



ASSESSMENT OF THE PREVALENCE OF

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN DOMESTIC WORKERS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EAC	East African Community
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ILO	International Labour Organization
KUDHEIHA	Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotel, Educational Institutions, Hospitals, and Allied Workers
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
NSS	National Social Security (referring to the National Social Security Act)

GLOSSARY¹

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: Refers to a policy or programme initiative that takes deliberate and targeted steps aimed at increasing representation of a vulnerable or marginalized group as an approach to redress biases and discrimination.

EMPOWERMENT: Refers to the process and outcome of people, when through knowledge women and men can take control over their lives, setting their own agendas and gaining skills.

GENDER: Refers to socially constructed differences in attributes and opportunities associated with being female or male and to the social interactions and relations between women and men. Gender determines what is expected, allowed, and valued in a girl, boy, woman or a man in each context. In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between girl, boy, women and men in roles and responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken and access to and control over resources, as well as in decision-making opportunities. These differences and inequalities between the sexes are shaped by the history of social relations and change over time within their environments and across cultures. Gender roles: Socially ascribed responsibilities or tasks assigned to boys, girls, men or women because of culture and may vary from context to context.

GENDER ANALYSIS: Gender analysis is a critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities, and rights/entitlements affect men, women, girls and boys in certain situations or contexts.

GENDER EQUALITY : is the state in which women and men enjoy equal rights, opportunities, and entitlements in civil and political life.

GENDER EQUITY: Fairness in women's and men's access to socio-economic resources and opportunities politically, economically, and socially.

GENDER PARITY: This is a numerical concept referring to the equal number of girls and women, boys, and men relative to their respective members in the population.

GENDER DISCRIMINATION: Refers to any distinction, exclusion or restriction made based on socially constructed gender roles and norms which prevent an individual from enjoying full human rights.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING: It is a strategy that seeks to make women's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and social spheres, such that inequality between men and women is not perpetuated. The goal is to achieve gender equality.

GENDER STEREOTYPE: They are generic attitudes, opinions, roles applied to a particular gender and which function as unjustifiable fixed assumptions.

GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE: This is an approach that changes the root causes of unequal gender relations and discrimination against women and girls. It also seeks to tackle inequalities through holistic engagement of women and in addressing underlying gender barriers.

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE: Any form discrimination or act of violence that may cause physical, sexual, and psychological harm or suffering to women, girls, men, and boys perpetrated based on gender.



1 The glossary of Terms and concepts is sourced from UNICEF 2017 Gender Equality: Glossary of Terms and Concepts <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/1761/file/Genderglossarytermsandconcepts.pdf>. UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia 2017

GENDER RELATIONS: Social relationships between men and women. They are relations of cooperation, connection, mutual support and conflict, separation, and competition, of difference and inequality. They are concerned with how power is distributed between sexes.

SEX: Refers to individual biological differences between women and assigned at birth and, cannot be changed. Unlike gender, these differences do not vary across culture or over time. Sex (female or male) is recorded during data collection in censuses, surveys, or administrative records.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: Unwanted conduct of sexual nature or other conduct based on sex that is done/ committed without consent and, can be verbal or physical.

GENDER GAP: The difference in any area between women and men in terms of their levels of participation, access, equal rights, remuneration, opportunities, or benefits.

GENDER EQUITY: The process of being fair to men and women, boys and girls, and importantly the equality of outcomes and results. It refers to differential treatment that is fair and positively addresses a bias or disadvantage that is due to gender roles, norms or differences between the sexes. Equity ensures that women, men and girls and boys have an equal chance in their spheres of life.

GENDER ANALYSIS: The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes, in all areas and at all levels.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research on the Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence in the Domestic Work Context was made possible through the continued support and collaboration of Oxfam Kenya's partners.

We express our sincere gratitude to Oxfam Canada and Global Affairs Canada, whose dedication and support in strengthening care infrastructure for domestic workers made it possible to undertake this study. Special thanks go to all domestic workers and domestic worker development stakeholders who generously shared their knowledge and experiences, which informed the findings of this study.

Finally, we recognize the Oxfam Kenya Team, whose dedication to this work was evident throughout the process. Their expertise at different stages of the study was vital in ensuring both the accuracy and the successful completion of the research.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THIS SECTION GIVES A HIGHLIGHT OF THE STUDY BACKGROUND, METHODOLOGY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING PREVALENCE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AMONG CARE WORKERS.

INTRODUCTION

Oxfam in collaboration with the Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotel, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Workers (KUDHEIHA) and Youth Alive Kenya (YAK) will implement a 6-year project titled 'Time to Care in Nairobi, Mombasa, Kiambu and Nakuru counties in Kenya. The project overall objective is to 'Improve gender equality and care infrastructure for women and girls in Kenya'. The Care Project will directly benefit 5,916 people and 2,021,800 people, these include both rural and urban populations. The project has a two-pillar strategy representing two Intermediate Outcomes of Increased adoption of gender-equitable social norms in support of women and girls in Kenya's care infrastructure and increased implementation of gender-transformative legislation, policies, and practices by duty bearers in support of care infrastructure in Kenya for women and girls.

The Time to Care Project intends to design effective strategies to reduce the prevalence of gender-based violence, discrimination, and work-related abuse for domestic workers in public and private spaces. To actualize these, the assessment was guided by four main objectives that sought to understand the prevalence of gender-based violence for domestic workers in their world of work, identify the different forms of GBV they experience in their workplaces, identify root causes of GBV for domestic workers to deepen the understanding on why domestic workers are vulnerable to gender-based violence, review of laws and legislations on Gender Based Violence and establish and recommend strategies in the prevention and management of GBV experienced by domestic workers.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO STUDY

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach to investigate prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) in domestic worker contexts across four Kenyan counties: Nairobi, Mombasa, Kiambu, and Nakuru. This approach combined quantitative surveys, qualitative Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), literature review of relevant documents and a stakeholder mapping exercise, ensuring both statistical rigor and contextual depth. The respondents for the quantitative study consisted of 351 domestic workers. 39.6% were from Nairobi, followed by Kiambu 24.2% and Nakuru 23.4% and Mombasa at 12.8% of the respondents. 87.7% (n = 308) of the total sample were female while males accounted for 12.3% (n = 43). The study conducted 19 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) across the target areas, with individuals from government and civil society organizations, based on their knowledge of domestic work and their involvement in the welfare of domestic workers. The legislative environment, existing protections, and gaps in laws related to domestic workers were explored. Additionally, 9 focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with domestic workers, providing rich qualitative data on the lived experiences of domestic care workers, as well as the social and cultural contexts shaping these experiences.

FINDINGS

The study documents the findings of the assessment aligned with the project's objectives. The analysis is based on aggregated data from various respondent categories across the four counties where the project is being implemented. The findings integrate both quantitative and qualitative responses, showcased through statistics, charts, and tables, complemented by verbatim quotes from respondents.

Prevalence of gender-based violence for domestic workers in their world of work

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) remains a critical issue within the domestic work sector, with 56.7% of respondents recognizing it as a major problem in their workplaces. The findings shows that female workers are disproportionately affected, with 90% of reported GBV cases involving women. A majority (59.8%) of domestic workers reported experiencing some form of gender-based violence. Nairobi had the highest percentage of affected respondents (21.9%) followed by Kiambu (16.0%) and Nakuru (14.2%). Mombasa had the lowest reported experiences at 7.7%. These findings highlight the widespread acknowledgment of gender-based violence as a critical issue particularly in Nairobi and Kiambu.

Forms of GBV experienced by domestic workers in their workplaces

Emotional violence is the most common form of GBV, affecting 49.9% of workers, followed by economic violence (28.5%), sexual violence (13.7%), and physical violence (8.0%). A multiple-response analysis revealed that across all age groups under study (18-24, 25-35 and above 35 years), females consistently reported higher exposure to various forms of violence, compared to males who reported lower incidences of emotional and economic violence but had some exposure to physical violence. The abuses range from harsh punishment for minor mistakes, to emotional and psychological abuse, where the domestic worker is belittled, humiliated, or denied basic rights. This includes the use of harmful words, insults, name-calling, and belittling language. It also involved constant criticism, yelling, or shouting to degrade or intimidate domestic workers. The findings underline the urgent need for stronger enforcement of labor laws, better wage regulations, and comprehensive programs to combat GBV in the domestic work sector.



90%
of reported GBV
cases affect female
care workers.

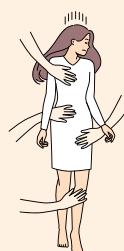


A majority **58%**
of domestic workers
reported experiencing
some form of gender-
based violence.



Emotional violence
is the most common
form of GBV, affects

49.9%
of workers



Sexual violence
affects

13.7%



Economic Violence

28.5%



Physical Violence

8%

Perpetrators of Gender-Based Violence Among Domestic Workers in their workplaces

Employers, particularly employer-wives, were identified as the primary perpetrators of GBV, accounting for 59.9% of reported cases. Other perpetrators included employer-husbands (25.1%) and employer's children (9.7%), while violence from co-workers was relatively minimal. These findings highlighted the significant role of employers, particularly women, in perpetrating violence against domestic workers.



Causes of Gender-Based Violence in domestic workers' contexts

The report identifies several root causes of GBV in domestic work, including the lack of recognition of workers' human rights, unequal power imbalances, absence of formal contracts, cultural acceptance of violence, and insufficient advocacy from trade unions and employment agencies. These factors contribute to a systemic cycle of abuse and exploitation. Female workers across Mombasa, Nakuru, Nairobi, and Kiambu reported that agencies often dismiss cases of abuse, fearing it would harm business and dismissing cases of exploitation.

Additional contributing factors include societal stereotypes, poor communication of job expectations, and indecent clothing, all of which exacerbate the risk of GBV. Addressing these issues requires legal reforms, stricter enforcement of labor protections, and stronger

advocacy from unions and agencies. Shifting cultural norms to recognize domestic workers' dignity and rights is crucial in reducing their vulnerability to GBV.

Risk factors to Gender-Based Violence for Domestic Workers

Several risk factors contribute to the likelihood of gender-based violence (GBV) affecting domestic workers in varying degrees. The findings established some critical factors contributing to the risks this include recruitment practices, economic dependency, legal gaps, and limited awareness of rights. Workers recruited through agencies face a higher risk of GBV (63.3%) compared to direct hires (59.3%), largely due to unclear job terms, frequent workplace changes, and weak protections. Economic dependency forces workers to endure abuse, with poverty heightening their vulnerability. Additionally, a lack of awareness about labor rights (29.6%) prevents them from seeking legal redress, while weak enforcement of labor laws (14.0%) further compounds their risk. Many workers lack formal contracts, and even when contracts exist, they are often unenforced or misunderstood, exposing them to exploitation. Limited participation in trade unions weakens their ability to negotiate better conditions, with employer retaliation and financial constraints discouraging membership. Nairobi recorded the highest union participation (71.4%), while Kiambu had the lowest (52.9%). Without systemic reforms, including stronger legal protections, improved labor enforcement, and union-driven advocacy, domestic workers remain highly vulnerable to GBV.

Young female domestic workers, migrants, and those employed through informal arrangements face heightened risks of GBV. Younger workers are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation, economic abuse, and excessive workload due to their perceived naivety and lack of bargaining power. Migrant workers, especially from Uganda and Tanzania, face additional risks due to legal uncertainties, lack of work permits, and systemic corruption that deters them from reporting abuse. Power imbalances and social norms further perpetuate GBV, with employers exerting control through verbal abuse, unpaid wages, and sexual harassment. Employment agencies and employers contribute to exploitation by withholding contracts, imposing unjustified fees, restricting workers' movement, and leveraging

financial hardship to demand sexual favors. Household dynamics, such as large family sizes, language barriers, and cultural biases, also exacerbate mistreatment.

Co-relation between level of education attained and the risk of Gender-Based Violence: In certain contexts, the predisposition to gender-based violence in domestic workers is linked with level of education and sex. Domestic workers with lower levels of education were more vulnerable to gender based violence, this could be attributed to the limited options to secure other types of work, limited knowledge on rights and where to claim them. The analysis of the highest level of educational attainment among 351 respondents showed that the majority had completed either primary school (42.2%) or secondary school (39.3%). Women comprised the largest share in both categories. A small proportion of respondents (5.1%), all women reported having no formal education. Men, who accounted for 12.3% of the sample, were represented across all education levels except those without formal education. Women dominated lower education levels while men had slightly higher representation in technical/vocational and higher education categories, highlighting potential gender disparities and cultural influence in determining access to education including Tertiary Learning opportunities. Training for domestic workers to understand labour rights and the acceptable code of practice is necessary in skilling domestic workers and enhancing their value in the care economy.

Effect of gender-based violence (GBV) on domestic workers

The effects of gender-based violence (GBV) on domestic workers are profound and multifaceted,

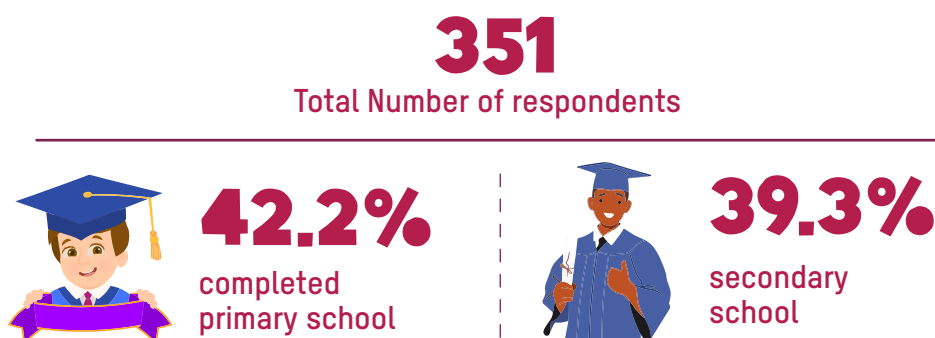
impacting their physical, psychological, emotional, social, and economic well-being. Most domestic workers experience psychological effects, with 54.1% reporting this as the most common consequence, followed by socio-economic effects (31.2%), physical effects (10.8%), and other impacts (3.9%).

Awareness of support services by domestic workers

The report also highlights the varying levels of awareness regarding support services available to survivors of GBV. A significant number of domestic workers (72.4%) is aware of the support available, with trade unions and domestic worker associations being the most commonly recognized resources. However, 27.6% of workers remain unaware, particularly in regions like Mombasa. The most identified support services include labor union offices (55.3%) and workers' rights associations (24.9%). Despite this awareness, many domestic workers still face barriers to reporting GBV, with fear of job loss being the primary deterrent (36%), followed by fear of retaliation (19%) and not being believed (18%). These fears contribute to the underreporting of abuse, allowing perpetrators to continue their actions with impunity.

The findings also reveal that a large proportion of domestic workers (70.5%) do not report incidents of GBV, with the fear of negative consequences such as job loss or retaliation being the dominant reason. This lack of reporting exacerbates the cycle of abuse, with many workers feeling trapped due to the financial dependence on their employers. Moreover, some workers cited a lack of union membership and the complexity of legal processes as additional deterrents to reporting.

Educational Levels of Domestic workers



RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, strengthening the prevention and management of Gender-based violence (GBV) in the context of domestic workers in Kenya requires that the Time to Care Project adopts a multi-faceted approach that addresses legal, social, economic, and cultural factors. There are several strategies that can be adopted with short-term goals of addressing the immediate needs of domestic workers and long-term goals of responding to long-standing system needs and barriers to attaining the realization of the domestic workers' rights in Kenya.

STRATEGY 1:

Strengthen legal protections and reforms for domestic workers which include raising awareness on the labor rights, initiating dialogue with government officials, lawmakers, and other key stakeholders to prioritize legal protection for domestic workers and the enactment of comprehensive legislation protecting domestic workers. Enforcement mechanisms should be well designed for the effectiveness of household labor inspections to hold employers accountable, enhancing employer registration systems, penalties for noncompliance and government mandated standardized contracts with codes of practice and ethics.

STRATEGY 2:

Strengthen awareness, education and integration of life skills programs targeting domestic workers by tailoring life skills training for domestic worker associations focusing on financial management for improved self-economic independence and strengthened understanding on identifying economic abuse as well as prevent exploitation.

STRATEGY 3:

Roll-out behavior change campaigns and interventions on domestic workers rights. These can be achieved through engaging employers and the community at large in forums, media collaborations and ensuring a sustained/continuous awareness of the dignity of work to foster long-term cultural shift towards greater respect for domestic workers' rights and values.

STRATEGY 4:

Provide/Strengthen immediate support and referral services and linkages to help domestic workers know where to report GBV and abuse confidentially and receive support which can be strengthened in Kenya through psychological support Clinics and enhancement of national shelter and safe house programs.

STRATEGY 5:

Strengthening Gender Based Violence Data and Information Management Systems for Domestic Workers. Data is critical in informing policy advocacy, tracking progress, shaping interventions, and holding society accountable for addressing abuse and violations of domestic workers rights. Monitoring and evaluation programs should therefore be enforced by government agencies and civil society organizations. The review and processing of data on the prevalence and forms of gender-based violence faced by domestic workers will help inform national policy decisions, advocacy and highlight the need for targeted interventions at national level.

STRATEGY 6:

Strengthening partnerships for Domestic workers collective bargaining and voice platforms. The Time to Care Project should encourage the mobilization of domestic workers through collaborations and partnerships, identification of successful groups to be models for emulation as well as supporting the registration of worker associations and reduction of fees to encourage membership.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND

Domestic workers play a critical role in households and communities around the world. They perform a wide range of tasks, including and are not limited to cleaning, cooking, caregiving, and child-rearing, often providing essential support for families, and enabling other members of the household to participate in the workforce. Beyond unpaid care work, there is a significant population of domestic workers, most of whom are women, that provide care services who are underpaid, work in unfavorable conditions and whose labour rights remain inadequately addressed.² Care work remains an important aspect of human well-being as it caters for essential domestic services at household and community levels. Nevertheless, it remains unrecognized, undervalued (because those involved seldom receive compensation in terms of wages) and in most cases unaccounted for by governments as a bonafide economic activity with crucial contribution to development. It often falls outside the System of National Accounts and unaccounted for in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) calculations.³

A 2016 baseline study report developed by Oxfam revealed that among other things, women involved in paid domestic work in Kenya earn wages that are below statutory wage for domestic workers; face various forms of work related rights violations including long hours without food and basic amenities, face sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV); are generally unaware of their labour and human rights and existing labour union(s) representing paid care workers; and do not benefit from social protection schemes/policy.⁴

Understanding the prevalence of Gender Based Violence in domestic work is central in finding preventative measures to address and respond to the physical, economic, emotional, and mental

consequences of GBV for domestic workers in Kenya. The report provides an account of gaps and opportunities to understand the prevalence of Gender-Based Violence with workplaces of domestic workers and opportunities for the Time to Care Project to influence gender-transformative care policy reforms, advocating for employer accountability and building more productive i.e. workplaces amongst other best practices in labour relations.

