

NYANDARUA COUNTY GENDER POLICY (DRAFT)

FOREWORD

According to the United Nations (1997) Gender mainstreaming is defined as the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. More so, it is a principle that means bringing gender into the main stream and into all decision making and organizational work.

Commonwealth Secretariat (1999) said that gender mainstreaming is women and men having equitable access to resources which includes opportunities and rewards. This means equal participation on what shapes the society and sharing equitably the benefits of development. They should both have an opportunity to influence who does what in society in terms of who owns and can own, who has access to jobs and income, who controls the society's resources and institutions, who makes decisions and who sets priorities. Gender mainstreaming does not restrict efforts of specific measures to help women, but mobilizing all general policies and measures for the purpose of achieving equality by ensuring at the planning stage effects on all genders is considered. This is done by systematically examining measures and policies and considering such possible effects when defining and implementing them (Hannan, 2004; UNIFEM, 2009).

I believe the formulation of this policy is a landmark achievement in ensuring gender equity. I would like to assure the people of Nyandarua County the full support of my department in implementing the commitments and actions proposed in the policy and call upon everybody in the county to render the necessary support.

Hon. Agnes Njunji

County Executive Committee Member

Department of Education, Technical Training, Culture, Gender and Social Protection.

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On behalf of the **Department of Education, Technical Training, Culture, Gender and Social Protection**, I take this opportunity to thank everybody who participated in development of this policy. In particular, special thanks to our County Executive Committee Member Mrs. Agnes Njunji for her support in the entire process and supporting it wholeheartedly.

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Dr. Edward Kigo

Chief Officer

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ABBREVIATIONS

GBV - Gender Based Violence

FGD - Focus Group Discussions

KII - Key Informant Interviews

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

CIDP - County Integrated Development Plan

PWDs - Persons Living with Disabilities

MCA - Member of County Assembly

IPV - Intimate Partner Violence

SGBV - Sexual and Gender Based Violence

ADR - Alternative Dispute Resolution

FGM - Female Genital Mutilation

SHA - Social Health Authority

KDHS - Kenya Demographic and Health Survey

SRH - Sexual and Reproductive Health

HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus

TVET - Technical and Vocational Education and Training

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To be developed once the policy is completed....

DRAFT

CHAPTER 1

1.0. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

The Nyandarua County Gender Policy has been developed to provide a comprehensive framework for promoting gender equality, equity, social inclusion, and the empowerment of all persons within the county. The Policy seeks to guide the mainstreaming of gender concerns across county laws, policies, programmes, plans, budgets, and institutional processes in line with the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and other national, regional, and international commitments on gender equality, human rights, and inclusive development. The County Government of Nyandarua recognizes that sustainable and inclusive development can only be achieved through deliberate efforts to address systemic gender inequalities and strengthen gender-responsive governance and service delivery systems.

Equal participation and involvement of all genders in development is essential for sustainable socio-economic growth, poverty reduction, improved livelihoods, effective governance, and social justice. Expanding equitable access to opportunities, resources, services, and decision-making processes contributes significantly to increased productivity, improved health outcomes, enhanced democracy, and strengthened leadership at both household and community levels.

Gender mainstreaming is a globally recognized strategy for integrating gender perspectives into development processes. It seeks to ensure that the concerns, experiences, priorities, and needs of women, men, girls, boys, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, Intersex and marginalized groups are systematically incorporated into policies, programmes, projects, budgets, and institutional frameworks. The County Governments Act No. 17 of 2012 provides that, the rights and interests of minorities and marginalized groups and communities are to be protected and integrated with county planning and development. In addition, the national values as provided in the Constitution of Kenya 2010 including citizen participation, equity, information sharing, good governance and sustainable development are equally applicable and binding to the County governments. The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equity, equality, and justice by addressing structural inequalities and ensuring inclusive participation in development.

This Policy therefore provides a conceptual and strategic framework for advancing gender equality and social inclusion within Nyandarua County. It aims to strengthen institutional responsiveness, promote equitable service delivery, address gender disparities, and enhance participation of all population groups in county development processes.

1.2. Background

Nyandarua County, like many counties in Kenya, has made notable progress in socio-economic development and in promoting gender equality through constitutional reforms, policy interventions, awareness creation initiatives, and increased public participation. According to the National Census of 2019, Nyandarua County recorded a total population of 638,289 persons made up of fFemales;323,247 (50.8%), Males: 315,022 (49.2%) and Intersex: 20. The population is characterized by high youth dependency; 0–14 years: 227,764 (35.7%), 15–64 years: 374,577 (58.7%) and 65+ years: 35,923 (5.6%). The data indicated that access to basic drinking water was

at 90% and basic sanitation was at 34% leading to a gendered health impact. However, poor sanitation disproportionately affects women due to hygiene and caregiving roles.

Data from the KNBS 2019 indicated that women dominated elderly poverty vulnerability (widowhood + landlessness), were more likely to be in informal agriculture and unpaid family work whereas men were more likely to control cash income and land assets. Poverty in Nyandarua was reported to be strongly gendered through asset ownership inequality. Although women, men, youth, and persons with disabilities play a critical role in development, structural barriers continue to limit their equitable participation and benefit sharing. Further, significant gender disparities and social inequalities persist across different sectors of development, including education, healthcare, economic empowerment, leadership and governance, access to productive resources, and protection from violence and discrimination. In response, the County Government is prioritizing gender mainstreaming to advance inclusive and sustainable development.

1.2.1. Employment and Economic Empowerment

Despite this economic potential, the county continues to face persistent gender inequalities shaped by socio-cultural norms, economic disparities, and unequal access to resources and opportunities. Traditionally, gender roles have defined men as providers and women as caregivers; however, evolving socio-economic conditions such as unemployment, alcohol and substance abuse, and changing family structures have significantly transformed household dynamics. As a result, women are increasingly contributing to household incomes, while men are experiencing growing economic and psychosocial pressures. These shifts have contributed to emerging social challenges, including household conflict, gender-based violence, mental health concerns, school dropout, particularly among boys, and the exclusion of vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, adolescents, and older persons.

Youth unemployment, poverty, unequal economic opportunities, and limited access to financial resources continue to affect both women and men, particularly young people and vulnerable populations. The employment structure as reported by KNBS 2019 shows 53.9% as employed, 46.2% self employed, 9.4% casual labor and 11.4% being employed. Reports indicate that women dominate in dairy (milking, sorting and selling) and potatoes farming, informal trade at the markets and small roadside shops known as '*kiosks*' domestic work and unpaid homecare work. On the other hand men dominate in; wage employment in both public and private sectors, transport including public transport, motorbikes and trucking, construction and skilled labour and decision-making at household level including farm income. Data showed that women earned less in agricultural labor due to casual contracts, lack of bargaining power and middlemen (mostly men) control of farm produce markets.

1.2.2. Agriculture and Gender

Nyandarua County is a predominantly agricultural region whose livelihoods largely depend on dairy farming, crop production, and informal trade. Agriculture remains the backbone of the county's economy, with women playing a significant role in agricultural production and household livelihoods. Approximately 69% of residents derive their livelihoods directly from agriculture with agriculture contributing approximately 73% of household incomes within the county (County Integrated Development Plan 2023-2027). Despite their contribution, women continue to face limited access to land ownership, credit facilities, markets, employment opportunities, and decision-making spaces. Nyandarua is heavily agricultural (potatoes, milk, vegetables). Gender distribution in agriculture (KNBS pattern-based) comprises women: ~60–70% of farm labor force and men: ~70% landowners / decision-makers with key inequalities pushing women to the periphery of development to provide planting, weeding, harvesting, dairy milking and small livestock care, whereas men are at the center of control of land ownership titles, sale of produce (potato, milk income). This translates to structural issue where agriculture is feminized in labor but masculinized in ownership and control. Statistics continue to show that only 20–30% of women have independent land control (national rural Kenya pattern applied at county level via KNBS 2019 gender land studies).

1.2.3. Education and Gender

The Kenya Demographic health Survey 2022 indicated significant progress and achievements in education and gender in Nyandarua County where primary education was almost universal with women and men aged 15-49 with no education were <1% and 1% respectively. Gender gap appeared in completion of secondary education with more girls dropping out of school in the rural areas and enrollment in tertiary/TVET had the rate slightly higher in boys especially in technical fields. The main causes of girls dropping out of school were reported as; early pregnancy with teen pregnancy rate at 5%, household labor demands and poverty-related school costs. It was noted that gender gap in education was not in access, but in completion and transition to higher education.

1.2.4. Health and Gender

The nexus between health and gender remains significant where milestones achieved in the health sector and gaps in Nyandarua county, significantly impact gender in terms of expected outcomes. Maternal and reproductive health key indicators show skilled birth attendance in Nyandarua county at 98% which is higher than the national rate at 89%. Modern contraceptive use (women 15–49) was reported to be at 67% with unmet need for family planning at 9%. The total fertility rate was reported to be at an average of 3.6 children per woman (KDHS 2022 fact sheet¹). Gender health burden indicated that women faced pregnancy and childbirth risks, higher unpaid caregiving responsibilities. On the other hand men faced lower healthcare utilization rates (common rural pattern).

¹ [Kenya-Demographic-and-Health-Survey-2022-Factsheet-Nyandarua.pdf](#)

Report from the National Syndemic Diseases Control Council 2023² reported an alarming and increasing rate of new HIV infections in 2023 and 2025 where 66% of new HIV infections were women and an overall 19% increase on new HIV cases recorded in 2023. The data further listed Nyandarua county as one of the counties with the lowest HIV incidence rate and AIDS-related deaths in Nyandarua County being below 20%. This is a key achievement which should be sustained by efforts including implementation of this gender policy.

Gender based violence is a key human rights and health concern with statistics showing alarming trends which this policy framework should address. The GBV assessment report by Flying Kites³ indicated data from KNBS & ICF in 2023, showing GBV prevalence at 41% of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical violence, and 13% have experienced sexual violence, in their lifetime in Nyandarua County. The KDHS 2022 report indicated that 24% of women aged 15–49 reported to have ever experienced physical violence since age 15 with 5% and 7% of these reporting to have experienced physical violence and sexual violence within the previous 12 months respectively. The report further listed high-risk areas being; Magumu, Murungaru, and Njabini, with prevalent forms including defilement, intimate partner violence, and cases involving close relatives. Further, the general lack of recent and real time statistics and data on gender based violence including GBV and intimate partner violence against men is a key gap in GBV reporting which this policy needs to address.

1.2.5. Leadership and representation

The situation of gender in leadership and representation aspect follows the structural reality in the larger Kenyan pattern where women representation is largely through nomination and appointments and not elective and particularly male dominated for both executive and legislative positions. This is demonstrated by the Governor's office, 27 male nominated Members of County Assembly (MCA), ward-level leadership and local administration through the local chief's office comprised of 11 men and 2 women. Further, The county has a total of 14 female Members of County Assemblies with 13 of these being nominated. The Barriers to women holding leadership and representation positions include; low access to election campaign financing for women candidates, patriachal system in voting patterns particularly in rural areas, land ownership linked to political credibility. As a result of these barriers, women remain politically underrepresented despite majority population share.

² [Kenya HIV Estimates Portal](#)

³ [GBV Assessment Final_21 July25.docx](#)

Within the County Government structure, the Department of Education, Technical Training, Culture, Gender, and Social Protection is mandated to promote gender affairs through inclusive empowerment initiatives. The Department has spearheaded the development of this Gender Mainstreaming Policy in alignment with the County Government's mission of effective representation, legislation, and oversight for sustainable development. The Policy has been developed through a broad-based participatory and consultative process involving County departments, the Gender Sector Working Group, civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, cultural leaders, community representatives, youth, persons with disabilities, and other stakeholders. The process included stakeholder consultations, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), public participation forums, and validation meetings, ensuring that the Policy is grounded in the lived realities, priorities, and aspirations of the people of Nyandarua County.

The implementation of this Policy shall be guided by:

1. Collaboration and networking among county institutions, national government agencies, development partners, civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, and community structures
2. Participatory and inclusive approaches in planning and implementation of county programmes and projects
3. Advocacy, sensitization, and public awareness to promote gender equality, inclusion, and positive social transformation
4. Strengthening mentorship, life-skills development, civic education, and capacity-building initiatives within communities and institutions
5. Promotion of inclusive participation and protection of persons with disabilities, minority groups, intersex persons, marginalized populations, children, youth, and older persons; and
6. Strengthening institutional systems, accountability mechanisms, and documentation processes to support effective gender mainstreaming across all county sectors.

1.3. Legal and Policy Framework

This policy is anchored in: The Nyandarua County Gender Policy is guided by international, regional, national, and county legal and policy frameworks that promote gender equality, human rights, social inclusion, non-discrimination, and protection from violence and marginalization. The Policy is anchored on the principles of equality, human dignity, participation, inclusivity, accountability, equity, and social justice. At the national level, the Policy is anchored in the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, which guarantees equality and freedom from discrimination and obligates both national and county governments to address historical and structural inequalities affecting vulnerable and marginalized groups. Key constitutional provisions informing this Policy include Article 10 on national values and principles of governance; Article 27 on equality and freedom from discrimination; Article 28 on human dignity; Article 43 on economic and social rights; Article 53 on the rights of children; Article 54 on the rights of persons with disabilities;

Article 55 on the rights of youth; Article 56 on the rights of minorities and marginalized groups; and Article 81(b) on the two-thirds gender principle. The Constitution further requires public institutions to mainstream gender, equity, and inclusion in governance, planning, budgeting, public participation, and service delivery.

