti-GBV Policy (2024–2028) to the needs and realities of widows and other vulnerable populations, identify policy gaps, and develop recommendations to strengthen prevention, protection, response, access to justice, and socio-economic empowerment mechanisms.

Day One focused on policy review, stakeholder presentations, analysis of implementation progress, experiences of widows, identification of policy gaps, and discussions on strengthening institutional responses to GBV. Participants also reviewed findings from a policy assessment comparing the Kilifi County Anti-GBV Policy with provisions in the Widowed Persons Protection Bill, 2026, a key legislation that has been developed by Come Together Widows and Orphans Organization and its key partners.

Day Two focused on validation of identified policy gaps, presentation of group work findings, formulation and adoption of recommendations, stakeholder commitments, and development of a roadmap for strengthening the policy framework. Participants emphasized the importance of widow representation in county GBV structures, recognition of widow-specific forms of GBV, legal aid support, psychosocial services, economic empowerment interventions, and improved data collection systems.

The dialogue demonstrated strong commitment from the County Government of Kilifi and all participating stakeholders to strengthen the policy framework and ensure it addresses the needs of widows and other vulnerable groups. The forum concluded with a collective commitment to advocate for policy reforms, strengthen partnerships, mobilize resources, and support implementation of the recommendations generated during the dialogue.



EVENT OBJECTIVES

General Objective

To review the Kilifi County Anti-Gender-Based Violence Policy (2024–2028) and strengthen its responsiveness to the rights, protection, and socio-economic needs of widows and other vulnerable populations.

Specific Objectives

1. To assess the effectiveness and implementation status of the Kilifi County Anti-GBV Policy (2024–2028).
2. To identify gaps, challenges, and emerging issues affecting the prevention and response to Gender-Based Violence in Kilifi County.
3. To examine the extent to which the policy addresses widow-specific vulnerabilities and forms of violence.
4. To gather stakeholder perspectives and experiences regarding GBV prevention, response, and survivor support services.
5. To develop recommendations for strengthening legal, institutional, and community-based protection mechanisms.
6. To promote collaboration among government agencies, civil society organizations, development partners, and community leaders.
7. To strengthen advocacy efforts towards the inclusion of widows in county development and governance processes.
8. To support policy reforms aligned with the principles contained in the Widowed Persons Protection Bill, 2026.



DAY ONE: 8TH JUNE 2026

1.0 Introduction



Stakeholders during the review of the Kilifi County Anti-GBV Policy (2024-2028) held at Kibaoni social Hall, Kilifi Town, Kilifi County.

The first day of the Stakeholder Roundtable Dialogue focused on reviewing the Kilifi County Anti-GBV Policy (2024–2028), assessing implementation progress, examining existing gaps, and facilitating dialogue among stakeholders on strengthening protection and support systems for GBV survivors, particularly widows.

The engagement was officially opened by the Deputy Governor of Kilifi County, H.E. Flora Mbetsa Chibule, who reaffirmed the County Government's commitment to ending Gender-Based Violence and strengthening partnerships that advance gender equality and social justice.

The forum served as a platform for collective reflection, knowledge sharing, policy analysis, and generation of evidence-based recommendations aimed at strengthening GBV prevention and response efforts within Kilifi County.



2.0 Opening Session

Participants were welcomed by Dr. Dianah Kamande, Founder and Executive Director of Come



Together Widows and Orphans organization, who highlighted the importance of reviewing county policies to ensure they adequately address the realities faced by widows and other vulnerable populations.

Dr. Dianah Kamande, Founder & ED, Come Together Widows and Orphans Organization welcoming stakeholders to the Stakeholder Roundtable Review of the Kilifi County Anti-GBV Policy (2024-2028)

3.0 Presentation of the Achievements, Lessons learned and challenges of the Fanikisha Mjane Project



Tom Mwaniki, Fanikisha Mjane Project Lead briefing the stakeholders on the achievements, challenges & lessons learned from the Fanikisha Mjane Project

Tom Mwaniki, Fanikisha Mjane Project Lead, delivered a presentation highlighting the project's achievements, lessons learned, and challenges encountered during implementation in Sokoke



Ward, Ganze Subcounty, Kilifi County. The presentation provided stakeholders with an overview of the project's progress in advancing the rights, protection, and socio-economic empowerment of widowed persons, while also shedding light on persistent gaps requiring policy and programmatic interventions.