1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSESSMENT

Oxfam in collaboration with the Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotel, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Workers (KUDHEIHA) and Youth Alive! Kenya (YAK) is implementing a 6-year project titled 'Time to Care in Nairobi, Mombasa, Kiambu and Nakuru counties in Kenya. The project's overall objective is to 'Improve gender equality and care infrastructure for women and girls in Kenya.' The Care Project will directly benefit 5,916 people and 2,021,800 people, these include both rural and urban populations, in particular small-scale farmers, women-headed households. The project has a two-pillar strategy representing two Intermediate Outcomes:

- i. Increased adoption of gender-equitable social norms in support of women and girls in Kenya's care infrastructure
- ii. Increased implementation of gender-transformative legislation, policies, and practices by duty bearers in support of care infrastructure in Kenya for women and girls.

The Time to Care Project intends to design effective strategies to reduce the prevalence of gender-based violence, discrimination, and work-related abuse for domestic workers in public and private spaces. To this end the objective of this assessment is to:



2 ILO [2016] Ensuring Protection and Rights for Domestic Workers in Africa, Addis Ababa: ILO News, https://www.ilo.org/africa/media-centre/pr/WCMS_459465/lang--en/index.htm

3 A. Fälth and M. Blackden (2009) Policy Brief - Unpaid Care Work: English, New York: UNDP, <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/Unpaid%20care%20work%20English.pdf>

4 Oxfam Women Domestic Workers Baseline Report 2016 <https://kenya.oxfam.org/latest/publications/women-domestic-workers-baseline-study-report>

- i Understand the prevalence of gender-based violence for domestic workers in their world of work.
- ii Identify the different forms of GBV they experience in their workplaces.
- iii Identify root causes of GBV for domestic workers to deepen the understanding on why domestic workers are vulnerable to gender-based violence.
- iv Conduct a review of laws and legislations on Gender Based Violence and to what extent they protect domestic workers in their workplaces.
- v Establish and recommend strategies in the prevention and management of GBV experienced by domestic workers.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

The study employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) in domestic worker contexts across four Kenyan counties: Nairobi, Mombasa, Kiambu, and Nakuru. This approach combined quantitative surveys, qualitative Key Informant Interviews (KIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and a stakeholder mapping exercise, ensuring both statistical rigor and contextual depth as underscored below:

- Literature review: The research began with a systematic literature review of Time to Care project documents and existing literature, providing insight into the context of care work with focus on domestic workers, experiences of gender-based violence not only in Kenya but also at regional and global scales. Additionally, the study leveraged extensive reviews of national and international legislation and statutes on care work and GBV.
- Quantitative data collection: This took the form of structured surveys focusing on domestic workers' experiences with GBV, capturing their perspectives on its prevalence, risk factors, forms, and occurrence rates. Structured questions facilitated in-depth discussions on the scope and magnitude of GBV.
- Qualitative Data collection: Data was gathered through Key Informant Interviews (KIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The study conducted 19 KIs across the target areas, selecting key informants based on their knowledge of domestic work and their

involvement in the welfare of domestic workers. These interviews offered critical insights into the legislative environment, existing protections, and gaps in laws related to domestic workers. Additionally, 9 FGDs were held providing rich qualitative data on the lived experiences of domestic care workers, as well as the social and cultural contexts shaping these experiences.

- Stakeholder mapping: The assessment also mapped the ecosystem of stakeholders and actors based on their interests and influence concerning care work. Most of the care workers were mobilized by the project implementers, KUDHEIHA and Youth Alive! Kenya. From an estimated population of 2,000,000 care workers, a sample size of 384 respondents was determined and distributed across the four counties: 166 in Nairobi, 90 in Kiambu, 82 in Nakuru, and 46 in Mombasa. Out of the targeted respondents, 351 individuals were interviewed, a response rate of 91%. These respondents included individuals engaged in both full-time and part-time domestic work, as well as migrant workers.

1.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study faced several challenges that may have impacted the efficiency of data collection, and the depth of information gathered. Despite these constraints, the quantitative and qualitative data obtained offered valuable insights, enabling thorough analysis and the development of reliable findings and conclusions. However, the study was subject to the following:

- a) **Data Collection Period:** The study was conducted within a limited timeframe, which posed challenges in reaching a large and diverse sample of domestic workers. To mitigate this, additional research assistants were engaged to expand outreach efforts and utilize the limited time slots. While key informant interviews and focus group discussions had adequate time for interaction, some individual interviews had to be conducted within constrained time slots, potentially limiting the depth of responses.
- b) **Mobilization of Respondents:** The mobilization of respondents was largely facilitated by KUDHEIHA, which may have influenced participants' perspectives, particularly in limiting negative views of trade unions,

however, this did not affect responses on prevalence of GBV among the workers. Additionally, a significant portion of respondents were already union members with awareness of their labor rights, which may not fully represent the experiences of unorganized domestic workers. To address this, efforts were made to reach a broader pool of domestic workers, including those unaffiliated with trade unions. Special outreach sessions were conducted on Sundays in Nairobi, Kiambu, and Mombasa—days when many domestic workers have time off—to include perspectives from a more diverse group. However, the study mainly focused on the prevalence of GBV and not whether one was a member or not.

c) Challenges in Accessing Domestic Workers During Work Hours:

Many domestic workers were only available during weekdays or Saturdays, times when they were expected to be at work. Securing participation for some of them, required to seek permission, which may have excluded those who were denied leave or feared repercussions from employers. The restricted availability also limited the duration of interviews, potentially impacting the depth of interviews. Researchers made efforts to maximize the time available while ensuring a comprehensive understanding of workers' experiences.

d) Limited Access to Migrant Domestic Workers:

Reaching migrant domestic workers proved particularly challenging as many are unregistered and work in informal or precarious conditions. Efforts to include this demographic were constrained by difficulties in mobilization and concerns over their legal status. Some insights were gathered from Kenyan returnees mobilized by KUDHEIHA, who had worked in Gulf countries, but the perspectives of active migrant domestic workers within Kenya remain underrepresented and the little gotten was from Kenyans who gave an account of what

they know about them. Additionally, there were indications of social tensions, with some domestic workers expressing dissatisfaction with the presence of migrant workers, which may have influenced the openness of discussions.

e) Underreporting Due to Fear and Stigma: Gender-based violence remains a sensitive issue, and some respondents may have been reluctant to share their full experiences due to fear of retaliation, job loss, or social stigma. This could have led to an underreporting of certain forms of abuse, particularly sexual violence. While researchers assured confidentiality and encouraged open dialogue, the influence of fear and social pressures on disclosure remains a limitation.

f) Workplace Power Imbalances and Employer Influence:

Some domestic workers may have downplayed their experiences of GBV due to power imbalances with their employers. Given that some employers restrict communication or control workers' mobility, certain participants may not have felt entirely free to share their perspectives. Additionally, some workers who participated may have been those whose employers allowed them to attend, meaning the study may have fully captured the experiences of those in more restrictive employment settings.

g) Limited Representation of Domestic Workers in Remote and Rural Areas:

The study primarily focused on urban and peri-urban areas, where domestic workers are more accessible. However, domestic workers in rural areas, who may experience different forms of GBV due to isolation and weaker enforcement of labor laws, were underrepresented. Future research could expand geographical coverage to capture these diverse experiences more comprehensively. However, the experiences do not vary much as those in urban settings were also working in close-up environments.

CHAPTER 2: DOMESTIC WORKERS CONTEXT IN KENYA.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Kenya, unpaid care work is unevenly distributed between women and men. The Kenya Time Use Survey Report 2021 findings show that Kenyan women spend 4 hours and 38 minutes per day against only 1 hour and 1 minute for men, that is 4.6 times more time for women than men, not to mention that there is a gender unequal distribution of unpaid tasks within the sphere of unpaid work (for instance women are more dedicated to the preparation of meals or to bathing and feeding young children, whereas men are more dedicated to shopping or home repairs). This gap is neatly higher than the average for Sub-Saharan Africa (2.9 times) or for the world (2.4 times). Over a year, which makes an equivalent of 196 full-time workdays (of 8 hours) for women against 46 workdays for men. Despite their contribution to GDP, paid and unpaid care work remains largely absent from both national and county social and economic development plans and policies, making women's paid and unpaid care work less valued than that of men in Kenya.⁵

Gender-based violence (GBV) in the workplace is a serious violation of human rights and integrity of domestic workers. Women and girls are the most at risk and most affected by gender-based violence. Current statistics show that Kenya has approximately two million (2,000,000) domestic workers. Research highlights that most of the women, girls including immigrants working in this sector work under exploitative conditions

often without social protections. It has also been reported that they are overworked, underpaid, and abused in their work settings. The care sectors (including domestic workers and non-care workers in the care sectors but excluding care workers in non-care sectors) contribute to 6.8% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at the current process in 2021 (from 7.1% in 2017). Despite domestic workers contribution to the economy women and girls working in domestic work settings remain unrecognized and undervalued⁶.

Domestic workers form the bulk of Kenyan immigrant workers in the gulf.⁷ More than 50% of the 87,784 plus Kenyans employed in the Middle East since 2019 have been domestic workers, with numbers steadily growing over the years⁸. Migrant domestic workers are also an important contributor to GDP with Saudi Arabia being the third-largest source of remittances to Kenya in 2022. An investigative study by the Kenyan Senate in 2021 revealed that the immigrant domestic workers report many cases of labour law violations, such as, passport confiscation, denial of food, sleep deprivation, poor pay (in comparison with the respective country's minimum remuneration), long working hours, sexual and other forms of harassment, violence and inadequate support from both the local government and Kenyan officials⁹. The Commission on Administrative Justice (Office of the Ombudsman) noted that there remarkably little data on Kenyan migrant domestic workers and that the legislative framework available is weak¹⁰.



- 5 Kenya Time Use Survey 2021 Report available <https://www.knbs.or.ke/reports/kenya-time-use-survey-2021/>
- 6 National Care Needs Assessment Report 2024 -Preliminary Report available <https://data.unwomen.org/publications/national-care-needs-assessment-kenya>
- 7 <https://kippra.or.ke/measures-to-ensure-the-safety-of-kenyan-domestic-workers-in-the-middle-east/>
- 8 <https://foreignpolicy.com/podcasts/hidden-economics-of-remarkable-women-hero/migrant-domestic-workers-saudi-arabia-gulf-states-kenya/#:~:text=Close%20to%2020%20percent%20of,domestic%20workers%20to%20Gulf%20countries.>
- 9 <http://www.parliament.go.ke/sites/default/files/2022-04/Labour%20Committee%20Report%20on%20Labour%20Migration.pdf>
- 10 <https://ombudsman.go.ke/sites/default/files/2023-10/A%20Report%20on%20Systemic%20Investigation%20into%20the%20Plight%20of%20Kenyan%20Migrant%20Domestic%20Workers%20in%20the%20Kingdom%20of%20Saudi%20Arabia%20-%20SEPT%202022.pdf>

Kenya is also home to migrant domestic workers from neighboring East African states¹¹. Due to the levels on unemployment in the region, and Kenya's more stable economy, Kenya is perceived as a preferable space for semi-skilled and unskilled labour. These workers are equally vulnerable to abuse, because despite the free movement between East African nations, non-locals are required to obtain work permits.

A demographic within the world of domestic work that is quite vulnerable is underaged domestic workers. Child domestic work – which Kenyan law prohibits as it amounts to child labour – is reported to be the second largest contributor to working children in Kenya¹². The informal and unregulated nature of children in domestic work means that illegal practice is largely overlooked because it occurs in family settings. A study undertaken by the Freedom Fund in 2013 found that children typically migrate from rural areas into neighboring towns or urban centers – with children as young as seven employed in domestic work¹³. Underaged domestic workers face physical and sexual abuse, food denial, long working hours and little to no payment.

2.2 LEGAL, POLICY AND NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK ADDRESSING LABOUR AND DOMESTIC WORK IN KENYA.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a flagrant violation of human rights and excludes women from economic and political opportunity. Work and relevant to this assignment domestic work is regulated in Kenya by legislative, executive, and judicial frameworks underscored as follows:

2.2.1 CONSTITUTION OF KENYA 2010

The Constitution of Kenya, 2010¹⁴ is the overarching law – all other instruments of law extract their power from it. It provides that among the national values binding all state organs and all persons, includes the values of “human dignity, equity, social justice, inclusiveness, equality, human rights, non-discrimination and protection of the marginalized.”¹⁵ Further, the Constitution protects against slavery, servitude or forced labour¹⁶. It follows then that care workers are owed all these protections – to work in dignified conditions that are free from coercion. Moreover, the Constitution stipulates that the National Government retains the sole responsibility of setting labour standards¹⁷. This should ensure uniform treatment of domestic and care workers across the country. Domestic workers' labour rights are enshrined under Article 41, as follows:

- a) The right to fair labor practices.
- b) The right to fair remuneration.
- c) The right to reasonable working conditions.
- d) The right to form, join or participate in the activities and programmes of a trade union; and
- e) The right to go on strike.
- f) Every person has the right to a clean and healthy environment [Article 42]
- g) Every very person has the right to fair administrative action that is expeditious, efficient, lawful, reasonable, and procedurally fair [Article 47].

-  11 https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_dialogue/@act_emp/documents/publication/wcms_849251.pdf
- 12 <https://www.freedomfund.org/app/uploads/2024/03/hiddenplainsight-2023.pdf>
- 13 Supra
- 14 The Constitution of Kenya 2010 available on <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/2010/constitution/eng@2010-09-03>
- 15 Ibid Article 10(2)(b)
- 16 Ibid, Article 30
- 17 Ibid, Fourth Schedule

2.2.2 EMPLOYMENT ACT 2007

The Employment Act, Cap 226¹⁸ (2007) applies to all employees under a contract of service. A contract of service includes oral or written agreement (whether expressed or implied), to employ or to serve as an employee for a period¹⁹. The Act therefore applies to domestic workers, and it outlines the following employee rights²⁰: -

- a) **Regulated Hours of Work** – Employees shall have at least one rest day for every period of seven days.
- b) **Annual Leave** – After every 12 consecutive months of service, the employee is entitled to 21 days of leave with full pay. If employment is terminated after the completion of 2 or more months of service, the employee shall be entitled to not less than 1.75 days of leave with full pay.
- c) **Maternity & Pre-Adoptive Leave** – A female employee shall be entitled to 3 months maternity leave with full pay; and a male employee, 2 weeks of paternity leave. In the case of adoption, 1-month pre-adoptive leave with full pay from the date of the placement of the child.
- d) **Sick Leave** – After two consecutive months of service, an employee shall be entitled to sick leave of not less than 7 days with full pay.
- e) **Housing** – An employer shall at all times, at his own expense, provide reasonable housing accommodation for employees either at or near to the place of employment, or shall pay a sufficient sum as rent, in addition to the salary, to enable the employee to obtain reasonable accommodation.
- f) **Water & Food** – An employer shall provide a sufficient supply of wholesome water for the use of his employees at the place of employment and will ensure that an employee is properly fed and supplied with sufficient and proper cooking utensils and means of cooking, at the employer's expense.
- g) **Medical Attention** – An employer shall ensure the provision sufficient and of proper medicine for his employees during illness and if possible, medical attendance during serious illness.

Other provisions touch on procedural fairness. For instance, termination must be done via notice or payment in lieu of notice.²¹ Any matter related to misconduct, injury, neglect, or ill treatment of an employee may be reported to a labour officer or the Employment and Labour Relations Court²². The right to report and attendance procedures are contained in the **Labour Relations Act**²³ Cap 233.

2.2.3 LABOUR INSTITUTIONS ACT²⁴

Cap 234 states that all employers are required to comply with employment law. Penalties for non-adherence will net an employer a six-month imprisonment term or a fine of Kenya shillings 50,000.



18 <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/2007/11/eng@2024-04-26>

19 Ibid, Section 2

20 Ibid, Part V

21 Ibid, Part VI

22 Ibid, Section 86

23 <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/2007/14/eng@2022-12-31>

24 <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/2007/12/eng@2023-12-11>

2.2.4 MINIMUM REMUNERATION

The Regulation of Wages (General) (Amendment) Order 2024²⁵ stipulates the minimum wage to which domestic workers are entitled. The minimum wage is as follows:

	Nairobi, Mombasa & Kisumu Cities			All former municipalities and Town councils of Mavoko, Ruiru and Limuru			All other areas		
General laborer including cleaner, sweeper, gardener, Children's ayah, house servant, day watchman, messenger	Monthly contract per month	Daily rate	Hourly rate	Monthly contract per month	Daily rate	Hourly rate	Monthly contract per month	Daily rate	Hourly rate
(KES)	16113.75	775.39	144.054	14866.92	712.32	131.652	8596.494	435.66	80.507

2.2.5 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

- **The National Social Security Act**²⁶ Cap 258 provides that all employers shall contribute 6% of the employee's monthly pensionable earnings to the National Social Security Fund (NSSF). An employee shall match said contribution.
- **The Social Health Insurance Act**²⁷ 2023 stipulates that individuals or employers shall contribute to the Social Health Insurance Fund (SHIF). Salaried earners contribute at the prescribed rate (presently 2.75% of monthly earnings), whereas individual contributors who are not salaried or who are in need of financial assistance, contribute the amount determined by means testing. Further, employers are required to take out insurance to compensate employees for work related injuries and diseases contracted in the course of their employment, as per the **Work Injury Benefits Act**.²⁸
- **The Affordable Housing Act**²⁹ 2024 provides for a levy charged at the rate of 1.5% of the gross salary of an employee or the gross income of a person received or accrued. The levy is deducted from an employee and the employer remits a similar contribution. The purpose of the levy is to enable citizens own houses

based on the income earned e.g. a domestic worker earning less than KES 20,000 is qualified for a social housing unit, one earning between KES 20,000 and KES 149,000 – an affordable housing unit, while those outside urban areas are eligible for a rural affordable housing.

