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social justice in health

GENERATION G
for gender justice

INTERROGATING SOCIAL CULTURAL (GENDER) NORMS THAT INFLUENCE GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) AND PROMOTION OF GENDER JUSTICE

IGANGA AND NAMUTUMBA, EASTERN UGANDA

Research Report

SONKE GENDER JUSTICE

FIDA UGANDA

Reach a hand
young people for young people

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDO	Community Development Officer
CEHURD	Center for Health, Human rights and Development
CEP	Community Empowerment programme.
CHAs	Community Health Advocates
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCDO	District Community Development Officer
DVA	Domestic Violence Act
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FIDA-U	Uganda Association of Women Lawyers
GBV	Gender Based Violence
Generation G	Generation Gender Equality
GTA	Gender Transformative Approach
IDI	In-depth Interviews
KII	Key Informant Interviews
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
RAHU	Reach A hand Uganda
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UDHS	Uganda Demographic Household survey
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Fund for Children
UWONET	Uganda Women's Network

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This executive summary provides an overview of the findings on Interrogating Social Cultural (gender) norms that influence Gender Based Violence (GBV) and promotion of Gender Justice in Busoga sub-region. With funding from Sonke Gender Justice through Rutgers and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, CEHURD, in partnership with Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA-U) and Reach A hand Uganda (RAHU), is implementing a Generation G project in Eastern and Northern regions of Uganda in 6 districts of Namutumba, Iganga; Kapchorwa, Kween, Bukwo, and Adjumani. The Generation Gender project is a five-year project funded by SONKE Gender Justice in Uganda. The goal of the project is to create a gender-just and violence free society with and for young men and women in their full diversity.

As part of this coalition, CEHURD works on the three interrelated challenges – GBV, unequal division of care work and women's lack of access to civic spaces - in the two districts of Iganga and Namutumba, Eastern Uganda. CEHURD's major aim is to build capacity of young women and men to promote gender justice; influence community leadership to develop and implement gender transformative and youth-inclusive policies and laws; and nurture gender transformative and youth inclusive local activism for gender justice. This is especially through the flagship model of Community Health Advocates (CHAs). This study set out to interrogating Social Cultural (gender) norms and their influence on Gender Based Violence (GBV) and promotion of Gender Justice in the Busoga Sub-Region.

Specific Objectives of the study

1. To document social and cultural (gender) norms (negative and progressive) in Busoga sub region.
2. Explore how social and cultural norms perpetuate GBV and limit promotion of gender justice in Busoga region (Iganga and Namutumba districts).
3. Identify the positive social and cultural norms and their impact on GBV prevention and promotion of gender justice.
4. To explore the sources and drivers of positive/ protective social and cultural norms that are used to prevent GBV and promote gender justice
5. To explore community perceptions and attitudes on the positive/ protective social and cultural norms prevent GBV and to promote gender justice in Busoga sub region (Iganga and Namutumba)
6. To explore the limitations in implementing or adopting the positive norms to address GBV and promote Gender justice.
7. Design strategies that can be adapted/adopted shift negative social norms and contribute to prevention of GBV and promotion of Gender justice.

To address these objectives, the study used qualitative methods of knowledge production.

1. Review of secondary data such as government policies, programmes and action plans and reports on GBV,
2. Collected primary data through interview conversations with key informants and ind-depth interviews with community members,
3. Focus group discussions with Community Health Advocates (CHAs) and community members,
4. Mapping the social ecology of the communities through transient walks, to explore the hidden social and cultural norms in the region.

The Overall total number of interviews for the two districts was 68 and then the total number of participants for the two districts was 106 (54.7% Males and 45.3% females).

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Findings are organized around dominant themes that include: a) Social cultural (gender) norms that exist in the sub-region – social norms registered, b) Social norms that influence GBV, Care work and Women's access to civic space, c) (CEHURD) Programme interventions addressing social norms and GBV and the Stories of change, d) Positive norms contributing towards gender justice in communities and Recommendations to shift the negative social norms.

Social-historical context of the Busoga Sub-region

» Critical observation across interview conversations and through community walks indicates broader socio-historical contexts within which norms are nurtured and sustained. Research identified the socioeconomic and historical contexts that dictate the patterns behaviour in the region. These include the sugar cane growing and its associated subculture; the history of industrialization; the region's geo-location on a travel highway and its associated transactional sexual and economic relations; as well as the region's proximity to the lake with the associated fishing community sub-culture.

» These socio-historical contexts reveal how Busoga cultural values, traditional belief systems, religious dynamics and poverty levels interact and nurture patterns of cultural norms whose complex intersection could possibly explain the endemic GBV in the region.

Social norms that influence GBV, Care work and Women's access to civic space

The study established diverse social (gender) norms that lead to gender-based violence and generally gender inequalities. These included;

» **Male authority, domination and control over women and children.** It is widely believed by both women and men that a man is the ordained head of the family, who makes decisions concerning his wife, children and entire home. His authority is also expected to be uncontested. Male authority is commonly demonstrated through the proverb/saying that "Omusadha kyakoba, omukyala kyakola" translated as "what the man says is what the wife does". Men's attempts to (re)claim dominant and controlling positions in families leads to men suppressing women's voice, physical confrontation and ultimately GBV.

» **Women are expected to submit to men (their husbands and male kin).** Women's cultural call to submit without questioning often leads to women missing out on opportunities to participate in political leadership, economic ventures or to merely lose control over productive resources they work for to men. Refusal to submit also triggers physical fights between husbands and their wives.

» **"A Girl should not start her menstruation when she is still in her father's house":** There are strong beliefs in Busoga that young girls are marriage material. In an interview with the Police officer in the Family and Child protection unit, Iganga, child marriage is one of the most reported cases, with 3-4 cases reported every week.

» **Women are expected to stay at home and perform domestic care work:** The social expectation of women as domestic workers limits their participation in civic spaces, increases their care work and sustains women's subordination to men in society.

Seven key social norms in the region that influence GBV

1. **VAW is often promoted through social norms rooted in the patriarchal power** imbalance between men and women, and in the dominant belief that men protect and provide for and have authority over their family and that good women/wives submit to their husbands authority. This norm is reflected in sayings such as "Omusadha Kyakoba kyenkora meaning "what a man says, is what I go with"
2. After marriage, women's most important roles are to serve their husbands and to have and to raise their children
3. **Norms that look at young girls as brides/marriage material** end up making girls lose opportunities for education, force girls in early marriage to potential older partners, with limited voice, high domestic care work.
4. **Norms around girls as a source of wealth** promote dislike for girls' education because it has the potential to disrupt prospects for early marriage and the associated bride price. Educated and empowered women are equally shunned as bad women for their percieved exercise of agency.
5. **Norms around women submission to male authority.** When married, women are expected to obey their husbands, act according to their wishes and not strive for equal decision making. If they transgress these norms they may face physical violence used by husbands as punishment or discipline.
6. **Men expected to exercise coercive control over women and girls.** Whilst women and girls are expected to be submissive, men are expected to exercise power and control in their families and relationships, which can manifest in various ways. This is even stringent in polygamous relationships where women are controlled through their own competion over who impresses the husband better. Men's coercive control is seen through social titles their partners give them e.g., Mukama Wange – meaning – "my Lord".
7. **Males as sole providers**: Norms around men as sole providers in households, has led to many young boys dropping out of school in search of money, and nurture this form of young masculinity through manual labour in sugar cane plantations.

Social Norms and domestic Care work and civic spaces

The study established a number of social norms that influence unequal distribution of unpaid care work in households. An ideal Musoga woman from the past is one who does domestic chores at home - digging, cooking food, washing clothes for the children and their father, collecting firewood, fetch/collect water, cleaning the compound, pealing food, sweep the main house and kitchen, helping mothers in the kitchen, preparing the serving area/dinning, serving food, uprooting food from the garden, peeling, washing the dishes, etc.

- Women and girls are strongly expected to *"kutyama awaka"* – sit (stay) at home and do domestic work without an expectation of a man's help.
- The idea that domestic work as predominantly *"women's work"* is deeply entrenched in the community sayings e.g. Nagura engato Kweyongya amagwa – I bought shoes to protect myself from thorns.
- Men and boys do not accept to take part of the domestic care work in the household because it is considered as shame. A few who tend to help their women are mocked by their fellow men and women with bad comments like he might be witched, 'pocketed', he was 'put in the bottle'. For many, men's participation in domestic work feels emasculating.
- There were beliefs that beating a wife is justifiable if she failed to do domestic work.
- Unequal distribution of care work was said to limit women's participation in civic spaces
- Women's active engagement in local council leadership, community groups, and participation in other civic spaces has also generated tension amongst men. Men fear women who have influence.

These findings not only reveal how violence against women is socially justified and normalized but also how these social norms on violence against women are intricately woven with notions of women's participation in unpaid care work and restricted mobility outside the home which would ideally enhance women's engagement in civic spaces. In effect, violence against women is justified when women go against the norm of shouldering heavy domestic care work or when their participation in civic spaces (voice and rights claims) are perceived as questioning men's authority in the home.

CEHURD PROGRAMME INTERVENTIONS

CEHURD interventions targeting prevention and response to GBV, care work and women's participation in civic spaces in Iganga and Namutumba districts are located within its broader programme on Community Empowerment programme (CEP). Community empowerment programming is aimed at building community capacities and agency in health and human rights to ensure that rights holders and duty bearers at community level participate effectively in promoting rights to health[1]. CEHURD interventions in Busoga Sub-region include;

1. **Nurturing Strategic partnerships through** District level Multi-stakeholder engagement, stakeholder participation, partnership and networking
2. **Community Health Advocates (CHAs)** – an established community based model to mobilise youth into a network for rights advocacy, in particular prevention and response to GBV.
   - Community Mobilisation, Dialogues and media engagement to facilitate interactions between rights holders and duty bearers.
   - Legal advocacy and litigation, in particular sensitizing the public about existing laws on prevention of GBV and following up cases of GBV to ensure victims receive justice (selected cases)
   - Nurturing a local conversation on how Social Norms influence the link between GBV, Care and civic engagement.

The study established four aspects in which CHA impact has been noted. These include:

» **Nurturing a vibrant youth network of CHAs with clear coordination structure**. CHA network has widened avenues for collective youth mobilization, sensitization, identifying and reporting social injustices; and have become part of the referral pathways to respond to GBV.

» **Knowledgeable, confident and empowered CHAs**: Through CEHURD Trainingsm, youth have acquired wide knowledge on what constitutes human rights abuse, how cultural norms influence GBV and unequal distribution of unpaid domestic care work, and how these injustices affect men and women disproportionately.

» **CHAs as social norms change agents**: There is a growing sense of individual and collective youth agency amongst CHAs. The model has considerably nurtured meaningful youth participation, youth agency and positioning youth as active agents for changing negative social norms that perpetuate gender inequalities.

Positive Social Norms in the region

Social norm change is possible, albeit generally complex and iterative. It calls for multisectoral, holistic and culturally sensitive approaches. In this report, (See table below), we identify areas in which norms that regulate women and men's behaviours especially those that perpetuate gender based violence, and gender inequality in general are changing. We also indicate sources of these positive changes. Positive

1 https://www.cehurd.org/portfolio/community-empowerment-programme/

social norms are marked by change in attitute towards women and girls, community realisation of the value for girls education, number of laws, ordinances prohibiting gender discrimination and their implementation in communities, changing stereotypes about gender division of labour, space, and decision making in families and community, among others.