The Policy is further guided by relevant national laws and policies that support gender-responsive governance and development, including the Public Finance Management Act, which promotes gender-responsive planning and budgeting; and the National Policy on Gender and Development 2019 which provides the national framework for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. At the international and regional levels, the Policy is informed by frameworks ratified by Kenya, including the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 on gender equality, and the African Union Agenda 2063. These frameworks commit Kenya to implementing legislative, policy, administrative, and institutional measures aimed at eliminating discrimination and promoting gender equality and social inclusion.

The Policy is also aligned with Nyandarua County development priorities and planning instruments, particularly the Nyandarua County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), as well as relevant county laws, programmes, and sector strategies related to health, education, youth empowerment, social protection, economic empowerment, and public participation.

1.4. Rationale of the Nyandarua County Gender Policy

The rapidly changing global, economic, technological and social trends have created the necessity for governments to re-examine and prioritize their mandate. This transformation is intended to capture and articulate core functions and values with a focus to improved performance. Nyandarua County is committed to align its Strategic objectives to national policy documents, including medium term plans, SDG's, Kenya's Vision 2030 and Africa Vision 2063. This is captured in the County's CIDPs (2023-2027). These documents provide a framework for people centred development, hence there is need for mainstreaming gender within the development agenda abound in all these documents.

It is within this context and the Constitutional requirements for equality and non-discrimination that the development of this policy becomes necessary. The Constitution is expressed on its gender equity, equality, and justice provisions and aspirations. Article 2(6) obliges the Government to implement the obligations of the international treaties it has ratified. We are cognizant of the need of the County Governments to contribute to the realization if these broader regional, international and national goals. As such, the development and adoption of this gender mainstreaming policy remains timely.

1.5. Guiding Principles

The Policy is anchored on the principles of equality, equity, inclusivity, participation, accountability, human dignity, non-discrimination, cultural sensitivity, and social justice. It provides a framework to guide the mainstreaming of gender concerns into county planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes, while also strengthening institutional coordination and accountability for gender-responsive development. Cognizance of intersectionality and the differences between all genders within Nyandarua County, this policy is guided by the following principles:

- a) Equality, equity and Non-discrimination.
- b) Inclusivity; Recognition of differences, intersectionality, diversities and inequalities among women and men in Nyandarua County with no one left behind.
- c) The inseparability of public and private spheres of life;
- d) Public participation, consultation and co-operation; Ensures representation of all genders in processes and decision-making.
- e) Protection, inclusion and integration of the marginalized and special interest groups.
- f) Accountability; Clear roles and responsibilities.
- g) Cultural sensitivity; Respect for local culture while promoting positive change
- h) Respect for human life.

1.6. Policy Objectives

1.6.1. Overall Objective

The overall goal of this policy is to achieve gender equity, equality and empowerment of women/ Men, Boys and Girls by creating equitable society and development environment for Nyandarua County.

1.6.2. Specific Objectives

Objectives of the Policy are to:

- a) Provide guidance on implementation and realization of the Constitutional provisions on gender equity, equality and empowerment;
- b) Mainstream Gender in County development planning as well as resource allocation.
- c) Define institutional framework and performance indicators for effective tracking, monitoring, evaluation and reporting implementation of gender equity, equality and women empowerment at the county level.
- d) Promote equitable access for both women and men to and control over resources, knowledge, information, land and business ownership, and services such as education and training, healthcare, credit, and legal rights.

CHAPTER 2

2.0. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

2.1. Introduction

This section presents a situational analysis of gender and social inclusion in Nyandarua County, drawing on findings from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted with different stakeholders in Nyandarua who were reached for the sole purpose of ensuring their voice and issues are addressed by this gender policy. The stakeholder groups included; Persons with Disabilities, men, women, adolescents, older persons, cultural and interfaith leaders, civil society actors, and government officials at National and County levels in the various sectors and departments. It provides evidence on existing inequalities, institutional gaps, and priority needs affecting different population groups. The findings are intended to inform the development and implementation of a comprehensive County Gender Policy by guiding gender-responsive planning, budgeting, and service delivery across County Government functions.

2.2. Stakeholders consultations methodology

The study adopted a qualitative participatory approach to generate in-depth insights on gender and social inclusion dynamics in Nyandarua County. Data was collected through multiple complementary sources to ensure triangulation and comprehensive coverage of issues. Primary data was obtained through focus group discussions (FGD) with various community groups including women, adolescents and youth, cultural elders, people with disabilities (PWDs) and children. Key informant interviews (KIIs) targeting various stakeholders in strategic and relevant positions on gender. The list of stakeholders reached is provided in Appendix II.

In addition to primary data collection, the study also reviewed and incorporated secondary data from the existing *Nyandarua County Draft Gender Policy*, which provided contextual background, highlighted previously identified gender gaps, and enabled comparison between documented policy priorities and current lived realities from community and institutional stakeholders. This combined approach strengthened the validity of the findings by integrating policy-level insights with field-level experiences, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of gender and social inclusion challenges in the county. Data was collected using structured discussion guides and interview schedules covering gender roles, economic empowerment, and access to services, governance, gender-based violence, and social norms.

2.3. Findings and Emerging issues

2.3.1. Key Findings

Community consultations conducted across the county revealed persistent gender stereotypes and unequal gender roles that continue to shape household responsibilities, access to opportunities, and participation in decision-making processes. Women and girls remain disproportionately affected by unpaid care work, gender-based violence (GBV), early pregnancies, harmful social practices, and limited access to economic resources and opportunities. At the same time, emerging challenges affecting men and boys, including substance abuse, school dropout, mental health concerns, unemployment, and social pressure associated with harmful masculinity norms, were also identified.

The consultations further highlighted increasing concerns regarding gender-based violence and insecurity affecting women, men, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities. Cases of domestic violence, sexual violence, emotional abuse, exploitation, neglect, incest, and harmful social practices were reported across the county. Participants also identified alcohol and substance abuse, harmful cultural norms, economic hardship, weak family support systems, and inadequate protection and response mechanisms as key drivers of violence and social vulnerability.

Persons with disabilities, older persons, widows, children, youth, intersex and marginalized populations were identified as facing heightened vulnerability to exclusion, discrimination, violence, and barriers in accessing services and justice systems. The community members emphasized the need for stronger institutional protection systems, inclusive development approaches, and enhanced public awareness on rights, equality, and social inclusion.

Table 2.1: Summary of Key findings

Summary of Key Findings from stakeholder interviews	
Gender roles and changing household dynamics	Traditional roles are shifting, with women increasingly acting as primary providers.
	Men continue to hold expectations of authority and provider roles despite economic decline.
	Dual burdens on women and reduced male economic stability are creating household tension.
Economic Vulnerability and employment	High unemployment affects all groups, especially youth and men.
	Women dominate the informal sectors but lack ownership of assets and land.
	PWDs face exclusion from employment despite their skills.
	Limited access to credit, markets, and affirmative action opportunities.
Gender based Violence (BGV) and protection gaps	High prevalence of IPV, defilement, incest, rape, and emotional abuse.
	Underreporting due to stigma, fear, and weak justice systems.
	Weak survivor protection infrastructure (few safe houses, limited rescue centres).
	ADR and informal settlements weaken the prosecution of offenders.
Mental Health and Psychosocial challenges	Rising depression, stress, and suicide cases, especially among men.
	Substance and alcohol abuse are major coping mechanisms and drivers of violence.
	Severe shortage of mental health professionals and services at the county level.
Education and Adolescent vulnerabilities	Boys increasingly drop out due to labour demands and economic pressure.
	Girls face risks of teenage pregnancy and sexual exploitation.
	Weak school infrastructure, limited learning materials, and inadequate sanitation.
	Substance abuse is emerging among learners.

Disability and social Inclusion	PWDs face systemic exclusion from employment, governance, and services.
	Infrastructure is largely inaccessible.
	Weak implementation of affirmative action policies (e.g., 5% employment rule).
	Bureaucratic barriers in accessing disability certification and benefits.
Cultural norms and harmful practices	Persistence of patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes.
	Continued presence of FGM in some areas, including cross-county arrangements.
	Harmful initiation practices affecting boys.
	Dowry commercialization is linked to GBV and family conflict.
Governance and service delivery gaps	Weak coordination between national and county gender structures.
	Poor implementation of gender policies and frameworks.
	Limited awareness of services and weak accessibility.
	Public participation is often non-inclusive or tokenistic.

2.3.2. Summary of Stakeholders reached and issues raised

Table 2.2: Summary of Key Stakeholders and Issues Raised.

STAKEHOLDER	ROLE	KEY ISSUES RAISED
County Government	Policy and service delivery	Weak coordination, limited implementation capacity
National Government	Oversight and legal framework	Limited intergovernmental coordination
Police Service	GBV response and justice	Underreporting, weak survivor trust, and ADR issues
Faith-Based Organizations	Moral guidance and support	Mental health, GBV prevention, youth mentorship
NGOs/CBOs	Advocacy and service support	GBV awareness, survivor assistance, mental health support
Cultural Leaders	Custodians of norms	Cultural preservation
Health Sector	Service deliver	Shortage of staff, mental health gaps, and SHA challenges
Education Sector	Child development	Dropout rates, SGBV, and weak infrastructure
Community Groups (PWDs, Youth, Women)	Beneficiaries and advocates	Exclusion, unemployment, GBV, limited voice

2.3.3. Emerging Issues

a) Economic Equality

Economic equality in Nyandarua County remains a persistent structural challenge shaped by gendered divisions of labour, unequal access to productive resources, and limited decision-making power over household and community assets. Although women play a central role in subsistence farming, dairy production, household management, and informal trade, their economic contribution is not matched by equivalent ownership or control over income, land, livestock, and other productive resources. In most households, men are still regarded as the primary owners and

controllers of key assets, while women provide the bulk of agricultural labour, including planting, crop management, and livestock care, as well as engaging in informal economic activities to sustain household livelihoods. Despite this, women often lack legal ownership of land and are frequently excluded from decisions regarding the sale or use of family assets. Traditional inheritance systems and entrenched patriarchal norms continue to limit women's rights to own, inherit, and independently manage property, resulting in a situation where they generate value without a corresponding control over the benefits.

These inequalities are compounded by limited access to credit, financial literacy, entrepreneurship training, formal employment, and markets, which constrain women's economic empowerment and long-term asset accumulation. In some cases, even where women earn independent income, household norms require them to surrender or pool earnings under male control, further reducing their financial autonomy. Emerging household dynamics, including increased male unemployment, alcohol and substance abuse, have also led to more women becoming primary or equal breadwinners, often placing on them a dual burden of income generation and unpaid domestic responsibilities.

Youth, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups also face significant economic exclusion due to limited technical skills, lack of capital, inadequate investment opportunities, inaccessible infrastructure, discrimination, and weak inclusion in formal economic programmes. Across these groups, barriers to accessing government funds, markets, and formal employment opportunities are reinforced by bureaucratic processes and exclusion from decision-making networks that determine resource allocation.

Additionally, cases of economic exploitation, such as financial abuse of women and older persons through unauthorized access to mobile money accounts and manipulation of household resources, further deepen vulnerability and erode trust within families.

b) Leadership and Representation

Leadership and decision-making spaces in Nyandarua County remain characterized by persistent underrepresentation of women, youth, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and other vulnerable groups, despite existing constitutional and policy provisions promoting inclusive governance. Although awareness of gender equality and inclusion has improved, actual participation in elective, administrative, and community leadership structures remains uneven and constrained. Women are particularly underrepresented in elective leadership positions, with only one female Member of County Assembly among 25 MCAs (2022-2027), highlighting a significant gender gap in political representation. While women are actively engaged in household welfare, agriculture, community mobilization, and informal economic activities, their influence in formal decision-making remains limited. In many cases, entrenched social and cultural norms continue to position leadership as a male domain, resulting in the prioritization of men's voices in community and political processes.

Even where women participate in public forums, their engagement is often constrained by low confidence, limited civic awareness, domestic responsibilities, and the highly political nature of such spaces, which can discourage active contribution. Similar participation gaps are experienced by youth, whose concerns, such as education, safety, and livelihoods, are not systematically integrated into planning and governance processes, and by older persons, who are often excluded from emerging development and innovation spaces.

PWDs and other marginalized groups face additional structural and physical barriers, including inaccessible venues, inadequate assistive communication support, weak enforcement of affirmative action measures, and limited inclusion in leadership selection processes. As a result, their participation is frequently symbolic rather than substantive.

At the community level, public participation forums are often perceived as non-inclusive or tokenistic, with concerns that attendance may be influenced by political or financial considerations rather than genuine representation. This undermines trust in governance processes and weakens accountability. Key informants further noted weak implementation of constitutional provisions such as the two-thirds gender principle, contributing to slow progress toward equitable representation across both elective and appointive positions.

c) Gender Based Violence

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) remains one of the most pervasive and deeply entrenched challenges in Nyandarua County, affecting women, men, children, older persons, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in different forms and intensities. Evidence from FGDs and KIIs shows that GBV manifests as domestic and intimate partner violence, sexual violence (including rape, defilement, incest, and exploitation), emotional and psychological abuse, economic violence, and neglect or exclusion of vulnerable groups. Children and adolescents are particularly exposed to sexual abuse, often occurring within trusted family or community settings.

The persistence of GBV is driven by a complex interplay of socio-economic and structural factors. Key drivers include alcohol and substance abuse, unemployment and economic stress, harmful cultural norms and patriarchal beliefs, weakening family structures, and exposure to unsafe environments. These factors are reinforced by access to illicit brews and drugs, absentee parenting, overcrowded living conditions, and inadequate child protection systems. In many cases, community attitudes continue to normalize violence and silence survivors.