- **The Occupational Safety and Health Act**³⁰ Cap 236A states that every occupier (employer) shall ensure the safety, health and welfare at work of all persons in their workplace. In addition, an employer shall not dismiss, injure, or discriminate against or disadvantage an employee by reason that the employee makes a complaint about a work issue concerning their safety or risk to their health.
- **The Prevention of Torture Act**³¹ Cap 88 and the **Protection Against Domestic Violence Act**³² Cap 151 respectively provide protection to employees (and persons residing in the same household) against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; as well as provide protection and relief for victims of domestic violence.
- Protection from Offences against sexual and gender-based violence (including assault, grievous harm, abuse) are punishable under the **Penal Code**³³ and **Sexual Offences Act**³⁴ Cap 63A.



25 <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/ln/2024/164/eng@2024-10-09/source>

26 <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/2013/45/eng@2022-12-31>

27 https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/2023/16/eng@2023-11-24#part_IV__sec_27

28 <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/2007/13/eng@2022-12-31>

29 <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/2024/2/eng@2024-03-22>

30 <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/2007/15/eng@2022-12-31>

31 <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/2017/12/eng@2022-12-31>

32 <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/2015/2/eng@2022-12-31>

33 <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/1930/10/eng@2023-12-11>

34 <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/2006/3/eng@2024-04-26>

2.2.6 JUDICIAL PRECEDENT

The courts have made landmark rulings that have helped further enshrine the employment rights of domestic workers. For instance, the Employment & Labour Court highlighted in *Robai Musinzi v Safdar Mohamed Khan* [2012] eKLR [2012] KEELRC 261 (KLR)³⁵ that domestic workers are subject to the Employment Act and must enjoy its protections. The case upheld the sanctity of oral contracts and did so again in *Elizabeth Adhiambo Oduor v Shalin Vora* [2017] KEELRC 1804 (KLR)³⁶. The work of the courts is infinitely important as it reinforces laws that may only remain law on paper. The court cases also highlight the important work done by unions such as the Kenya Union of Domestic Hotels Educational Institutions Hospitals & Allied Workers (KUDHEIHA) which educates communities on the importance of care work and domestic work. KUDHEIHA assists its members to bring cases before the labour court and has contributed to the jurisprudence on the matter.

2.2.7 POLICIES AND STATUTES

- The State Department for Gender Affairs under the Ministry of Public Service, Youth & Gender promulgated the **National Policy on Gender and Development**³⁷ (Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2019) whose goal is to “achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment in national development so as to enhance participation of women and men, boys and girls, vulnerable and marginalized groups for the attainment of sustainable development”. It underscores the importance of respect for human rights, creation of labour and employment opportunities including access to justice. Most importantly, the policy calls for multispectral collaboration, roping in national and county governments, constitutional commissions and independent offices, faith-based organizations and civil society organizations and the private sector.

- The Ministry of Devolution and Planning launched the **National Policy for Prevention and Response to Gender Based Violence**³⁸ with the aim of accelerating efforts towards the elimination of all forms of GBV in Kenya.
- **The Kenya National Care Policy (Draft 2024)** is a groundbreaking effort by UN Women and State Department for Gender and Affirmative Action addressing the challenges of unpaid care work including domestic work in Kenya.

2.3 REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL LAWS

- **The East Africa Community (EAC) Gender Policy**³⁹ was developed with the aim of ensuring that gender equality and the empowerment of women are integrated across the East African Community and the policy therefore applies to Kenya. With migration of domestic workers from Uganda, Burundi, and Tanzania to Kenya, this legislation is critical in protection of labour rights. The policy affirms that 14% of women in Kenya have ever experienced sexual violence and 45% physical violence⁴⁰. The policy calls for the recognition that sexual and gender-based violence is caused by unequal power relations between men and women, sociocultural norms that normalize GBV practices and changing gender roles pervasive for the overall goal of regional cohesion.
- **African Union’s (AU) Strategy for Gender Equality & Women’s Empowerment**⁴¹ for 2018-2028 sets forth a plan to realize Aspiration 6 of the African Union’s Agenda 2063: “An Africa where development is people driven, relying upon the potential offered by people, especially its women and youth and caring for children,” and the principles enshrined in Article 4 (l) of the AU’s Constitutive Act: “promotion of gender equality” as well key continental and global commitments.



35 <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/judgment/keelrc/2012/261/eng@2012-12-19>

36 <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/judgment/keelrc/2017/1804/eng@2017-02-10>

37 <https://psyg.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/NATIONAL-POLICY-ON-GENDER-AND-DEVELOPMENT.pdf>

37 <https://psyg.go.ke/docs/National%20Policy%20on%20prevention%20and%20Response%20to%20Gender%20Based%20Violence.pdf>

39 <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/mul214448.pdf>

40 Ibid, pg. 19

41 https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/36195-doc-au_strategy_for_gender_equality_womens_empowerment_2018-2028_report.pdf

- **The Maputo Protocol⁴²**, which Kenya signed in November 2005 states that national laws and judicial systems ought to protect and fulfil women's ownership and inheritance rights, education, wage equality, civil liberties and physical integrity as provided for by the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women (Maputo Protocol).
- Kenya acceded to **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women⁴³** in 1984 (CEDAW). CEDAW advocates for legal reforms on issues affecting women and urges countries to formulate laws, practices and policies that eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and all customs that are detrimental to their dignity.
- **Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)⁴⁴** is an International Labour Organization treaty that strives to dignity care & domestic workers, providing that the ought to be legislation dictating their work hours, work conditions, where they live, protection for migrant workers, written employment contract, workplace safety and health, social security, complaints resolution, regulation of employment agencies etc. Unfortunately, Kenya is yet to ratify the convention.
- In 2023 Kenya was set to ratify C.190 - **Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019⁴⁵** following a presidential commitment. The Convention outlines the underpinning elements of violence and harassment; the groups, sectors, occupations, and work arrangements more exposed to violence and harassment; and the linkages between domestic violence in the world of work.⁴⁶

2.4 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

In addition to other international & regional conventions guaranteeing worker's rights, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families stands out because it is specific to migrant workers and provides for their dignity and equality. The UN General Assembly adopted the convention/resolution without a vote on December 18, 1990.⁴⁷

The Kenyan Employment Act stipulates that foreign contracts of service shall be in a prescribed format and reviewed by the labour office prior to attestation. The Act provides that it shall be an offence to induce a worker into informal employment aboard without a contract. Most migrant workers often secure employment via private employment agencies. These agencies are equally regulated. For instance by the Labour Institutions Act 2007 that requires the agencies to be registered; and the attendant regulations – the Labour institutions (Private Employment Agencies) Regulations (L.N 110 of 2016)⁴⁸. The regulations required that foreign contracts of services outline which party shall pay for via airfare, visa and medical examinations. Bodies such as the National Employment Agency (established under the National Employment Authority Act); and the National Industrial Training Authority (established under the Industrial Training Act) bear training and placement responsibility. The Foreign Service Act provides that migrant worker may be evacuated at the expense of government.



42 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Women/WG/ProtocolontheRightsofWomen.pdf>

43 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

44 https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C189

45 <https://nation.africa/kenya/news/gender/kenya-to-ratify-ilo-treaty-to-boost-war-on-sexual-violence-at-work-4428214>

46 https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C190

47 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-convention-protection-rights-all-migrant-workers>

48 <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/ln/2016/110/eng@2022-12-31>

The Foreign Policy 2024 succeeded the inaugural 2014 version and outlines Kenya's framework for conducting foreign relations and diplomatic engagements⁴⁹. The framework provides for mobile consular services and global labour placement programme/body for Kenyan workers. The impact of the policy on 21st century global migrant worker industry (particularly migrant workers), is yet to be seen. There is however a Labour Migration Management Bill 2024⁵⁰ which has more extensive provisions that seem to appreciate the plight and needs of the migrant worker. The Bill touches on pre-departure procedures, monitoring, enforcement, supervision, welfare fund/financial aspects, labour attaches, the foreign contracts etc. Should the bill pass into law, it may provide a more robust framework for migrant domestic workers.

2.5 GAPS IN LEGISLATIVE PROTECTIONS FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS.

Domestic workers often face unique challenges that leave them vulnerable to exploitation and gender-based violence (GBV). Despite a progressive legislation, literature review of legal underpinnings in Kenya presented the following gaps which hinder the full protection of domestic workers and leave them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. This section gives an account of the gaps in legal and policy commitments predisposing domestic workers to one or more forms of gender-based violence and work-related abuse from employers:

- I. **Lack of comprehensive coverage of unique context of Domestic work in the Employment Act 2007:** For instance, it mandates provisions for regular employees such as paid leave, maximum working hours, and overtime, which is not uniformly applied to domestic workers as employers' obligations are not enforced for unique cases such as working overtime.
- II. **Limited enforcement on contractual obligations:** While the Employment Act 2007 section 85 emphasizes the need for written contracts, domestic workers are often employed informally without formal agreements leading to disputes regarding

wages, work hours, and the nature of the work.

- III. **Limited Social Protections for domestic workers:** Even with the Social Health Insurance Fund and National Social Security Fund (NSSF) in domestic workers' case is rarely covered by employers and they are therefore excluded from such social protections. This means they do not receive retirement benefits or compensation for workplace injuries or illnesses including physical strain associated with nature of work.
- IV. **Weak enforcement of Legal Protections:** Although domestic workers' rights are protected by robust legislative underpinnings, enforcement mechanisms are weak. Government agencies tasked with monitoring working conditions often lack resources to inspect households and ensure employers compliance with labor laws. This leaves domestic workers vulnerable to exploitation, including excessive working hours, underpayment, and abuse.
- V. **Underreporting of Gender Based Violence and Exploitation:** The informal nature of domestic work means that employers are not obliged to comply and often evade legal measures.
- VI. **Limited protection against abuse in 'private settings':** Although domestic workers are covered under the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act Chapter 151, there is often reluctance from domestic workers to report cases of abuse due to fear of losing their jobs or facing societal stigma. Furthermore, the Act does not adequately address the specific vulnerabilities of domestic workers, such as restrictions on their movement or isolation in private households. A respondent also cited that most domestic workers are not aware of their rights, or the laws which cover domestic settings or private spaces.
- VII. **Inadequate legal redress mechanisms:** The process of seeking justice in cases of wrongful dismissal or exploitation is often complicated by the lack of legal support, such as legal aid services or trade unions that could advocate for domestic workers' rights.

 49 <http://www.parliament.go.ke/sites/default/files/2025-02/Sessional%20Paper%20No.%201%20of%202025%20on%20the%20Foreign%20Policy%20of%20the%20Republic%20of%20Kenya.pdf>

50 https://kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/bills/2024/TheLabourMigrationManagementBill_2024.pdf

VIII. Delay in ratification of C.189 & C.190. These conventions appreciate the peculiarities of domestic work for both local & migrant workers, and people in paid & unpaid care work. Unlike many of the local laws and other ratified regional or international treaties, these ILO conventions offer a wide range of protection for decent work for domestic workers and elimination of workplace violence and harassment. The protocols do not introduce new obligations to Kenya and do not contradict any constitutional or statutory provisions. The lack of political goodwill and slow speed in effecting the ratification means that domestic workers in Kenya do not enjoy the protections of the conventions.

The study established that these gaps stem from legal, institutional, societal, and cultural shortcomings, which collectively hinder the effective protection of domestic workers. The Time to Care project will need to incorporate a comprehensive approach involving legislative action, advocacy on legislative reforms through domestic workers' chapters and unions as agents of change to address the gaps. This is critical to creating a safer and more equitable environment for these workers, who are predominantly women and improving the value and dignity of care work.

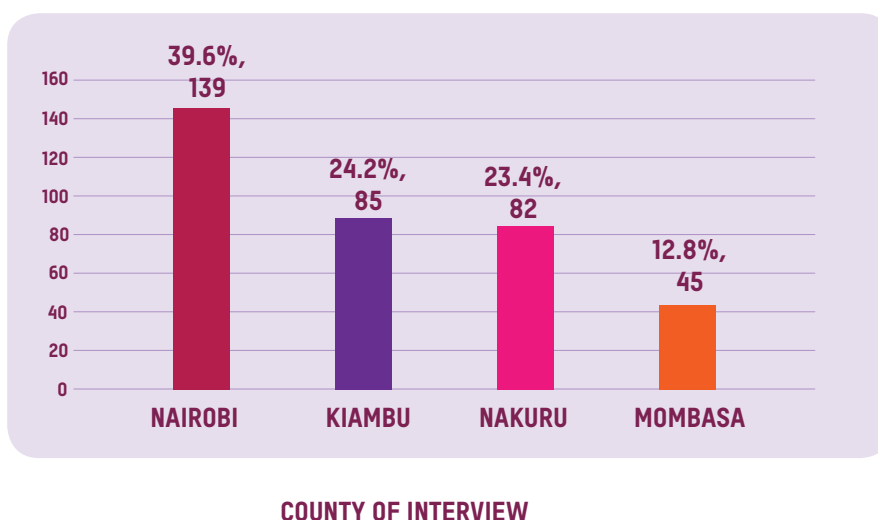
CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the assessment aligned with the objectives of the Terms of Reference. The combination of statistical rigor and contextual qualitative insights provides a comprehensive understanding of gender-based violence (GBV) in the world of domestic work and offers actionable strategies and recommendations to address and prevent violence against domestic care workers.

3.0 CHARACTERISTICS/DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

3.1.1 RESPONDENTS BY COUNTY

The respondents for the quantitative study consisted of 351 domestic workers. 39.6% were from Nairobi, followed by Kiambu 24.2% and Nakuru 23.4% and Mombasa at 12.8% of the respondents. This distribution indicated a proportionate representation as per sample spread with a higher response rate recorded in Nairobi County.



3.1.2 SEX AND AGE

87.7% (n = 308) of the total sample were female while males accounted for 12.3% (n = 43). Nairobi had the highest percentage of female respondents (34.8%) followed by Nakuru (21.9%), Kiambu (19.7%) and Mombasa (11.4%). Male respondents were relatively few in all counties with Nairobi having the largest proportion (4.8%) while Mombasa and Nakuru each contributed 1.4%. All respondents in the survey identified as either male or female. Consequently, there were no responses from non-binary and LGBTQ+ respondents. As a result, no gender or sexual identity analysis or intersectional insights on this aspect were included in this report.

Table 3: Sex of Respondents by County (n = 351)

County	Female	Male	Total
Kiambu	69 (19.7%)	16 (4.6%)	85 (24.2%)
Mombasa	40 (11.4%)	5 (1.4%)	45 (12.8%)
Nairobi	122 (34.8%)	17 (4.8%)	139 (39.6%)
Nakuru	77 (21.9%)	5 (1.4%)	82 (23.4%)
Total	308 (87.7%)	43 (12.3%)	351 (100.0%)

The highest proportion of respondents (53.8%) were aged above 35 years followed by those aged 25-35 years (34.8%) while the 18-24 years group accounted for 11.4% of the total sample.

Table 4: Age of Respondents by County (n = 351)

County	18-24 Years	25-35 Years	Above 35 Years	Total
Kiambu	6 (1.7%)	32 (9.1%)	47 (13.4%)	85 (24.2%)
Mombasa	6 (1.7%)	17 (4.8%)	22 (6.3%)	45 (12.8%)
Nairobi	18 (5.1%)	46 (13.1%)	75 (21.4%)	139 (39.6%)
Nakuru	10 (2.8%)	27 (7.7%)	45 (12.8%)	82 (23.4%)
Total	40 (11.4%)	122 (34.8%)	189 (53.8%)	351 (100.0%)

As earlier highlighted in chapter 1, sex and age of domestic workers are significant factors influencing the exposure of domestic workers to gender-based violence (GBV). Below is how they can affect vulnerability:

- **Sex:** Female domestic workers are more likely to experience different forms of GBV such as physical, sexual, and emotional abuse due to power imbalances in their employer-employee relationships coupled with limited agency and autonomy while in 'private settings.' With low wages, domestic workers are financially dependent on their employers, which can make it difficult for them to report abuse or escape exploitative situations.
- **Age:** Young domestic immigrant workers especially working in Nairobi and Mombasa are trafficked or coerced into domestic labor, where they face increased risks due to their legal status, limited ability to negotiate, report abuse, or seek help from labor or criminal justice systems in Kenya. Focus group discussions with the domestic workers revealed that young girls below the age of 18 are engaged in care work despite being outlawed. Vulnerability in domestic work often varies significantly with age, exposing certain groups to heightened risks of exploitation and abuse. The vulnerability is further enhanced by their undocumented status. Poverty was highlighted as the major driver of underage workers seeking employment. Parental involvement in employment arrangements also contributes to the vulnerability of young

domestic workers. In many cases, parents negotiate job terms and receive the workers' salaries directly from employers, depriving the young workers of financial independence and control over their earnings. Additionally, when these workers live far from their parents, the absence of a parental presence increases the likelihood of mistreatment by employers, who exploit their isolation. In contrast, older domestic workers face a different set of challenges. While they may be more assertive and capable of negotiating better working conditions, they are often vulnerable to economic exploitation by accepting poor terms of engagement.

3.1.3 DISABILITY STATUS OF RESPONDENTS BY COUNTY

Persons with disability comprise 2.2% of Kenya's total population yet in many instances experience exclusion from meaningful work or are forced to work without pay.⁵¹ Few persons with disabilities were engaged in domestic work. 96.3% of respondents reported having no impairment while 3.7% indicated having a form of disability

Only 13 respondents as shown in Table 9 reported having impairment with some domestic workers experiencing multiple forms of impairment. The most common type of disability was physical impairment recorded in Nakuru. Visual impairment followed closely with one respondent each from Kiambu, Nairobi and Nakuru. Hearing impairment, epilepsy and other disabilities were reported.