Table showing a snapshot of positive change in norms, attitudes and belief systems towards Gender based violence and gender justice

#	Negative social Norms	Positive change in the social norms
1	VAW as normal and acceptable, rooted in the patriarchal power	• Women are increasingly reporting Domestic Violence to Uganda Police, GBV shelters, local councils to seek for help • Some men report cases of violence against them. GBV Shelter in Namutumba District Acknowldged that some men walk into the GBV coordination office to seek for help.
2	Good women/wives stay home, serve their husbands and raise their children	• Increasing access to girls education. Girl children can now access education • Increasing women's participation in community civic spaces, local politics. • Women are inspired by women political leaders in the region, e.g., Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, former Speaker of Parliament • The norm around women as domestic actors is slowly changing.
3	Young girls as brides/marriage material/ girls as a source of wealth.	• Increased awareness about child marriage as form of GBV. • Increased cases of girls enrolling and staying in schools.
4	Women submission to male authority. Men expected to exercise coercive control over women and girls. Low valuing of Girls and women eg., seen through limited access to education.	• Women have voice: "what the man says, is what the woman follows, are talks of long ago. Things have changed now. So, the woman of today cannot just keep quiet" • Women attaining economic empowerment: in most household have been empowered through government income generating activities. • Women supporting children's education: Women have formed community associations where they get money to support children's education
5	Domestic violence as acceptable form of disciplining women and children for non-performance of care work	• Increasing awareness about and abiding by existing law prohibiting gender inequalities e.g., DVA, 2010, Succession Act, and women's rights in general -- "If you beat a person, you beat your pocket" • People increasingly know that it is a human rights abuse to beat a wife • Change in perception on what GBV entails – Police officials noted "we no longer ask victims of GBV to show us the physical wounds, we now know violence can also be emotional and psychological" • Meaningful youth participation, youth agency in challenging negative social norms

6	Men as sole household heads and providers	• Women perform economic roles (casual business, membership in Village savings groups), earn and support majority of households in the region. • Some women invest jointly in business with spouses. • Women starting business for their husbands
7	Limited mobility of women outside the home	• Women are free to move within communities, attending community savings groups meeting. Women dominate school and church meeting. • Some men (especially those in educated homes) participate in unpaid care work
8	Lack of inheritance for girls	• Change in attitude towards girls and women inheriting family property. Communities are now aware of the succession Act, 2022 • As an emerging practice, Parents are now naming their daughers' after their fathers.
9	Community structures that are gatekeepers of social cultural norms	• Some of the traditional leaders and religious leaders are supportive of the work on gender equality. • Thriving grassroot youth movement against GBV – made of CHAs through grassroot mobilisation; partnership with district-based partners (duty bearers and rights holders) e.g., Action Aid, Fields of Life, CEHURD, Food for the Hungry, and many others.

It is notable that a lot of expectations about women and men, about gender roles, gender division of spaces, and decision making patterns are all changing albeit slowly. For instance, it is nolonger strange for women to perform economic roles, earn incomes and provide for households. These changes are attributed to continuous community sensitisation by CEHURD, gender equality and women empowerment programmes by government and efforts by other strategic actors in the region such as UWONET.

Community perception about positive social norms in community

While there is notable progressive change in attitudes towards gender equality these have triggered inadvertent effects in some communities.

» Men who share in domestic care work are denigrated, stigmatized and ridiculed as not men-enough, as bewitched by their wives
» There is general disgruntlement that gender justice interventions (by NGOs and government) lean strongly towards women and girls leaving out men and boys. There is indeed general public outcry that women empowerment programmes have left out the 'boy child'.
» There are misconceptions that women and children rights discourse is the root cause of gender-based violence in communities.
» Empowered women are perceived by some community members as bad mannered and against culture. For some male participants, empowered women were characterized as rebellious and turning children against their fathers.

» Gender equality and women's empowerment has transformed the gender division of labor in communities with most women joining public sphere in formal and informal income generation activities, earning and sustaining their families. These changes have altered men's roles and expectations.

These inadvertent effects of positive change in gender norms point to persistent and sticky nature of social norms and the resistance against gender equality.

Limitations to the CEHURD Interventions

» Stories of change from CEHURD CHA model indicate how this intervention has created a shift in certain social norms around GBV and care work, towards gender equality. However, the shift in some of the norms has been realized at the Community Health Advocates' individual level. Substantive stories of Realisation of how negative social norms impact everyday life of women and men and the possibilities for change are from CHAs and a few community leaders who have been exposed to constant sensitization and less felt in the general community especially in rural areas.

» The study also noted that CEHURD trainings and community mobilisation interventions have not yet targeted communities massively. Sensitization meetings that have occurred are apparently convened in hotels in urban areas, missing the opportunity to directly impact local communities.

» Equally, the project interventions have only lasted for a few years – since 2021 yet the number of years of project interventions matter. Participants observed that short-term projects have minimal impact on deep rooted gender norms.

Study Recommendations on how to shift the negative social norms.

1. **Conceptual unpacking of social norms, care and civic engagement**. Nurture an intellectual conversation to unpack and make familiar the concepts and their implication to the communities. Do we have enough knowledge on what care work is? Or are we imposing these concepts on the communities to make choices about? Do men understand unpaid care work and how it can be remedied, or they think we now want them to do women's work at home or start paying their wives? Do we know the 5 Rs – Recognize, Reduction, Redistribution, Representation in policy making spaces and Rewarding care workers[2]? Interventions for care work need to start in institutions of learning to create that knowledge and awareness.

2. **Re-think the approaches to community change**: who are we targeting? With what interventions and for how long? NGO actors need to think through approaches used in addressing GBV to avoid duplication of similar strategies that have not delivered in the past; Think through specific target audience - men need to be targeted more for social change. Target norm holders and gatekeepers in their spaces – e.g., drinking joints.

3. **Deliberate male engagement to foster gender transformative change**. There is need to think of male involvement as a gender transformative approach/intervention. We need to engage men and women in the same setting if we want to see a change in the social norm because over time, women's capacities have been built but when they return to households, women's agency triggers GBV. Having joint (men and women) sensitization creates room for collective critical reflection on harmful norms, negative masculinities and opportunities for change.

2 https://www.ilo.org/publications/major-publications/care-work-and-care-jobs-future-decent-work

- When women are invited in these meetings and men (most of whom are perpetrators) are left out, the latter cannot experience change. They should be brought on board. “Sensitizing men and women at the same time would be the best way to manage the community change.
- It is like telling the girl that you should be clean when you are not telling the boy that you should be clean. This leads to a generation of men that do not care.
- Promote male champions and role models in prevention of GBV, sharing care work and promoting women’s civic engagement.

4. Continuous Sensitization of community members;

- Consistent Sensitization of women to overcome backward submissiveness – they must be able to be submit to their husbands while express a level of assertiveness and decision making on things that concern their lives.
- Sensitization in schools to target boys and girls on living violence-free life, sharing care roles at home and in the community, building confidence and self esteem of both boys and girls; nurture children into responsible grown-ups.
- Hold community dialogues within the community: CSOs should desist from using money as a motivation for mobilizing community dialogues. When CSOs use money, people would not listen, but they would wait for that time when they would be signing for the money.
- Community sensitization should start with smaller groups and scale up interventions after impact. It is better to start with small groups of people, serve and create impact than targeting bigger communities whom you not going to serve at the same time.
- Target sensitization in Higher Institutions of learning. Advocate for integration of GBV, care work and women’s civic spaces in the syllabus.
- Address community sensitization through multiple dimensions to be able to contribute to social norm change.

5. Continuous learning from communities through participatory Research

This study interfaced with diverse stakeholders (duty bearers) and community members (rights holders), and documented norms. Interview conversations acted as a space for advocacy, training and awareness creation on how norms influence GBV, Care and Civic engagement.

- There are Participants (especially in group discussions) who appreciated and looked at the research as an avenue for sensitization (omusomo) and requested for more. Others wished these conversations targeted them and their spouses, or the entire community. That way, the study would have sowed a seed of norm change.

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CEHURD equally appreciates its partners, Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA-U) and Reach A hand Uganda (RAHU), with whom they have been implementing the Generation G project.

OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

Unpaid care work

Unpaid care work refers to the provision of services within households for other household and community members. It includes but is not limited to caring for children, elderly, and sick individuals, washing, cooking, shopping, cleaning and helping other families with their chores.

Gender Based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is violence directed against a person because of that person's gender or violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately. Acts of gender-based violence result in, or are likely to result in physical harm, sexual harm, psychological harm, or economic harm. Although most violence is perpetrated toward girls and women, people of all genders can experience GBV.

Civic Space

Civic space is the environment that enables people and groups – or 'civic space actors' – to participate meaningfully in the political, economic, social and cultural life in their societies. Vibrant civic space requires an open, secure and safe environment that is free from all acts of intimidation, harassment and reprisals, whether online or offline.

Social Norms

Social norms are defined as informal, mostly unwritten, rules that define acceptable and appropriate actions within a given group or community, thus guiding human behaviour. Social norms consist of what we do, what we believe others do, and what we believe others approve of and expect us to do.

Gender Norms

Gender norms are collective beliefs about what behaviors are appropriate for women and men and the relations between them. Norms are external to an individual, and are enforced, learnt and internalized through socialization in the family and social institutions (such as schools, media).

Gender Transformative Approaches

A gender-transformative approach (GTA) examines, questions, and changes harmful gender norms and power imbalances. There are six principles of GTAs. These include – Human Rights; Power dynamics and relationships; Norms and Values related to gender and sexuality; Women's and Girls' empower, gender and diversity; and engaging boys and men.

Gender Justice

Gender justice is the systemic redistribution of power, opportunities, and access for people of all genders through the dismantling of harmful structures including patriarchy, homophobia, and transphobia. Gender

justice refers to systemic change at the level of root causes of discrimination, sexism and harmful norms that impede full access to rights for people on the mere basis of their gender.

Inclusivity

Acknowledging the diversity of the old and young people and involving and creating equal opportunities for all especially the marginalized who often face the most barriers to SRHR and GBV.

Child labour

Child labour is work performed by the child that is likely to interfere with his or her right to education, or to be harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

Child marriage

Child marriage jeopardizes girls' rights, such as the right to education, because new brides are usually forced to drop out of school to bear children and to provide household labour. In addition, married girls have few social connections, restricted mobility, limited control over resources and little or no power in the households. They are thus especially vulnerable to domestic violence.

Witchcraft

This refers to rituals and practices that incorporate belief in magic and that are associated especially with neo-pagan traditions and religions. The Busoga sub region is known for the practice of witchcraft which especially happens amongst relatives and the neighborhood within the community.

Voice/Influence

Women's voice in decision making is critical for the development of all. When women have a say in private and public affairs, decisions reflect their needs, and often the needs of their families and communities.

Naabakyala/ Mama Police

These are localized terms referring to personale for women issues at the local council (Naabakyala) as well as at the Police (mama police). Mama Police is often the police officer in charge of the Family and child protection department. These are the popular pathways for reporting and handling GBV in communities.

Community Health Advocates (CHAs)

CHAs are a community-based network of youth who were identified and trained by CEHURD on the existing laws on prevention and response to GBV; human rights, care work, and the negative social norms that perpetuate social injustices in the communities.

1.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Background

Center for Health Human Rights and Development (CEHURD) is a non-profit, research and advocacy organization which is pioneering the justiciability of the right to health. Founded in 2010, CEHURD has moved from the margins to the center stage of advancing social justice and right in health systems in Uganda, East African Region, pan-African and Globally.