A major concern is the widespread underreporting of GBV cases, driven by stigma, fear of retaliation, victim-blaming, financial barriers, and limited trust in justice systems. Survivors, particularly women, children, PWDs, and men facing masculinity-related stigma, often prefer informal dispute resolution mechanisms, which undermines accountability. Even where cases are reported, survivors face fragmented referral pathways, weak follow-up, and limited survivor protection and rehabilitation services.

Institutional response systems exist but remain fragmented and under-resourced. Gaps include inconsistent availability of police gender desks, inadequate safe houses and one-stop centres, weak coordination among justice, health, and social services, and limited psychosocial and rehabilitation support. Frontline officers also face capacity constraints in handling the evolving nature of GBV cases, while referral systems remain long and inefficient. The burden of GBV is disproportionately borne by vulnerable groups. Women and girls experience high levels of sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence, and early pregnancy. Children face defilement, incest, neglect, bullying, and exposure to unsafe environments. PWDs encounter heightened risks of abuse, neglect, and barriers to accessing justice. Older persons, especially elderly women, face economic exploitation, neglect, and physical or sexual violence. Men and boys, while also affected, are less likely to report due to stigma. Emerging concerns include rising cases of incest and intra-family abuse, increasing teenage pregnancies, school dropouts, and growing links between GBV and mental health challenges such as depression and suicide ideation. Substance abuse among adolescents and risky behaviours linked to peer influence further exacerbate vulnerability. Cultural practices and weak socialization systems were also noted as contributing to violence and risky behaviours among adolescents.

National context data, including the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) 2022, reflects a broader gender inequality that influences vulnerability to GBV. Key priorities in addressing GBV include strengthening survivor-centred services (including safe houses and one-stop centres), improving reporting and referral systems, enhancing enforcement of laws, expanding psychosocial and rehabilitation services, addressing alcohol and substance abuse, promoting positive masculinities, strengthening school-based protection systems, improving community safety measures, and enhancing coordination, financing, and data systems for GBV response.

d) Education

Education in Nyandarua County continues to be shaped by intersecting social, economic, and cultural factors that affect access, retention, and completion for both girls and boys, though the drivers differ by gender and context. While overall enrolment has improved, school dropout, absenteeism, and poor completion rates remain key concerns, limiting learners' transition to higher levels of education and ultimately constraining human capital development. Among girls, school participation is largely undermined by teenage pregnancy, early and forced marriages, poverty, and heavy domestic responsibilities. These are compounded by limited access to comprehensive sexuality education, weak parental guidance, and exposure to exploitation and sexual and gender-based violence. Inadequate menstrual hygiene management, including lack of sanitary products and insufficient sanitation facilities in some schools, further contributes to absenteeism and dropout, while stigma and psychosocial stressors negatively affect performance and retention.

Boys, on the other hand, are increasingly affected by child labour and economic pressures that draw them into agriculture, *boda boda* transport, construction work, and other informal income-generating activities. This is reinforced by household poverty, peer influence, substance abuse

risks, and weak mentorship and guidance systems, leading to disengagement from schooling and reduced transition rates at upper primary and secondary levels. Across both genders, structural and institutional gaps within the education system further constrain learning outcomes. These include shortages of teachers, inadequate learning materials and ICT resources, poor school infrastructure such as lack of electricity and water, inadequate sanitation facilities, and long distances to school that expose learners to fatigue and safety risks. In addition, weak school-based counselling and psychosocial support systems limit early identification and response to learner challenges.

Learner safety and wellbeing concerns also remain significant. These include unsafe routes to school, bullying and peer violence, and emerging cases of substance and drug abuse among learners. Such risks are compounded by limited protective and psychosocial support mechanisms within schools, affecting attendance, concentration, and overall wellbeing. Broader governance, social norms, and household dynamics further influence education outcomes. Persistent gender stereotypes shape expectations and opportunities for boys and girls, while economic prioritisation of child labour over schooling remains common in some farming households. In addition, limited parental engagement in education follow-up and evolving but inconsistent attitudes toward the value of education continue to affect learner retention. Learners from marginalized groups, including children with disabilities and those from low-income households, face additional barriers such as inaccessible infrastructure, stigma, discrimination, and inadequate support services. Rural and remote schools are particularly affected by resource constraints, including shortages of teachers and learning materials.

e) Health

Access to quality health services in Nyandarua County remains uneven, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach areas, resulting in significant inequalities across population groups. While national health reforms have improved service availability, gaps persist in the quality, inclusiveness, and affordability of care, disproportionately affecting women, men, adolescents, older persons, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). Reproductive, maternal, and adolescent health services remain a major concern. Women and girls in rural areas continue to face barriers such as long distances to facilities, shortages of skilled health personnel, and high costs, leading to delayed care and increased risks during pregnancy and childbirth. Adolescents also experience limited access to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, contributing to teenage pregnancies, unmet family planning needs, and inadequate access to menstrual health products. Cultural stigma further restricts open discussion and timely care-seeking.

Mental health is an emerging and significant challenge across the county. Rising cases of stress, depression, substance abuse, and suicide risk, particularly among men and young people, are compounded by shortages of mental health professionals, limited integration of services at lower-level facilities, and weak community-based psychosocial support systems. Stigma continues to discourage many from seeking help. Health financing reforms under the Social Health Authority (SHA) have improved access to basic services at lower-level facilities, and the county records

relatively higher health insurance coverage (36% compared to the national average of 26%). However, affordability challenges remain for low-income households, especially in managing chronic illnesses, maternity care, and specialized treatment, with delays in reimbursement and limited awareness of entitlements further constraining access.

Health vulnerabilities also intersect strongly with age, gender, and social status. Adolescents and young people account for a significant proportion of new HIV infections (39.4%), highlighting their heightened risk due to factors such as early sexual activity, exploitation, and substance use. Men face increasing mental health challenges linked to economic pressure, unemployment, and shifting gender roles, yet continue to underutilize available services due to stigma and limited specialized care. Older persons and PWDs face additional barriers including mobility constraints, long travel distances, limited assistive services, and inadequate long-term care support, despite an estimated 23,127 PWDs in the county. Across the health system, structural constraints, including shortages of skilled health workers, inadequate supplies, and limited specialized services, further weaken service delivery, particularly in rural areas. These challenges are compounded by poverty, gender norms, stigma, and weak integration of preventive and psychosocial health services.

f) Unpaid Care Work

Women and girls in Nyandarua County disproportionately bear the burden of unpaid care and domestic work, which remains a key but often invisible driver of gender inequality. This includes childcare, household management (such as cooking, cleaning, and collecting water and firewood), and caring for sick, elderly, and persons with disabilities. In addition, many women also engage in informal community care roles through church groups, women's groups, and informal support networks. These responsibilities are typically performed alongside income-generating activities, particularly in agriculture and informal trade, creating a constant strain on time and energy.

Despite slight shifts in gender roles, care work remains largely feminised. Cultural expectations continue to position men primarily as providers, limiting their involvement in domestic and caregiving duties. As a result, women experience a dual burden of productive and reproductive roles, while girls are frequently engaged in household chores that interfere with their schooling, rest, and study time. Boys, on the other hand, are less involved in routine domestic work, reinforcing traditional gender socialisation patterns. This unequal distribution of care responsibilities has significant implications for women's economic empowerment. It limits time available for formal employment, entrepreneurship, skills development, and participation in leadership or community decision-making spaces. It also contributes to reduced productivity due to time poverty and fatigue, while reinforcing reliance on low-return informal activities as women attempt to balance competing demands. The burden is further intensified by poverty, limited access to affordable childcare or domestic support services, and household instability linked to unemployment, alcohol and substance abuse, and male migration. In some cases, caregiving responsibilities extend to child-headed or grandparent-headed households, where older women often assume full responsibility for grandchildren due to parental absence or neglect.

Unpaid care work therefore remains a structural barrier to inclusive development in Nyandarua County, requiring targeted interventions such as care-sensitive policies, investment in community support systems, and the promotion of more equitable sharing of domestic responsibilities.

g) Changing Gender Roles

Nyandarua County is undergoing significant socio-economic and cultural changes that are reshaping traditional gender roles and family dynamics. Factors such as economic hardship, unemployment, migration, urbanisation, and expanding educational and livelihood opportunities have increasingly led to women taking up roles traditionally associated with men, including becoming primary or equal breadwinners. Many women are now actively engaged in agriculture, entrepreneurship, small-scale trade, and informal employment to sustain household livelihoods. While this shift reflects progress in women's economic participation and decision-making power, it has also resulted in a heavier overall workload for women, as they continue to shoulder the majority of unpaid domestic responsibilities such as childcare, caregiving, food preparation, and household management. This "dual burden" often limits their time for rest, education, leadership, and personal development.

Despite these evolving economic realities, many households still retain traditional expectations that men remain primary providers and decision-makers. The gap between these expectations and current economic conditions has contributed to role conflict and household tensions. In some cases, where men face unemployment, reduced income, or social pressures, this has led to stress, reduced sense of identity, resistance to changing gender roles, and, at times, increased domestic conflict, family instability, and vulnerability to substance use. At the same time, these shifts have also created space for gradual positive change. Some households are increasingly embracing shared responsibilities, more flexible gender roles, and greater involvement of men in caregiving and domestic work. Younger generations in particular appear more open to equitable partnerships within families.

h) Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Mental health challenges and substance abuse in Nyandarua County are a growing and interconnected social and public health concern affecting all population groups, but with distinct gender and age dimensions. The burden is largely driven by unemployment, economic hardship, changing household roles, family conflict, weak support systems, and cultural expectations that discourage emotional expression, particularly among men. These conditions have contributed to rising levels of stress, depression, anxiety, emotional distress, and in some cases suicide risk, alongside increasing reliance on alcohol and drugs as coping mechanisms. Across communities, mental health challenges are manifested through depression, chronic stress, social withdrawal, trauma linked to gender-based violence and poverty, and increasing cases of suicide ideation, especially among men. Substance and alcohol abuse both contribute to and exacerbate these conditions, with widespread availability of cheap and often illicit alcohol further worsening the situation. Youth are increasingly exposed to drugs and alcohol, while older persons and caregivers

of vulnerable groups experience isolation and secondary psychological stress due to limited support systems.

The situation is further worsened by significant service delivery gaps, including a shortage of mental health professionals, limited psychosocial counselling services, weak integration of mental health into primary healthcare, stigma around mental illness, and inadequate community-based prevention and rehabilitation programmes. These gaps reduce access to timely care and discourage help-seeking behaviour. Alcohol and substance abuse remain a major driver of both mental health challenges and broader social and economic instability. A high prevalence of unregulated alcohol trade has increased access to illicit brews, contributing to widespread misuse. Men are disproportionately affected, with alcohol use linked to poor mental health, reduced productivity, family neglect, and increased household vulnerability. Women and girls, while less likely to consume alcohol, bear significant indirect burdens, including economic strain, caregiving responsibilities, and heightened exposure to sexual and gender-based violence, exploitation, and HIV risk in contexts of intoxication. Boys and girls are also increasingly exposed to early substance use, contributing to school dropout, risky behaviours, and reduced future economic opportunities.

The impacts are wide-ranging, including increased domestic violence, weakened family cohesion, reduced productivity, school dropout, and rising insecurity and social disorder. Emerging concerns include growing mental health distress among men linked to identity and economic pressures, increasing adolescent substance use, and rising mental health needs among older persons experiencing isolation and dependency.

i) Youth Vulnerability

Adolescents and young people in Nyandarua County experience multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities that affect their education, health, protection, and future livelihood opportunities. While they remain a highly energetic and aspirational group, they are also exposed to significant social, economic, and environmental risks.

School dropout and irregular attendance are key challenges, with boys particularly affected as many are drawn into casual labour such as farming, potato harvesting, dairy work, construction, and *boda boda* operations due to household economic pressures. This engagement in income-generating activities often compromises their schooling and limits future employment prospects.

Girls face different but equally serious risks, including teenage pregnancy, early marriage, and sexual exploitation, all of which contribute to school dropout and disrupted learning. Economic vulnerability further increases their exposure to transactional relationships, especially where household support is limited and protection systems are weak. Across both boys and girls, substance and alcohol abuse is an increasing concern. Exposure to alcohol and drugs such as cannabis (bhang) is linked to peer pressure, lack of supervision, and community influences, including certain social gatherings. This negatively affects academic performance, behaviour, and decision-making.

The findings also point to significant gaps in mentorship, guidance, and psychosocial support. Many adolescents lack access to safe spaces, counselling services, life skills training, and positive role models, which weakens resilience and contributes to risky behaviours. In addition, youth face protection challenges, including weak reporting and response mechanisms for abuse, limited adolescent-friendly health services, and stigma that discourages disclosure of violence or exploitation. Despite these challenges, young people in the county continue to demonstrate strong aspirations in fields such as engineering, health, agriculture, sports, entrepreneurship, and leadership. However, limited access to quality education, skills development, and talent nurturing opportunities constrains their ability to realise these ambitions.

j) Persons With Disabilities (PWDs)

Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Nyandarua County continue to face deep and intersecting forms of exclusion in social, economic, and governance spaces, despite the existence of supportive legal and policy frameworks. This exclusion is driven by both structural barriers and negative attitudes, limiting their full participation in development and access to public services. A major challenge is limited access to employment and economic opportunities. PWDs frequently encounter discrimination during recruitment, where their competence is questioned regardless of qualifications. Even when employed, they are often underpaid or placed in poor working conditions. Access to government empowerment funds and business support is also constrained by complex procedures and limited targeted support, while affirmative action measures such as the 5% employment quota are weakly enforced. As a result, many PWDs remain economically dependent despite their potential to contribute productively.