 51 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Results. Accessible <https://www.knbs.or.ke/guide/2019-kenya-population-and-housing-census-results/>

Table 5: Disability Status of Respondents by County (n = 351)

County	No	Yes	Total
Kiambu	83 (23.6%)	2 (0.6%)	85 (24.2%)
Mombasa	45 (12.8%)	0 (0.0%)	45 (12.8%)
Nairobi	135 (38.5%)	4 (1.1%)	139 (39.6%)
Nakuru	75 (21.4%)	7 (2.0%)	82 (23.4%)
Total	338 (96.3%)	13 (3.7%)	351 (100.0%)

Table 6: Form of Disability 'Impairment' by County (n=13)

Type of Disability	Kiambu (n = 3)	Nairobi (n = 4)	Nakuru (n = 8)	Total (n = 13)
Visual Impairment	1 (6.7%)	1 (6.7%)	1 (6.7%)	3 (20.0%)
Hearing Impairment	1 (6.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (6.7%)
Physical Impairment	1 (6.7%)	1 (6.7%)	6 (40.0%)	8 (53.3%)
Person Living with Epilepsy	0 (0.0%)	1 (6.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (6.7%)
Other Kind of Impairment	0 (0.0%)	1 (6.7%)	1 (6.7%)	(13.3%)

While interrogating intersectional aspects such as disability, the study established that emotional violence/abuse pre-disposes domestic workers to mental health illnesses such as depression, anxiety, and stress. As domestic workers age, they also might face more vulnerability to abuse related to their physical health or potential disability associated with work injury, including neglect, or forced labor. It is therefore important to strengthen mental health policies and support programs for domestic workers who experience physical and emotional abuse.

3.1.4 MARITAL STATUS BY COUNTY

Marital status of respondents varied across the counties (Table 5) with the highest percentage of respondents being married (43.9%) followed by those who were single (34.5%). According to

respondents, most domestic workers engage in domestic work to provide for their families and most importantly educate children, especially widowed domestic workers in Mombasa County. In Kiambu and Nairobi County, domestic workers reported experiencing intimate partner violence with many running to domestic work to meet daily needs of children and escape intimate partner violence.

Among the counties, Nairobi had the highest proportion of married respondents (19.4%) and single respondents (12.8%). Kiambu county had the second highest proportion of single respondents (9.7%). Mombasa had the highest percentage of divorced respondents (2.0%) and Nakuru had the highest percentage of widowed respondents (3.1%).

Table 7 : Marital Status of Respondents by County (n = 351)

COUNTY	MARITAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS					TOTAL RESPONDENTS
	DIVORCED	MARRIED	SEPARATED	SINGLE	WIDOWED	
Kiambu	4 (1.1%)	32 (9.1%)	9 (2.6%)	34 (9.7%)	6 (1.7%)	85
Mombasa	7 (2.0%)	17 (4.8%)	2 (0.6%)	16 (4.6%)	3 (0.9%)	45
Nairobi	7 (2.0%)	68 (19.4%)	12 (3.4%)	45 (12.8%)	7 (2.0%)	139
Nakuru	0 (0.0%)	37 (10.5%)	8 (2.3%)	26 (7.4%)	11 (3.1%)	82
Total	18 (5.1%)	154 (43.9%)	31 (8.8%)	121 (34.5%)	27 (7.7%)	351 (100.0%)

3.1.5 AVERAGE YEARS ENGAGING IN DOMESTIC WORK BY COUNTY

29.1% of respondents interviewed had engaged in domestic work for 4-7 years, followed by those who had worked for 13 years (24.5%). A smaller proportion (4.8%) had worked for less than one year. Nairobi had the largest share working 4-7 years (13.1%). The group of respondents with over 1-5 years of experience represented 13.1% of the total mostly found in Nairobi County. These findings suggest that domestic workers in these counties have varied levels of experience with a substantial proportion being those who have worked for more than 4 years which according to respondents plays a significant role in determining wages earned. The limited representation of those who have worked for 1-3 years could also indicate the low level of their awareness of the existence of trade unions as they could not have been reached during mobilization or could not have realized the benefits of collective organizing.

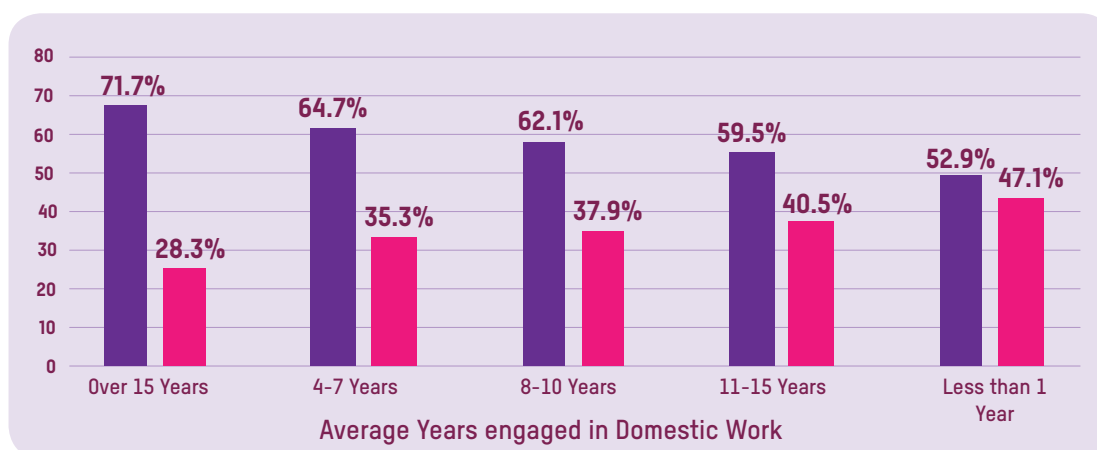
Further data analysis reveals a noteworthy correlation between the number of years worked as a domestic worker and the likelihood of experiencing GBV in the workplace. As the years of experience in domestic work increase, there is a consistent rise in the percentage of workers reporting GBV. Specifically, among those with 1-3 years of experience, 47.7% reported experiencing GBV while this figure increases to 71.7% for workers with over 15 years of experience.

This trend suggests that domestic workers with longer tenure in the profession are more likely to face GBV which could reflect systemic issues within the industry that may become more pronounced over time. The rising percentage of "Yes" responses across experience levels indicates a concerning link between duration of employment and exposure to GBV highlighting the need for targeted interventions and policy changes to address and prevent GBV in the domestic worker sector.

Table 8 : Average Years Worked as a Domestic Worker by County (n = 351)

Time Worked as Domestic Worker	Kiambu (n = 85)	Mombasa (n = 45)	Nairobi (n = 139)	Nakuru (n = 82)	Total (n = 351)
4-7 years	24 (6.8%)	9 (2.6%)	46 (13.1%)	23 (6.6%)	102 (29.1%)
1-3 years	25 (7.1%)	10 (2.8%)	31 (8.8%)	20 (5.7%)	86 (24.5%)
8-10 years	11 (3.1%)	8 (2.3%)	27 (7.7%)	12 (3.4%)	58 (16.5%)
Over 15 years	10 (2.8%)	5 (1.4%)	16 (4.6%)	15 (4.3%)	46 (13.1%)
11-15 years	10 (2.8%)	11 (3.1%)	14 (4.0%)	7 (2.0%)	42 (12.0%)
Less than 1 year	5 (1.4%)	2 (0.6%)	5 (1.4%)	5 (1.4%)	17 (4.8%)

Table 9: Relationship/link between the years working and experience of GBV in the workplace



Most domestic workers in the study worked daily, accounting for 77.5% of respondents (Table 7). Nairobi had the highest percentage of daily workers (28.8%) followed by Nakuru (20.2%) and Kiambu (17.7%). A smaller group worked from time to time, making up 18.2% with Kiambu having the highest proportion (5.7%). Only 2.0% of workers were employed once. These findings suggest that domestic work in the surveyed counties were primarily on a daily engagement, pointing to the high dependency on domestic workers for regular tasks and the limited flexibility or opportunities for part-time or occasional employment within this sector. It is worth noting that finding does not necessarily mean that daily workers were paid on a daily basis. In Kenya, domestic workers can be paid daily, weekly, or monthly depending on their agreement with employers. Many full-time workers, particularly live-in domestic

workers, receive monthly wages while casual or part-time workers may be paid daily or weekly. The Regulation of Wages (General) (Amendment) Order, 2024 (Kenya Law) sets minimum monthly wages implying that formal workers are typically paid on a monthly basis.

This type of employment largely falls under the informal sector as most domestic workers did not have formal contracts, social security benefits or labor protections. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) Economic Survey 2023, most of the domestic work in Kenya remains unregulated and informal with many workers facing job insecurity and inconsistent pay. The lack of formal employment structures makes it difficult for workers to claim benefits like paid leave, medical cover, or pension contributions as borne out by the survey.

Table 10: Frequency of Work per Month by Domestic Workers across Counties (n=351)

Frequency per month	Kiambu	Mombasa	Nairobi	Nakuru	Total
Daily	62 (17.7%)	38 (10.8%)	101 (28.8%)	71 (20.2%)	272 (77.5%)
From time to time	20 (5.7%)	5 (1.4%)	30 (8.5%)	9 (2.6%)	64 (18.2%)
Once in two weeks	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (2.0%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (2.0%)
Once a week	2 (0.6%)	1 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.6%)	5 (1.4%)
Once a month	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (0.9%)
Total	85 (24.2%)	45 (12.8%)	139 (39.6%)	82 (23.4%)	351 (100%)

3.1.6 NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED PER DAY BY DOMESTIC WORKERS ACROSS TARGET COUNTIES.

Domestic workers in the study worked 9-10 hours per day accounting for 33.9% of respondents with Nairobi having the highest proportion (14.5%) followed by Nakuru (12.3%) and Kiambu (6.0%) (Table 8). A sizable portion of workers (29.9%) worked between 6-8 hours daily with Nairobi having the highest percentage (11.1%) of workers in this category. A smaller group worked 11-12 hours per day comprising 16.8% of the total respondents with the highest percentage in Nairobi (8.0%). Fewer workers reported working over 12 hours per day (11.4%) with Kiambu having the largest proportion (4.3%). A few of workers reported working 3-5 hours (7.7%) and an even smaller number (0.3%) worked for up to 2 hours. These findings suggest that most domestic workers had full working days with a majority working between 6 to 10 hours per day.

Table 11: Hours Respondents Worked per Day (n=351)

No. of Hours	Kiambu	Mombasa	Nairobi	Nakuru	Total
9-10 hours	21 (6.0%)	4 (1.1%)	51 (14.5%)	43 (12.3%)	119 (33.9%)
6-8 hours	24 (6.8%)	27 (7.7%)	39 (11.1%)	15 (4.3%)	105 (29.9%)
11-12 hours	15 (4.3%)	3 (0.9%)	28 (8.0%)	13 (3.7%)	59 (16.8%)
Over 12 hours	15 (4.3%)	6 (1.7%)	12 (3.4%)	7 (2.0%)	40 (11.4%)
3-5 hours	10 (2.8%)	5 (1.4%)	9 (2.6%)	3 (0.9%)	27 (7.7%)
Up to 2 hours	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)
Total	85 (24.2%)	45 (12.8%)	139 (39.6%)	82 (23.4%)	351 (100%)

According to a Focus Group Discussion in Nakuru and Nairobi, the long hours also constitute hours occasionally worked for employers' relatives where domestic workers are forced to work for e.g. extended family without any additional pay. In other instances, while working for extensively long hours domestic workers reported being denied food especially by female employers:

'We usually eat hiding from the CCTV cameras so that our employer does not see us' FGD Discussant, Nakuru

3.1.7 RESPONDENTS AVERAGE TOTAL EARNINGS PER MONTH BY COUNTY.

According to the Regulation of Wages (General) (Amendment) Order, 2024 (https://www.kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/LegalNotices/2024/LN164_2024.pdf) the minimum wage for domestic workers in Kenya varies depending on the region. The minimum wage for domestic workers in Kenya is set at KES 16,113 per month in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu, KES 14,866 in municipalities like Ruiru and Limuru and KES 8,596 in rural areas. These adjustments aim to address the rising cost of living and improve the working conditions of domestic workers across the country.

A substantial number of domestic workers earned between KES 5,001 and KES 10,000 per month, making up 59.8% of the total respondents

(Table 9). This range was especially common in Nairobi (23.1%) and Kiambu (14.5%). A smaller group of workers (20.5%) earned between KES 10,001 and KES 15,000 with Nairobi having the highest percentage (8.8%) in this category. A few workers (6.3%) earned between KES 15,001 and KES 20,000 and an even smaller number (2.6%) earned between KES 20,001 and KES 30,000. Only 1.1% of total respondents earned over KES 30,000. Only 9.7% of workers reported earnings below KES 5,000 per month with the majority of these being in Nakuru (4.6%). These findings indicate that most domestic workers earned below minimum wage. Those that earn above the recognized minimum wage were mostly those who have remained in employment for a longer period under the same employer.

Table 12 : Domestic Worker's Average Total Earnings per Month (n=351)

Average Earning (KES)	Kiambu	Mombasa	Nairobi	Nakuru	Total
Below 5000	8 (2.3%)	4 (1.1%)	6 (1.7%)	16 (4.6%)	34 (9.7%)
5001-10,000	51 (14.5%)	20 (5.7%)	81 (23.1%)	58 (16.5%)	210 (59.8%)
10,001-15,000	23 (6.6%)	10 (2.8%)	31 (8.8%)	8 (2.3%)	72 (20.5%)
15,001-20,000	2 (0.6%)	4 (1.1%)	16 (4.6%)	0 (0.0%)	22 (6.3%)
20,001-30,000	0 (0.0%)	6 (1.7%)	3 (0.9%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (2.6%)
Over 30,000	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	2 (0.6%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (1.1%)
Total	85 (24.2%)	45 (12.8%)	139 (39.6%)	82 (23.4%)	351 (100%)

Raising awareness on minimum wage is crucial to empowering domestic workers to advocate fair wages, improved working conditions and economic dependency. Among the 176 respondents who were aware of the national minimum wage for domestic workers, a significant majority (79.0%) reported that their pay does not meet the national minimum wage. This disparity was particularly evident in Nairobi, where 38.1% of domestic workers reported being paid below the minimum wage. In contrast, only 21.0% of the respondents stated that their pay was in line with the legal wage standards with Nakuru having the smallest proportion (0.6%) of workers receiving pay that meets the national wage. These findings suggest a considerable gap in the enforcement of the national minimum wage for domestic workers, pointing to the need for stronger enforcement of labour policies specific to domestic workers policies, penalties, and oversight to ensure fair compensation for this vulnerable workforce.

Table 13: Pay Commensurability to the National Minimum Wage for Domestic Workers (n=176)

RESPONSE	KIAMBU	MOMBASA	NAIROBI	NAKURU	TOTAL
No	35 (19.9%)	14 (8.0%)	67 (38.1%)	23 (13.1%)	139 (79.0%)
Yes	9 (5.1%)	5 (2.8%)	22 (12.5%)	1 (0.6%)	37 (21.0%)
Total	44 (25.0%)	19 (10.8%)	89 (50.6%)	24 (13.6%)	176 (100%)

3.2. THE PREVALENCE OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN DOMESTIC WORKERS

56.7% of respondents considered gender-based violence extremely problematic in their workplaces. Nairobi reported the highest percentage at 25.4% followed by Kiambu at 14.8% and Nakuru at 9.1%. 23.6% perceived the vice as a little problematic with Nakuru and Nairobi, both contributing significantly at 9.1% and 8.3%, respectively. Only 13.7% felt the issue was somewhat problematic with Nairobi at 4.6% and Kiambu at 4.3%. A small fraction (5.1%) believed it was not problematic at all and 1.8% were unsure. These findings highlight the widespread acknowledgment of gender-based violence as a critical issue particularly in Nairobi and Kiambu.

Table 13 : Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence in Domestic Workers

LIKELIHOOD	KIAMBU	MOMBASA	NAIROBI	NAKURU	TOTAL
Extremely	14.8%	7.4%	25.4%	9.1%	56.7%
Somewhat	4.3%	2.0%	4.6%	2.8%	13.7%
A little	4.3%	2.0%	8.3%	9.1%	23.6%
Not sure	-	0.3%	0.6%	0.9%	1.8%
Not at all	0.9%	1.4%	1.1%	1.7%	5.1%
Total	24.2%	12.8%	39.6%	23.4%	100.0%

3.2.1 PERCEIVED RISK TO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE BY SEX

A further analysis on perceived risk to gender-based violence by sex, reveals that 46.4% of respondents perceived male domestic workers were less likely to experience gender-based violence, with Nairobi reporting the highest percentage (21.9%) followed by Nakuru (11.1%) and Kiambu (8.5%). 23.6% indicated the likelihood was somewhat with notable percentages from Kiambu (9.4%) and Nairobi (8.3%). Only 17.4% perceived the likelihood as extreme with Nairobi and Nakuru each contributing 5.4%. 9.4% believed there was no likelihood at all while 3.1% were unsure. The data highlights varying perceptions across counties with Nairobi County consistently reporting higher levels of concern in occurrence levels. The findings of the survey showed that 10% of male domestic workers reported experiencing GBV, compared to 90% of female domestic workers. While the perception that men face a lower risk aligns with the study's findings, the gap between perception and actual experience is notable.

Table 15: Perceived likelihood of Male Domestic Workers to experience Gender-Based Violence by County (n=351)

LIKELIHOOD	KIAMBU	MOMBASA	NAIROBI	NAKURU	TOTAL
A little	30 (8.5%)	17 (4.8%)	77 (21.9%)	39 (11.1%)	163 (46.4%)
Somewhat	33 (9.4%)	6 (1.7%)	29 (8.3%)	15 (4.3%)	83 (23.6%)
Extremely	13 (3.7%)	10 (2.8%)	19 (5.4%)	19 (5.4%)	61 (17.4%)
Not sure	2 (0.6%)	8 (2.3%)	1 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (3.1%)
Not at all	7 (2.0%)	4 (1.1%)	13 (3.7%)	9 (2.6%)	33 (9.4%)
Total	85 (24.2%)	45 (12.8%)	139 (39.6%)	82 (23.4%)	351 (100%)

On the other hand, the perceived likelihood of female domestic workers experiencing gender-based violence was higher at 63.2% of respondents as captured in Table 13. Nairobi stood at 29.3%, Kiambu 17.7% and Nakuru at 9.1%. 22.2% believed the likelihood was a little with Nakuru contributing 8.8% and Nairobi 6.6%. Only 8.0% thought it was somewhat likely with Kiambu (2.3%) and Nakuru (2.8%) reporting modest levels. A minimum of 6.3% felt there was no likelihood with the highest percentage in Nakuru (2.6%). Uncertainty about the likelihood was reported by 0.3% in Mombasa. This highlights significant concern about gender-based violence, particularly in Nairobi and Kiambu.