Key Achievements

Among the key achievements highlighted were:

1. Agricultural Achievements

- 150 widows trained in cassava farming
- Increased household food security and land use among the 150 widows.
- Enhanced climate resilience and agricultural skills
- Families relying on farms for food and income

2. Table Banking Initiative

The Project introduced a table banking initiative complemented by financial literacy training on savings, budgeting, loans, business planning, and bookkeeping, which has significantly enhanced the financial management skills and economic resilience of widows. As a result, beneficiaries have developed a strong saving culture, improved their ability to manage household finances, and are now able to meet urgent needs through collective savings mobilization, with one group successfully saving KES 20,000 within a short period of implementation. This achievement demonstrates the effectiveness of the initiative and has further inspired many widows to embrace financial inclusion, with growing interest in opening both individual and group bank accounts to support their long-term economic empowerment.

3. Social Empowerment

The 150 beneficiaries were organized into groups which provided platforms for collective learning, experience sharing, and collaborative problem-solving. These groups promoted strong social bonds among widows that helped to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness and also created a sense of belonging and mutual support. Through regular interactions, members learned from one another, exchanged practical solutions to common challenges, and built confidence in addressing economic and social issues. The solidarity developed within these groups has contributed towards the strengthening of their collective voice, empowered them to pursue shared goals, and contributed to positive changes in their families and communities.

4. Amplification of Widows' Voices Through Advocacy and Awareness Campaigns

The project successfully amplified the voices of widows through their active participation in key national and international advocacy campaigns, including;

- 16-Days of Activism 2025 held on 2nd December 2025
- International Women's Day 2026 held on 11th March 2026
- International Day of the Girl Child 2025

These campaigns allowed widows to publicly voice against discrimination, exploitation, and harmful cultural practices affecting their lives and daughters.

Challenges Experienced

Despite these achievements, several challenges were reported during project implementation, including:

1. Persistent harmful cultural practices and social norms that continue to expose widows to discrimination, stigma, and various forms of Gender-Based Violence.
2. Limited awareness and enforcement of laws and policies that protect widows' rights, particularly in matters related to inheritance and property ownership.



3. Limited access to legal aid and justice services for widows experiencing rights violations.
4. Lack of comprehensive and disaggregated data on widows.
5. Economic vulnerability among widows, which often limits their ability to seek justice and access essential services.

Emerging Issues Affecting Widows After the Project

- Limited market access for cassava products
- Limited access to agricultural inputs
- Continued harmful cultural practices i.e. widow inheritance, forced shaving and forced isolation.
- Limited legal support
- Poverty and challenging economic conditions
- Limited business growth opportunities for widows

Lessons Learned

The presentation also highlighted several important lessons learned from the project:

1. Community sensitization and awareness creation play a vital role in challenging harmful cultural practices and promoting the protection of widows' rights.
2. Economic empowerment interventions significantly contribute to improving the resilience, dignity, and self-reliance of widows.
3. Strengthening local leadership structures and community-based support systems enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions targeting widows.
4. Continuous advocacy is necessary to ensure that widow-specific concerns are recognized and integrated into county policies, legislation, and development plans.

The project lead concluded by emphasizing the need for sustained collaboration among stakeholders to address the challenges affecting widows and to ensure that future policy reforms, including the review of the Kilifi County Anti-GBV Policy, adequately respond to the rights, protection, and empowerment needs of widowed persons.

5.0 Voices of Widows



Florence Katana, a beneficiary of the Fanikisha Mjane Project, sharing her testimony during the Stakeholder Roundtable Dialogue on the Review of the Kilifi County Anti-GBV Policy (2024–2028).

During her testimony, **Florence Katana, a beneficiary of the Fanikisha Mjane Project**, shared how widowhood had exposed her to numerous challenges, including economic hardship, social stigma, discrimination, limited access to information, and a lack of confidence to speak out on issues affecting her rights and wellbeing. She explained that before joining the project, many widows in her community suffered in

silence, often unaware of their rights and with little support to address the injustices they faced.



Florence noted that through the Fanikisha Mjane Project, she had received training on widow rights, financial literacy, leadership, and economic empowerment, which had transformed her life and restored her confidence. “Before this project, I felt alone and helpless, but today I know my rights, I can speak for myself and other widows, and I have learned how to save and plan for my future,” she stated. She further highlighted that the project had provided a platform for widows to come together, support one another, participate in advocacy initiatives, and engage duty bearers on issues affecting them. Her testimony demonstrated the positive impact of the project in empowering widows to become informed, confident, economically active, and active participants in community and development processes.