In addition, PWDs face significant barriers in accessing essential services and infrastructure. Many public buildings, health facilities, and transport systems are not disability-friendly, lacking ramps, assistive technologies, and accessible communication systems. Government offices are often perceived as unresponsive, while information on available services such as tax reliefs and empowerment programs is poorly disseminated, further limiting access. Administrative and certification processes also present major challenges. Disability assessment and certification procedures are often lengthy, repetitive, and, in some cases, burdensome even for individuals with permanent conditions. Delays in processing benefits and grants are common, sometimes taking over a year, and procedures for accessing entitlements are not clearly communicated, discouraging engagement with public systems.

Representation and participation in governance remain limited. PWDs are underrepresented in decision-making structures, and selection of representatives is often viewed as non-transparent. Weak communication between county disability offices and grassroots groups, inaccessible public participation forums, and fear of victimization further restrict meaningful engagement in governance processes. Social stigma and discrimination continue to reinforce exclusion. Negative cultural beliefs associate disability with curses or misfortune, leading to ridicule, isolation, and in

some cases families hiding members with disabilities. These experiences contribute to low self-esteem and reduced participation in community life, despite gradual improvements in awareness.

PWDs are also highly vulnerable to gender-based violence and abuse, particularly women and girls. Cases of sexual exploitation, incest, and psychological abuse are often underreported due to stigma, dependency, and weak reporting systems. Limited access to disability-responsive justice and survivor support services further compounds their vulnerability. Although relevant policies and affirmative action measures exist, implementation gaps remain significant. Enforcement of employment quotas is inconsistent, disability inclusion is not fully mainstreamed across county departments, and specialized services such as rehabilitation and inclusive education remain limited and costly. Coordination between national and county structures is also weak, undermining effective service delivery.

k) Policy Implementation

Weak institutional coordination and limited policy implementation capacity emerged as key structural challenges undermining the effectiveness of gender and social inclusion interventions in Nyandarua County. Findings from FGDs and KIIs show that coordination among key actors, County departments, National Government agencies, law enforcement, health institutions, and civil society organizations, remains fragmented. Although many stakeholders are engaged in gender-related programming, their efforts are often implemented in isolation. This has led to duplication of activities, uneven service coverage, and weak synergy in addressing gender and inclusion issues. Coordination platforms such as the Gender Sector Working Group exist but are constrained by limited funding, irregular meetings, and weak follow-up on agreed actions. Additionally, the absence of a strong, well-resourced intergovernmental coordination framework linking the County Commissioner's office, the County Gender Office, and sectoral departments further weakens collaboration.

Despite the existence of national and draft county gender policy frameworks, implementation at the county level remains inconsistent. Gender mainstreaming is not yet fully institutionalized across departments and is often treated as a project-based activity rather than being integrated into routine planning, budgeting, and service delivery. As a result, gender priorities are not consistently reflected in sectorial plans and annual budgets, limiting their operational impact. Implementation is further constrained by inadequate financing and limited human resource capacity. Budget allocations for gender, GBV, disability inclusion, and mental health programmes are insufficient, restricting outreach, monitoring, and sustainability of interventions. In addition, there is a shortage of specialized personnel in key areas such as gender and social development programming, mental health and psychosocial support, disability inclusion, and GBV case management, which weakens service delivery and response systems at community level.

Weak monitoring, accountability, and data systems also undermine progress. The limited use of gender-disaggregated data affects planning and decision-making, while weak performance tracking reduces accountability for gender-related commitments across departments. This

contributes to slow implementation of policies and weak enforcement of affirmative action measures for women, youth, and persons with disabilities. At community level, limited public awareness and institutional visibility further constrain access to services. Many residents are unaware of available support systems, particularly for GBV response, disability inclusion, and psychosocial support. Gender and social inclusion offices are often perceived as under-resourced or difficult to access, reducing their effectiveness and utilization.

The cumulative effect of these challenges is persistent gaps in service delivery and inclusion outcomes, including continued high levels of GBV with weak survivor support systems, limited economic empowerment for women, youth, and PWDs, inadequate mental health services, uneven access to justice, health, and education, and slow progress in addressing harmful social norms.

1) Social Norm Transformation

Harmful cultural practices and deeply rooted social norms continue to shape gender relations and social inclusion outcomes in Nyandarua County, even though gradual positive change is emerging, particularly among younger generations and some community actors. Despite being widely condemned and, in some cases, illegal, certain harmful practices persist, often in hidden or evolving forms. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is still reported in some communities through secret arrangements and informal networks, making enforcement difficult. Harmful initiation practices for boys sometimes expose adolescents to risky behaviours and reinforce dominance-based masculinity. The increasing monetization of dowry has also contributed to transactional perceptions of marriage, reinforcing inequality and occasionally fueling domestic tensions and gender-based violence. In addition, inheritance disputes remain common, with women, especially widows and older women, sometimes excluded or disadvantaged in land and property succession processes, increasing their economic vulnerability.

Patriarchal beliefs remain strongly embedded in community life. Men are still largely regarded as primary decision-makers and household heads, even where women make significant economic contributions. Women continue to bear the bulk of domestic and caregiving responsibilities, including when they are engaged in income-generating work. At the same time, rigid masculinity norms discourage emotional expression among men, contributing to mental health challenges and delayed help-seeking. These stereotypes also continue to shape access to education, career choices, and leadership opportunities.

Certain beliefs and perceptions further reinforce exclusion and inequality. Disability is in some contexts still associated with misfortune or spiritual causes, contributing to stigma and marginalization of persons with disabilities. In some communities, women's empowerment is misinterpreted as a threat to male authority, generating resistance and social tension. Additionally, some cultural and religious interpretations continue to reinforce unequal gender roles and, in certain cases, normalise domestic violence or male dominance in households.

Traditional governance systems such as councils of elders (*kiama*) continue to play a role in dispute resolution and cultural guidance. However, their influence is gradually declining due to the growing role of formal justice systems. In some cases, informal mechanisms are still preferred, particularly in handling gender-based violence cases, which can limit accountability and survivor protection. These structures, therefore, play a dual role, supporting mediation in some instances while also, at times, perpetuating harmful norms.

Despite these challenges, important shifts are underway. There is increasing acceptance of women's participation in economic activities and leadership roles, alongside growing awareness of gender equality and human rights, especially among young people. Community dialogues, media, and faith-based organisations are increasingly promoting positive masculinity, family cohesion, and rejection of harmful practices. There are also signs of improved recognition of women's inheritance rights in some areas, reflecting gradual but meaningful socio-cultural change.

The persistence of these norms continues to reinforce gender inequality, increase vulnerability to gender-based violence, and perpetuate exclusion of women, girls, persons with disabilities, and children. It also contributes to intergenerational transmission of harmful attitudes, resistance to gender reforms, and weak enforcement of legal protections where cultural justification is invoked.

m) Intersex Persons

Globally, the UN Free & Equal Campaign survey conducted by a researcher Anne Fausto-Sterling, estimated that between 1.7 and 3.0 percent of the global population is intersex. The 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census established indicative figures on existence of Intersex person in Kenya at 0.03% of the current population where 1,524 intersex persons were registered. The results further pointed that all 47 counties recorded at least 2 intersex persons with Nyandarua County recording 20 intersex persons. Discussions with the chairperson of the Association of Intersex Persons in Kenya, highlighted challenges faced by intersex persons including; delay in aligning policies with the law recognizing intersex persons, stigma, discrimination and rejection in the society, lack of inclusive education and employment opportunities, lack of safety due to threats, intimidation and violence towards both the intersex or intimate partner violence for mothers with children who are intersex, fear, Shame resulting to Mental health concerns, invasive and unnecessary surgeries and medical procedures which are not well researched such as infant genital mutilation and infanticide for intersex babies in some communities and high cost of medical tests and procedures. Limitations within correctional facilities and public institutions that currently recognize only male and female categories remains a key challenge for Intersex persons.

n) Access to Essential Services

Access to essential services, including education, healthcare, and justice, remains a persistent structural challenge in Nyandarua County, disproportionately affecting women, men, youth, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), and older persons. Although various national and county-level

initiatives have been introduced to improve service delivery, significant barriers continue to limit equitable access and quality of services, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach areas.

i. Access to Education Services

Access to education is constrained by both economic and infrastructural factors. Households continue to struggle with rising costs associated with schooling, including school fees, learning materials, transport, and digital learning requirements. In addition, inadequate school infrastructure, such as insufficient classrooms, water and sanitation facilities, and learning resources, negatively affects retention and learning outcomes.

Key challenges include:

1. Long distances to schools, particularly for learners in rural areas, increase dropout risks and expose them to safety concerns.
2. Inadequate teaching and learning resources, including a shortage of teachers, books, and ICT equipment.
3. Poor school infrastructure, including limited access to electricity and safe water.
4. Inadequate sanitation facilities, particularly affecting girls and learners with disabilities.
5. Child labour and household economic demands contribute to absenteeism and dropout, especially among boys.
6. Teenage pregnancy and early marriage are affecting girls' school completion rates.

These challenges collectively undermine equitable access to quality education and contribute to persistent disparities in educational attainment.

ii. Access to Health Services

While access to basic healthcare services has improved through initiatives such as the Social Health Authority (SHA), significant gaps remain in service availability, affordability, and quality, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

Key barriers include:

1. High cost of healthcare services, including maternity care, chronic illness management, and specialized treatment.
2. Inadequate staffing and shortages of medical personnel, particularly in mental health and specialized care.
3. Limited availability of essential medicines and medical supplies in public facilities.
4. Weak access to reproductive health services, particularly for adolescents and women in rural communities.
5. Inadequate mental health services and psychosocial support, despite rising cases of stress, depression, substance abuse, and suicide risk.
7. Poor accessibility of health facilities for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

Additionally, stigma and lack of awareness continue to prevent timely health-seeking behaviour, especially among men and adolescents.

iii. Access to Justice and Protection Services

Access to justice remains constrained by structural, economic, and social barriers that limit survivors' ability to report and pursue cases, particularly those involving gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection.

Key challenges include:

1. High cost of legal services and limited availability of legal aid.
2. Long distances to police stations and courts, especially in rural areas.
3. Inconsistent handling of GBV cases and reliance on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), which often leads to under-prosecution of offenders.
4. Weak survivor support systems, including limited availability of safe houses and rescue centres.
5. Fear of stigma, retaliation, and social exclusion discouraging reporting of violence.
6. Limited awareness of legal rights and available protection mechanisms among vulnerable populations.

For PWDs, access to justice is further hindered by communication barriers, inaccessible facilities, and limited disability-sensitive service provision.

iv. Cross-Cutting Barriers to Access to Service

Across all sectors, several common constraints were identified:

1. Geographical barriers: long distances to service delivery points, particularly affecting rural populations.
2. Economic constraints: poverty limiting the ability to afford services such as healthcare, education, and legal support.
3. Infrastructure limitations: lack of disability-friendly facilities, poor road networks, and inadequate public utilities.
4. Information gaps: low awareness of available government programmes, entitlements, and service locations.
5. Institutional inefficiencies: weak coordination, understaffing, and delayed service delivery.
6. Social and cultural barriers: stigma, discrimination, and harmful norms discouraging service uptake, particularly among PWDs, women, and men seeking mental health or GBV services.

v. Overall Implication

The limited access to essential services reinforces cycles of poverty, inequality, and vulnerability across population groups. It disproportionately affects already marginalized communities and undermines the effectiveness of county and national development programmes. Addressing these barriers requires integrated service delivery, improved infrastructure, strengthened institutional coordination, and targeted interventions for vulnerable groups.

DRAFT

CHAPTER 3

3.0. PRIORITY THEMATIC AREAS

3.1. Economic empowerment and equality

Data from the situational analysis highlights persistent economic inequality in Nyandarua County, driven largely by gender disparities, structural exclusion, and unequal access to resources and opportunities. High unemployment affecting all groups with the youth taking the full brunt of lack of jobs. It was evident from a number of FGDs that the women were left as primary caregivers of not only their grown children who were adults with their own children but also of the grandchildren due to either neglect by the parents who resorted into alcoholism and sex work or because of desperation and despair among the youth due to unemployment. It was a huge burden to the women and female youths due to their lack of reliable income source yet a big family to singlehandedly take care of. The data pointed at a greater engagement of women in the informal sectors without access to ownership of key economic resources such as land which becomes a barrier to their economic growth. This is due to gender norms and power dynamics where men are regarded as the owners, custodians and controllers of assets and household income. The issue of unpaid care work emerged as a great concern where women were overburdened by doing both home care work and income generation which was not only exhausting but unfair driven by patriarchal system which foster gender inequality.

PLWDs and intersex persons are seriously excluded from employment and economic activities opportunities despite their demonstrated skills. Access to important documents from the required regular physical assessment was a key barrier to access services and opportunities designated for PWDs. PLWDs reported to find it absurd to subject PWDs with permanent disabilities to regular assessments yet it was established that their disability was permanent. Access to job opportunities was reported to be a great challenge in almost all formal and informal sectors where women who reported that sexual exploitation and harassment by the people in charge of allocating work was actually normalized. Lack of safe and reliable sexual exploitation and harassment reporting mechanisms was a great challenge.

Further, the data demonstrates that economic inequality in Nyandarua County was deeply interconnected with gender norms, unequal resource distribution, social exclusion, and systemic barriers that disproportionately affect women and other vulnerable groups. The aim of this thematic area is to empower women, men and persons of interest groups to have access to and control over economic opportunities and resources including eliminating discrimination in access to employment, promotion and training including equal remuneration to enhance income security for all genders. Key action areas under this thematic areas include;

- Design interventions to address household dynamics and increased care burdens on women.