Table 16 : Perceived Likelihood of Female Domestic Workers to experience Gender-Based Violence by County (n=351)

LIKELIHOOD	KIAMBU	MOMBASA	NAIROBI	NAKURU	TOTAL
Extremely	62 (17.7%)	25 (7.1%)	103 (29.3%)	32 (9.1%)	222 (63.2%)
A little	14 (4.0%)	10 (2.8%)	23 (6.6%)	31 (8.8%)	78 (22.2%)
Not at all	1 (0.3%)	6 (1.7%)	6 (1.7%)	9 (2.6%)	22 (6.3%)
Not sure	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.3%)
Somewhat	8 (2.3%)	3 (0.9%)	7 (2.0%)	10 (2.8%)	28 (8.0%)
Total	85 (24.2%)	45 (12.8%)	139 (39.6%)	82 (23.4%)	351 (100%)

The perception of the likelihood of Gender-based violence (GBV) being higher in female domestic workers than male domestic workers is influenced by social cultural and statistical factors:

Gender and Social norms: Women are socialized to be more aware of the potential threats to their safety. A female focus group discussant in Mombasa stated that when she works at her employers, she prefers to tie a **'leso' (a type of a wrapper, a large piece of cloth, usually rectangular, worn around the body as a garment, skirt, or shawl)** so that she cannot expose herself to any unwanted requests for sexual favors from male who reside where she works. From an early age, women have been socialized to be more aware of the potential threats based on their appearance which in this context makes female domestic workers more vulnerable and contributes to a heightened sense of danger in private settings.

Unequal power relations: Power relations and inequalities in the household contribute to the perception of violence in female domestic workers. According to a Key Informant Interview respondent from Kituo cha Sheria, female domestic workers have less power in the economic domains as they depend on employer to meet daily needs without employment contracts and often hailing from vulnerable backgrounds. This makes them more exposed to GBV risks such as sexual harassment from boys, men, or husbands in the home setting. The imbalances with employers' spouses can influence perception of their susceptibility to GBV including exposing them to risk.

These factors, combined with societal attitudes and the lived experiences of female domestic workers, contributed to the perception that women are at a higher likelihood of experiencing GBV.

3.2.2 DOMESTIC WORKERS EXPERIENCE WITH GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

According to Table 16, 59.8% of respondents experienced GBV, with females making up the majority at 90.0%, while only 10% of males were affected. On the other hand, 40.2% of respondents did not experience GBV, with 87.7% being female domestic workers and 15.6% being male workers. This highlights a significantly higher prevalence of GBV among female workers compared to males.

Table 17: Experience of Gender-Based Violence Among Domestic Workers by Gender (n=351)

59.8% of domestic workers interviewed reported experiencing some form of gender-based violence

AGE	EXPERIENCE OF GBV		
	NO	YES	TOTAL
18-24 years	19 (47.5%)	21 (52.5%)	40 (100.0%)
25-35 years	45 (36.9%)	77 (63.1%)	122 (100.0%)
Above 35 years	77 (40.7%)	112 (59.3%)	189 (100.0%)
Total	141 (40.2%)	210 (59.8%)	351 (100.0%)
Gender			
Female	119 (84.4%)	189 (90.0%)	308 (87.7%)
Male	22 (15.6%)	21 (10.0%)	43 (12.3%)
Total	141 (40.2%)	210 (59.8%)	351 (100.0%)

in their workplaces. Nairobi had the highest percentage of affected respondents (21.9%) followed by Kiambu (16.0%) and Nakuru (14.2%). Mombasa had the lowest reported experiences at 7.7%. Conversely, 40.2% reported no experience with gender-based violence with Nairobi also leading in this category (17.7%) followed by Kiambu (8.3%) and Nakuru (9.1%). These findings underscore a high prevalence of gender-based violence among domestic workers with Nairobi emerging as a hotspot for the different forms of gender-based violence as highlighted in subsequent sections. Further, age-wise, among respondents aged 18-24 years, 52.5% experienced GBV while 47.5% did not, showing a nearly equal distribution. In the 25-35 years group, 63.1% faced GBV while 36.9% did not, indicating a higher prevalence of GBV. Similarly, in the above 35 years group, 59.3% experienced GBV and 40.7% did not show that most of this age group were affected. Older age groups (25-35 years and above 35 years) show a higher prevalence of GBV compared to younger

individuals in the 18-24 years age group where the distribution is more balanced.

3.2.3 FORM OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED BY DOMESTIC WORKERS

Emotional violence was the most reported form of gender-based violence, affecting 49.9% of domestic workers. Nairobi recorded the highest percentage (16.8%) followed closely by Nakuru (13.7%) and Kiambu (13.1%). Economic violence was the second most common at 28.5% with Kiambu (11.1%) and Nairobi (9.1%) leading while Nakuru reported 4.0%. Sexual violence affected 13.7% of respondents with Kiambu (5.7%) having the highest prevalence followed by Nairobi (4.6%) and Nakuru (1.4%). Physical violence, the least reported, impacted 8.0% with Kiambu (3.1%), Mombasa (2.0%) and Nakuru (1.1%) contributing smaller shares.

Table 18: Form/Type Gender-Based Violence Experienced by Domestic Workers

			COUNTY OF INTERVIEW				TOTAL
			KIAMBU	MOMBASA	NAIROBI	NAKURU	
Type of violence experienced	Physical Violence (Slap you, punch you, kick you or drug you, pull your hair)	Count	11	7	6	4	28
		% of Total	3.1%	2.0%	1.7%	1.1%	8.0%
	Sexual Violence (Sexual Harassment- touch you inappropriately, request for sexual favors, Rape, Defilement)	Count	20	7	16	5	48
		% of Total	5.7%	2.0%	4.6%	1.4%	13.7%
	Emotional Violence (Insulted you or made you feel bad about yourself; Belittled or humiliated you in front of other people; Done things to scare or intimidate you on purpose (e.g. by the way he looked at you, by yelling and smashing things); Verbally threatened to hurt you)	Count	46	22	59	48	175
		% of Total	13.1%	6.3%	16.8%	13.7%	49.9%
	Economic Violence (Denial of pay, leave and social protection benefits including low wages paid)	Count	39	15	32	14	100
		% of Total	11.1%	4.3%	9.1%	4.0%	28.5%
	TOTAL	Count	116	51	113	71	351
		% of Total	33.0%	14.5%	32.2%	20.2%	100.0%

Further Multiple-response analysis (see Table 19) revealed that in the 18-24 years age group, females experienced higher levels of emotional violence (61.9%) and economic violence (38.1%) while males reported lower incidences of emotional and economic violence but had some exposure to physical violence (28.6%). In the 25-35 years age group, females again reported the highest instances of emotional violence (76.6%) and a significant amount of economic violence (41.6%) while males faced relatively lower levels of all types of violence. For those above 35 years, females continued to experience the highest rates of emotional violence (80.4%) and economic violence (42%) with males showing lower levels of both emotional and economic violence. Across all age groups, females consistently reported higher exposure to various forms of violence compared to males.

Table 19: Form/Type Gender-Based Violence Experienced by Domestic Workers per Age per Gender

AGE	GENDER	TYPE OF VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED				
		Physical Violence (Slap, punch, kick, drug, pull hair)	Sexual Violence (Sexual Harassment, sexual favors, Rape, Defilement)	Emotional Violence (Insult, belittle, scare, intimidate, verbally threaten)	Economic Violence (Denial of pay, low wages)	TOTAL
18-24 years	Female	4 (19.0%)	6 (28.6%)	13 (61.9%)	8 (38.1%)	15 (71.4%)
	Male	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (4.8%)	6 (28.6%)	6 (28.6%)
	Total	4 (19.0%)	6 (28.6%)	14 (66.7%)	14 (66.7%)	21 (100%)
25-35 years	Female	11 (14.3%)	18 (23.4%)	59 (76.6%)	32 (41.6%)	71 (92.2%)
	Male	0 (0.0%)	3 (3.9%)	4 (5.2%)	1 (1.3%)	6 (7.8%)
	Total	11 (14.3%)	21 (27.3%)	63 (81.8%)	33 (42.9%)	77 (100%)

Above 35 years	Female	13 (11.6%)	18 (16.1%)	90 (80.4%)	47 (42.0%)	103 (92.0%)
	Male	0 (0.0%)	3 (2.7%)	8 (7.1%)	6 (5.4%)	9 (8.0%)
	Total	13 (11.6%)	21 (18.8%)	98 (87.5%)	53 (47.3%)	112 (100%)

3.2.3 FREQUENCY OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED BY DOMESTIC WORKERS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

Asked about the incidence of violence over the last 12 months, 57.6% of domestic workers reported experiencing a form of gender-based violence at least sometimes most notably in Nairobi (22.9%) and Nakuru (16.2%). Additionally, 28.6% reported experiencing it "often," with similar proportions in Nairobi and Kiambu (7.6% each) followed by Nakuru (7.1%) and Mombasa (6.2%). Only 13.8% reported no instances of such violence with Nairobi again leading this category at 6.2% followed by Kiambu (5.7%), Mombasa (1.4%) and Nakuru (0.5%).

Table 20: Frequency of Gender-Based Violence in the Last 12 Months

FREQUENCY	KIAMBU	MOMBASA	NAIROBI	NAKURU	TOTAL
Not in the Last 12 Months	5.7%	1.4%	6.2%	0.5%	13.8%
Often	7.6%	6.2%	7.6%	7.1%	28.6%
Sometimes	13.3%	5.2%	22.9%	16.2%	57.6%
Total	26.7%	12.9%	36.7%	23.8%	100.0%

PERPETRATORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AMONG DOMESTIC WORKERS

Employers were the primary perpetrators of gender-based violence at workplace against domestic workers with employer-wives accounting for 59.9% of reported cases. This is most notable in Nairobi (21.3%) and Nakuru (16.9%) [see Table 20]. Employer-husbands were responsible for 25.1% of cases with Kiambu (8.2%) and Nairobi (7.9%) reporting the highest incidences. Employer's children contributed to 9.7% of cases, led by Nairobi (3.0%) and Mombasa (2.6%). Violence by co-workers and other perpetrators was relatively minimal, comprising 3.0% and 2.2% of cases, respectively. Other perpetrators of gender-based violence (GBV) included clients (16.7%), other employers' relatives (50%), and other employers' tenants in the compound (33.3%) with females mostly affected by other relatives (50%) and males experiencing violence from other tenants (16.7%). These findings highlighted the significant role of employers, particularly women, in perpetrating violence against domestic workers especially through emotional violence presented as verbal abuse and the diverse and localized nature of non-employed perpetrators in the experiences of domestic workers.

Table 21: Perpetrators of Gender- Based Violence by County

PERPETRATOR	KIAMBU	MOMBASA	NAIROBI	NAKURU	TOTAL
Employer-wife	16.5%	5.2%	21.3%	16.9%	59.9%
Employer-husband	8.2%	5.6%	7.9%	3.4%	25.1%
Employer's child	2.2%	2.6%	3.0%	1.9%	9.7%
Co-worker	1.1%	1.1%	0.4%	0.4%	3.0%
Other perpetrators	0.7%	0.0%	1.1%	0.4%	2.2%
Total	28.8%	14.6%	33.7%	22.8%	100.0%

Table 22: Other Specified Perpetrators of Gender-Based Violence

OTHER PERPETRATORS	KIAMBU	NAIROBI	NAKURU	TOTAL
Clients	16.7%			16.7%
Other relatives	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	50.0%
Other tenants in compound		33.3%		33.3%
Total	33.3%	50.0%	16.7%	100.0%

Focus group discussion and key informant interviews also revealed that female employers were frequently reported as the primary perpetrators of GBV against domestic workers. Many domestic workers, especially women, face abuse at the hands of the wife or female employer, who may exploit their position of power within the household. These abuses range from harsh punishment for minor mistakes, to emotional and psychological abuse, where the domestic worker is belittled, humiliated, or denied basic rights. This includes the use of harmful words, insults, name-calling, and belittling language. It also involved constant criticism, yelling, or shouting to degrade or intimidate domestic workers. Men employers were mostly mentioned perpetrators especially of sexual harassment of female domestic workers.

Some of the women employers, especially those with husbands, see the female domestic worker as competition in the house and would not want a girl who is more beautiful than her, kama mimi nimeshawai ambiwa, sitaki wewe unamakalio kubwa, bwana yangu hatakuwa na amani kwa nyumba (I was once told that she would not want me because I had a big behind which would make her husband lack peace in the house). Other women employers receive you in the house and do not guide you on what to do, they come later to blame you for the errors that you didn't know about (FGDs respondents in Nairobi and Kiambu).

In some cases, wives use sexual coercion, demanding sexual favors in exchange for job security or better working conditions for male domestic workers. Some of the women give men underwear to wash for them, male drivers are asked to do house chores like cleaning dishes, if you complain, you are dismissed. She doesn't want you to go on leave/off (FGD respondents in Nairobi and Mombasa).

Some of the women also show their children to mistreat the workers, you are even beaten, slapped and spitted on by the children and there is nothing you can do (FGD respondents in Nairobi, Kiambu and Mombasa).

Respondents interviewed stated the following causes of Gender-Based Violence in domestic workers' contexts:

- I. Lack of recognition of human rights: Domestic workers experienced gender-based violence primarily because employers felt that domestic workers had no rights due to their choice of work accounting for 29.9% overall, with the highest incidence in Nairobi (10.0%) followed by Nakuru (8.6%) and Kiambu (8.1%) while Mombasa reported the lowest (3.2%).
- II. Unequal power imbalances: The second major reason was abuse of power and undervaluing domestic work associated with the unskilled nature of the job reported at 29.5% in Nairobi (10.3%) followed by Kiambu (7.8%) and Nakuru (7.4%) and the lowest in Mombasa (4.0%).
- III. Lack/Absence of contracts (terms of work): Lack of formal contracts defining how we work exposes us to work violations' (14.4%) and weak protection measures: Employers are also not held accountable to how they treated domestic workers by the government reported at (12.9%).
- IV. Cultural acceptance of Violence: Acceptance of violence as a means of addressing work concerns or disciplinary action accounted for 10.7% with the highest contribution from Nakuru (5.8%) and the lowest from Mombasa (0.7%). These statistics highlight systemic inequalities and the vulnerability of domestic workers, emphasizing a lack of respect for their rights and cultural acceptance of exploitative behaviors which collectively create a conducive environment for perpetrating gender-based violence in private settings.

- V. Apathy by Unions and employment agencies in advocating for domestic workers' rights: Trade Unions lacked consistency in actively and systematically advocating for domestic workers' labor rights and enforcing employers' obligations. Additionally, it was unanimously put forward by female domestic workers in Mombasa, Nakuru, Nairobi and Kiambu that most employment agencies are in business and are more focused on making profits than the well-being of the domestic workers.
- VI. Agencies and bureaus must also dignify the work and play an active role in dispute resolution between the employer and domestic worker. Some of the agencies and bureaus were said to be unregistered. They were said to conduct enrollment in a haphazard and unprofessional manner. Respondents indicated the need for agencies to act systematically and professionally, and advocate for domestic workers. They need

to stop accepting poor pay for the workers and refuse employers to take in a domestic worker where there is no written contract.

biashara na nikazi hutaki kufanya (if you go report a case, you are told you are spoiling the business and you are not interested in the job, (Female Domestic Worker Mombasa).

- VII. Other reasons contributing to domestic workers' exposure to gender-based violence include issues such as indecent clothing, stereotypes associated with domestic workers' vulnerability and poor communication of job expectations by employers.

3.2.4 RISK FACTORS TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

Several risk factors contribute to the likelihood of gender-based violence (GBV) affecting domestic workers in varying degrees. Domestic workers interviewed identified the following critical factors arising from a complex interplay of systemic, economic, cultural, and interpersonal factors in society: Among these factors, the method of recruitment played as a significant determinant of GBV exposure with domestic workers recruited through agencies facing greater risks. Further analysis showed that domestic workers recruited through employment agencies experienced a higher rate of GBV with 63.3% (31 out of 49) reporting exposure compared to 36.7% (18 out of 49) who did not. In contrast, among those recruited through direct engagement, 59.3% (179 out of 302) experienced GBV while 40.7% (123 out of 302) did not. Conversely, those recruited through agencies often face weaker protections, unclear job terms and frequent changes in workplaces that may increase their risk of abuse. The slightly lower prevalence of GBV among directly hired workers may be attributed to stronger employer-employee relationships and greater job stability which can reduce vulnerability to exploitation.

Table 23: Risk factors to Gender-Based Violence for Domestic Workers

FACTORS	KIAMBU	MOMBASA	NAIROBI	NAKURU	TOTAL
Economic factors	9.2%	4.3%	13.6%	8.1%	35.2%
Limited knowledge of workers' rights	6.9%	3.1%	9.5%	10.1%	29.6%
Weak legal protection and enforcement mechanisms.	4.5%	2.5%	2.9%	4.0%	14.0%
Low participation in domestic workers/ unions	3.5%	2.1%	2.3%	3.6%	11.5%
Low educational attainment	3.6%	2.1%	2.1%	2.0%	9.9%
Total	27.7%	14.1%	30.4%	27.8%	100.0%

i. Economic factors 'Economic dependency'

The dire financial circumstances of many domestic workers make it easy for employers to take advantage of their desperation. This economic dependence due to limited options for survival, forces them to endure exploitative working conditions including emotional abuse as they protect their livelihood. Furthermore, the overlapping financial pressures within households where employers themselves may face economic hardships create a volatile environment that disproportionately impacts workers.

"Domestic workers facing poverty and supporting families are forced to tolerate abusive behaviour familia inakwambia uvumilie tuu" (Female Domestic worker, Nairobi).

"Economic disparity and poverty play significant roles in fostering abusive environments. Both employers and employees may struggle financially, but domestic workers are disproportionately affected as they live and work within the same space, limiting their ability to separate personal safety from professional obligations. (Key Informant Interview, Nairobi, November 2024).

ii. Low awareness of domestic workers rights

Low awareness of workers' rights is the second largest contributing factor, making up 29.6% of the total risk. Nairobi again leads in this category (9.5%), followed by Kiambu (6.9%). Many workers are unaware of legal protections and mechanisms for redress, leaving them unable to assert their rights or seek help in cases of abuse. This lack of awareness is compounded by poor regulation and enforcement of domestic work laws, which further exposes workers to exploitation and violence. For example, most workers are employed without formal contracts, relying instead on verbal agreements that fail to protect them from unfair treatment or violations of their terms of engagement.