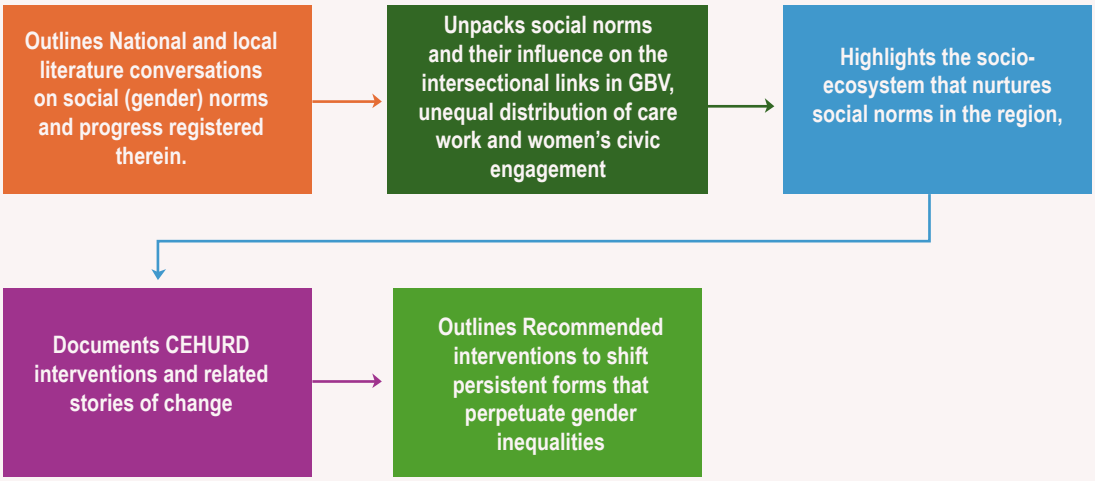
With funding from Sonke Gender Justice through Rutgers and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, CEHURD, in partnership with Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA-U) and Reach A hand Uganda (RAHU), is implementing a Generation G project in Eastern and Northern regions of Uganda in 6 districts of Namutumba, Iganga; Kapchorwa, Kween, Bukwo, and Adjumani. The Generation Gender project is a five-year project funded by SONKE Gender Justice in Uganda. The goal of the project is to create a gender-just and violence free society with and for young men and women in their full diversity. The Generation Gender partnership is aimed at raising public awareness about resilient social and cultural norms that perpetuate deep-rooted gender inequalities in form of unequal division of care, pervasive gender-based violence, and women's lack of access to civic space to contribute realizing women's rights, equality and gender justice. As such, the Generation Gender project directly contributes to sustainable development goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls and Goal 16 on promoting peaceful, accountable and inclusive societies. The partnership seeks to address three key interrelated challenges: gender-based violence, the unequal division of care and women's lack of access to civic space.

As part of this coalition, CEHURD works on the three interrelated challenges – GBV, unequal division of care work and women's lack of access to civic spaces - in the two districts of Iganga and Namutumba, eastern Uganda. In Namutumba district, the project is being implemented in 4 sub counties (Namutumba Sub County, Namutumba town council, Ivukula Sub County and Bulange) and Iganga (Iganga central division, Nawandala, Iganga town council and Namungalwe).

CEHURD, through Generation Gender partnership, works with the youth particularly those who are often excluded because of their age, gender, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. Through research, advocacy, capacity building, media engagements and community mobilization, CEHURD aims to build capacity of young women and men to promote gender justice; influence community leadership to develop and implement gender transformative and youth-inclusive policies and laws; and nurture gender transformative and youth inclusive local activism for gender justice.

This study set out to interrogating Social Cultural (gender) norms that influence Gender Based Violence (GBV) and promotion of Gender Justice in the Busoga Sub-Region.

The Report context is summarized below;



1.2 National Conversations on Gender Justice

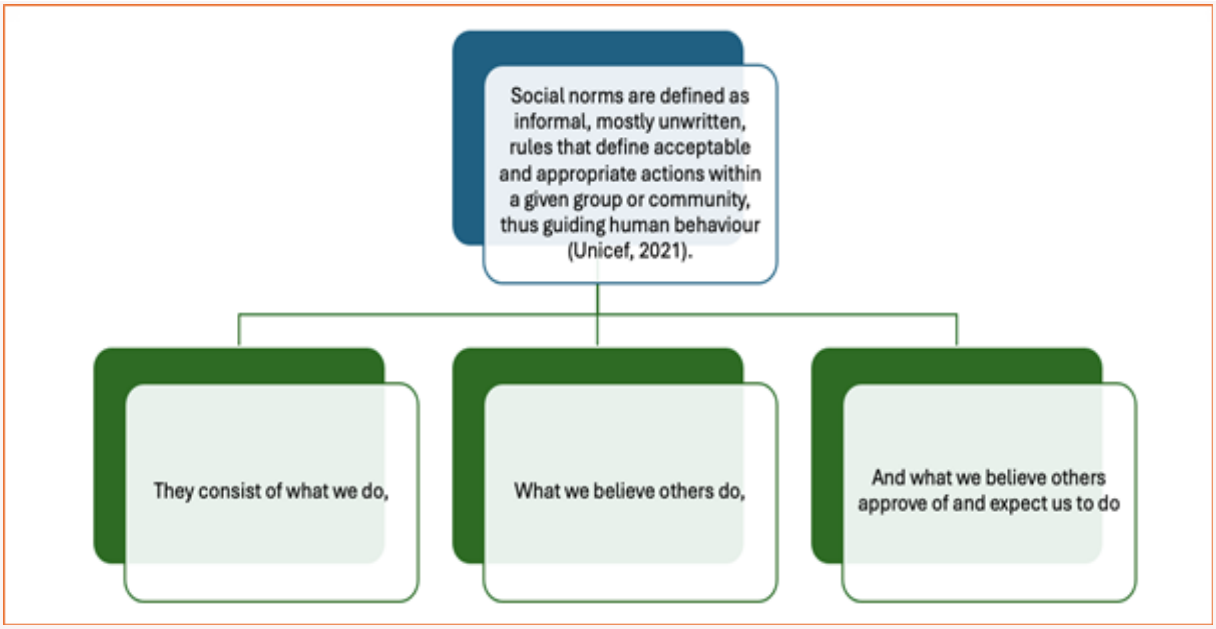
Uganda has had concerted efforts in the advocacy for women's rights, equality and gender justice on the African continent. For instance, in the early 1990s, Uganda was counted among the trailblazers on the African continent in terms of women's inroads into policy making (Ahikire & Mwiine, 2019, p. 67). Together with South Africa, Uganda was one of the few countries with a parliament made up of more than 20 percent female members and an apparent commitment to securing women's engagement with the state more broadly, including through the significant processes of constitutional reform being undertaken at the time. This progress was sparked by a new regime that had emerged on the political scene in 1986 with deliberate policy of expanding educational opportunities for both girls and boys; the opening up of political spaces for women through electoral quotas to create seats for women, workers, youth and people with disabilities; and the creation of a specific ministry for gender justice and equality (the Ministry of Gender, Social Development and Labour), as well as the rise of a vibrant women's movement in civil society (Watson et al., 2020). The 1995 Constitution stands as a hallmark of gender-sensitive legislation, ushering in a mass of progressive national laws, policies and programmes.

'Armed with a 'gender sensitive' constitution, the women's movement crafted and promoted issue-based campaigns challenging cultures, norms and practices that had been outlawed by the constitution. In particular, the constitution had not only 'named' women as citizens of equal worth with the men but it also took cognizance of specific contexts that rendered women and other groups of community marginalized. In its Article 32, the constitution stated: "Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, the State shall take affirmative action in favor of groups marginalized on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom, for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them" (Republic of Uganda, 1995). Women's rights organisations drew on the constitutional provisions to sustain protracted advocacy against domestic violence consequently bringing the issue of violence against women into the public discourse and questioning its normalization. Women activists equally pushed for gender equality reforms through parliament, with the 8th Parliament (2006–2011) alone registering significant progress, including enactment of the laws on prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (2009), prevention of trafficking in persons (2009), Domestic Violence Act (2010), penal code amendments (2007), and the establishment of an equal opportunities commission (2006) (Mwiine, 2021).

Despite the progress, advocacy for equality, women's rights and gender justice has remained largely uneven and rather rugged terrain. For instance, laws governing land, inheritance, domestic relations, and sexual rights have been on the women's movement agenda for several decades without substantive success. In practice, gender-based violence remains pervasive in most communities, while a rising tide against gender equality is also visible in women's access to civic spaces. While women's political participation has expanded, women continue to battle gendered stereotypes that favor male participation in political leadership. Obstacles to their exercise of power include sexual harassment and aggression, negative portrayals and trivialization of their needs and experiences in the media, and a lack of the resources and skills needed to participate in politics and public life, coupled with a new trend of men increasingly abdicating their responsibility in households. Women still suffer unequal access to economic resources and assets, and face discrimination in the workplace (Watson et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the space for civil society activity is increasingly shrinking, limiting women's civic engagement.

1.3 Conceptualizing Social (Gender Norms)

There is increasing global awareness of the importance of context in shaping human behavior and the role that social norms play in behavior change (The Social Norms Learning Collaborative, 2021, p. 6). As a result, there has been increased global investment, spiraling to locally diverse communities, towards exploring the potential of social norms to inform the design of effective and sensitive interventions aimed at facilitating social norms change (Unicef, 2021). While social norms change targets diverse social development sectors, there has been considerable focus on how changing social norms can contribute towards ending gender inequalities in aspects of gender-based violence, unpaid care work and women's economic empowerment (Karimli et al., 2016; Rutgers, 2021; UNDP, 2023).



Social norms are defined as informal, mostly unwritten, rules that define acceptable and appropriate actions within a given group or community, thus guiding human behaviour (Unicef, 2021). Accordingly, they consist of what we do, what we believe others do, and what we believe others approve of and expect us to do (Unicef, 2021). Often learned from infancy, social norms consist of perceptions of what others are expected to do and actually do, they regulate human behavior and thus influence individual and community well-being.

According to Bicchieri (2015, p. 16) social norms are not only about what we do because we believe others do but importantly about what we do because we believe others expect us to do. This perspective underscores the ways in which individuals are compelled (social policing by community members whose opinion matters strongly - reference groups) to behave in particular ways. Other characteristics that define social norms include expectations held in place by a combination of sanctions, creating social order, socially contextual and fluid. "Social norms are not uniform or immutable; social norms can bend, shift, change overtime and sometimes even disappear" (The Social Norms Learning Collaborative, 2021, p. 7). Social norms matter because they influence behaviour and often influence discrimination and social inequalities, including gender inequalities.

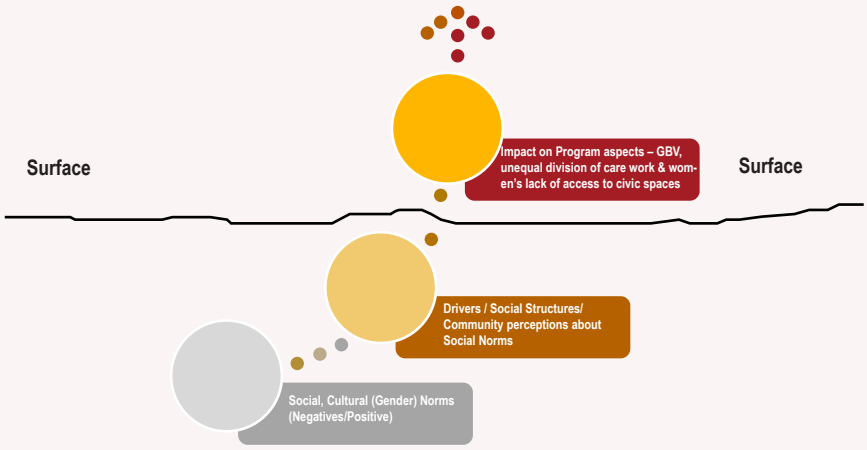
1.4 Gender norms as a subset of social norms

Beyond social norms are more specific, regulatory norms that guide collective behaviour of individuals on the basis of their gender identity – the gender norms (Unicef, 2021). Accordingly, gender norms are collective beliefs about what behaviors are appropriate for women and men and the relations between them (The Social Norms Learning Collaborative, 2021). As a subset of social norms, gender norms are internalized from an early age and they can perpetuate discrimination and inequities through acceptance of those who conform to the norms (rewards), and exclusion of those who do not conform (sanctions). They too, give expression to and reinforce the power dynamics inherent in a society's valuation of male and female gender roles, consequently providing a fertile ground upon which patriarchal privilege and associated discriminatory treatment is perpetrated.