- Address Economic exclusion and exploitation of vulnerable and marginalized groups including women by removing barriers to accessing economic opportunities, government support, access to productive assets, property ownership, financial services, and credit.
- Promote and strengthen enforcement and implementation of existing disability accessibility laws and standards.
- Ensure farmers with special vulnerabilities and gender intersectionality are included in the distribution of farm inputs, support, training, and market access.
- Increase and strengthen access to credit opportunities for women and all other special interest groups through affirmative action initiatives;
- Establish a database on employment records of women and men with special consideration of intersectionality and vulnerabilities, in formal and informal sectors to track, evaluate and improve employment conditions for all.
- Review skills development programs and projects and target them at increasing decent employment for all particularly women.
- Enhance extension services and avail agricultural information and appropriate technologies to particularly benefit vulnerable women in agricultural practices;
- Facilitate and enhance adoption of engendered climate processes, smart inputs and out markets, to ensure that agricultural and other livelihood practices are climate resilient including enhancing women's participation in fisheries sector.
- Promote women and marginalized groups participation in climate-smart agriculture.
- Support and ensure involvement of both men and women, boys and girls in sustainable natural resource management.
- Promote civic education on gender equality towards building capacities of all gender's entrepreneurial skills, access to credit and start-up capital, and a healthy gender power balance, relationships and mutual respect and appreciation.
- Address the barriers rural populations face in accessing reporting, referral, and support services for GBV due to distance and limited infrastructure.
- Promote financial literacy, entrepreneurship development, and economic empowerment initiatives for men, women and youth.
- Promote the need to strengthen linkages between economic empowerment programmes and existing youth, men's and women's enterprise funds and expand these to include intersex persons and other vulnerable groups.

3.2. Leadership and representation

The collected data pointed that despite constitutional and policy provisions promoting equality and participation, a lot more needs to be done in the Leadership and decision-making structures in Nyandarua County. Women, youth, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and other vulnerable groups were reported to experience underrepresentation in elective, administrative, and community leadership spaces with women being significantly underrepresented in political leadership. Deep-rooted cultural and social norms continue to drive the perception of leadership as a male domain,

limiting women's influence in formal governance and decision-making processes. The actions under this thematic area will focus on Ensuring equitable and meaningful participation and representation of women and men in governance, power and decision-making positions. Key action areas under this thematic area include;

- Strengthen strategies to ensure equality in representation in elective, administrative and community leadership spaces. This can be achieved through enhancing compliance to the “not more than two thirds” gender principle in recruitment, appointment and promotion of women and men in all spheres for greater inclusion and visibility in the County.
- Expand participation of women and other vulnerable groups including PWDs and older persons in forums and processes and emerging development and innovation opportunities.
- Strengthen initiative to build leadership capacity for women, men and all groups including vulnerable groups.
- Support and encourage active and meaningful participation of both men and women in all groups including the older persons in political and decision-making processes from the grassroots level.
- Support effective collaboration of state and non-state actors to build the capacity of women to participate and engage in competitive politics, leadership and governance.
- Dedicate resources in the county budget for effective delivery county Department for Gender Affairs mandate.
- Promote equitable representation of women in appointive and decision-making positions.
- Encourage collaboration with and between civil society groups supportive of gender equity, equality, and justice so as to effectively address any gaps in the implementation of gender equity, equality, and justice agenda.

3.3. Gender Based Violence

The situational analysis report showed that Gender-Based Violence (GBV) remains a widespread and deeply rooted challenge in Nyandarua County, affecting women, men, children, older persons, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) through various forms including domestic violence, sexual abuse, emotional and psychological abuse, economic violence, and neglect. Women and girls experience high levels of intimate partner violence, sexual exploitation, and early pregnancies, while children face defilement, incest, neglect, and unsafe environments. PWDs and older persons are particularly vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and barriers in accessing justice and support services. The persistence of GBV is driven by interconnected socio-economic and cultural factors such as alcohol and substance abuse, unemployment, harmful gender norms, weakening family structures, unsafe living conditions, and inadequate child protection systems. Emerging concerns include increasing cases of incest, teenage pregnancies, school dropouts, mental health challenges, and risky behaviours among adolescents linked to peer influence and substance abuse.

Despite the existence of institutional response mechanisms, GBV response systems in the county remain fragmented, under-resourced, and hindered by widespread underreporting due to stigma,

fear, victim-blaming, financial barriers, and limited trust in formal justice systems. Survivors often rely on informal dispute resolution processes, weakening accountability and access to justice. Existing challenges include inadequate safe houses and one-stop centres, weak referral and coordination systems, limited psychosocial and rehabilitation services, and insufficient capacity among frontline responders. Key priorities identified for addressing GBV include strengthening survivor-centred services, improving reporting and referral systems, enhancing enforcement of laws, addressing alcohol and substance abuse, promoting positive masculinities, strengthening school and community protection systems, and improving coordination, financing, and data management for effective GBV prevention and response. The aim of actions under this thematic area will be to eliminate all forms of gender based violence with more attention to sexual violence (SGBV) against women and men, girls and boys in both public and private spheres.

Action areas under this thematic area include;

- Strengthening GBV prevention programs at community level including promoting positive and healthy gender relations and power dynamics.
- Establish an effective and appropriate GBV and sexual exploitation and harassment reporting mechanism starting from community or village level to sector level including a 24 hour free toll call line targeting both formal and informal sectors. The reporting mechanism must take into consideration the special needs of PWDs, older persons, children and adolescents and young women and men.
- Strengthen GBV emergency response, recovery centers/safe spaces and establish one stop centres in hospitals and healthcare facilities.
- Capacity building for law enforcement, judicial services workers, health workers, community leaders and community members' representatives on GBV response. Some of the trained actors can be further trained as paralegals to strengthen access to justice and rights for all. This will also address the concern of addressing criminal gender based violence and sexual offences through alternative community dispute mechanisms which undermines access to justice for the survivors and retribution to perpetrators.
- Strengthen multi stakeholder coordination to prevent and respond to SGBV and ensure good feedback loops information sharing and development of joint strategies.
- Ensure enforcement of SGBV related policies.
- Promote advocacy and education programs with a view to changing attitudes and culture that contributes to the acceptance and tolerance of SGBV.
- Develop and strengthen the capacity of relevant institutions to undertake effective and timely investigations and prosecution of SGBV related offences.
- Undertake research to identify underlying and systemic causes of SGBV and provide appropriate response measures for mitigation; and,
- Promote male involvement in preventing, responding and managing of SGBV cases.
- Promote the concept of positive masculinity and promote positive male engagement in advancing gender equality and social well-being.

- Increase awareness on GBV reporting mechanisms to reduce stigma and fear for reporting GBV.
- Strengthen data and reporting systems at all levels for accurate statistics and trends on GBV.

3.4. Education and Skills Development

Findings from the FGDs and KIIs pointed a number of gaps which the gender policy must address. Teenage pregnancy, early and forced marriages, poverty, and heavy domestic responsibilities were found to be among the key drivers to school dropout cases among girls in Nyandarua, while child labour into agriculture, *boda boda* transport, construction work, and other informal income-generating activities were the drivers for boys dropping out of school. This thematic area seeks to address this and other issues aiming to promote equitable access to quality, inclusive, and gender-responsive education and training opportunities for women, men, girls, boys, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), youth, and other vulnerable groups in Nyandarua County. This will focus on ensuring equal access to education and technical and vocational training and address structural barriers that limit educational attainment and economic participation. It further seeks to strengthen literacy, digital skills, vocational competencies, leadership development, and entrepreneurship opportunities while promoting safe and inclusive learning environments that empower all individuals to participate meaningfully in social, economic, and political development. Key actions will include;

- Promote retention of girls and boys in schools by addressing gender specific factors that drive dropping out of school. A good example is child labour in the timber sector which was reported to be keeping boys from school in some parts of Nyandarua.
- Promote safe and inclusive education for all intersex persons by promoting better safe school environments through creating awareness in schools and education duty bearers.
- Enhance sexual and reproductive health education, messaging and awareness among adolescents and youth.
- Prioritize education, awareness, support and management for alcohol and substance abuse among pupils and students at all levels.
- Support menstrual hygiene and management by ensuring girls and households have access to sanitary towels and disposal facilities in public institutions.
- Support development of disability-friendly infrastructure in educational institutions to improve access. This should include installation of ramps, disability-friendly sanitation units and learning equipment and furniture.
- Support delivery of vocational training for youth and women
- Support girls to improve involvement and participation in STEM subjects to address low uptake.
- Promote age-appropriate gender education beginning in early childhood to address harmful stereotypes and discriminatory gender norms.

- Integrate gender equality, gender-based violence prevention, and positive socialization approaches into teacher training programmes.
- Promote equitable sharing of caregiving and household responsibilities among men and women.
- Promote the development of age-appropriate sexuality education and reproductive health information for children and adolescents.
- Promote positive value systems, patriotism, respect, responsibility, and citizenship among children and youth.

3.5. Health and Wellness

Under this pillar, the gender policy will focus on facilitating equality to affordable, accessible, and acceptable and quality health care for women and men, girls and boys. Quality health care needs to be approached from a broader perspective touching on all aspects of health including primary health care, sexual and reproductive health services and mental health.

- Increase investment towards health infrastructure, human resource and innovations to address low access to quality health care services with specific attention to improving facilities infrastructure for PWDs.
- Ensure standards for medical procedures, tests and investigations are in place to protect intersex persons especially children from unnecessary and harmful corrective surgeries such as infant genital mutilation, and other medical procedures that affect their health in their lifetime.
- Improve maternal and child health services with increased efforts towards eliminating maternal mortality and HIV infections among infants.
- Increase access to reproductive health information and services targeting both women and men with intersectionality and vulnerability into perspective.
- Promote sexual and reproductive health and rights among adolescents' girls and young women to address teenage pregnancies and other SRH issues including special attention to the high and alarming rates of HIV infection among women.
- Enforce targeted implementation of existing health and nutrition programs to benefit vulnerable children in ECDE centres.

3.6. Mental Health and Psychosocial wellbeing

The data agreed with recent trends and statistics that indicate an alarming increase in mental health crisis through increased stress, depression that lead to high rates of suicide especially among men. The mental health crisis driven by factors such as economic pressure was also reported to be a cause of the increased GBV, intimate partner violence and femicide cases. The data indicated a severe shortage of mental health support services in the county, with men in the FGD reporting

that they were not aware of any facility in their location they would go to when they needed mental health services. Further, substance and alcohol abuse were reported to be a major problem affecting both men and women, boys and girls with men being mostly affected.

- Provide access to psychosocial support and mental health services for intersex persons to navigate life challenges and the realities of living intersex, and psychosocial needs of their parents and caregivers.
- Strengthen and expand mental health awareness and support services with specific approaches and focus to address high mental disorders and issues among men.
- Address the allocation of adequate resources for mental health promotion, prevention, treatment, and referral services.
- Address the increasing prevalence of mental health challenges among men and boys, including high rates of suicide and self-destructive behaviours.
- Promote awareness of available mental health services and help-seeking pathways, particularly targeting men and youth.
- Leverage the Community Health Promoters (CHPs) and community-based structures to increase access to mental health information and services.
- Address the impact of parental mental health challenges on child development and family wellbeing.

3.7. Gender and Social Protection and Inclusion

Under this thematic area, the gender policy seeks to promote equitable access to social services, economic opportunities, and protection mechanisms for all residents, particularly women, children, youth, older persons, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), Intersex persons and other vulnerable and marginalized groups. The policy aims to strengthen inclusive social protection systems that address poverty, economic vulnerability, discrimination, exclusion, and exposure to violence and exploitation, while enhancing access to healthcare, education, justice, psychosocial support, and livelihood opportunities. It further prioritizes the removal of structural, cultural, and institutional barriers that hinder meaningful participation and equal access to development resources, with a focus on promoting dignity, resilience, safety, and social equity across all sectors of society. Key action areas include;

- Review and enforce implementation of appropriate social protection systems and measures to ensure that all women and men, girls and boys in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services.
- Invest in capacity building for law enforcers, adminisrtaion, correctional officers and the justice sector personnel on ensuring the human rights and dignity of intersex persons are

upheld and protected including aligning their institutional facilities with the recognition of Intersex persons by law.

- Strengthen access to social protection programmes for women, youth, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), intersex persons, older persons, children, and other vulnerable groups through targeted outreach and simplified registration processes.
- Strengthen community-based child protection, elderly care, and disability support systems to prevent neglect, abuse, exploitation, and social exclusion.
- Enhance access to assistive devices, accessible infrastructure, and inclusive public services for PWDs in line with disability inclusion standards.
- Strengthen enforcement of policies and laws protecting vulnerable groups from discrimination, exploitation, violence, and economic abuse.
- Promote the need to establish adolescent, youth, and women-friendly service centres.
- Advocate for the need to strengthen privacy and confidentiality mechanisms in public service points, including Huduma Centres.
- Improve access to reporting, referral, counselling, and support services, particularly for rural populations.
- Promote the need for integrated service delivery and referral systems for gender-related concerns.

3.8. Children

Children are a key thematic area of this Gender Policy, recognizing that gender inequalities often begin early in life and can have lasting effects on opportunities, well-being, and development. The policy seeks to promote the rights, protection, and empowerment of all children, with particular attention to addressing the different needs and vulnerabilities of girls and boys. It aims to ensure equal access to quality education, healthcare, nutrition, social protection, and participation opportunities while eliminating all forms of discrimination, violence, exploitation, neglect, and harmful cultural practices that undermine children's development and dignity.