6.0 Presentation of the Kilifi County Anti-GBV Policy (2024-2028)



Mr. Mwangome Cyrilus, Director of Gender, Kilifi County Department of Gender, Culture, Social Services and Sports, presenting the Kilifi County Anti-GBV Policy (2024–2028) during the Stakeholder Roundtable Dialogue.

Mr. Mwangome Cyrilus, Director of Gender, Kilifi County Department of Gender, Culture, Social Services and Sports, delivered a comprehensive presentation on the Kilifi County Anti-Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Policy (2024–2028). He highlighted that the policy envisions “a county free from all forms of Gender-Based Violence” and seeks to eliminate GBV through strengthened legal frameworks, promotion of gender equality, and provision of victim-centered support services. He explained that the policy is anchored on six strategic pillars, namely ***Legal Frameworks, Prevention and Awareness, Support Services, Capacity Building, Economic Empowerment, and Research and Data***, which collectively guide the county’s efforts towards preventing and responding to GBV.

He further noted that the policy ***targets women, children, youth, persons with disabilities (PWDs), older persons, and other marginalized groups***, with implementation being spearheaded by the Department of Gender Affairs in Kilifi County through a coordinated multi-sectoral approach. He outlined the institutional structures established to support implementation,



including the **County GBV Coordination Committee**, which meets quarterly to oversee policy implementation and coordinate county-wide GBV interventions; **the County GBV Technical Working Group**, which convenes bi-annually to review data and provide technical guidance; the **Sub-County GBV Networks**, which facilitate grassroots coordination and referrals to health, counselling, shelter, and vocational services; and the **Community GBV Action Committees**, which mobilize community action, strengthen referral pathways, and support survivors in accessing psychosocial, protection, and economic empowerment services. He emphasized that these structures are critical in ensuring effective coordination, accountability, service delivery, and community engagement in the county's efforts to address Gender-Based Violence.

7.0 Panel Discussion: Addressing Policy Gaps, Strengthening Protection Mechanisms and Advancing Economic Justice for Widows

Following the presentation of the Kilifi County Anti-GBV Policy (2024–2028), stakeholders engaged in a vibrant panel discussion focusing on the challenges facing widows, policy gaps, access to justice, economic empowerment, and opportunities for strengthening protection mechanisms within Kilifi County. The discussion drew insights from government representatives, legal experts, civil society organizations, widow rights advocates, and project beneficiaries, creating a rich dialogue on practical solutions to improve the lives of widows and other vulnerable groups.

Panelists:

1. Director Judith Kashero, Director Gender, Kilifi County Department of Gender, Culture, Social Services and Sports.
2. Tom Mwaniki, Project Lead, Fanikisha Mjane Project
3. Asma Abdalla, Legal Officer, Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ)
4. Tracey Mwangeli, Legal Officer, FIDA Kenya
5. Purity Muinde, Representative GROOTS Kenya
6. Elizabeth Muthoka, Widow Leader, Fanikisha Widows Initiative Chairperson

The panelists acknowledged that widows continue to face multiple and intersecting challenges including property grabbing, inheritance disputes, harmful cultural practices, economic vulnerability, social exclusion, limited access to justice, and inadequate representation in governance and decision-making structures. Participants emphasized that while legal and policy frameworks exist, many widows remain unaware of their rights or face barriers in enforcing them due to poverty, fear, illiteracy, weak implementation mechanisms, and cultural norms.

The discussion further highlighted the need for county governments, local administration, civil society organizations, and development partners to work collaboratively to strengthen prevention, protection, response, and empowerment initiatives targeting widows. Particular emphasis was placed on ensuring that widows are recognized not merely as beneficiaries of support programmes but as active contributors to policy formulation, community development, and governance processes.