Gender norms not only inform girls and boys about how they should see themselves growing up, but also constrain what they can aspire to, influencing their behaviors and life choices.

1.5 Invisibility of social (gender) norms

It is important to note that social cultural norms are often hidden, informal, mostly unwritten, rules that define acceptable and appropriate actions within a given group or community. They are the below-the-surface behaviors, beliefs and expectations that regulate human behaviour and development programme interventions as indicated in the illustration below.



Unless the below-the-surface norms are identified and addressed, programme interventions can only address symptoms of gender inequality. This study particularly focused on identifying hidden social cultural (gender norms), their drivers, and the social structures that sustain them, to establish ways in which they influence GBV and gender justice.

1.6 Norms, GBV and unequal distribution of care work

The interlinkage between norms, GBV, unequal division of care work and women's limited access to civic spaces strongly featured in the 2006 Uganda Demographic health survey findings. In what was termed "attitudes towards wife beating", the 2006 UDHS asked both women and men whether they thought that wife beating was justified under any of these five circumstances:

- Neglecting the children.
- Going out without telling the husband.
- Refusing to have sex.
- Arguing with the husband.
- Burning the food.

It was established that "Seven in ten women agree that at least one of the five circumstances is sufficient justification for wife beating. The most widely accepted reasons that women mentioned are neglecting the children (56%) and going out without informing the husband (52%). Among men, 6 in 10 respond that at least one of these reasons justifies wife beating" (Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) & Macro International Inc, 2007, p. 22). The acceptance of violence related to performing unpaid care work is further recorded in a recent Oxfam-funded study by Uganda Women's network (UWONET, 2017). The survey asked women and men in the districts of Kaabong, Kabale and Kampala, whether in their opinion, it would be acceptable or unacceptable to harshly criticise or shout at a woman or beat her if she did not perform certain domestic or care activities at home or left the house without asking for permission. Accordingly, "about 17.2% [Kaabong], 15.4% [Kabale] and 14.1% [Kampala] of women said it was acceptable to beat/commit violence against a woman if failed to care well for children, left the house without asking, or disobeyed her husband/uncle/father/brother (all males)." The data shows that men also felt it would be acceptable to beat a woman if she left the house without asking, failed to care well for the children and disobeyed male authority (UWONET, 2017, p. 48).

The 2006 UDHS survey and the 2017 UWONET report are a decade apart, yet they present similar results in the societies' normalization of violence against women in relation to care work, highlighting the persistence of these harmful gender norms. These findings not only reveal how violence against women is socially justified and normalized but also how these norms on violence against women are intricately woven with notions of women's participation in unpaid care work, and restricted mobility outside the home which would ideally enhance women's access to civic spaces. In effect, violence against women is justified when women go against the norm of shouldering heavy domestic care work and when they question men's authority in the home. The report also revealed that such findings point to many women's ignorance about their rights, an indication of their limited civic engagement.

Studies on norms indicate that social feedback is a key driver to adoption as well as changing social norms (Bicchieri & Penn Social Norms Training and Consulting Group, 2015; Zhang et al., 2023). When societies celebrate a man who has beaten his wife or applaud a man who has married an uneducated, stay-home-mother, or justify men's control over women's mobility outside the home (Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) & Macro International Inc, 2007), they reinforce and deeply entrenched social norms that perpetuate a complex web of gender inequalities.

1.7 Norms and women's limited access to civic space

In restrictive and even open civic space environments, women and girls tend to suffer additional layers of difficulties based on their gender as a result of patriarchal norms (WOUGNET, 2021). This is because they are presented with discriminatory laws and practices that prevent the exercise of civic freedoms that further impede their participation in public life. Gender norms structure access to resources, affect opportunities to develop skills, influence time-use and divisions of labor, and impact people's ability to act on the opportunities that are available to them (Marcus & Somji, 2024). The shrinking civic space poses a severe threat to women's economic empowerment. thus, it is crucial to recognize that gender equality is not just a social or moral imperative; it is also an economic one.

According to Watson, Kyomuhendo, & Ghimire, (2020), there is realization of positive changes in discriminatory gender norms and practices that have expanded the opportunities available to girls and women ranging from education to greater voice for women in politics and public life. However, this change has been gradual. In 1995, Uganda constitution granted women entry into formal politics and civic engagement through affirmative action. Affirmative action was included in the 1995 constitution as indicated in Articles 32, in favor of marginalized groups. The article reads:

> *32 (1) Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, the State shall take affirmative action in favor of groups marginalized on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom, for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them. (2) Parliament shall make relevant laws, including laws for the establishment of an equal opportunities commission, for the purpose of giving full effect to clause (1) of this article.*

Affirmative action was also included in the national objective (IV) on gender balance and fair representation of marginalized groups on all constitutional and other bodies; one woman representative for every district (Article 78 (1) (b)); and in the composition of local government councils (A 180 (2 b). The latter article indicates that "Parliament shall by law prescribe the composition, of local government councils, with "one-third of the membership of each local government council shall be reserved for women". Equally, the constitution provided for civic rights and freedoms. The article 38 (1 &2) stipulates that "every Uganda citizen has the right to participate in the affairs of government, individually or through his or her representatives in accordance with law" as well as the "right to participate in peaceful activities to influence the policies of government through civic organisations". These constitutional provisions provided a foundation upon which the Ugandan populace, in particular women, would actively engage in civic spaces.

At a much global level, the 1995 Beijing Declaration includes a goal to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision making. Yet, after this declaration, and its ratification there is evidence that gender norms still influence women's parliamentary representation, (George, Samman, Washington, & Ojha, 2020) women's experiences of standing in leadership positions, and women's engagement in civic action and social movements. Despite the fact that women are increasingly exercising their right to political participation, many still "find their way barred by the gender norms that see politics as a masculine space" (George, Samman, Washington, & Ojha, 2020).

1.8 Justification of the study

Interventions to prevent and/or respond to GBV without addressing the social and cultural norms that provide the foundation, have only led to frustration of programmes and persistence of gendered inequalities. Many multilateral and bilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are seeking ways to achieve profound and sustainable development objectives by tackling the root causes of gender inequality (FAO et al., 2020). They recognize that while it is necessary to focus on treating the symptoms of gender inequality, for example unequal access to civic spaces, unequal distribution of care work amongst young women, this is not enough on its own to effect change. Using a gender transformative research approach, CEHURD aims to explore the social, cultural (gender) norms that animate gender-based inequalities, in order to inform mobilization of public support, advocacy and policy change efforts. Through the Generation Gender Project, CEHURD is equally interested in exploring positive social and cultural norms that can be leveraged to prevent GBV and promote gender justice.. Gender transformative approaches equally inform advocacy for gender responsive policies and laws and strengthening of civil society capacity to prevent and respond to GBV and contribute to gender just communities.

Social norms matter because they help society to function, binding communities together and promoting collective behaviors. However, at times, the social order and community behaviors being maintained may be harmful and can often reinforce unequal power dynamics and lead to discrimination, and gender inequities. A deeper examination of social/ gender norms, as CEHURD has done, establishes how norms produce and maintain a social order with harmful consequences on people's well-being (Unicef, 2021).

1.9 Study Objectives

The overall goal of the research was to interrogate the influence of social and cultural (gender) norms on prevention of GBV and promotion of gender justice in Iganga and Namutumba districts.

Specific Objectives of the Consultancy

1. To establish social and cultural (gender) norms (negative and progressive) in Busoga sub region.
2. Explore how social and cultural norms perpetuate GBV and limit promotion of gender justice in Busoga region (Iganga and Namutumba districts).
3. Identify the positive social and cultural norms and their impact on GBV prevention and promotion of gender justice.
4. To explore the sources and drivers of positive/ protective social and cultural norms that are used to prevent GBV and promote gender justice
5. To explore community perceptions and attitudes on the positive/ protective social and cultural norms prevent GBV and to promote gender justice in Busoga sub region (Iganga and Namutumba)
6. To explore the limitations in implementing or adopting the positive norms to address GBV and promote Gender justice.
7. Design strategies that can be adapted/adopted shift negative social norms and contribute to prevention of GBV and promotion of Gender justice.

The study particularly worked with a key research question: How do social cultural (gender) norms influence gender-based violence and promotion of gender justice? Specific Questions related to the following:

Specific Research Questions

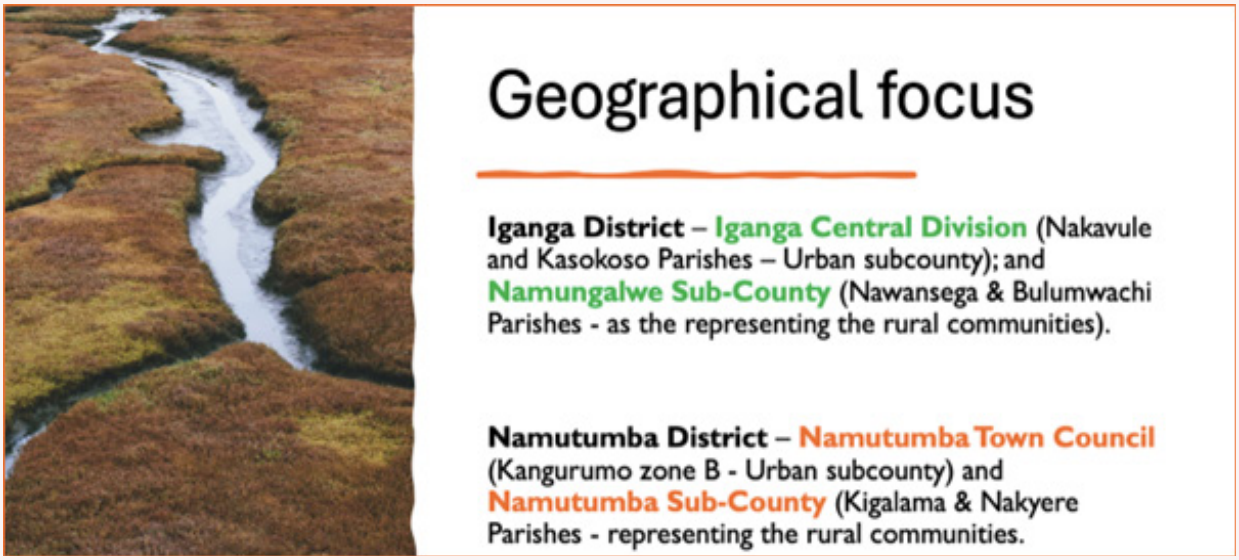
- What are social cultural norms (negative/positive)? How do communities perceive these norms in Busoga sub region?
- What drives and sustains negative social cultural norms?
- What is the link between existing social cultural norms and gender justice? Which social norms in the region promote GBV? Which of the norms facilitate prevention of GBV and promotion of gender justice?
- What drives progressive norms that support equality and gender justice?
- What limits adoption and implementation of positive norms to address GBV?
- What are the existing social structures (actors) that promote or oppose social cultural norms that prevent GBV and gender justice.
- Are there any existing efforts to uphold positive social norms to prevent GBV and promote gender just societies? How can these be scaled up to realise transformative gender change?
- What strategies can be put in place to shift the negative social (gender) norms?