To achieve these objectives, the policy prioritizes actions that strengthen child protection systems, prevent and respond to gender-based violence against children, promote gender-responsive education and life-skills development, and support positive parenting and caregiving practices. Key action areas include;

- Increasing access to safe and inclusive learning environments and safety of children in all public and private spaces.
- Supporting operationalization of a 24 hour child reporting toll free line, emergency response, rescue and safety.
- Supporting the retention and transition of girls and boys through all levels of education, and ensuring meaningful participation of children in decisions affecting their lives.
- Interventions to increase protection of children during the rights of passage for boys

- Programmes to prevent female genital mutilation and eradicate it completely.
- Address family disintegration and its contribution to children's vulnerability, exploitation, abuse, and neglect.
- Promote the need to strengthen parental guidance and positive parenting programmes, including consideration of adapting the Kenya National Positive Parenting Programme at the county level.
- Advocate for child rescue centres within Nyandarua County to support children requiring protection and emergency care.
- Promote strengthening of collaborations with probation hostels, remand homes, children's courts, and child protection institutions.
- Include interventions addressing children born and raised within correctional environments and their welfare needs.
- Address initiation into substance use among children and adolescents through prevention and awareness programmes.
- Address harmful teachings and practices associated with some initiation rites, particularly those that reinforce gender inequality, violence, or harmful masculinities.
- Promote the need to engage cultural leaders, religious institutions, parents, and community structures in reforming initiation programmes.
- Promote positive and values-based initiation programmes for both boys and girls.
- Promote the need to explore alternative models for rites of passage that reinforce positive values, leadership, responsibility, and gender equality.

CHAPTER 4

4.0. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The implementation of this policy will be coordinated through a multi-sectoral institutional framework that promotes accountability, participation, and effective service delivery across all levels of county governance. The Nyandarua County Government County Executive Committee will provide overall policy leadership, strategic direction, and resource mobilization to ensure that gender equality and social inclusion are mainstreamed in county planning, budgeting, and development programmes. The County Executive Committee will also ensure that all county departments align their mandates and activities with the objectives of this policy.

The Nyandarua County Assembly County Assembly will play a critical role in enacting supportive legislation, approving budgets, and exercising oversight to ensure effective implementation of gender-responsive programmes and compliance with constitutional and statutory obligations on equality and non-discrimination. The Assembly will further advocate for inclusive governance and monitor the performance of county institutions in promoting gender equity and protecting the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups.

It will be noble to establish the Directorate of Gender with adequate authority and resources as the lead coordinating institution for the implementation of the Gender Policy. The Nyandarua County Department of Gender, Youth, and Social Services will serve as the lead implementing department responsible for coordinating, supervising, and monitoring the implementation of this policy. The department will facilitate capacity building, community awareness, stakeholder engagement, data collection, and reporting on gender-related interventions across the county. It will also work closely with other county departments to integrate gender considerations into sector plans, programmes, and service delivery mechanisms.

Implementation of the policy will further rely on strong partnerships and collaboration with non-state actors, including civil society organizations, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, development partners, academic institutions, and the private sector. These stakeholders will contribute through advocacy, technical support, resource mobilization, research, community outreach, and program implementation aimed at advancing gender equality and socio-economic empowerment within the county. Collaborative approaches will strengthen community ownership, enhance accountability, and promote sustainable and inclusive development outcomes.

CHAPTER 5

5.0. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The implementation of the Nyandarua County Government Gender Policy will be guided by a comprehensive, coordinated, and results-oriented approach aimed at promoting gender equality, social inclusion, and equitable development across all sectors of the county. The county government will ensure that gender concerns are mainstreamed into all county development plans, policies, programmes, and budgeting processes to guarantee that the needs and priorities of women, men, youth, persons with disabilities, intersex, older persons, and marginalized groups are adequately addressed. Gender integration will be incorporated within the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), Annual Development Plans, sector strategies, and performance management frameworks to ensure that development interventions contribute to inclusive and sustainable socio-economic growth. All county departments and agencies will be required to develop annual gender-responsive action plans aligned with the objectives and priorities of this policy. These action plans will provide clear implementation frameworks outlining specific activities, targets, timelines, responsibilities, indicators, and budgetary allocations necessary for achieving gender equality outcomes within each sector. Departments will further be expected to regularly monitor and report on progress made in implementing gender mainstreaming initiatives to enhance accountability, coordination, and evidence-based decision-making across county institutions.

The county government will undertake continuous capacity-building programmes for county staff, public officers, and relevant stakeholders to strengthen institutional capacity for effective gender mainstreaming and responsive service delivery. Training and sensitization initiatives will focus on areas such as gender analysis, gender-responsive budgeting, prevention and response to gender-based violence, inclusive governance, human rights, leadership, and the use of gender-disaggregated data in planning and monitoring. These initiatives will enhance the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for implementing gender-responsive programmes and fostering an inclusive organizational culture within county institutions. The implementation strategy will further prioritize collaboration and partnership with key stakeholders, including national government agencies, development partners, civil society organizations, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, academic institutions, and the private sector. This will include strategies for engaging cultural and religious institutions in addressing harmful social norms and initiation practices.

There will be need to strengthen coordination among community structures including community health promoters, ‘*Nyumba Kumi*’, community leaders and local administration. It will important to explore the opportunity of utilizing available community structures such as Huduma Centres and local administrative structures, while ensuring confidentiality and privacy safeguards. The county will also promote intergrated service delivery approaches for sustainability and efficiency.

These partnerships will support resource mobilization, technical assistance, advocacy, public awareness, research, and community engagement initiatives aimed at advancing gender equality and social inclusion within Nyandarua County. Strengthened stakeholder collaboration will also promote shared responsibility, transparency, innovation, and sustainability in the implementation of gender-responsive programmes and interventions across the county. The below implementation matrix describes the logical framework and process of achieving the milestones under each thematic area of the gender policy.

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GENDER POLICY IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX						
Action	Expected outcome(s)	Indicators	Responsible	Means of verification	Timeline	Assumptions
Approval of the Gender Policy	The gender policy is approved by the County	Gender policy launched and adopted as a County policy document.	County Director in charge of gender and County Gender officer.	Approved and enacted Gender policy	Jul-26	Effective and inclusive coordination in review processes for the final Gender policy.
			County Gender Sector Technical Working Group (CGSWG)			That the County leadership will approve the gender policy within the required time.
Dissemination of the policy	Gender policy is available in both soft and hard copies for distribution to all stakeholders.	# of copies of Gender policy developed and distributed.	County Director in charge of gender	Gender policy Printed copies and distribution list	Continuous	Adequate resources allocated to Gender policy development, distribution and sensitization forums.
	All stakeholders with emphasis on community and vulnerable groups adequately and periodically sensitized on the Gender policy	# and % of stakeholders sensitized on the Gender policy.	County Gender Sector Technical Working Group (CGSWG)	Gender policy sensitization forums reports and periodic status update reports.	Continuous	

Integration of Gender policy into County departments	Mainstreaming of Gender in all county departments	Gender issues intergrated into county department performance frameworks	Department leadership and CGSWG	Departmental performance updates and reports	Continuous	Ownership and prioritization of the gender policy by the departmental heads.
	Each county department to have a gender focal point person.	# and % of departments with gender focal point persons.				
Integration of the Gender policy into County plans and processes (CIDP, annual development plans and sector strategies)	Gender issues and priority actions addressed in county plans and processes (CIDP, annual development plans and sector strategies).	% of funds allocated towards addressing gender issues and priority actions.	Department leadership and CGSWG	CIDP, Annual Dev plans and sector strategies.	5 year cycle and annually.	Ownership and prioritization of the gender policy by the County leadership (Executive and County Assembly)
Regular monitoring of gender policy progress	continuous MEAL of the Gender policy	Sex-dissegragated data collection tools including elements for Intersex persons developed/revised and disseminated for use by all county departments and stakeholders.	Department leadership, CGSWG and County Planning department.	Developed/ revised data collection tools.	Oct-26	There will be adequate financial and technical resources allocated to support performance monitoring and learning of the gender policy.
		A gender dashboard with real time data on GBV cases (reporting, refferal and support services) operationalised and accessed by all County stakeholders.		Gender dashboard	Continuous	
		A periodic county Gender fact sheet published.		Gender fact Sheet	Semi-annual and annual	

		periodic multi-sectoral review forums including community and marginalised groups representation for gender policy performance progress review, learning and accountability.			
		Routine tracking of performance and progress on gender policy thematic areas and key actions.		Annual department /sector reports	
		Documentation, dissemination and adoption of lessons and emerging issues.			
		Collaborative and community-led monitoring (CLM) on the Gender policy implementation.		County and department Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning plans.	Annually
		Monitoring of county progress towards key performance indicators aligned to the SDG Goal 5 indicators.			
		Bench-marking and cross learning from National and other counties.			
Continuous capacity building	Key county duty bearers and relevant officials are continuously trained on gender and gender policy key priority actions.	# and % of county staff continuously trained on gender and gender policy key priority actions.		Annual department /sector reports	Adequate resources allocated to Continuous capacity building.
Collaboration and partnerships	Achievement of gender policy goal and objectives translating to gender equality.	# of partnerships and collaborations formed to strengthen implementation of the Gender policy.			There will be partners from International, national and county level interested in supporting implementation of the Gender policy.

CHAPTER 6

6.0. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

The implementation of this policy will be supported through sustainable and adequate resource mobilization mechanisms aimed at ensuring effective delivery of gender-responsive programmes and interventions across Nyandarua County. The Nyandarua County Government will prioritize the allocation of sufficient financial, technical, and human resources to support the realization of gender equality, social inclusion, and women's empowerment objectives. The county government will adopt and institutionalize gender-responsive budgeting practices to ensure that county planning and budgetary processes address the diverse needs and priorities of women, men, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, intersex and marginalized groups. Gender-responsive budgeting will further promote equitable distribution of public resources and enhance accountability in service delivery.

The county government will allocate resources for gender mainstreaming and gender-specific programmes through annual county budgets, sector plans, and development frameworks. County departments will be encouraged to incorporate gender-responsive allocations within their budgets and implementation plans to support activities related to economic empowerment, prevention of gender-based violence, access to education and health services, leadership development, social protection, and inclusion of vulnerable populations. Adequate funding will also be provided for monitoring, evaluation, research, public awareness campaigns, and institutional capacity building to strengthen implementation of the policy.

The county government will further mobilize additional resources through collaboration and partnerships with development partners, donor agencies, and international organizations that support gender equality and inclusive development initiatives. Such partnerships will facilitate technical assistance, financial support, knowledge exchange, and capacity strengthening programmes aimed at enhancing the impact and sustainability of gender interventions within the county. The county will ensure that all externally supported programmes align with county priorities and national legal and policy frameworks on gender equality and human rights.

The policy will also encourage strategic engagement with the private sector, philanthropic organizations, foundations, and corporate institutions to support gender-responsive initiatives through public-private partnerships, corporate social responsibility programmes, grants, sponsorships, and innovation-driven interventions. Collaboration with these stakeholders will contribute toward expanding economic opportunities, supporting entrepreneurship, strengthening community empowerment programmes, and improving access to services for vulnerable and marginalized groups. Through diversified resource mobilization strategies, the county will enhance sustainability, shared responsibility, and long-term impact in advancing gender equality and inclusive development across the county.

CHAPTER 7

7.0. MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING (MEAL) FRAMEWORK

This section describes the comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) framework that will guide the implementation, tracking, assessment, reporting, and continuous improvement of this Gender Policy. The MEAL framework shall serve as a strategic mechanism for ensuring that gender equality and social inclusion commitments are effectively integrated into county governance, planning, budgeting, legislation, programs, and service delivery. The MEAL framework shall promote evidence-based decision-making, transparency, accountability, learning, and results-oriented governance in advancing gender equality and inclusive development across the County.

The County Government of Nyandarua recognizes that effective implementation of the Gender Policy requires a robust Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) framework. This framework ensures that commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment are systematically tracked, assessed, and reported in alignment with the Constitution of Kenya 2010, Kenya Vision 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), national gender equality frameworks such as the National Gender and Development Policy and the County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs). The MEAL system provides mechanisms for evidence-based decision-making, transparency, and continuous improvement in service delivery. It also guarantees accountability to citizens, particularly women, men, youth, persons with disabilities, intersex and marginalized groups, by ensuring their voices inform policy implementation.

The MEAL framework will also support development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to guide implementation of policy provisions. The MEAL framework shall ensure a participatory approach which will ensure promotion of structured and community-owned participation spaces that enable all population groups including children, young people, PLWD, older persons, intersex persons and other marginalized groups to contribute to issues, share their lived experiences in relation to the gender policy.

Alignment with National and Global Frameworks

The MEAL system shall ensure coherence with:

- **Constitution of Kenya 2010:** Upholding equality and non-discrimination.
- **Public Finance Management Act:** Ensuring prudent and equitable use of public resources.

- **Kenya Vision 2030:** Advancing gender equality as a driver of socio-economic transformation.
- **Sustainable Development Goals:** Particularly Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 10 on reducing inequalities.
- **National Gender Commitments:** Including the Beijing Platform for Action and African Union gender frameworks.

Objectives of the MEAL Framework

- **Policy compliance:** Ensure that gender-responsive programs are implemented in accordance with constitutional and statutory provisions.
- **Performance measurement:** Track progress against set targets and defined indicators for gender equality and inclusion.
- **Accountability mechanisms:** Establish clear lines of responsibility for county departments, agencies, and partners.
- **Learning and adaptation:** Document lessons learned and integrate them into future planning cycles.
- **Citizen engagement:** Promote participatory monitoring that includes community voices, especially women and vulnerable groups.