"Many have little to no education beyond primary school, lack exposure to broader societal norms, and are unaware of their rights or the legal frameworks available to protect them. These workers are often young, inexperienced, and perceived as vulnerable, particularly by employers who explicitly prefer "mtoto mdogo na si mtu mkubwa" (a small person, not a mature/older person). This perception as 'children' exacerbates their vulnerability to various forms of abuse, including emotional and physical violence. (Key informant interview, Mombasa).

iii. Weak Legal Protections and enforcement mechanisms

Weak legal protection, accounting for 14.0% of the total risk, reveals the inadequacy of existing frameworks to protect domestic workers. Kiambu reports the highest percentage in this category (4.5%). Many workers live in their employers' households often in isolation which increases their risk to abuse, including sexual violence by family members, long working hours, and denial of food or being forced to consume stale food. Weak and ineffective enforcement of labor laws, and prolonged judicial processes leave them unprotected and vulnerable to violations. These conditions are exacerbated by the lack of proper monitoring and enforcement of employers' obligation to comply with minimum wage and contractual expectations by the law.

Some challenges undermine the effectiveness of contracts. One of the key informants argued that having a contract does not automatically prevent abuse, as unscrupulous employers may disregard its provisions. Moreover, many domestic workers lack the education needed to fully understand the terms outlined in their contracts, leaving them vulnerable even when a contract is in

place. A significant concern is the reluctance of employers to prioritize written contracts, stemming from ignorance or deliberate violation of labor laws. Addressing this issue requires stronger enforcement measures and widespread ratification of international standards, such as ILO Convention 190, to emphasize the importance of contracts in protecting domestic workers' rights.

The employer will still abuse the employee even if they have contracts. Even with contracts, some vulnerability remains, especially if workers are unaware of their rights or if the contracts are not enforced properly. Most of the workers are not educated, meaning even if there is a contract, they haven't read and understood what it entails.

Asked why the employers fail to prioritize written contracts for domestic workers, the informant had opined on the following... 'Employers are either willfully ignorant or are outrightly breaking the law. The government needs to make it very clear that contracts are an important tool in the protection of domestic workers. Ratification of ILO C.190 will go a long way with that' (Key Informant, December 2024).

The informal nature of domestic work further exacerbates this problem. Current labor laws and trade union frameworks are predominantly designed for formal employment, failing to address the unique vulnerabilities of domestic workers in informal settings. This misalignment leaves a significant portion of the workforce inadequately protected.

iv. Low participation in Trade Unions and Collective Bargaining

Union membership has the potential to provide domestic workers with collective bargaining power and legal support. Many domestic workers stated that they could not raise the monthly membership fee consistently, especially when they did not earn minimum wage. Some domestic workers indicated that some employers are happy to know that one belongs to a union while others are negative about it and would abuse the worker.

'When an employer knows that you belong to a union, they will try all ways to ensure they have dismissed you, some will deny you permission to attend meetings, like today, I had to lie that I have an emergency at home to enable me come to this meeting.' (Female Domestic Worker)

Nairobi had the highest membership rate with 71.4% of workers being part of such unions. In contrast, the lowest membership was observed in Kiambu, where 52.9% of domestic workers reported union membership. Only 26.5% of workers were not part of any union with Kiambu having the highest percentage of non-members at 47.1%.

Table 24 : Membership of Domestic Workers Union or Association by County

COUNTY OF INTERVIEW	MEMBERSHIP STATUS		
	NO	YES	TOTAL
Nairobi	36 (25.9%)	103 (74.1%)	139 (100.0%)
Kiambu	40 (47.1%)	45 (52.9%)	85 (100.0%)
Nakuru	10 (12.2%)	72 (87.8%)	82 (100.0%)
Mombasa	7 (15.6%)	38 (84.4%)	45 (100.0%)
Total	93 (26.5%)	258 (73.5%)	351 (100.0%)

The reasons for not being a member of the domestic workers union or association in Kenya varied as in table 25 below. When asked why domestic workers were not in trade unions or associations 56.3% cited lack of awareness on the importance of being part of a trade union or collective organizing as domestic workers. Other significant reasons included employer disapproval (14.6%) and personal disinterest in joining (9.4%). Only a small proportion of workers mentioned other reasons (19.8%) especially for those in daily casual work.

Table 25 : Reasons for Not Being a Member of Any Domestic Workers Union or Association by County (n=93)

REASON FOR NON-MEMBERSHIP	NAIROBI	KIAMBU	TOTAL
I am not aware such associations exist	28 (29.2%)	15 (15.6%)	54 (56.3%)
My employer does not approve	6 (6.3%)	4 (4.2%)	14 (14.6%)
I just do not want to join	1 (1.0%)	6 (6.3%)	9 (9.4%)
Other reasons	1 (1.0%)	18 (18.8%)	19 (19.8%)
Total	36 (37.5%)	43 (44.8%)	96 (100%)

The findings reveal that the lack of registration fees and monthly contributions at (31.6%) also plays a significant role in determining the participation of female domestic workers in unions such as KUDHEIHA. Another 21.1% stated that they were planning to join in the future, while 10.5% feared disapproval or retaliation from the employer.

“Membership fees that unions ask for are discouraging. The Unions need to modernize their operations and find other ways of fundraising other than fees that discourage members from joining. They should focus on welfare beyond bread and butter and even consider offering pension for the workers, fight for skills learned abroad by migrant workers to be recognized, among others.

The Unions should also ensure that domestic workers understand the contracts they sign, some have signed contracts in Arabic thinking they are migrating to work as security guards only to find out that they signed for construction work ...unaenda kuwa security, alafu unapata kwamba kumbe ilikuwa kazi ya mjengo” (Key Informant Interview Respondent, Mombasa).

Table 26 : Other reasons for not being a member of any domestic workers union or association.

REASON	FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT
Lack of registration fee and monthly contributions	6	31.6%
Planning to join	4	21.1%
I fear the employer may not take it positively	2	10.5%
Prefer not to register since it was part-time or casual work	2	10.5%
I will join when ready	1	5.3%
Lack of information on how to join	1	5.3%
Lack of time	1	5.3%
Seeking more information	1	5.3%
Until I find a better job	1	5.3%
Total	19	100.0%

v. Vulnerability of Younger aged ' Female Domestic workers'

Vulnerability in domestic work often varies significantly with age, exposing certain groups to heightened risks of exploitation and abuse. The findings established that:

- Young women and girls are particularly susceptible to sexual exploitation by male employers, who perceive them as naïve and defenseless. This exploitation is compounded by their limited ability to report or defend themselves, leaving them at the mercy of abusive environments. The situation is made worse if the younger girls are below the legal age of 18, as they view the work given as a favour which serves as a lifeline for their family's economic support.
- Parental involvement in employment arrangements also contributes to the vulnerability of young female domestic workers. In many cases, parents negotiate job terms and receive the workers' salaries directly from employers, depriving the young workers of financial independence and control over their earnings.
- Employers often assign younger female domestic workers disproportionately heavy workloads, if their age and lack of awareness make them less likely to resist or assert their rights. This age-based workload distribution creates an environment where young workers are overburdened and undervalued. Moreover, when job postings specify age requirements, younger workers who do not meet these criteria may still be hired but are then exploited

or mistreated, as employers question their eligibility and use it as justification for unfair treatment.

- In contrast, older female domestic workers especially those above 35 years, face a distinct set of challenges. While they may be more assertive and capable of negotiating better working conditions, they are often vulnerable to economic exploitation, as they are likely to be fending for a family or with their bills to cater for. Driven by desperation, they accept poor conditions or inadequate compensation. Employers, recognizing their financial need, may exploit this vulnerability.

Middle-aged workers generally face fewer challenges compared to younger and older counterparts. Younger workers, however, are increasingly becoming aware of their rights and are beginning to stand up for themselves, signaling a shift in the dynamics of exploitation. Despite these advances, systemic issues persist, with employers often preferring younger workers who lack the knowledge or confidence to defend themselves.

These trends highlight the need for age-sensitive interventions and stronger protection through the Time to Care Project to ensure fair treatment for domestic workers across all age groups.

vi. Migrants and Gaps in Labor Law Knowledge

Migrant workers from other countries often do not understand local laws and are sometimes denied communication with their families and are at greater risk of gender-based violence.

Migrant workers are at greater risk for sexual abuse. Migrant domestic workers in the gulf face extreme working conditions, with no safeguards or protections. We have seen the worst GBV cases come from there. The result is extreme damage to their mental health, and once they return, recovery is slow and painful. Migrant workers need protection before they depart to work and especially after. Their cases are not documented as bureaus do not have or care to put reporting mechanisms in place.” (Key Informant Interview Respondent, Nairobi).

“Some of the employers here are preferring the migrant workers from Tanzania, as they do not complain of the work given and are paid lower than the Kenyan workers since they do not have the bargaining power. The local migrant workers are also at risk of the locals who say that ‘wanaharibu soko’ (they are spoiling the market) by accepting low salaries. When the migrant workers face challenges, most of the time they are interested in getting their pay and not following up on the case, since they do not have work permits. The Government should regularize the free movement of labour to stem this disadvantage.” (Key Informant Interview Respondent, Mombasa).

Locally, migrant workers from Uganda and Tanzania are at a heightened risk to Gender-based Violence due to a lack of work permits often making them hesitant to report abuse for fear of legal repercussions. Corruption within enforcement agencies compounds these challenges. Police and other officials were said to often demand bribes to follow up on cases, while many reported incidents are downplayed or dismissed altogether. This creates a significant disparity between the number of cases reported at police stations and those that ultimately reach the courts. Organizations like Kituo Cha Sheria, Haki Africa, Muhuri, and FIDA frequently intervene to ensure action is taken, but systemic issues remain. Without treaties governing the treatment of domestic workers across borders, refugees are often threatened with deportation, further deterring them from reporting abuse. Initiatives

such as the proposed justice center for refugees by Kituo Cha Sheria aim to address this gap but require broader support.

vii. Power Imbalances and Social norms

Social norms and cultural practices also play a significant role in perpetuating Gender-based violence through certain behaviors, such as verbal abuse or overworking domestic workers. In some cases, employers' prolonged presence at home present a situation where the domestic workers have long contact hours with them, which create opportunities for abuse, as workers are seen as easy targets for gender-based violence including physical assault.

“Cultural norms and personal behaviors further fuel abuse. Some employers exhibit pride and a need to showcase their status, treating domestic workers poorly despite financial inability to pay them adequately. Marital tensions and unresolved anger within the employer's household are often directed at domestic workers, with the “boss lady” venting her frustrations on them. The lack of clear boundaries and formal contracts defining roles and responsibilities also fosters environments where violations are more likely. For example, workers might feel pressured to perform tasks outside their defined roles to gain favor, inadvertently exposing themselves to further exploitation” (Key informant Interview, Nairobi).

Employees put themselves in a vulnerable position thinking they are doing a favour. They lack education on what to expect, the rights and face a normalised culture of silence. The history of employers being called to account is limited – *ata fulani alimstaki na hakuna kitu kilifanyika* (even so and so reported an employer who was abusive and nothing was done). As long as the employer remains with the power, money and connection, the plight of the domestic worker will remain vulnerable and open for exploitation (Key informant – Mombasa, November 2024).

“Power dynamics within households also contribute significantly to GBV. Employers wield considerable influence over their domestic workers, often devaluing their contributions and disregarding their grievances. This imbalance is exacerbated by a slow and often ineffective justice system, which discourages workers from reporting abuse due to prolonged case durations, financial constraints, and the likelihood of cases being dismissed. Employers’ wives frequently disbelieve domestic workers’ claims of harassment, instead accusing them of seducing their husbands. This dismissal of workers’ voices reinforces a culture of silence and impunity.” (Key informant Interview, Mombasa, November 2024).

The behavior of domestic workers can also influence workplace dynamics, albeit in ways shaped by their circumstances. The lack of proper professional training on appropriate workplace behaviors in terms of punctuality, work ethics, proper dress code, etiquette communication may pose a challenge. The lack of professionalism may sometimes lead in cases where some workers talk or dress inappropriately or behave in ways perceived as provocative. For example, they might step into roles traditionally performed by the employer's wife, such as serving the husband in a manner the wife does not. These actions can create tensions that escalate into violent confrontations, with the wife retaliating against the worker.

“Some of us are greedy and take advantage of the wife not being there to seduce the husband to get more money. They check on what the husband prefers and ensure they provide it like favorite meals and service, for example, if the wife does not take water to the bathroom and is rude, the girls ensure they are extra nice to the husband. What do you think will happen when the wife discovers that there is a relationship in her house?” (Focus Group Discussion, Kiambu, November 2024).

Training for the domestic workers is therefore important to ensure that they embrace professional conduct which will not predispose them to abuse.

viii. Employers Job Demands

Employers’ job demands when not sufficiently met result in delayed or partial payments, verbal abuse, and mistreatment of domestic workers. In the absence of employment contracts, domestic workers and employers do not have clear terms of engagement.

The lack of clear terms of work and payment dates affects our work. When the employer knows that the salary is due, that day you will be given the hardest jobs siku ya kulipwa ndio ngumu kuliko zingine zote, Tajiri sijui huskia vibaya anakulipa, utapewa kazi ngumu, atakuwa mkali kwako, mpaka unashangaa. Saa zingine ata unashidwa kuitisha mshahara (the payment day is usually the hardest, I do not know whether the boss feels bad to pay or what, one is given the hardest task, boss is angry and at times you are not able to ask for your pay). (Domestic Worker, Mombasa).

“Addressing these risks requires strengthening legal frameworks, improving enforcement, increasing awareness of workers’ rights, and fostering union participation to ensure safer and more equitable working conditions. “The employers themselves are also not doing well. Poverty affects both the employer and employee.” (Key Informant Interview, Nairobi, November 2024).

ix. Household Dynamics and Ethnicity

The following unique dynamics were noted from the respondents in the focus group discussions:

- Large households with more than 10 members expose the workers to abuse where every member wants some work done and give demands to be met. Employers also send the workers to work for members of the family in a different household without an increase in salary.
- Households with both male and female employers pose a threat to the employee. The male employers tend to be kind and polite while the female employees are abusive and prohibit the workers from engaging or talking to their male partners, this is further correlated to the findings in table 19. Females in these households who travel a lot for work leave their workers exposed to sexual harassment since they are always away.
- In households where they speak diverse languages such as Hindi, Arabic or Somali or languages which domestic workers do not understand, the findings established that domestic workers tend to be vulnerable to verbal harassment and demeaning conversations. The workers may also struggle to prepare traditional food for these households resulting in employers’ dissatisfaction, conflict, and mistreatment.

x. The Role of Employment Agencies in Gender-Based Violence

Employers, particularly through employment agencies, often contribute to an environment that perpetuates gender-based violence especially deprivation and coercion. Most employment agencies withhold key documentation outlining the terms of service and engagement e.g., identification cards only allowing workers to append their signatures without full access to or understanding the details.

In addition, agencies frequently charge commissions or deduct fees from workers’ earnings, often without clear prior communication. These charges are sometimes extended beyond the agreed-upon period, further straining the financial stability of domestic workers. Even when cases of abuse arise, agencies often fail to support the workers. Instead, they may side with employers to maintain their business relationships, leaving the workers without proper recourse. Reports indicate that some agencies operate informal, unregulated “kangaroo courts” to resolve cases, a practice that disregards the workers’ rights and lacks accountability.

Rather than proactively ensuring the rights of domestic workers many agencies focus solely on collecting dues or contributions. Some actively discourage workers from reporting abuse, instilling fear of job loss or providing no safe mechanism for raising concerns. This creates a culture of silence and enables the persistence of gender-based violence and exploitation. By prioritizing profit over protection, these agencies contribute to a cycle of abuse and neglect, making them complicit in the challenges faced by domestic workers.

Xi. The Role of Employers

Employers play a significant role in perpetuating abuse and exploitation of domestic workers through various practices that undermine their rights and dignity. Additionally, some of the domestic workers are often discouraged or outright prohibited from joining labor unions, isolating them from collective support and advocacy.

The working conditions imposed by employers can also expose domestic workers to abuse. For example, in households where working-class women are frequently absent, domestic workers are left vulnerable to sexual harassment by male partners. Abusers often intimidate workers into silence, claiming that any complaints will not be believed due to established trust with their spouses “ata ukiambia bibi yangu hatakuamini kwa sababu tumeishi nayeye kwa muda mrefu (even if you tell my wife, she will not believe you because we have stayed together for long)”. Female domestic workers may also face jealousy and mistrust from the lady of the house, who perceives them as competitors in their matrimonial relationships. Cultural norms, such as the acceptance of polygamy, further exacerbate the risk of abuse, as female workers are sometimes viewed as potential additional wives.

Employers frequently deny workers basic human rights, such as freedom of movement and access to the outside world, particularly for live-in workers. These restrictions not only isolate domestic workers but also make them more dependent on their employers. In some cases, domestic workers are employed through family connections, which complicates reporting abuse. Workers are often pressured by their own families to tolerate mistreatment due to financial desperation, fostering a culture of endurance over empowerment.

Delayed or inconsistent salary payments are another form of exploitation, with employers often paying in arrears or piecemeal, forcing workers to beg for what they are owed. Some employers exploit financial vulnerabilities to demand sexual favors in exchange for timely payment or salary increases. Employers also fail

to address the needs of workers by neglecting personal interactions to understand their well-being or provide appropriate safety measures. The absence of essential equipment such as aprons, gloves, or gumboots exposes workers to physical harm. In some cases, employers who provide safety gear deduct the cost from workers' wages, further exacerbating financial exploitation.

Finally, employers often hire young, uneducated girls from rural areas under the pretense of helping their families, making them more susceptible to abuse. These workers are pressured by their families to endure mistreatment, with the rationale that the employer is doing them a favor. Such practices perpetuate a cycle of vulnerability and exploitation, which could be mitigated through better regulation, enforcement of labor laws, and education for both employers and workers.