Key Recommendations from the Panel Discussion

S/N	Recommendation	Explanation
1	Explicit Recognition of Widows in the Policy	Widows should be recognized as a distinct vulnerable group within the Kilifi County Anti-GBV Policy.
2	Recognition of Widow-Specific Forms of Gender-Based Violence	The policy should specifically address widow inheritance, property grabbing, forced eviction, forced remarriage, widow cleansing, psychological abuse, and economic violence experienced by widows within the region



3	Strengthen Access to Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establish legal aid support services and community-based paralegal programmes to assist widows in addressing inheritance, succession, land ownership, and other rights violations. ➤ Improve responsiveness and accountability of public institutions when handling complaints involving widows.
4	Increase Widow Representation in Decision-Making Structures, GBV Prevention & Response Structures	Ensure widows are represented in County Gender Sector Working Groups, County GBV Committees, and other policy implementation and monitoring structures.
5	Prioritize Empowerment Opportunities for Widows	Develop targeted empowerment programmes including i.e. paralegal training program for widows and livelihood support programs
6	Establishment of Safe Spaces and Support Services	Establish rescue centres, counselling services, psychosocial support programmes, and referral pathways for widows and other GBV survivors.
7	Strengthen Community Awareness and Prevention Efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conduct continuous public education and sensitization on widows' rights, inheritance rights, and harmful cultural practices. ➤ Engage community leaders, religious leaders, and local administration in prevention efforts.
8	Have a disaggregated Widowhood Data	Ensure widows are adequately captured in county statistics and development planning processes.
9	Strengthen Multi-Sectoral Coordination	Enhance collaboration between county government departments, local administration, civil society organizations, legal institutions, and community groups to improve service delivery and protection mechanisms.

This session concluded with a strong call for sustained partnerships, increased resource allocation, and collective action to ensure that the recommendations generated through the panel discussion translate into meaningful change for widows and other vulnerable groups across Kilifi County.



DAY TWO: 9TH JUNE 2026

1.0 Introduction

Day Two of the forum focused on a comprehensive review of the Kilifi County Anti-Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Policy 2024–2028 to assess its responsiveness to the unique challenges faced by widows in Kilifi County. Participants were divided into two working groups to critically analyze the policy framework, identify existing gaps, and propose recommendations for strengthening its effectiveness in addressing widow-specific forms of violence, discrimination, and exclusion. The discussions provided an opportunity for stakeholders to reflect on the policy's implementation and ensure that the lived experiences of widows are adequately reflected within county GBV prevention and response mechanisms.

2.0 Group Work: Review of the Kilifi County Anti-GBV Policy (2024–2028)

Participants were organized into groups to review the policy and assess its effectiveness against the realities experienced by widows. Both groups examined the policy's vision of a county free from all forms of Gender-Based Violence and reviewed its strategic pillars, including prevention, legal protection, survivor support services, capacity building, economic empowerment, and multi-sectoral coordination.

The review focused on the following thematic areas:

- Prevention and awareness creation.
- Survivor support services.
- Legal and institutional frameworks.
- Economic empowerment.
- Data collection and research.
- Multi-sectoral coordination and implementation.

Policy Analysis and Assessment



Participants engaged in a policy review exercise to assess the responsiveness of the Kilifi County Anti-GBV Policy (2024–2028) to the needs and challenges faced by widows in Kilifi County.

Participants examined the extent to which the Kilifi County Anti-GBV Policy (2024–2028) addresses the vulnerabilities and protection needs of widows.

Members noted that while the policy provides a broad framework for addressing GBV, however, it does not explicitly recognize widows as a vulnerable category requiring targeted interventions. The group emphasized the need for greater

inclusion of widowhood-related concerns within prevention, protection, and support strategies.



Identification of Gaps and Recommendations



Participants engaged in a policy review exercise, discussing gaps in the Kilifi County Anti-GBV Policy (2024–2028) and developing recommendations to address widow-specific forms of gender-based violence, discrimination, and exclusion.

3.0 Key Policy Gaps Identified

The review by both groups revealed several critical gaps within the Kilifi County Anti-GBV Policy (2024–2028). These gaps include;

3.1 Lack of Explicit Recognition of Widows

The policy does not identify widows as a distinct vulnerable group despite their heightened exposure to violence, discrimination, harmful cultural practices, and economic deprivation following the loss of a spouse.

3.2 Absence of Widow-Specific GBV Provisions

Participants observed that the policy fails to recognize and address harmful practices and violations that disproportionately affect widows, including:

- Widow inheritance.
- Widow cleansing.
- Forced remarriage.
- Property disinheritance.
- Evictions from matrimonial homes.
- Psychological and emotional abuse associated with widowhood.