2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

The study used qualitative methods of knowledge production. The study's conceptual scope focused on exploring the hidden social cultural (gender) norms, both negative and progressive within Busoga region. The research equally established community perception of social (gender) norms, the actors, drivers and social structures that sustain these norms. The key aspect of the study was to establish how social cultural norms (negative and positive) influence three interrelated areas of GBV, women's access to civic spaces as well as division of care work.

Geographically, the study focused on the two districts – Iganga and Namutumba - where CEHURD implements its activities as part of the Generation Gender Project Partnership. While the project is implemented in the 8 Sub-counties of the two implementing districts, this study focused on 4 sub-counties, selected purposively to capture diversity of the social cultural norms and enable a deeper reflection on the norms and their impact on programme aspects. The study purposively focused on:



2.2 Sampling Strategy

For each District, two sub counties were purposively selected with consideration of those where CEHURD is operating and ensuring that one of the sub counties is rural and the other urban. For each of the sub counties, two parishes were randomly selected. From each parish, one village was randomly selected. From each village, 4 people were purposively selected with a consideration of age (very old senior citizens-50 and above as well as youth) and gender (both men and women). To ensure inclusivity and diversity other social factors included in determining participants included sexuality, disability, religion, tradition role, and marital status among others.

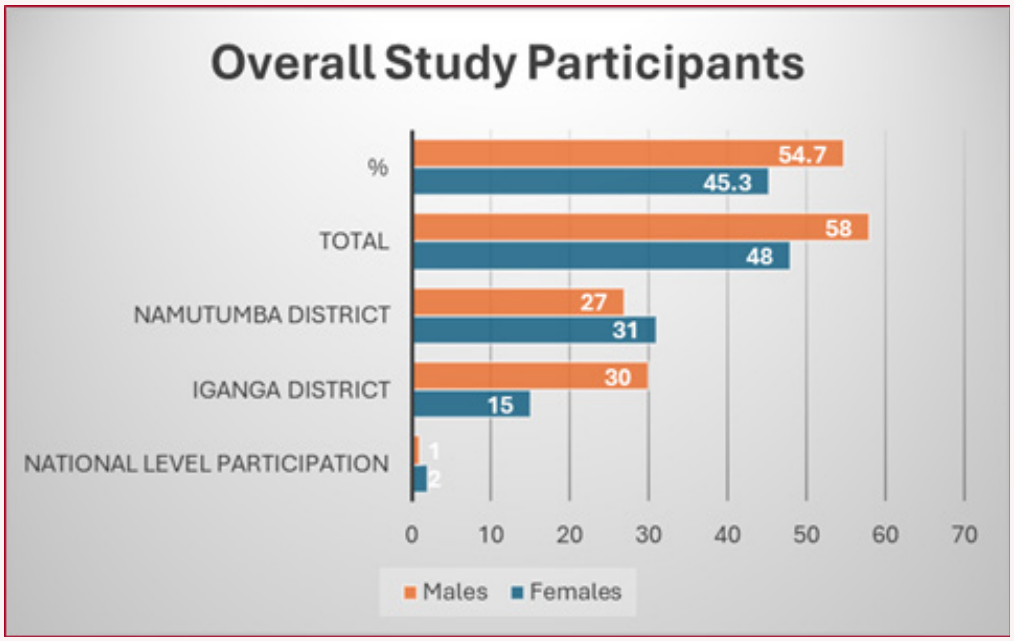
1. IGANGA DISTRICT

SN	Method	Level	Number	Total Participants
1.	KIIs	District	1 CAO, 1 DCDO, 1 CSO and 2 CHAs, Uganda police – Uganda Police, Family & child protection Unit	8
2.	KIIs	Sub county	1 Religious leader, 1 cultural leader and 1 LC111 (for each of the 2 sub counties)	6
3.	KIIs	Parish	1 LC1 (For each of the two villages in different parishes)	2
4.	IDIs	Parish	4 people for each village (2 villages will be selected from each of the two parishes)	16
5.	FGDs	District	1 mixed for CHAs (with 8 participants)	8
6.	FGDs	Parish	2 FGDs for the 2 villages with 8 participants (1 village per parish)	16
	TOTAL		15 KIIs, 16 IDIs and 3FGDs (33 Interviews)	55

2. NAMUTUMBA DISTRICT

SN	Method	Level	Number	Total Participants
1.	KIIs	District	1 CAO, 1 DCDO, 1 Probation Officer, 1 CSO and 2 CHAs Uganda Police, Family & child protection Unit, GBV Shelter – UWONET	6
2.	KIIs	Sub county	1 Religious leader, 1 cultural leader and 1 LC111 (for each of the 2 sub counties)	2
3.	KIIs	Parish	1 LC1 (For each of the two villages in different parishes)	16
4.	IDIs	Parish	4 people for each village (2 villages will be selected from each of the two parishes)	8
5.	FGDs	District	1 mixed for CHAs (with 8 participants)	16
6.	FGDs	Parish	2 FGDs for the 2 villages with 8 participants (1 village per parish)	16
	TOTAL		16 KIIs, 16 IDIs and 3FGDs (33 Interviews)	56

NB: The Overall total number of interviews for the two districts was 68 and then the total number of participants for the two districts was 106.



2.3 Data collection methods/Tools

a) Secondary data collection methods

The study conducted a review of secondary data such as government policies, programmes and action plans on GBV, programme reports on GBV and social norms in the Busoga sub-region, CEHURD baseline survey, programme indicators, published literature on social norms, GBV and gender justice. Analysis of secondary data informed the conceptualisation of social norms and the framing of research tools to guide primary data collection in the districts.

b) Primary data Collection – process and methods

The study collected primary data through one-on-one interview conversations with key informants – District officials e.g., Community Development and Probation Officers, local council leaders with the mandate of policy development and implementation, actors from CSO and CBOs, religious leaders and cultural leaders, youth and senior citizens in the community as custodians and gatekeepers of social norms.

Interviews were complemented with focus group discussions with Community Health Advocates (CHAs) who have been working with CEHURD, to enhance a collective understanding of social cultural norms, and how these can be tapped into to promote violence-free and gender just societies. One-on-one interview conversations and Focus Group Discussions worked as avenues of knowledge production but also as spaces of advocacy and awareness creation on nurturing progressive norms that promote gender just societies (See appendix 1 – Research Tools).

c) Mapping the social ecology of the communities

In order to appreciate the hidden social and cultural norms in the region, the research team conducted transient walks in the communities, observed and mapped linguistic, social, economic resources and activities that predominantly shape the ecological system of the region. Analysis of ethnographic observations provided insights into the hidden norms and social structures that regulate everyday life.

2.4 Ethical Considerations and Data Analysis

Researchers requested for consent from all participants. Apart from key informant interviews who consented verbally, all In-depth-interview participants signed consent forms after explanation from researchers, the ethical implications of participating in the study (see sample consent form appendix 2) Qualitative data was audio-recorded with the permission of participants, and later transcribed for analysis. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic and critical discourse analysis. This analysis specifically focused on common themes that emerge through critical reflection on language, symbols and representations in interviews and group discussions.

A detailed qualitative methodology enabled collective learning and co-production of knowledge. Most community members especially those in focus groups perceived the research process as sensitization meeting (omusomo) on GBV, care work and civic engagement.

2.5 How Generation Gender core principles were integrated in the Research Process

The research process was intentionally guided by Generation Gender core principles of gender transformative approach; inclusivity, meaningful and inclusive youth participation, do no harm, accountability and co-creation and co-ownership of knowledge.

1. A gender-transformative approach (GTA)

Core elements of Gender transformative approaches include use of participatory approaches to facilitate dialogue, trust, ownership, visioning and behaviour change at various levels (individual/household, group/community…); require critical reflection on deep-rooted social and gender norms and attitudes in order to challenge power dynamics and bring about a paradigm shift at all levels; explicitly engage with men and boys to address the concepts of masculinity and engage with influential norm holders, such as traditional and religious leaders, lead farmers to influence change (FAO et al., 2020, p. 6). This study intentionally used group conversations with women and men, targeted male and female youth and traditional and religious leaders as gate keepers of social norms in the region. Through these conversations that meaningfully ensured youth participation, the study enabled collective learning about existing social gender norms, how these are deeply embedded in linguistic and proverbial constructions, and the implication of gender inequalities informed by these norms and how negative norms can be shifted towards gender equitable societies.

2. Meaningful and inclusive Youth Participation

The study employed a methodological approach that purposively considered diverse social identities based on age, sexuality, gender, geographical location (rural and urban communities), disability, religion, among other considerations. Participants included male and female youth, elderly males and females, religious leaders to be able to capture diverse views in the community.

3. Do-No-Harm

The study worked with certain research ethical principles of voluntariness and informed consent. All research participants were explained the nature of the research, its objectives and the benefits of participating. They

were equally informed of how they were free to withdraw from the interview in case they were uncomfortable. While Key informants' consent was recorded verbally during interviews, In-depth-interview participants provided written consent.

4. Inclusiveness:

In this research process, the idea of inclusivity was percieved as including diverse people especially those who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized because of their gender, social class, race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, refugee or migrant status, ability, education, religion, language, health condition, body shape among others. Inclusivity includes ensuring diversity while trating people fairly and with equity. The research process endeavored to include commenity members from rural and urban areas, young and old, male and females, different education levels, persons with disabilities, government officials, participants from non-governemtal organisations, traditional institutions, diferent religions among other diversities. It is through such focus on diverse social contexts that social norms which drive GBV are understood, and adequately addressed.

5. Accountability:

This concept deals with the process where actors are held responsible for the principles and actions they agreed on. Generation gender project is implemented in districts and communities with different actors who have diverse commitments to promoting violence free communities and gender justice. For instance, the local governments have departments on gender and community development, committed to ensuring prevention of GBV and improved welfare of communities. The research process enquired on how different actors committed to promoting gender justice have done this in the communities. Findings indicate accountable practices towards violence free communities, stories of change as well as areas that require further improvement.

6. Co-production of knowledge

The study conceptualized the research process as an avenue for co-production of knowledge. Rather than use standardized question-answer tools, the study used semi-structured tools that left a wider room for probing and learning from the participants. Community members were perceived as participants rather than 'mere respondents' to researcher questions. As such, the report is informed by detailed verbatim quotations highlighting participants' viewpoints.

3.0 RESEARCH STUDY FINDINGS

3.1 Introduction

This section presents key findings from the study. Findings are organized around dominant themes that include a) social cultural (gender) norms that exist in the region – social norms register, b) social norms that influence GBV, Care work and Women's access to civic space, c) (CEHURD) Programme interventions addressing social norms and GBV and the Stories of change, d) Sticky negative norms that influence the link between GBV, unequal division of domestic care work and women's civic engagement. Other themes relate to strategic interventions (advocacy messages) suggested by participants to shift negative social (gender) norms to contribute to gender just societies.

3.2 Social-historical context of the Busoga Sub-region

Participants were asked to identify social norms that regulate everyday interactions between women and men in the region. While a set of norms were identified, critical observation across interview conversations indicates broader socio-historical contexts within which norms are nurtured and sustained. Before highlighting social cultural/gender norms in the region, the report points out the social cultural contexts that explain the norms that exist in the region.