3.2.5 EFFECTS/ CONSEQUENCES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: DOMESTIC WORKERS PERSPECTIVES

The effects of gender-based violence (GBV) are profound and far-reaching, impacting domestic workers who often do not seek health and criminal justice redress. These effects can be physical, psychological, emotional, social, and economic. Below is a breakdown of the key consequences of GBV in domestic workers (table 26):

As result of abusive working environments, 54.1% of respondents experienced psychological effects, making it the most prevalent form followed by 31.2% who experienced socio-economic effects, 10.8% who experienced physical effects and 3.9% who reported other effects. Among the counties, Nairobi had the highest overall impact at 32.6%, mainly due to psychological effects (20.1%) and socio-economic effects (9.3%). Kiambu followed with 28.7%, driven by psychological (12.9%) and socio-economic effects (10.4%). Nakuru recorded 23.7% with most effects being psychological (14.3%) and socio-economic (6.5%). Mombasa had the lowest impact at 15.1% with 6.8% being psychological and 5.0% socio-economic. These results show that GBV mainly affects people's mental health and financial well-being, highlighting the need for support systems in these areas.

Table 27: Effects/Consequences of Gender Based Violence

EFFECTS OF GBV	KIAMBU	MOMBASA	NAIROBI	NAKURU	TOTAL
Physical Effects (bruises)	8 (2.9%)	8 (2.9%)	6 (2.2%)	8 (2.9%)	30 (10.8%)
Physical Effects (unwanted pregnancies)	8 (2.9%)	8 (2.9%)	6 (2.2%)	8 (2.9%)	30 (10.8%)
Socio-economic Effects (e.g., stigma, job loss)	29 (10.4%)	14 (5.0%)	26 (9.3%)	18 (6.5%)	87 (31.2%)
Psychological Effects (e.g., anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts)	36 (12.9%)	19 (6.8%)	56 (20.1%)	40 (14.3%)	151 (54.1%)
Other Effects	7 (2.5%)	1 (0.4%)	3 (1.1%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (3.9%)
Total	80 (28.7%)	42 (15.1%)	91 (32.6%)	66 (23.7%)	279 (100.0%)

3.2.6 AWARENESS OF SUPPORT SERVICE AVAILABLE FOR SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

A significant proportion of domestic workers (42.1%) indicated that they would report incidents of gender-based violence (GBV) to labor union offices such as KUDHEIHA with Nairobi accounting for the highest share at 20.0% (Table 28). The next most preferred reporting venue was local administration offices (chief's office) which 22.3% of respondents chose. Police stations were the third most common reporting destination with 18.4% of respondents choosing this option and Nakuru had the highest proportion (7.0%). Other venues, such as religious leaders (2.5%), employers (3.3%) and family members/friends (5.5%), were less commonly cited. This suggests that while formal and recognized reporting channels like police stations and local administration were important, union offices were seen as a critical place for workers to seek support.

Table 28: Where Respondents Would Report Incidents of Gender-Based Violence (n=305)

WHERE GBV INCIDENTS WOULD BE REPORTED	KIAMBU	NAIROBI	NAKURU	MOMBASA	TOTAL
Labour Union Office (e.g., KUDHEIHA)	47 (9.2%)	102 (20.0%)	46 (9.0%)	20 (3.9%)	215 (42.1%)
Local Administration (Chief's Office)	62 (12.1%)	31 (6.1%)	21 (4.1%)	0 (0.0%)	114 (22.3%)
Police station	17 (3.3%)	29 (5.7%)	36 (7.0%)	12 (2.3%)	94 (18.4%)
Family member/friend	8 (1.6%)	10 (2.0%)	7 (1.4%)	3 (0.6%)	28 (5.5%)
NGO/CSO (e.g., Kituo Cha Sheria)	2 (0.4%)	6 (1.2%)	5 (1.0%)	3 (0.6%)	16 (3.1%)
Employer	3 (0.6%)	11 (2.2%)	1 (0.2%)	2 (0.4%)	17 (3.3%)
Elsewhere	6 (1.2%)	4 (0.8%)	1 (0.2%)	3 (0.6%)	14 (2.7%)
Religious/spiritual leader	2 (0.4%)	7 (1.4%)	4 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)	13 (2.5%)
Total	147 (28.8%)	200 (39.1%)	121 (23.7%)	43 (8.4%)	511 (100%)

A significant majority of respondents interviewed (72.4%) were aware of support available to domestic workers experiencing gender-based violence including trade unions and domestic worker associations (Table 29). Awareness was highest in Nairobi, where 31.4% of respondents were informed followed by Kiambu at 19.0% and Nakuru at 13.8%. Despite this, a substantial portion (27.6%) of respondents remained unaware of such support, highlighting a gap in outreach and education, particularly in regions like Mombasa where awareness was lower.

Table 29: Awareness of Support Available to Domestic Workers Experiencing Gender-Based Violence (n=210)

COUNTY OF INTERVIEW	NO	YES	TOTAL
Kiambu	16 (7.6%)	40 (19.0%)	56 (26.7%)
Mombasa	10 (4.8%)	17 (8.1%)	27 (12.9%)
Nairobi	11 (5.2%)	66 (31.4%)	77 (36.7%)
Nakuru	21 (10.0%)	29 (13.8%)	50 (23.8%)
Total	58 (27.6%)	152 (72.4%)	210 (100%)

3.2.7 DOMESTIC WORKERS PERSPECTIVE ON REPORTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

A sizable proportion of domestic workers (42.1%) indicated that they would report incidents of gender-based violence (GBV) to labor union offices such as KUDHEIHA with Nairobi accounting for the highest share at 20.0%. The next most preferred reporting venue was the local administration offices (chief's office) which 22.3% of respondents chose. Police stations were the third most common reporting destination with 18.4% of

respondents choosing this option and Nakuru had the highest proportion (7.0%). Other options, such as religious leaders (2.5%), employers (3.3%) and family members/friends (5.5%), were less commonly cited. This suggests that while formal and recognized reporting channels like police stations and local administration were important, trade union offices were identified as a critical place for workers to seek support.

Table 30: Reporting Channels for incidents of Gender-Based Violence (n=305)

CHANNELS	KIAMBU	NAIROBI	NAKURU	MOMBASA	TOTAL
Labour Union Office (e.g., KUDHEIHA)	47 (9.2%)	102 (20.0%)	46 (9.0%)	20 (3.9%)	215 (42.1%)
Local Administration (Chief's Office)	62 (12.1%)	31 (6.1%)	21 (4.1%)	0 (0.0%)	114 (22.3%)
Police station	17 (3.3%)	29 (5.7%)	36 (7.0%)	12 (2.3%)	94 (18.4%)
Family member/friend	8 (1.6%)	10 (2.0%)	7 (1.4%)	3 (0.6%)	28 (5.5%)
NGO/CSO (e.g., Kituo Cha Sheria)	2 (0.4%)	6 (1.2%)	5 (1.0%)	3 (0.6%)	16 (3.1%)
Employer	3 (0.6%)	11 (2.2%)	1 (0.2%)	2 (0.4%)	17 (3.3%)
Elsewhere	6 (1.2%)	4 (0.8%)	1 (0.2%)	3 (0.6%)	14 (2.7%)
Religious/spiritual leader	2 (0.4%)	7 (1.4%)	4 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)	13 (2.5%)
Total	147 (28.8%)	200 (39.1%)	121 (23.7%)	43 (8.4%)	511 (100%)

Among the four respondents as in table 32, domestic workers would report incidents of gender-based violence (GBV) through other channels e.g., female support groups, FIDA, media and 'Nyumba Kumi' each accounted for 25.0% of the responses. Additionally, 10 other respondents had indicated that they would report the GBV incidents through this avenue but did not specify the exact channel.

Table 31: Other Channels of Reporting by County (n=4)

OTHER CHANNELS OF REPORTING	KIAMBU	NAIROBI	TOTAL
Female support groups	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
FIDA	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%
Media	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Nyumba Kumi	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%
Total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

The findings established that 70.5% of domestic workers did not report gender-based violence experienced in their line of work. The most common reason for not reporting was the fear of losing a job, which accounted for 36% of the responses. The second most common reason was fear of retaliation (19%) followed by fear of not being believed (18%) and lack of trust in authorities (17%). Lack of awareness of options for reporting and support at 7% and other

reasons were cited by 3%. By county, Kiambu had 13% of respondents citing fear of losing their job, Mombasa had 12%, Nairobi had 5% and Nakuru had 13%. Similarly, Mombasa had the highest percentage (8%) of respondents reporting fear of retaliation. The data shows that fear of job loss and retaliation were major reasons across all counties for not reporting GBV incidences. Consequently, the lack of reporting encourages the perpetrators to continue with the vice.

Table 32 : Reasons Why Respondents Would Not Report Any Incidences of GBV by County (n=46)

REASON FOR NOT REPORTING INCIDENTS OF GBV	KIAMBU	MOMBASA	NAIROBI	NAKURU	TOTAL
Fear of losing my job	6 (6.0%)	12 (12.0%)	5 (5.0%)	13 (13.0%)	36 (36.0%)
Fear of retaliation	3 (3.0%)	5 (5.0%)	2 (2.0%)	9 (9.0%)	19 (19.0%)
Lack of trust in authorities	4 (4.0%)	8 (8.0%)	2 (2.0%)	3 (3.0%)	17 (17.0%)
Fear of not being believed	4 (4.0%)	6 (6.0%)	1 (1.0%)	7 (7.0%)	18 (18.0%)
Lack of awareness	2 (2.0%)	2 (2.0%)	3 (3.0%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (7.0%)
Other reasons	0 (0.0%)	3 (3.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (3.0%)
Total	19 (19.0%)	36 (36.0%)	13 (13.0%)	32 (32.0%)	100 (100%)

Other reasons for not reporting gender-based violence (GBV) includes not belonging to a union (50.0%) and the process being complicated with the involvement of lawyers (50.0%). These reasons indicate a lack of confidence in the criminal justice system and lack of support in navigating complex legal processes.

The findings also established that among the 62 respondents who reported experiencing gender-based violence (GBV), a sizable proportion (36.6%)

reported to a labor union such as KUDHEIHA with Nairobi (22.5%) having the highest proportion of such reports. The police were the second most common reporting channel (18.3%) with Nairobi (9.9%) having the largest share. Family or friends were also a common reporting avenue (16.9%). These figures indicate that labor unions and NGOs such as Kituo Cha Sheria play a critical role in providing support and channels for reporting GBV among domestic workers.

Table 33: Where Survivors of GBV incidents reported (n=62)

WHOM DID YOU REPORT GBV	KIAMBU	MOMBASA	NAIROBI	NAKURU	TOTAL
Labour Union (e.g., KUDHEIHA)	2 (2.8%)	6 (8.5%)	16 (22.5%)	2 (2.8%)	26 (36.6%)
Police	2 (2.8%)	4 (5.6%)	7 (9.9%)	0 (0.0%)	13 (18.3%)
Reported Elsewhere	7 (9.9%)	1 (1.4%)	2 (2.8%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (14.1%)
Family/Friend	2 (2.8%)	3 (4.2%)	6 (8.5%)	1 (1.4%)	12 (16.9%)
NGO/CSO Organization (Kituo Cha Sheria)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.4%)	3 (4.2%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (5.6%)
Employer	1 (1.4%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (5.6%)	1 (1.4%)	6 (8.5%)
Total	14 (19.7%)	15 (21.1%)	38 (53.5%)	4 (5.6%)	71 (100%)

For the 10 respondents who reported their experiences of gender-based violence (GBV) to other places or individuals, the most common reporting channel was the local administration (chief), at 50% with Kiambu having the highest representation (30%). The next most usual places were Nyumba Kumi (30%) and an agency office (10%). A small proportion (10%) reported the abuse to the wife of their employer. This suggests that community-based reporting mechanisms, including local administration, play a significant role in GBV cases.

Among the 100 respondents who did not report incidences of gender-based abuse (GBV), the most common reasons were once again fear of losing their job (36%), fear of retaliation (19%) and fear of not being believed (18%). Lack of trust in

authorities (17%) also featured prominently as a reason for non-reporting. These findings suggest that fear of negative personal consequences was a significant barrier to reporting GBV reflecting broader challenges in seeking justice for domestic workers who are survivors of gender-based violence.

Among the 8 respondents who reported other reasons for not reporting gender-based abuse (GBV), bribery/corruption in responsible authorities was the most common reason, cited by 50% of the respondents (Table 34). Other reasons included resolving the issue domestically (12.5%), handling vulnerable elderly people (12.5%), seeking a new job (12.5%) and directly informing the employer (12.5%).

Table 34: Other Reasons Respondents Did Not Report Gender-Based Abuse Experienced (n=8)

REASON	MOMBASA	NAIROBI	NAKURU	TOTAL
Bribery/corruption in responsible authorities	1 (12.5%)	3 (37.5%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (50.0%)
Did not report because the domestic worker conflict with the employer till they settle their issues	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)
Handling an elderly person who is vulnerable	0 (0.0%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (12.5%)
I just look for another job	0 (0.0%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (12.5%)
I told my boss directly	0 (0.0%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (12.5%)
Total	1 (12.5%)	6 (75.0%)	1 (12.5%)	8 (100%)

3.2.8 SUPPORT SERVICE FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS WHO WERE SURVIVORS OF GBV

The most reported support service is the Labor Workers Union, which was identified by 55.3% of respondents with Nairobi showing the highest percentage (23.6%) (see Table 35). Workers' Rights Associations/Movements followed, mentioned by 24.9% of respondents with Kiambu and Nakuru showing notable responses (6.8% and 8.0%, respectively). Other services included Criminal Justice System (Police), recognized by 8.4% of respondents, primarily from Nakuru (5.9%) and Judicial Services-

Labor Courts, acknowledged by 5.5% of participants with Kiambu, Mombasa and Nairobi having equal representation. Health referrals from public hospitals were mentioned by 3.8% while other support services were noted by 2.1% of respondents, though less frequently across the counties. Overall, the majority of support services were centered on labor unions and workers' rights associations.

Table 35: Support Services Available for Domestic Workers

SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR WORKERS	KIAMBU	MOMBASA	NAIROBI	NAKURU	TOTAL
Labor Workers Union	37 (15.6%)	11 (4.6%)	56 (23.6%)	27 (11.4%)	131 (55.3%)
Workers' Rights Associations / Movements	16 (6.8%)	7 (3.0%)	17 (7.2%)	19 (8.0%)	59 (24.9%)
Criminal Justice System-Police	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.4%)	5 (2.1%)	14 (5.9%)	20 (8.4%)
Judicial Services-Labor courts	4 (1.7%)	4 (1.7%)	4 (1.7%)	1 (0.4%)	13 (5.5%)
Health referral - public hospitals	2 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.4%)	6 (2.5%)	9 (3.8%)
Other support services	1 (0.4%)	1 (0.4%)	3 (1.3%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (2.1%)
Total	60 (25.3%)	24 (10.1%)	86 (36.3%)	67 (28.3%)	237 (100.0%)

3.3 PROTECTIONS FROM WORK RELATED INJURY

The table suggests a potential link between the lack of safety equipment and the experience of gender-based violence (GBV) among domestic workers. A higher percentage (80.0%) of those who experienced GBV reported not having safety equipment, compared to 63.8% of those who did not experience GBV. Conversely, only 20.0% of those who faced GBV had safety equipment, compared to 36.2% of those who did not experience GB.

Table 36: Provision of Safety Equipment and Experience of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) at the Workplace

PROVISION OF SAFETY EQUIPMENT	GBV EXPERIENCE AT WORKPLACE		
	NO	YES	TOTAL (COUNT, %)
No	90 (63.8%)	168 (80.0%)	258 (73.5%)
Yes	51 (36.2%)	42 (20.0%)	93 (26.5%)
Total	141 (100.0%)	210 (100.0%)	351 (100.0%)

73.5% of respondents did not receive safety/protection equipment across the four counties (Table 37). The highest percentage was in Nairobi (28.5%) followed by Nakuru (18.5%), Kiambu (18.2%) and Mombasa (8.3%). Only 26.5% of domestic workers were provided with safety equipment with Nairobi having the highest proportion (11.1%) followed by Kiambu (6.0%), Mombasa (4.6%) and Nakuru (4.8%). This highlights the significant gap in protection from work-related injury especially for those working in farm areas exposed to chemicals used in agriculture.

“Domestic workers operate in isolated environments that are not easily subjected to inspection. This makes it hard to monitor any abuse that could be ongoing” (Key Informant Interview-Nairobi).

Table 37: Provision of Safety Equipment to Domestic Workers (n=351)

RESPONSE	KIAMBU	MOMBASA	NAIROBI	NAKURU	TOTAL
No	64 (18.2%)	29 (8.3%)	100 (28.5%)	65 (18.5%)	258 (73.5%)
Yes	21 (6.0%)	16 (4.6%)	39 (11.1%)	17 (4.8%)	93 (26.5%)
Total	85 (24.2%)	45 (12.8%)	139 (39.6%)	82 (23.4%)	351 (100%)

Among the domestic workers who reported being provided with safety equipment (n=93), gloves were the most provided item, accounting for 31.1% of the total responses (Table 38). Masks followed at 14.7% with the highest provision in Nakuru (5.3%). Overcoats or aprons were provided to 25.8% of workers with Nairobi accounting for the largest share (12.0%). Gumboots were another key item, provided to 24.9% of domestic workers with the highest percentage seen in Nairobi

(12.0%). Other safety items, such as unspecified tools, were less common, making up just 3.6% of responses. These findings indicate that while some safety items were provided, there remains a need for broader and more consistent provision of protective equipment across the domestic work sector, especially for those supporting agricultural work in agricultural zones. The table below highlights the safety equipment provided:

Table 38: Safety equipment's provided to respondents (n=93)

SAFETY ITEMS PROVIDED	KIAMBU	MOMBASA	NAIROBI	NAKURU	TOTAL
Gloves	17 (7.6%)	12 (5.3%)	29 (12.9%)	12 (5.3%)	70 (31.1%)
Masks	5 (2.2%)	6 (2.7%)	10 (4.4%)	12 (5.3%)	33 (14.7%)
Overcoats/Aprons	10 (4.4%)	10 (4.4%)	27 (12.0%)	11 (4.9%)	58 (25.8%)
Gumboots	15 (6.7%)	2 (0.9%)	27 (12.0%)	12 (5.3%)	56 (24.9%)
Other Safety Items	3 (1.3%)	1 (0.4%)	4 (1.8%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (3.6%)
Total	50 (22.2%)	31 (13.8%)	97 (43.1%)	47 (20.9%)	225 (100%)

8 respondents reported being provided with other specified safety items. Among these, the most common items were uniforms, provided to 25% of respondents in Nairobi. Detergents, headgear, and veils were each reported by 12.5% of workers in Kiambu or Nairobi. Other items included jembe/rake, reflectors, goggles, and

reflectors with goggles each reported by 12.5% of respondents from either Kiambu or Nairobi. These items highlight the limited range of safety equipment provided beyond the basic items like gloves and overcoats further emphasizing the need for more comprehensive safety measures in domestic work.