3.3 Limited Access to Justice

Stakeholders noted significant barriers that hinder widows from seeking redress, including:

- Lack of specialized legal aid services.



- Weak support mechanisms for succession and inheritance disputes.
- Inadequate protection during property and inheritance-related conflicts.

3.4 Data and Evidence Gaps

The policy lacks mechanisms for collecting and analyzing data disaggregated by widowhood status, making it difficult to understand the prevalence and nature of violence experienced by widows and to design targeted interventions.

3.5 Lack of Emergency Support Services

Participants highlighted the absence of dedicated support measures for widows facing violence and displacement, including:

- Emergency shelters for widows evicted from their homes.
- Specialized psychosocial and trauma support services.
- Tailored referral and case management mechanisms.

3.6 Weak Representation in Coordination Structures

The policy does not guarantee the representation of widows within county GBV coordination and decision-making structures which limits their participation in policy implementation, monitoring, and advocacy processes.

4.0 Key Recommendations Adopted

4.1 Representation and Inclusion

- Include widows in County Gender Sector Working Groups.
- Ensure widow representation in GBV coordination structures.
- Strengthen participation in county planning processes.

4.2 Recognition of Widow-Specific GBV

Recognize:

- Widow cleansing.
- Widow inheritance.
- Forced remarriage.
- Property grabbing.
- Evictions.
- Emotional and psychological abuse.

4.3 Access to Justice

Establish:

- Legal aid services.
- Community paralegal programmes.
- Succession rights support mechanisms.

4.4 Psychosocial Support

Develop:

- Counselling services.
- Safe spaces.
- Rescue centres.
- Trauma healing programmes.

4.5 Economic Empowerment

Promote:

- Financial literacy.
- Entrepreneurship support.
- Access to government funds.
- Livelihood strengthening programmes.



4.6 Data and Research

- Collect data disaggregated by widowhood status.
- Develop county widow registries.
- Conduct periodic research on widowhood issues.

5.0 Key Commitments Made by Stakeholders

During the discussion, stakeholders expressed commitment towards advancing the rights, dignity, and socio-economic wellbeing of widows in Kilifi County through the following actions:

1. County Government of Kilifi committed to reviewing recommendations from the dialogue and exploring opportunities to integrate widow-focused interventions into county policies, development plans, and social protection programmes.
2. The Department of Gender committed to strengthening collaboration with stakeholders and promoting greater inclusion of widows in county programmes and policy implementation processes.
3. Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ) committed to enhancing awareness on administrative justice, promoting accountability within public institutions, and supporting efforts to improve access to justice for widows.
4. FIDA Kenya committed to continuing legal empowerment initiatives, legal aid support, and advocacy for reforms that strengthen inheritance, succession, and property rights for widows.
5. GROOTS Kenya committed to strengthening grassroots organizing, community sensitization, and economic empowerment initiatives targeting widows.
6. Local Administration (Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs) committed to strengthening community-level dispute resolution mechanisms, improving referral systems, and addressing harmful cultural practices affecting widows.
7. CTWOO and Partner Organizations committed to continuing advocacy efforts, capacity building, economic empowerment programmes, and policy engagement aimed at protecting and promoting the rights of widows.

The County Government expressed willingness to work with stakeholders to strengthen policy responsiveness and implementation.

6.0 Way Forward

The dialogue agreed on the following next steps:

1. Submit recommendations to the Kilifi County Department for Gender, Culture, Social Services & Sports.
2. Advocate for incorporation of recommendations into the revised policy.
3. Strengthen collaboration among stakeholders.
4. Promote awareness of widow rights.
5. Establish monitoring mechanisms to track progress.

CONCLUSION

The two-day Stakeholder Roundtable Policy Review/Dialogue marked a significant milestone in strengthening Gender-Based Violence prevention and response efforts in Kilifi County. The engagement successfully created a platform for inclusive dialogue, evidence-based policy review, and collective action aimed at ensuring that widows and other vulnerable populations are adequately protected within the county's GBV framework. The recommendations generated provide a clear pathway towards a more inclusive, responsive, and rights-based Anti-GBV Policy that advances protection, justice, dignity, and socio-economic empowerment for all. The strong commitment demonstrated by government institutions, civil society organizations, widow leaders, and development partners offers a solid foundation for sustained advocacy and implementation efforts moving forward.



GALLERY