Monitoring Framework

The monitoring framework of this gender policy shall align with the overall and department specific monitoring system of the Nyandarua County structure with the respective county gender department team leading coordination, implementation and routine tracking of gender-responsive programs, projects, activities, and budget commitments across all county departments and entities. Monitoring of this policy shall be integrated into county planning and performance management systems to ensure continuous assessment of progress and compliance with policy objectives. This will be achieved through ensuring all county departments mainstream gender considerations into their annual work plans, program-based budgets, and performance contracts. Departments shall align the defined and measurable gender indicators into their performance objectives and targets for ownership. For successful monitoring and tracking of progress across all county departments, each county department shall designate a Gender Focal Person responsible for coordinating policy implementation, data collection, reporting, and liaison with the gender department.

Data and information as per the defined gender performance indicators using a sex-disaggregated matrix across all sectors and population groups, will be collected routinely for and analysis. This will ensure utilization of data to support evidence-based planning, budgeting, and decision-making. The gender department with the support of other stakeholders and departments, will be responsible in developing the gender policy monitoring tools including; implementation matrices,

scorecards, progress reports, field assessments, gender audits, budget tracking tools, citizen feedback systems, and departmental performance reviews.

Evaluation Framework

The County Government will conduct periodic evaluations for the Gender Policy and related programs to measure their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and inclusivity. These evaluations will generate objective evidence on progress toward policy goals, guiding reviews, redesigns, and strategic planning. The evaluation framework will include a baseline studies, annual reviews, and mid-term (two and a half years) and end-term (after 5 years) assessments for each cycle of the county integrated development plan (CIDP). Independent evaluations by stakeholders at county and national levels will be encouraged to ensure impartiality and validity of the performance of the gender policy. Findings and recommendations will be shared with stakeholders and integrated into county planning, budgeting, policy review, and program implementation. Mechanisms will be established at the gender department to track the adoption of recommendations, strengthening learning and accountability.

Accountability Mechanisms

Commitment from the County Government to implement this Policy using the principles of transparency, participation, responsiveness, and accountability will be paramount. Public participation and stakeholder engagement will be institutionalized in line with constitutional principles and county structures to ensure involvement of both men and women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, intersex, marginalized groups, civil society, faith-based organizations, the private sector, and development partners through forums, hearings, dialogues, and review meetings. Establishing a grievance and feedback systems emerged as a key need from the situational analysis findings which will strengthen accountability and enable individuals and communities to report and voice their concerns. The grievance and feedback mechanism will be critical to document cases of discrimination, exclusion, harassment, gender-based violence, inequitable services and non-compliance. Transparency will be reinforced through regular publication of implementation, budget, audit, and evaluation reports. Oversight will be provided by the responsible county structures led by the County Assembly, Public Service Board, Executive Committee, and other institutions to ensure compliance. Administrative and corrective measures will be taken against institutions or officers who misuse resources or fail to meet obligations.

Learning and Knowledge Management

Learning and knowledge management are essential components of effective policy implementation and institutional transformation. The gender department will adopt and align to mechanisms for continuous learning, innovation, documentation, and dissemination of knowledge related to gender equality and social inclusion. Lessons learned, best practices, success stories,

innovations, and implementation challenges shall be systematically documented and shared across county departments and stakeholders. The gender department will be responsible to organize regular review forums, stakeholder consultations, peer learning sessions, reflection meetings, and knowledge-sharing platforms to strengthen adaptive management and institutional learning. Research, gender analysis, and evidence generation shall be promoted to support informed policy development, planning, and programming. Partnerships with academic institutions, research organizations, civil society organizations, and development partners shall be strengthened to support technical assistance, innovation, and capacity building.

Further, it will be critical to invest resources in continuous capacity strengthening for county officials, gender focal persons, community leaders, representatives and stakeholders on gender-transformative planning, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and data management.

Data Management and Reporting

The County Government shall establish and maintain an integrated gender data management system to support effective collection, analysis, storage, dissemination, and utilization of gender-related information. County departments shall generate accurate, timely, reliable, and verifiable data aligned with national statistical standards and county reporting requirements. The County Government shall prioritize the use of sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data in planning, budgeting, program design, monitoring, and reporting to ensure equitable and inclusive service delivery. Data collection tools and systems shall be standardized across departments to enhance consistency, comparability, and quality assurance. County departments shall submit periodic implementation and performance reports to the County Gender Office in accordance with established reporting schedules and guidelines. Annual county gender reports shall be prepared and disseminated to inform policy review, decision-making, resource allocation, and public accountability.

The County Government shall collaborate with relevant national government institutions, including the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the National Gender and Equality Commission, and other sector agencies, to strengthen gender statistics systems and harmonize reporting frameworks. The collected data shall be compiled, reported and published periodically through a County gender fact sheet with data on the specific performance and key indicators stipulated in the Policy indicators matrix. Further, County departments shall prepare periodic progress reports highlighting achievements, challenges, lessons learned, expenditure trends, and recommendations for improvement. These reports shall be consolidated into annual county gender status reports for submission to the County Executive Committee, County Assembly, and relevant oversight institutions.

Institutional Coordination and Sustainability

Implementation of the MEAL framework shall be coordinated by the County Gender Office in collaboration with county departments, the County Treasury, the County Assembly, constitutional commissions, civil society organizations, development partners, community structures, and relevant national government agencies. The County Government shall establish interdepartmental coordination mechanisms to promote collaboration, information sharing, harmonized reporting, and integrated implementation of gender-responsive programmes and interventions. County departments shall incorporate MEAL responsibilities into institutional structures, staffing arrangements, and operational plans.

To ensure sustainability, the County Government shall allocate adequate financial, technical, and human resources for implementation of the MEAL framework. Continuous political commitment, institutional strengthening, stakeholder participation, and integration of gender priorities into county development planning and budgeting processes shall remain central to successful implementation of this Policy.

The County Government commits to fostering a culture of accountability, transparency, learning, innovation, and evidence-based governance in order to advance gender equality, social justice, human dignity, and inclusive development for all residents of the County.

Performance Indicators

The MEAL framework defines key performance indicators to be tracked to ensure achievement of the goal and objectives of this gender policy. The key performance indicators are aligned to the indicators under Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals⁴

Key Performance Indicators of the Gender Policy	
Thematic Area	High-Level Indicators
1. Economic Empowerment	Percentage increase in women-, youth-, and PWD-owned enterprises accessing county procurement opportunities, credit facilities, and business development services.
	Proportion of women and marginalized groups participating in formal and informal income-generating activities supported by county programs.
	Percentage of women and marginalized groups with access to and control over land, agricultural resources, extension services, and productive assets.
	Proportion of women farmers benefiting from climate-smart agriculture, agricultural financing, value chain development, and market access initiatives.
	Percentage of county climate change, environmental conservation, and disaster risk reduction programmes integrating gender-responsive approaches.

⁴ [Goal 5 – Sustainable Development Goals Coordination Directorate](#)

	Number or proportion of women and marginalized groups participating in climate resilience, natural resource management, and environmental sustainability initiatives.
2. Leadership and representation	Percentage of women, youth, persons with disabilities (PWDs), intersex and marginalized groups represented in county leadership, decision-making, and public participation structures.
	Percentage of county departments integrating gender-responsive planning, budgeting, and reporting into annual work plans and performance frameworks.
3. Gender-Based Violence (GBV)	Number or percentage of reported GBV cases receiving timely survivor-centered response, referral, and support services.
	Percentage reduction in prevalence of gender-based violence, harmful cultural practices, and sexual exploitation within the county.
4. Education and Skills Development	Gender parity index in enrolment, retention, completion, and transition rates in county-supported education and vocational training programmes.
	Number or percentage of women, girls, youth, and PWDs benefiting from technical, vocational, digital, and entrepreneurship skills development programmes.
5. Health and Wellness	Percentage of women, girls, and vulnerable populations accessing quality reproductive health and maternal healthcare services.
	Percentage reduction in teenage pregnancy rates, maternal mortality rates, and unmet need for family planning services within the county.
	Percent of men reached with mental health support and substance and alcohol abuse treatment services.
	Percentage increase in health investment and proportion allocated to maternal and child health services, mental health and alcohol and substance abuse services.
6. gender and social Protection and Inclusion	Percentage of vulnerable and marginalized populations benefiting from county social protection programmes and inclusive public services.
	Level of participation of women, youth, older persons, PWDs, intersex and marginalized groups in county development planning and decision-making processes.
7. Children	Percentage of girls and boys enrolled in and completing primary and secondary education
	Percentage of reported child protection and gender-based violence cases involving children that receive appropriate response and support services
	Percentage of children (girls and boys) participating in child-focused decision-making forums and programs

Reporting and Accountability

- **Annual Gender Report:** The County Executive Committee shall publish an annual report detailing progress, challenges, and recommendations.
- **Public Expenditure Reviews:** Gender-responsive budgeting shall be assessed to ensure equitable allocation of resources.
- **Citizen Scorecards:** Communities shall evaluate service delivery and provide feedback to county leadership.
- **Audit Mechanisms:** Independent audits shall verify compliance with gender commitments under the Public Finance Management framework.

CHAPTER 8

8.0. COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY

Communication and advocacy are key enablers in advancing gender equality and social inclusion. Strategic communication and coordinated advocacy shall be used to promote awareness, influence attitudes and behaviors, strengthen public participation, and foster accountability in addressing gender issues across the county. The successful implementation of this policy requires a well designed communication and advocacy strategy. The County department responsible for gender will be in charge of ensuring adequate resources are allocated for development and dissemination of the gender policy and other advocacy and sensitization materials. It will be of great importance to ensure communication materials and messages are interpreted in multiple languages including English, Kiswahili and any other relevant local languages. Communication materials shall be accessible, culturally sensitive, and responsive to the diverse needs of the diverse populations. The stakeholders will ensure the policy is disseminated through multiple channels, including community forums, media platforms, faith-based institutions, schools, and local leadership structures.

The County shall promote inclusive and gender-responsive communication approaches that enhance public understanding of gender equality, human rights, prevention of gender-based violence, and the empowerment of women, youth, persons with disabilities, intersex persons, older persons, and other marginalized groups. It will be important to strengthen advocacy initiatives aimed at influencing policies, planning, budgeting, and decision-making processes to ensure gender responsiveness and equitable development. Advocacy efforts shall also seek to address discriminatory social norms, harmful cultural practices, and barriers that limit equal participation and opportunities. To enhance outreach and engagement, the County and other stakeholders shall utilize appropriate communication platforms and partnerships, including community forums, media, digital platforms, educational institutions, faith-based organizations, and civil society structures. The County shall collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including national government institutions, development partners, civil society organizations, community groups, and the private sector, to strengthen coordinated advocacy and awareness initiatives on gender and social inclusion.

The County Government shall further promote responsible and gender-sensitive communication practices that uphold human dignity, equality, and positive representation of all persons. Capacity building initiatives shall be undertaken to strengthen communication and advocacy competencies among county staff and relevant stakeholders. Finally, indicators shall be designed and tracked to assess the effectiveness and impact of communication and advocacy interventions and to inform continuous improvement in advancing the objectives of this Policy.

CHAPTER 9

9.0. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation Measures
Cultural resistance and negative social norms	The county government will undertake continuous community sensitization and public awareness campaigns to address harmful cultural practices, stereotypes, and discriminatory gender norms that hinder the realization of gender equality. Engagement with community elders, religious leaders, cultural leaders, youth groups, women's organizations, and opinion leaders will be prioritized to promote positive social change, acceptance, and community ownership of gender equality initiatives.
Limited funding and inadequate resource allocation	The Nyandarua County Government will strengthen gender-responsive budgeting and prioritize allocation of adequate resources for implementation of gender programmes. The county will also diversify funding sources through partnerships with development partners, private sector actors, civil society organizations, and philanthropic institutions to enhance sustainability of gender interventions and reduce overreliance on county budget allocations.
Weak law enforcement and limited accountability mechanisms	The county government will strengthen institutional accountability systems, policy enforcement mechanisms, and inter-agency coordination to ensure compliance with constitutional, legal, and policy provisions on gender equality and non-discrimination. Capacity building for law enforcement agencies, county officers, and justice actors will be undertaken to improve responsiveness to gender-related violations, including gender-based violence and discrimination cases.
Poor implementation of the gender policy	The county will ensure effective dissemination of the policy to all stakeholders and undertake continuous sensitization on the objectives, benefits, and obligations arising from the policy. Lobbying and engagement with political leadership, county departments, and community stakeholders will be strengthened to enhance ownership, political goodwill, and commitment to implementation. Clear implementation frameworks, monitoring systems, and reporting mechanisms will further be established to support effective execution of policy interventions.
Inadequate technical capacity among county staff members	The county government will undertake regular capacity-building programmes for county staff and stakeholders on gender mainstreaming, gender-responsive planning and budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, and data management. Technical support and mentorship will also be provided to strengthen institutional capacity for effective implementation of gender-responsive programmes and services.
Low public awareness on gender rights and services	Public education and awareness campaigns will be conducted across all sub-counties to improve understanding of gender equality, human rights, prevention of gender-based violence, and available support services. The county will utilize community forums, media platforms, schools, religious institutions, and local administrative structures to reach diverse populations, including vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Political interference and changing political priorities	The county will institutionalize gender mainstreaming within county legislation, policies, and planning frameworks to ensure continuity beyond political transitions. Stakeholder engagement, evidence-based advocacy, and regular policy reviews will be promoted to sustain political commitment and support for gender equality initiatives.
Weak coordination among implementing stakeholders	The county government will establish clear coordination structures and communication mechanisms among county departments, national government agencies, civil society organizations, development partners, and community actors involved in implementation of the policy. Regular stakeholder forums and joint planning sessions will be conducted to enhance collaboration, reduce duplication of efforts, and improve efficiency in programme delivery.
Inadequate gender-disaggregated data for planning and monitoring	The county will strengthen data collection, analysis, storage, and reporting systems to support evidence-based planning and decision-making. County departments will be required to collect and utilize gender-disaggregated data to monitor progress, identify gaps, and inform policy interventions targeting women, men, youth, persons with disabilities, intersex and marginalized groups.
Gender-based violence and discrimination practices	The county government will strengthen prevention and response mechanisms for gender-based violence through awareness campaigns, survivor support services, referral systems, legal aid, and collaboration with security and justice institutions. Community engagement initiatives will also be implemented to address stigma, discrimination, and harmful practices affecting women, children, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable populations. A multi-stakeholder will be developed to establish a safehouse for survivors of SGBV.