Table 39: Other Specified Safety Items by County (n=8)

OTHER SAFETY ITEMS PROVIDED	KIAMBU	MOMBASA	NAIROBI	TOTAL
Detergents	1 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (12.5%)
Head gear	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)
Jembe, rake	1 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (12.5%)
Reflector	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)
Reflector, goggles	0 (0.0%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (12.5%)
Uniform	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (25.0%)	2 (25.0%)
Veil	1 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (12.5%)
Total	3 (37.5%)	1 (12.5%)	4 (50.0%)	8 (100%)

3.4 LEVEL OF AWARENESS ON LABOUR RIGHTS IN KENYA

Nairobi had the highest proportion of workers aware of their rights at 34.2% followed by Kiambu at 19.9%, Nakuru at 13.4% and Mombasa at 7.4%. In contrast, 25.1% were not aware of their rights with the highest proportion of unawareness recorded in Nakuru at 10.0% followed by Mombasa and Kiambu at 5.4% each and Nairobi at 5.4%.

Table 40: Awareness of Domestic Workers' Rights by County

AWARENESS OF RIGHTS	NAIROBI	KIAMBU	NAKURU	MOMBASA	TOTAL
YES	120 (34.2%)	70 (19.9%)	47 (13.4%)	26 (7.4%)	263 (74.9%)
NO	19 (5.4%)	15 (4.3%)	35 (10.0%)	19 (5.4%)	88 (25.1%)
TOTAL	139 (39.6%)	85 (24.2%)	82 (23.4%)	45 (12.8%)	351 (100%)

The primary sources of information about domestic workers' rights were through civil society organization awareness and education campaigns at grassroots level. 32.7% of respondents indicated they received information from these organizations particularly in Nairobi (17.3%). The second most common source was friends and family with 31.0% of respondents, notably in Kiambu (7.7%). Other sources of information, including informal channels, were mentioned by 19.9% of respondents with Nairobi

having the largest proportion at 16.1%. Internet sources were referenced by 9.2%, especially in Kiambu (4.5%). Books, pamphlets, or government documents accounted for 4.8% and employers provided information to only 2.4% of the workers. These findings emphasize the significant role of informal networks like family and NGOs in spreading information about domestic workers' rights particularly in urban settings such as Nairobi.

Table 41: Sources of Information About Rights of Domestic Workers by County

SOURCE OF INFORMATION	NAIROBI	KIAMBU	NAKURU	MOMBASA	TOTAL
NGOs/CSOs/CBOs	58 (17.3%)	19 (5.7%)	24 (7.1%)	9 (2.7%)	110 (32.7%)
Briefed by a friend/family member	42 (12.5%)	26 (7.7%)	25 (7.4%)	11 (3.3%)	104 (31.0%)
Other sources of information	54 (16.1%)	9 (2.7%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (1.2%)	67 (19.9%)
Internet sources	11 (3.3%)	15 (4.5%)	4 (1.2%)	1 (0.3%)	31 (9.2%)
From books, pamphlets, or government documents	2 (0.6%)	5 (1.5%)	2 (0.6%)	7 (2.1%)	16 (4.8%)
Enlightened by employer	4 (1.2%)	1 (0.3%)	3 (0.9%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (2.4%)
Total	171 (50.9%)	75 (22.3%)	58 (17.3%)	32 (9.5%)	336 (100%)

CHAPTER 4: STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE DOMESTIC WORKERS CONTEXT

Based on the findings, strengthening the prevention and management of Gender-based violence (GBV) in the context of domestic workers in Kenya requires that the Time to Care Project adopts a multi-faceted approach that addresses legal, social, economic, and cultural factors. Here are several strategies that can be adopted. The goals focus on short-term (addressing the immediate needs of domestic workers) and long-term (responding to long-standing system needs and barriers to attaining the realization of the domestic workers' rights in Kenya).

STRATEGY 1: STRENGTHEN LEGAL PROTECTIONS AND REFORMS FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

As Time to Care Project engages in policy advocacy aimed at strengthening legal protections and reforms for domestic workers in Kenya, it is important to structure both immediate (short-term) and long-term goals in a way that addresses urgent needs while paving the way for sustainable and systemic changes in the domestic workers context.

SHORT TERM GOALS	LONG-TERM
Raise awareness on the labor rights of domestic workers: Increase public awareness and understanding of the rights of domestic workers, particularly among employers and workers themselves. PROPOSED STRATEGIES: 1. Work with KUDHEIHA and YAK in organizing domestic worker chapter workshops and legal clinics disseminating information on domestic worker's labor rights including the use of social media and local community platforms 2. Led by Oxfam, convene multi-stakeholder dialogues engaging stakeholders such as Federation of Kenya Employers, KUDHEIHA, civil society organizations, unions to develop country briefs and spread awareness about the rights of domestic workers. Initiate dialogue with government officials, lawmakers, and other key stakeholders to prioritize legal protection for domestic workers. Proposed strategies: • Submit policy briefs, petitions, and research on the plight of domestic workers to government bodies as citizen data strengthening KDHS reports on prevalence of violence in Kenya Domestic Worker Legal Clinics: Provide legal consultation and assistance to domestic workers to seek criminal justice redress in labor courts for instance through lawyer fees or pro-bono legal counsel and advocacy in case of disputes. The legal clinic intervention should also encompass health referral and emergency shelters with additional funding from the Government.	ENACT COMPREHENSIVE LEGISLATION PROTECTING DOMESTIC WORKERS: PROPOSED STRATEGIES: 1. Support with the Government in strengthening implementation of Employment Act 2007 Section 85 which also governs domestic work by developing clear guidelines on protection of domestic workers and employer's obligations to adhering with contracts as terms of employment. The guidelines should also include recognition of overtime for domestic workers who work beyond 8 hours a day in home settings. 2. The establishment of a Domestic Wages Council (DWC) should also be fast-tracked to regulate fair wages and conditions for domestic workers. 3. Advocate for implementation and monitoring of Labour Migration Laws: (1) Advocate for enactment of labor and migration laws and policies such as Laws Labour Migration Bill 2024, protecting migrant domestic workers which protects migrants from abuse and gender-based violence while regulating employment agencies. (2) Other key instruments are The ILO Recommendation concerning HIV and AIDS and the World of Work, 2010 (No. 200) recommendations for instance Recommendation No. 200 also provides that HIV testing or other forms of screening for HIV should not be required of migrant workers (paragraph 25). (3) Advocate for signing of bi-lateral agreements between Governments to ensure protection of domestic workers across borders. These agreements would safeguard their rights and ensure that they are not exploited or abused when working in foreign countries. 4. Advocacy for Ratification of ILO Convention No. 189: Engage in policy influencing for the ratification of international conventions like the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No. 189, which sets standards for domestic work, minimum wage, leave entitlement and protection from all forms of gender-based violence and work-place abuse.

	5. Social Protections: (1) Support the government in advocating for employers to uphold minimum wage so that domestic workers can benefit from Social Health Insurance Fund (SHIF), as majority cannot afford monthly deductions when they earn exceptionally low wages as highlighted in findings. ROLL-OUT ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS: PROPOSED ENFORCEMENTS: 1. Develop and implement household labor inspections Frameworks: With the proper framework, these inspections can help uncover abuses such as exploitation, abuse, unsafe working conditions, and violations of labor laws, such as working hours, wages, and rest periods coordinated by KUDHEIHA and labor apparatus in Kenya 2. Design mechanisms to hold employers accountable to the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) as domestic workers are often excluded from such social protections: 3. Employer registration systems: Registration of domestic workers provides a clear record of employers who can be tracked on compliance with labor laws and address violations such as unpaid wages, abuse, or unsafe working conditions. 4. Implementation of penalties for non-compliance: Working with Unions such as KUDHEIHA and domestic worker groups/chapters to document violations and enforce penalties to employers through Government on those who do not comply with Employment ACT Section 84 and 85 and Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), 2007, and other relevant legislation that governs labor relations in the country 5. Government-mandated standardized contracts: Provide standardized contracts to enforce the Employment Act 2007 which states that employers are required to provide written contracts to domestic workers detailing job responsibilities, working hours, salary, and other conditions. 6. Develop domestic workers codes and ethics: (1) Formulate Domestic Workers Codes of Conduct and Regulations for domestic workplaces, with clear consequences for mistreatment and harassment of domestic workers which will help prevent physical and psychological/emotional violence and enhance employer obligation to fair wages as law. (2) As part of the Codes, develop clear guidelines regarding working hours, accommodation, and safety in their workplace.
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STRATEGY 2: STRENGTHEN AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND INTEGRATION OF LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMS TARGETING DOMESTIC WORKERS.

Through education and economic empowerment there is an opportunity to enhance the well-being of domestic workers and ensure long-term sustainability of their rights and dignity by reducing risk factors to gender-based violence in the sector. The following is recommended:

SHORT TERM GOALS	LONG-TERM GOALS
Empower domestic workers with life skills and self-confidence: Tailor life skills training trainings for domestic worker associations focusing on financial management for improved self-economic independence and strengthened understanding on identifying economic abuse as well as prevent exploitation PROPOSED STRATEGIES: 1. Customize Gender-based violence prevention education programs for domestic workers sector: Tailor-made domestic workers Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Management Curriculum and Training Programs with Government actors such as National Employment Agency, Trade Unions such as KUDHEIHA, development partners such as the International Labour Organization are effective approaches to help domestic workers understand their rights and how to recognize and report GBV. The workshops provide accessible information on labor laws in Kenya, standards of decent working conditions, and reporting mechanisms. This will enable domestic workers to better recognize instances of abuse and understand how to seek help. 2. Financial literacy programs: Working with KUDHEIHA other trade unions and financial institutions such as SACCOs, roll-out financial literacy and savings programs to help domestic workers save and have a safety net in cases of gender-based violence or how to transition to safety. Strengthening the formation of domestic workers' co-operatives may offer financial security and collective bargaining power.	Reduce the Incidence of GBV in Domestic Work Settings: To support reduction in the prevalence of gender-based violence in domestic work target promoting cultural shifts and better labor practices. PROPOSED STRATEGIES: 1. Conduct continuous education campaigns targeting both domestic workers and employers to challenge harmful stereotypes, gender norms, and violence

STRATEGY 3: ROLL-OUT BEHAVIOR CHANGE CAMPAIGNS AND INTERVENTIONS ON DOMESTIC WORKERS RIGHTS.

Societal norms will evolve to reflect greater respect for domestic work when there is a decline in harmful practices such as exploitation from minimum wage and abuse which has been normalized by norms and 'informality' of domestic work. The following is recommended:

SHORT TERM	LONG-TERM
• Employer engagement forums: Conduct awareness campaigns targeting employer education on the importance of gender equality, workers' rights, and how GBV harms both individuals and the home environment adopting a multi-sectoral approach with Government, Civil Society and Domestic worker associations. • Locally led community engagement: Raise awareness in local communities about Gender-Based Violence, including its impact on domestic workers. For instance, training community leaders, religious groups, and local authorities as champions who will help identify and address gender-based violence in private settings like the 'home,' creating a broader support network for domestic workers through local led approaches. Additionally, sharing success stories of empowered workers can inspire others and encourage open dialogue about the challenges they face. • Media collaborations: Use media campaigns to spread awareness about GBV and challenge harmful stereotypes about domestic workers. Media campaigns can help reshape public attitudes/narratives toward domestic workers, reduce stigma, and encourage a culture of respect and equality. The media campaigns play a significant role in amplifying ratification of international conventions such as ILO C.189 and ILO C.190 and enacting related social protection laws in Kenya such as NSSF formalizing protections and addressing workplace gender-based violence.	Sustained/continuous awareness: To foster a long-term cultural shift toward greater respect for domestic workers and the recognition of gender equality in the workplace engage in sustained public awareness campaigns that challenge stereotypes, raise awareness about the dignity of domestic workers, and promote gender equality. Progressively, societal norms will evolve to reflect greater respect for domestic work, with a decline in harmful practices such as exploitation, discrimination, and violence.

STRATEGY 4: PROVIDE/STRENGTHEN IMMEDIATE SUPPORT AND REFERRAL SERVICES AND LINKAGES

Referral services and linkages help domestic workers know where to report GBV and abuse confidentially and receive support which can be strengthened in Kenya through:

SHORT TERM	LONG-TERM
PROPOSED STRATEGIES 1. Psychological support Clinics: Integrating Psychosocial support for domestic workers will help them cope with trauma and re-build their lives. The findings of this study established that most of the female domestic workers experience GBV with some considering suicide for lack of support in dealing with experiences of GBV. The Time to Care Project should also target an employer program as a pilot to extend psychosocial support to families of survivors (domestic workers) to prevent cycles of violence and empower them on how to support domestic workers who are survivors of GBV.	PROPOSED STRATEGIES: 1. National shelter and safe house program: Working with government develop national guidance and integrate shelter and safe House Programs/interventions for domestic workers who experience Gender Based Violence in settings that are not near to their homes such as migrants enabling them acquire protection and recovery as well as legal assistance.

STRATEGY 5: STRENGTHENING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE DATA AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS.

With the paucity in data on prevalence of gender-based violence in domestic workers in Kenya, data is critical in informing policy advocacy, track progress, shape interventions, and hold society accountable for addressing abuse and violations of domestic workers rights. Whether it's funding for shelters, legal aid, or education campaigns, data helps identify where the most support is needed and ensures that resources are distributed in a way that maximizes impact whilst also filling data gaps in official national statistics. It is therefore important to:

SHORT TERM	LONG-TERM
PROPOSED STRATEGY 1. Monitor and Evaluate Programs: Conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of existing GBV prevention programs in the domestic work sector which can help assess their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement for Time to Care Project working closely with health referral actors in Kenya and Gender machinery such as National Gender and Equality Commission and State Department for Gender, State Department for Labor and Social Protection.	PROPOSED STRATEGY 1. Review and processing of Prevalence of GBV in domestic workers data: New research and data on GBV such as in this report is key in strengthening Kenya Demographic Health Survey which introduced a module on GBV in 2022 under the framework of citizen generated data. The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) is implementing the Kenya Statistical Quality Assurance Framework (KeSQAF) provides an opportunity for Oxfam to submit Citizen- Generated Data (CGD) for official reporting in areas where data gaps exist such as prevalence of GBV in domestic workers. The review and processing of data on the prevalence and forms of gender-based violence faced by domestic workers will help inform national policy decisions, advocacy and highlight the need for targeted interventions at national level.

STRATEGY 6: STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND VOICE PLATFORMS

It is important to strengthen the collective voice of domestic workers through forming domestic worker associations and allowing them to demand better working conditions and challenge abusive employers as champions of change. The following is proposed:

SHORT TERM	LONG-TERM
1. Mobilize Domestic Worker Groups: 2. Joint collaborations and partnerships: To avoid fragmentation and duplication of efforts, work with e.g Dhobi Women's Network and Center for Domestic Training and Development Domestic workers to train domestic workers on how to speak for themselves, ensuring their concerns are directly addressed as tailored solutions. 3. Case studies of successful organizing should be used to encourage others to enroll. For instance, a successful model in Mombasa involved a group of women who formed an organization that helps distribute workers to various employers, ensuring that payment is made directly to the group's pay bill account, which reduces the risk of economic exploitation.	1. Register Domestic Worker Associations: KUDHEIHA should also work towards not only registering domestic workers as members but support efforts to register domestic workers into associations or collective bargaining groups and provide them with the resources and training to negotiate effectively which is also a great exit and sustainability strategy for Time to Care Project. 2. Labour unions should explore mechanisms of supporting domestic workers at affordable rates to encourage membership.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Despite existing laws aimed at protecting domestic workers in Kenya, significant gaps persist, leaving workers vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Weak enforcement mechanisms and inadequate political commitment among relevant agencies undermine the effectiveness of labor legislation, particularly in private settings. Many domestic workers remain unaware of their rights due to insufficient dissemination of information. A critical issue is employers' reluctance to adopt written contracts, often due to ignorance or deliberate non-compliance with labor laws. Employment contracts, however, play a crucial role in safeguarding workers' rights, offering legal protection, and reducing vulnerability to gender-based violence (GBV) through clear terms for fair treatment and equitable pay. Ratification of international standards such as ILO Convention 190 is essential to strengthen these protections and emphasize employers' obligations.

The study comprehensively examined the prevalence, forms, and root causes of GBV affecting domestic workers within their workplaces, revealing that GBV is deeply entrenched in systemic inequalities, socio-economic vulnerabilities, and weak protective mechanisms. A majority (59.8%) of domestic workers reported experiencing some form of gender-based violence, indicating a high prevalence rate. Domestic workers, predominantly women, face various forms of abuse, including physical, emotional, sexual, and economic violence. Emotional violence was found to be the most prevalent form of abuse at 49.9% and this significantly affects the environment of work and mental health of domestic care workers. The causes and risk factors of gender-based violence in the workplaces of domestic workers range from their low socio-economic status, limited education, and lack of awareness further exacerbate their vulnerability, while cultural norms and informal employment conditions intensify their plight. Female employers were notably identified as significant perpetrators of abuse, challenging traditional narratives of GBV.

The assessment highlights the need for targeted interventions under the Time to Care Project, emphasizing the importance of strengthening legal protections, enforcing labor laws, and promoting workers' awareness of their rights. The study also calls for enhancing collective organizing mechanisms and fostering partnerships among unions, civil society organizations, government agencies, and international actors. The findings provide actionable recommendations for reducing GBV, discrimination, and work-related abuse, aiming to create a safer, more equitable environment for domestic workers in Kenya. Through strategies informed by the study, such as advocating for progressive legislation, transforming social norms, and implementing gender-responsive policies, the Time to Care Project can significantly contribute to improving the rights and social protections of domestic workers.

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