It was argued that "Busoga is one of those areas in Uganda which have, … let me not call them backward but some form of backwardness. Why do I call it backwardness? They still believe certain things that other regions no longer believe" (Interview with a female, national-level participant). On the one hand, participants noted that the region still holds strong beliefs in traditional cultures, witchcraft, cultural practice of polygamy, and less value for education. On the other, they identified the socioeconomic and historical contexts that dictate the patterns behaviour in the region. These structures include the sugar cane growing and its associated subculture; the history of industrialization; the region's geo-location on a travel highway and its associated transactional sexual and economic relations; as well as the region's proximity to the lake with the associated fishing community sub-culture.

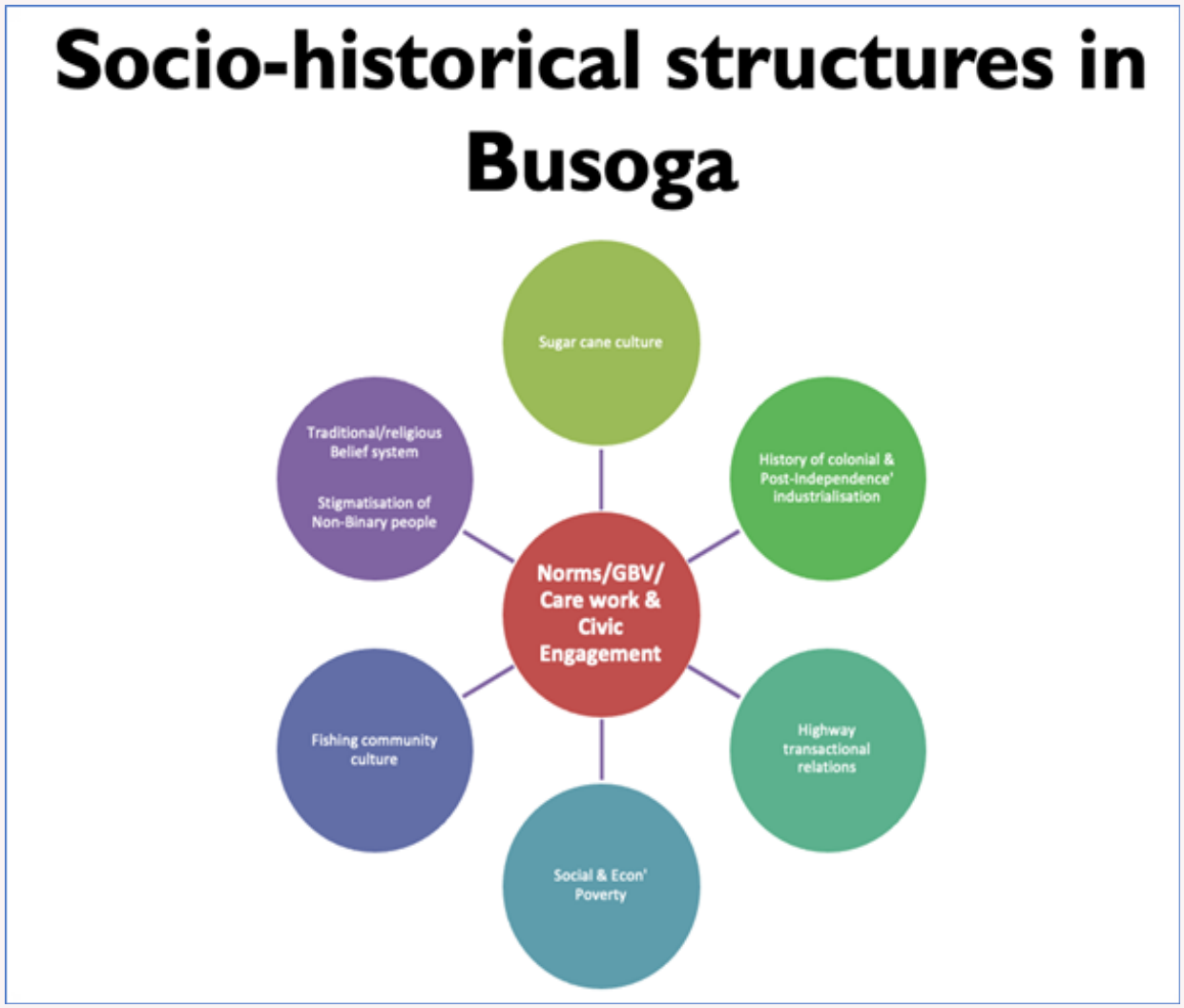
Sugar cane sub-culture: One of the key markers of the region is sugarcane growing which has overtime cultivated and nurtured a unique subculture that disrupts and diverts young boys of 12 to 13 years from school to paid manual child/teen labor in sugarcane cutting and loading on trucks. Some are hired and taken for weeks in "boarding" to cut and load sugarcane headed for factories. We were told by residents in Iganga district that cutting 25 bundles of sugarcane with each bundle containing 25 pieces, is paid at Sh.1,000. It often takes hefty efforts by young energetic men to cut sugarcane worth Shs 7,000 a day. The money gives them the ability to get girlfriends, whom they buy chapatis for, among other goodies. The common stories among the boys while cutting sugarcane, are about girls which breed room for sexual activity in the plantations which in most cases results in teenage pregnancies, and early marriages. For young men who are married, sugar cane cutting introduces them to constrained earning and high household expenditure. Amidst young boys working to become men, we were told stories on how earning money, getting a girlfriend, marriage and fathering children were key markers of masculinity and how men in this region are recognized by large numbers of children. This creates an economic burden of looking after the many children and also increases possibilities of fights in the home over unfulfilled basic needs.

History of Industrialization: Busoga subregion hosts Jinja city as one of the traditional industrial hubs in Uganda. Industrial processing begun with activities such as cotton ginning, coffee curing and sugar milling during colonial time. Sugar milling was the largest plant at the time which later became the Sugar Corporation

of Uganda Limited (SCOUL), established by the entrepreneur Nanji Mehta in Lugazi in 1924. The Kakira Sugar Works, was established in Kakira, just east of Jinja, by the Madhvani family in 1930. Industrial labor only afforded workers minimal wages, enough to sustain everyday life expenditure but too little for any sustainable economic investment. With the expulsion of the Asian population in the early 1970s which was pre-eminent in the ownership and management of the industries in the region, Jinja's industrial position waned. The lapse in the Jinja industrial hub further exacerbated economic poverty in the region.

Highway transactional relations: Busoga sub-region lies along a regional highway from Kenya to Uganda with most of the heavy trucks on the road having designated stop overs. Busoga's centrality in the East African regional transport network dates far back to the days of Uganda Railway from the coast at the Kenyan Indian Ocean port of Mombasa to the Lake Victoria port of Kisumu in 1901. Over the past, long distance truck drivers were identified as a significant part of transactional sexual networks that had consequences for the regions with the dominant being the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Fishing communities: Much of the Busoga region sits on the shores of L. Victoria, with a significant part of its population deriving their livelihoods from fishing. As some of the research participants noted, "when a fisherman goes out to do fishing, he comes back as a big person in the village and wants to spend all he has earned". In effect, fishing communities have unique subcultures around transactional sexual activity, daily earnings and expenditure and limited investment in education. This sociological environment has equally contributed to hypersexual relations that manifest in early child marriages and multiple sexual partnerships.



These 4 socio-historical contexts reveal how Busoga cultural values, traditional belief systems, religious dynamics and poverty levels interact and nurture patterns of cultural norms whose complex intersection could possibly explain the endemic GBV in the region.

3.3 Social Cultural (gender) norms in Busoga Sub-Region

Social culture/gender norms that inform human behaviour, social order and men and women's aspirations, were identified within the communities visited. Norms listed included what men and women were expected to be and do even if the reality was different. They dominantly featured:

a) Male authority, domination and control over women and children

The belief in men as authorial figures is deeply entrenched in Busoga region. It is widely believed by both women and men that a man is the ordained head of the family, who makes decisions concerning his wife, children and entire home. His authority is also expected to be uncontested. This was commonly demonstrated through the proverb/saying that "Omusadha kyakoba, omukyala kyakola" translated as "what the man says is what the wife does". Other participants pointed out how women submit to this authority especially by referring to their husbands as "Mukama wange" (my lord). A female, program staff in a non-governmental organisation explains:

> *Women here call their husbands 'mukama wange'. They will say "Mukama Wange kyakoba kyenkola" like what my husband says it is what I have to do. So they call their husbands "mukama wange". What the husband says is what they have to do. If you advise her contrary to what the husband believes, you are looked at as the bad person. If you tell her to use contraceptives or may be if there is domestic violence and you tell her to report unless you have created that space of trust, you will be looked at as the bad one.*

This norm is deeply believed and recited quite often, with an expectation that the man remains the symbol of authority and decision making in the home and the wider community. In a men only FGD, one of the participants shared a proverb intended to highlight male superiority over women. "Empube niwegeda eya, pusi neegilya" which is translated as "however big the rat may grow, it is eaten by the cat". The meanings derived from this proverb by men in the group is that a man shall always remain superior over a woman regardless of progress women register. They argued that even if the woman is educated and has books or big a position, she has to remain under the man's control (Participant 4: Male FGD, Kangulumo "A" village, Namutumba District, 3rd May 2024). Attempt to (re)claim dominant and controlling positions in families leads to men suppressing women's voice, physical confrontation and ultimately GBV. Other men emphasized that an ideal Musoga man is one whose responsibility is to marry wives whether he marries 4 his role is just to move from one wife to another and also producing many children (Female CHA, Namutumba Town Council).

"Empuba niwegeda etya pusi neegilya" which is translated as **"however big the rat may grow, it is eaten by the cat"**

These social and cultural norms are strongly held by the people in society, and all are expected to live by them. As noted by one of the participants, "those cultural norms should be obeyed or conformed to and if you fail to abide, there are repercussions. So, you have to follow them to have luck in your life. There are blessings you get when you follow them – you get peace and if you don't follow them, you may develop abnormal behaviors, no peace and those people are there who started behaving weirdly as a result of not conforming to cultural expectations" (IDI Adult woman-Kasokoso, Iganga District).

b) Women's submission to men (their husbands and male kin)

The norm around male authority is reinforced by expectation of the women's submission to their husbands and other men in the community. Women and men in focus groups and in in-depth interviews attested to women submission as one of the dominant cultural expectations of women in Busoga. Feminine submission also culturally plays out in proverbs, sayings, songs as it gets internalized by females across different age-groups. Basoga believe that once the man has talked, what he has said is the uncontested 'truth' that women have to agree with as a sign of submission and respect to the man's authority. In an interview, the deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Namutumba District, decried the level of feminine submission in Busoga which she termed "Backward submission", that is, submission without questioning. She explained that:

> *Women, even us who are learned, still believe that we have to be submissive, and I think it is within women. We don't want to be aggressive, … women still have that weakness. What the man says you just accept which is not true. If we could remove that backward submissiveness, that I am a woman I must do what I was told, we could progress. Women need to be assertive not to be blown by wind, this way, that way…(Interview with Deputy CAO, Namutumba.)*

The opposite of "backward submission" is what was termed as "assertive submission." The latter is where, if a woman wanted to go for training prior to standing for a political office, she sits with her husband and tells him about the intended decision and its advantages. Later, the woman shares with her husband her decision to stand in politics and requests for his support. If he refuses such a woman would go ahead and contest in politics because she has already told him. Participants argued that such a woman is submissive because she has done her role of informing the husband as a wife but if he refuses, she assertively goes with her decision because she submitted first. Notably, for feminine submission to influence both the educated and uneducated women, points to how sticky the norm is in the region. It is argued that social norms change very quickly when incentives for such change are strong while social norms can be sticky when incentives for change are weak (Dutta, Levin and Modica, 2017)[3]. Women's cultural call to submist without questioning often leads to women missing out opportunities to participate in political leadership, economic ventures or to merely lose control over productive resources they work for to men. Refusal to submit also triggers physical fights between husbands and their wives.

c) "A Girl should not start her menstruation when she is still in her father's house"

There is a belief in the region which is held by the moslem affiliated families that "girls ought not to start menstruating while they are still in their fathers' homes". If she did, it would be seen as an 'embarrassment' because the girls could get pregnant before marriage, in her father's compound. This norm was severally referred to, although some of the participants believed that there is positive change in which teenage girls are looked at. Young girls would therefore easily be given out in marriage to avoid this 'embarrassment'. It

3. Dutta, Rohan, Levin, K. David, and Modica, Salvatore, 2017: Interventions with Sticky social norms: A Critique.

was equally pointed out that in this region; child marriage is seen as a norm. As one of the key informants noted, "the Basoga believe that those young girls are marriage material". In an interview with the Police officer in the Family and Child protection unit, Iganga, child marriage is one of the reported cases, with 3-4 cases reported every week. Participants reported that it is not uncommon for a family to accept goods such as sugar and rice in exchange of their daughter. Normalization of child marriage is also reflected in sayings/ proverbs in everyday life.