CHAPTER 10

10.0. REVIEW AND REVISION

The Nyandarua County Government Gender Policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its continued relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with emerging development priorities, legal frameworks, and socio-economic dynamics in the county. A comprehensive review will be undertaken every five (5) years, or earlier where necessary, to assess progress in implementation, identify gaps, and incorporate lessons learned from its implementation. The review process will also take into account changes in national gender policies, constitutional requirements, and international commitments on gender equality and social inclusion to ensure coherence and compliance.

The review process will be participatory and inclusive, involving a wide range of stakeholders including county departments, the Nyandarua County Assembly, development partners, civil society organizations, community-based organizations, faith-based institutions, private sector

actors, and representatives of women, youth, persons with disabilities, intersex and other marginalized groups. This inclusive approach will ensure that diverse perspectives and lived experiences inform the revision of the policy, thereby strengthening its responsiveness and effectiveness.

In addition to the formal five-year review cycle, the county will promote continuous stakeholder engagement throughout the implementation period of the policy. The Gender Sector Working group will hold regular consultative forums, establish feedback mechanisms, public participation engagements, and performance review meetings to gather ongoing input, monitor progress, and address emerging challenges in real time. These engagements will foster transparency, accountability, and shared ownership of gender equality initiatives.

Findings and recommendations arising from both periodic reviews and continuous stakeholder consultations will be documented and used to inform necessary policy amendments, programmatic adjustments, and strategic planning processes. This adaptive approach will ensure that the policy remains dynamic, evidence-based, and capable of effectively addressing the evolving gender equality and social inclusion needs within Nyandarua County.

11.0. CONCLUSION

The Nyandarua Gender Policy provides a critical framework for promoting equality, equity, and inclusive development across the county. By addressing gender disparities in access to opportunities, resources, decision-making, and public services, the policy reinforces the principle that women, men, girls, and boys are equal partners in the county's social and economic transformation. Its successful implementation will contribute to reducing discrimination, gender-based violence, and other barriers that hinder the full participation of all citizens in development.

The realization of the policy's objectives will require strong commitment from county institutions, development partners, civil society organizations, communities, and individual citizens. Through effective gender mainstreaming, capacity building, adequate resource allocation, and continuous monitoring and evaluation, Nyandarua County can create a more just and inclusive society where everyone has an equal opportunity to thrive. The policy therefore serves not only as a guide for action but also as a commitment to sustainable development, social cohesion, and the empowerment of present and future generations.

Ultimately, the success of the Nyandarua Gender Policy will be measured by tangible improvements in the lives of the county's residents, including enhanced economic empowerment, increased representation in leadership, greater protection from gender-based violence, and equal access to services and opportunities. By fostering a culture of equality and mutual respect, the county will strengthen its development agenda and build a future where no one is left behind.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I; SITUATTIONAL ANALYSIS REPORT

APPENDIX II; FGD AND KII PARTICIPANTS

APPENDIX III: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Access to Justice: - This is the ability of any person, regardless of gender, income or status etc. to use the legal system to advocate for themselves and their interests or opportunity to seek and obtain justice when one's rights have been violated.

Affirmative Action: - The process by which institutions identify and take positive steps to enhance opportunities in education, training, and employment of people who are underrepresented. It is often time bound, ending when the perceived imbalance has been addressed.

Capacity Building: - This is a conceptual approach to social or personal development that focuses on understanding the obstacles that inhibit people, governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations from realizing their development goals while enhancing the abilities that will allow them to achieve measurable and sustainable results. It involves the creation of an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks; institutional development, including community and human resources development

Discrimination: - It refers to the biases, prejudices and intolerance that people suffer from on account of their sex, race, social status, religion, health condition or related factors. In higher education institutions, gender discrimination may manifest in systematic exclusion of women or men from executive authority, unfairness in the allocation of research, teaching and other resources, discouragement from pursuing specific courses and hostility to gender activism in higher education.

Empowerment: - Refers to the process of building critical analytical skills for an individual to gain self-confidence in order to take control of his or her life. Empowerment of women is an essential process in the transformation of gender relations because it addresses the structural and underlying causes of subordination and discrimination.

Equality of Opportunity: - Refers to a fundamental human right embedded in the Constitution of Kenya. This Gender Policy Framework aims towards the achievement of equality of opportunity, in access to and share of employment opportunities, services and resources as well as in equality of treatment by employers and service providers.

Equality of Treatment: - Refers to meeting the specific and distinct needs of different social categories of women and men. This can often involve special programs and the commitment of additional resources, for example in the case of women and men with disabilities. Equality of treatment does not mean treating all men and all women in exactly the same way (i.e. in a gender-blind fashion) as this would only serve to perpetuate existing disparities.

Exploitation: - Taking non-consensual advantage of another person. Exploitation

Includes, but is not limited to: electronically recording, photographing, or transmitting

Sounds or images without the knowledge and consent of all parties involved, voyeurism, and distributing intimate or sexual information about another person without that person's consent.

Gender analysis: - The identification, investigation and use of data to inform action to address inequalities that arise from the different roles of all genders, or the unequal power relationships between them and the consequences of these inequalities on their wellbeing.

Gender and Development (GAD): - Refers to a planning process which is based on an analysis of the different situations and needs of women and men. It aims at creating gender equity and equality between women and men. A gender and development perspective recognize the importance of the relations between women and men.

Gender Awareness: - Refers to a state of knowledge of the differences in roles and relations of women and men and how this results in differences in power relations, status, privileges and needs. Gender awareness recognizes that the life experiences, expectations, and needs of women, men, boys and girls are different, and that they may involve inequities that are subject to change. Without gender

Awareness, development interventions might fail to meet the needs and interests of all people they are intended to support.

Gender Based Violence: - An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated

Against a person's will based on abuse of power and privilege of the socially ascribed (gender) differences between all genders. It takes the form of actions that result in physical, sexual and psychological harm or suffering to a person and affront to their human dignity, whether occurring in public or private life. It is men who predominantly carry out such violence, and women who are predominantly the victims of such violence, but men are increasingly becoming victims of Gender based violence.

Gender Blindness: - It refers to the conscious development of objectives, plans and program in an organization or institution with no effort to recognize or incorporate gender issues that might influence functioning of that organization, the production of plans, the implementation of programs or their outcomes.

Gender Budgeting: - This is the examination of all expenditures and revenues from a gender perspective. All expenditure is examined for its relevant accessibility, impacts and consequences for all genders. It involves scrutinizing the ways the resource expenditure can be made to reflect the institutional goal of gender equity.

Gender discrimination: - Refers to the unfair treatment of a person based on their gender. Acts of gender discrimination can include sexual harassment, pregnancy discrimination, and unequal pay for either men or women who do the same jobs.

Gender Dynamics: - The relationships and interactions between and among boys and girls, women, and men. Gender dynamics is informed by socio-cultural ideas about gender and the power relationships that define them. Gender dynamics either reinforce or challenge existing gender norms.

Gender Equality: - Refers to the state of equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women & men and girls & boys. Equality does not mean that women and men are the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. The concept of Gender equity, equality, and justice as used in this policy considers women's existing subordinate positions within social relations and aims at the restructuring of society so as to eradicate male domination. Therefore, equality is understood to include both formal equality and substantive equality; not merely simple equality to men. Substantive Equality refers to a stage of real equality underpinned by equality

of opportunity, access and treatment between women and men strengthening of managerial systems.

Gender Equity: - Refers to the fair and just distribution of all means of opportunities and resources between women and men. To ensure fairness, strategies and measures need to be in place to compensate for women's historical and social disadvantages that might have prevented women and men from operating on a level playing field. Thus, Equity is seen as a precursor to the realization of equality.

Gender Inequality: - The ways in which all genders are treated differently in relation to opportunities and responsibilities in the society.

Gender Gap: - Gender Gap is the difference in the scores between all genders on attitudes, interests, behavior, knowledge, wage and perspectives on particular issues.

Gender Identity: - Gender identity refers to how someone feels about and expresses her or his gender and gender roles for instance how she or he chooses her clothing, behavior, and personal appearance.

Gender Issues: - These are defined in the form of relationships between women and men, their roles, privileges, status and positions are identified and analyzed. Gender issues arise where inequalities and inequities are shown to exist between people purely on the basis of their being female or male. The fact that gender and gender differences are socially constructed is itself a primary issue to deal with in the form of programming and legislation.

Gender Mainstreaming: - The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

Gender Parity: - Numerical concept related to gender equality. Gender parity concerns relative equality in terms of numbers and proportions of women and men, girls and boys, and is often calculated as the ratio of female-to-male values for a given indicator.

Gender Responsive Budget: - This is a fiscal-based mechanism for ensuring greater consistency between economic goals of a country and social commitments in as far as engendering gender equity, equality, and justice is concerned.

Gender Responsive Indicators: - Refers to a gauge of measure used as evidence to demonstrate that a change has occurred as a result of a policy, program, initiative or action. Gender-sensitive indicators measure whether gender equity, equality, and justice or gender equity is being achieved. These indicators are therefore designed to track gender related changes as a result of a policy, program, initiative or action over a specific period of time. Indicators can be quantitative showing or qualitative, they are essential for monitoring and evaluation.

Gender Responsive: - Refers to a planning process in which programs and policy actions are developed to deal with and counteract problems which arise out of socially constructed differences between women and men.

Gender Roles: - Clusters of socially or culturally defined or learned expectations about how all genders members of a society should behave in specific situations. Gender roles are usually based on stereotypical beliefs that all genders possess distinct, mutually exclusive physical and psychological characteristics which determine their behavior and characteristics.

Gender Roles/Dynamics: - These are set of societal norms dictating the types of behaviors which are generally considered acceptable, appropriate, or desirable for people based on their actual or perceived sex or sexuality and are usually centered on conceptions of femininity and masculinity.

Gender Sensitive: - Refers to the state of knowledge of the socially constructed differences between women and men, including differences in their needs, as well as to the use of such knowledge to identify and understand the problems arising from such differences and to act purposefully to address them.

Gender Sensitivity: - Gender Sensitivity is the translation of gender awareness into practices that result in changes in the perceptions, plans and activities of institutions and organizations. A gender sensitive institution not only has the awareness, but also demands gender responsiveness that includes acting on gender issues.

Gender Stereotype: - Gender Stereotype is a rigid and over-simplified definition of a group of people in which all members of that group are labeled with similar characteristics. Stereotypes produce behavior patterns that conform to expectations in a society and are used as standards for evaluating categories of people based on their gender.

Gender stereotyping: - Refers to the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics or roles on the sole basis of her or his membership of the social group of women or men.

Harassment: - Threatening to commit an action against another person, stalking and cyber-stalking. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to words, persistent requests for sexual favors or dates, gestures, touching, unwanted sexual overtures, engaging in indecent exposure, coerced sexual intercourse and rape.

Intersex; - Intersex as a person bearing biological sex characteristics that do not exclusively fit in the common binary of female or male due to inherent and mixed anatomical, hormonal, gonadal or chromosomal patterns occurring at any point in their lifetime.

Intimidation: - Workplace intimidation is an intentional and malicious attempt to cause a coworker/student to feel inadequate or afraid. Intimidation includes verbal threats, unjust criticism, sabotage or sexual harassment and physical violence.

Participation: - Refers to the process of involving person(s) in the running of an organization. Participation can also be the joint consultation in decision making, goal setting, profit sharing, teamwork, and other such measures through which a firm attempt to foster or increase its employees' commitment to collective objectives.

Practical Gender Needs: - Refers to the needs identified to help women and men cope bettering their existing subordinate positions. Practical needs are related largely to issues of welfare and do not challenge the existing gender division of labour or to women's subordinate positions in society.

Strategic Gender Needs: - Refers to needs which are identified as necessary to transform the existing unequal relations between women and men. Addressing women's strategic gender needs expedites women's empowerment and facilitates the fundamental social transformation

necessary for establishment of gender equality.

Violence: - A means of control and oppression that ranges from emotional, social or economic force, coercion or pressure to physical harm. It may be overt in the form of physical assault or covert in the form of intimidation, threats and deception. Violence can be a one-time incident or repeated over.

Inclusivity:- Practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or 87, such as those having physical or intellectual disabilities or belonging to other minority groups.

Marginalized Populations:- Article 260 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010, provides for the interpretations of the Marginalised Community to include a community that, because of its relatively small population or for any other reason, has been unable to fully participate in the integrated social and economic life of Kenya as a whole.