A Male youth councilor in Iganga Central division recalled a proverb "Eito Tilyenga" (a young one does not ripen"). This proverb is often used in reference to girls who have developed bums and breasts and started walking in trading centers. Men would argue that since the girls have developed breasts, it implied that they were ready for marriage. Other proverbial normalizations of child marriages related to equating "Omwana omuwala sukari" meaning that if you give birth to a baby girl you would be assured of bride price symbolized as 'sugar'. Such sayings equally looked at women and girls as destined for marriage.

d) Women are expected to stay at home and perform domestic care work

In both Iganga and Namutumba, girls and women were culturally expected to marry, produce children, and stay at home rather than doing productive work outside the home. Women's domestic destiny was expressed in Lusoga as "omukyala atyame awaka, akola mirimu gyawaka. Omusadha azila mirimu gyawaka" translated as the woman sits at home and does domestic work while the man does not do domestic work. It is seen as 'abnormal' for a man to perform domestic work. A few men who assist in care work are perceived as having been bewitched by their wives. Community members who disprove male involvement in care work would say "Omukyala yamutyama ku mutwe" – that the wife sat on him. During one of the interviews in Namutumba town council-Namutumba district, a female participant noted that;

> *"When I was pregnant, I requested my husband to help pass me a glass of water but he refused. He can't help me with any work at home because he says that he is superior and I am under him" (Interview with a Female IDI).*

She shared that her husband often says "nagura engato Kwewonya amagwa" meaning that "I bought shoes to protect myself from thorns". It is in this respect that most women in this area are left alone in the private space (home) to handle all domestic care work with no expectation of men's help. The social expectation of women as domestic workers limits their participation in civic spaces, increases their care work and sustains women's subordination to men in society.

Other social norms are reflected in the numerous proverbs in the region as indicated below.

#	Proverb in Lusoga	English Translation	Implied meanings attached by the respondent	Proverbial linkage to GBV and gender inequality
1.	Nagura Engato kwewonya amagwa	I bought shoes in order to be protected from thorns	This implies that women in this region are 'bought' by men into marriage using the dowry, in order for them to do all the work at home. This proverb is a tool that is used by men in the communities to exploit women to even extreme levels as a way of them paying back to what the man paid marrying her off	• Commodification of women • Relegating domestic care to women • Limiting women's mobility from home • Failure to perform domestic roles leads to wife beating
2	Omusadha kyakoba, nzena kyenkola"	What a man says is what I do	This is one of the sayings that have brought about total submissiveness of women in the region because of the fact that their voices are subsumed under those of men and they only do what the man says. Participants noted those women's voices at home are only when they are instructing children. Matters of decision making are thus known to be a man's preserve.	• Suppression of women's voice. • Male domination over women in decision making • Women who go against their husbands decisions e.g., on the sale of household agricultural harvest attract physical abuse of men abdication of household responsibility.
3	Omwana omulenzi kilowa, omuwala kasukali	A boy child is considered instrumental like a landmark which never disappears while a girl is sugar. This was evidenced in all the interviewed parishes and villages in Namutumba District.	With that analogy, males have been the first choice to consider in the community unlike females who are assumed to be married off from their biological home to husbands home. This has made many families letting down a girl child in favor of a boy child.	• Denial of inheritance to women and girls – economic violence. • Less value to girl children leading to denied education opportunities, early marriage.
4	Mwenhe waka taba mutono	He who has a home is not minor	This means that a man's respect should be reserved as the head of the family despite the size i.e. small or short. It gives a deep reflection of how anyone considered as a man in a home should be taken as in terms of respect and obedience from the woman	• Normalising Male headship of housholds and consequent domination
5	Abasadha kiti kyamwogo ighe ghokisura ghe kirandira ighe oba okiswire nga kirambeire kyo kiranda burande	Men are like cassava cuttings, where you throw it is where it grows and establishes.	Meanings derived from this proverb are used to justify men's initiation of multiple sexual reproductivity.	• Promotes male sexual aggressiveness, multiple sexual partnerships. These contribute to a cylcle of polygamous relationships, producing many children, poverty and gender based violence

6	Eyiirya eyiibi likira eghemwe.	The worst marriage, it is better than a woman's paternal home	People's meanings derived from this proverb relate to marriage as mandatory for women. That a Musoga woman loves her marriage than her paternal/fathers' home.	• Urges women to stick to marriage regardless of circumstances, including abusive relationships
7	Omwana akutyamya ku yiiga eyisu"	This means that a child can make you seat on hot cooking stones.	This implies that whatever situation that comes in marriage where you have produced children you have no option to separate and leave your children to suffer in the hands of other step mothers in her absence as a female parent.	• This reflects on how children tie parents into abusive relations. Mothers often persevere in a violent relationship because of children in the marriage. • This has intensified bad treatment of women by men in Busoga region knowing that they are going nowhere since they produced children leading to increased forms of GBV.
8	Omukazi olina Okufa Na mirimu dho woba nga okayenda obufumbo.	A woman has to take care of her domestic work if she wants her marriage.	Domestic work is seen as a mandatory part of women's work in marriage. This is an indicator that men should not at all help their women in doing domestic chores or unpaid care work in a home	• Increased care work for women in the family • Stigmatising men who participate in domestic care responsibilities in the family
9	Empube niwegeda eya, pusi neegilya.	However big a rat may grow; it is eaten by a cat.	The proverb was used in reference to women empowerment. That even if the woman is having books, big position, she has to remain under the man's control.	• Criticising women's empowerment work and justifying violence agianst empowered women
10	Omusadha Mpango ya munumba. Wemeneka, nenumba egwa"	A man is the strong pillar that supports the house. If that pillar breaks, the house collapses.	This symbol of the man as the pillar speaks to the expectations around men as strong and backbone to the existence of households in Busoga. Additionally, this also justifies a man's word as a "final word".	• Promotes and normalises male domination in household decision making. • May lead to suppression of women's views
11	Abasadha tibalingirira mu entamu	A man does not look into the cooking pot	A social call on cooking as a responsibility of women not men	• Promotes exclusion of men from domestic care responsibilities. • Stigmatises men who make effort to participate in care work

The proverbs shared above point to a rich linguistic and cultural regulatory framework that guides everyday life in Busoga. The proverbs and sayings point to how deeply internalized and sticky social norms are and how slow changing negative ones can be. The report has also highlighted proverbial linkages to gender based violence as well as gender inequalities that are animated by these proverbs and resulting belief systems. According to the UNDP (2020)[1] report on "Human Development Perspectives: Tackling Social Norms A Game changer for gender inequalities" a social norm will be stickiest when individuals have the most to gain from complying with it and the most to lose from challenging it. As a region that cherishes its traditional heritage, community members still have stronger attachment to the social/gender norms than the urge to question and transform these. As such, the above proverbs and the social norms that flow therefrom,have enough power to keep women from claiming their legal rights due to pressure to conform to societal expectations. They also prevail because of the limited investment in education and individuals' lack the information or knowledge to act or think differently.

3.4 Social (gender) norms and Gender Based Violence

Busoga Sub-region is on record for having the highest numbers of Gender Based Violence cases in the country. The national survey conducted by Inter Religious Council of Uganda in 2021 indicated that Busoga region was in the top position in terms of Gender Based Violence with 62%. A similar Survey by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) in the same year indicated that 51.9% of women aged 15-49 in the region experienced spousal violence and 22% experienced sexual violence. According to an interview with staff at UWONET, the establishment of GBV shelters in Kamuli and Namutumba districts ten years ago, was justified by the high incidences of GBV in the region.

This report has cited a wide range of literature on how social norms influence the understanding and perpetuation of gender-based violence. For instance, we highlighted how national surveys by UBOS, studies by women's rights organisations e.g., Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) and Oxfam indicate that wife beating was justified in most societies in Uganda, until the recent past. The idea that it was acceptable to beat/commit violence against a woman if she failed to care well for children, left the house without asking, or disobeyed her husband/uncle/father/brother (all males) remains prevalent amongst women and men today (UWONET, 2017).

In Iganga and Namutumba, the study inquired from participants what Gender based violence was, the forms it takes, and who perpetrates this violence. The enquiry further sought to establish the kind of norms that influenced gender violence in communities. Findings indicate the commonest forms of GBV in the region include forced child marriages with the majority of the young girls forced out of school and married off by age of 14. Other forms of GBV include child labor, wife beating, women shouldering domestic care work alone, men's control over agricultural produce, men refusing their wives to work outside the home, among others.

Domestic violence against women

In an interview with a female NGO staff who has worked in the region for 5 years now, GBV manifests in form of Domestic violence against women.

> *There is domestic violence against women in form of physical and psychological abuse. The lady will not be able to decide on many things – the number of children to give birth to, the use*

4. 2020 Human Development Perspectives: Tackling Social Norms: A Game changer for gender inequalities, UNDP, UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017 USA

of contraceptives. You know a lady will carry alone all the burden of supporting the family even when the husband is available. She is thinking of giving birth, paying of school fees, feeding the family, constructing a habitable home for the family. All these can drain emotionally. What makes it worse is that the little money she toils for is controlled by the husband (Interview with Female NGO staff, Head of Programmes, in charge of implementation).

The above reflection points to the complexity of GBV as indicated in the way it is woven in everyday culturally approved practices of women's domestic work, and men's socially acceptable control over women. In fact, she further shared on how wife beating was unfortunately normalized as a form 'disciplining' your wife at home as indicated by high numbers of unreported cases of violence because of the belief that these can be handled at home.

Majority of the participants have noted that men tend to engage in polygamy most especially during the harvesting season when there is some money coming into the family and this breeds a lot of violence in the homes.

One of the participants said that "domestic violence against women is rampant here for example in town you may be having a business so that you develop your family together, but the man can get money from the business and misuse it and there is no benefit gained. It is like you worked for him instead of working together and accumulating wealth together. In the villages, man and woman may cultivate together because it is the order of the day but when it comes to harvesting, do you know what he does? He sells all the harvests and does not use the money to buy basic needs at home instead he marries another wife which is not good at all" (IDI, Adult woman-Kasokoso). Experiences of this nature lead to violence against women.

Child labor

There are reportedly high cases of GBV in form of Child labor in the region. Child labor was reportedly high in both Iganga and Namutumba taking the form of street vending in towns, to sugar cane cutting in the plantations.

"If you went to Namutumba town council now, you would see so many children selling many things. I wish you came when it is school time, we have tried our level best, but the parents are adamant. They are selling all types of merchandise, if you go along that road, deep in the village there they are cutting sugar cane. Then in the gardens, during the harvests children don't go to schools, they are the ones who are planting ground nuts, in rice in the gardens, they are the ones weeding and chasing the birds, they are the ones harvesting. And even when mothers give birth, they are the ones to stay behind to look after the mother. So, there is a lot of child labor across" (Interview with Deputy CAO, Namutumba).

Incidences of child labor were particularly gendered with young boys leaning towards mostly sugar cane cutting while girls doing domestic related activities. Nonetheless, each of these activities had a dire consequence for male and female children. Participants noted that children only go to school when it is examination time, affecting their quality academic performance and eventual dropping out of school in favor of casual labor.

Forced child marriage.

This is one of the highly reported cases of GBV. This is form of violence is influenced by norms that look at girls as marriage material, and a source of wealth for parents through brideprice. Child marriages in Busoga region have reached near normal situation, believed to be fueled by religion, low value of girls education and poverty. In Namutumba, a group conversation with CHAs indicated that deep

Down in the villages, people are marrying off girls who are not even of age. "As long as you have grown some breasts on your chest, they will say that she is ready for marriage and they will start looking for her a husband. Some of these actions are reportedly justified by religious beliefs e.g., that a girl cannot start menstruation when she is still in her father's home.

SRHR Related GBV

> Women go for family planning without discussing with their husbands because their husbands will not allow. So, they go hiding and prefer to use methods that will not easily be discovered such as injections. Because of methods which may not be appropriate for their bodies, women end up over bleeding or drying up. And they lose their appetite for sex. That even if you do what, she will not be interested. You touch her and she pushes you away. And those are the fights in those bedrooms. And then the man will rape the woman. And yet these men don't know that if they force a woman and she tells you to leave her that she does not want and you continue forcing, that is rape (CHA, FGD, Namutumba District).

Other forms of GBV include denying girls and women inheritance of family property, chasing widows off the land of their deceased husbands, and violence against men. While there are most men experiencing violence, majority do not report for fear of being stigmatized.

Manifestation of GBV

Gender based violence manifests in diverse ways in communities. It was noted that most forms of GBV manifest in form of normalized cultural practices, thus taking on the form of socially acceptable forms of behaviour. For example, there were many instances in which participants cited wife beating as acceptable e.g., if she has stayed for long at the well fetching water, went out of the home without asking husband's permission, came back home late, commits adultery, among other reasons. Child labor and child marriage were the other forms of violence that happened subconsciously without communities' wariness. Most children are sent by parents to work (sell merchandise in towns and trading centers or work in sugar cane plantations) to contribute to family needs while girls are equally 'sold' into marriage in exchange of household goods.

Participants also noted 'seasonal' patterns of gender-based violence in homes. We were alerted that since the research was happening during the planting season, we would most likely find fewer cases of GBV in communities and fewer GBV survivors in shelters. GBV cases are reportedly higher in communities during harvesting season as well as in the months when children are reporting to school.

> *Yes, during planting season, there is less violence because the women are busy planting and men are appreciating it. When it comes to harvesting, other men deliberately disorganize their wives so that they divorce, and men use their absence to sell the produce. Then in other cases, men just go to the gardens and sell what women have grown, others just sell what she has harvested*

that is already in the house. So, there are always high cases of GBV, and we always receive more survivors in our shelters during harvesting period (Interview with MLE, UWONET,)

Seasonal violence also manifested in form of men controlling household agricultural produce. The study registered numerous cases where on harvesting, men transport the rice to the market in town and only return when they have exhaustively used up all the money out of the rice sales. Quite often, men marry another wife in town upon whom they spend this money with and return to their wives at home in time for the new season. These patterns triggered numerous cases of violence in homes.

Violence was also reported during school reporting at the beginning of the year. As the demand for scholastic materials increases, most men, through their informal conversations in drinking joints (bars) will embark on hatching plans to marry their daughters of as a way avoiding the burden of school demands and earning incomes through bride price. Marrying off school girls instead of supporting their continuation in school is closely supported by social norms that look at young girls as marriage material as well as those that devalue education in the region.

These findings on manifestation of GBV, resonate with attitudes captured in cartoon caricature sometime in 1993 as shown below. This cartoon (source not clearly identifiable) featured four men discussing girls, marriage and bride price in a bar setting. Through their peer group, they talked about how "if you want to miss bride price, let your daughter go to school", how "educated women make very poor wives" and how educating girls is a waste of funds." While this is an old cartoon, its description, the peer group setting and the issues of concern can be typically associated with conversations in Busoga Sub-region.

- The carton speaks to the apparent dislike for girls' education because it has the potential to disrupt prospects for early marriage and the associated bride price.
- The manner in which all men, on the drinking joint are all in agreement to defer girls' education for early marriage.
- Collective support to men marrying uneducated women because educated ones who are enlightened are likely to speak, have voice, work, earn and no longer exhibit unquestioned submission to men. Educated women, according to the cartoon, make poor wives.
- Un educated, early married girls produce many children have higher care workload at home and are more likely to be submissive, abused if they speak out.

This cartoon enables us to have a glimpse on the social contexts that explain how norms that perpetuate GBV are subtly crafted and nurtured in spaces like drinking joints. These are spaces where men's ideas crystallize into cultural norms. Informally nurtured, tightly policed, and guarded by cultural gatekeepers – the men. Indeed, GBV was noted as one of the complex forms of negative social behaviour, apparently rooted in pervasive poverty, and a patriarchal culture that promotes male domination and women's dependence over men.

Seven key social norms in the region that influence GBV

1. VAW is often promoted through social norms rooted in the patriarchal power imbalance between men and women, and in the dominant belief that men protect and provide for and have authority over their family and that good women/wives submit to their husbands authority. This norm is reflected in sayings such as ***"Omusadha Kyakoba kyenkora*** meaning ***"what a man says, is what I go with"***

2. After marriage, women's most important roles are to serve their husbands and to have and to raise their children

3. Norms that look at young girls as brides/marriage material end up making girls lose opportunities for education, force girls in early marriage to potential older partners, with limited voice, high domestic care work.

4. Norms around girls as a source of wealth promote dislike for girls' education because it has the potential to disrupt prospects for early marriage and the associated bride price. Educated and empowered women are equally shunned as bad women for their percieved exercise of agency.

5. Norms around women submission to male authority. When married, women are expected to obey their husbands, act according to their wishes and not strive for equal decision making. If they transgress these norms they may face physical violence used by husbands as punishment or discipline.

6. Men expected to exercise coercive control over women and girls. Whilst women and girls are expected to be submissive, men are expected to exercise power and control in their families and relationships, which can manifest in various ways. This is even stringent in polygamous relationships where women are controlled through their own competion over who impresses the husband better. Men's coercive control is seen through social titles their partners give them e.g., ***"Mukama Wange"*** – meaning – ***"my Lord"***.

7. Male child labor: Norms around men as sole providers of households has led to many young boys drop out of school in search of money, and nurture this form of young masculinities through manual labour in sugar cane plantations.

3.5 "Nagura Engato Kwewonya Amagwa" – Social Norms and domestic Care work

Unequal distribution of care work is one of the three core aspects the study focused on. We particularly asked the kind of domestic care work at exists in a typical family in the region, how the work is distributed between and amongst women, men, girls and boys, and the norms that govern this distribution. The study also enquired on possibilities of progressive changes in the unequal distribution of care work.

As noted by many participants, what is considered as work in the Busoga subregion is that which earns people an income. Thus, anything that is unpaid is not looked at as a form of work. One of the participants mentioned that "An ideal Musoga man is expected to do work. Any work for men like doing Boda riding, riding motor vehicle, sometimes digging, and carpentry, Electrical, Auto motives" (IDI Female youth Budongo).

An ideal Musoga woman from the past we have been trained that she is one who wakes up very early in the morning, goes to the farm/gardens to dig, comes back and finds her husband home and she cooks and serves her husband (Female CHA-Namutumba Town council).

A number of activities (and the gendered division of these roles) were listed as making up the load in the households. In a group discussion of women in Nakyeere village-Nakyeere parish, Namutumba District, Participants identified digging, cooking food, washing clothes for the children and their father, collecting firewood, fetch/collect water, cleaning the compound, pealing food, sweep the main house and kitchen, helping mothers in the kitchen, preparing the serving area/dinning, serving food, uprooting food from the garden, peeling, washing the dishes, as some of the care work in the home.

While women and girls were responsible for the above unending list of care work, boys and men's participation in the domestic work remained minimal. Participants 1 and 8, in the Nakyeere FGD submitted as follows:
A boy is supposed to dig, sometimes collect water, sweeping and cleaning the compound rear or look after goats and cattle. On the other hand, men wait to be served, supposed to dig and after should go and look for money to support his family by clearing household dues and bills (FGD Nakyeere,).

This disproportionate distribution of unpaid domestic work, with most of it being done by women and girls was dominant across the region. The FGD participants believed this was normal because it is what culture dictates.

Typical care work in Busiki households

I can give you a typical musiki woman. Very early in the morning, you prepare children to go to school, then you and your husband will go to the garden. You carry both hoes, maybe he can carry the panga. Because for a traditional man – a musiki knows that he is supposed to protect the home, so he carries a panga and for you, you carry two hoes. After you have come back, you fetch water, look for food, prepare it. Prepare children at home, take the goats for grazing, serve the man food, then do other household chores like washing clothes especially for the kids, if there is soap. If there is no soap, you can postpone washing up to tomorrow. You will need to go back to the garden in the evening. You can go both of you or alone depending, because a man can give you a situation that in the morning you will work in his garden in the evening, your garden. You must have some energy for your own garden as a woman (CAO, Namutumba).

The report noted several incidences in which, as a matter of social norm, women are strongly expected to "kutyama awaka" – sit (stay) at home and do domestic work without an expectation of a man's help. Participants described a typical woman as "one who goes to the garden, and if she is lucky to go with the husband, she carries the two hoes, the child on her back, takes care of the cows and goats at home, she cooks, she protects the man at home even at night when the man is soundly sleeping the woman must make sure the man is safe". Most of them wondered whether this kind of unequal distribution of care work should not be seen as GBV in itself.

Asked whether the unpaid domestic care work was not burdensome to women, some participants disagreed and wondered what else would be there for the woman to do at home. In a conversation with a male Local Council Leader in Bulafa, Namutumba;

"It is 'natural', a woman is the one supposed to fetch water, look for firewood, prepare food, wash utensils and other activities like that. It is expected of her. She can be burdened if she doesn't have

many children but if she has many children, she is also a commander (mudumizi). You come and wash utensils and please don't argue, for you come and peel the potatoes. She instructs children to work." (Interview with Male LC Leader, Bulafa Cell,Namutumba)

In the submission above, the male local leader did not see anything wrong with women shouldering all domestic work. He instead points out how care work motivates women to give birth to many children because they will help her perform this culturally mandatory role.

The idea that domestic work as predominantly "women's work" is deeply entrenched in the region as indicated in some of the proverbs which approve and celebrate women care workers while denigrating and stigmatizing men who make attempts to participate in sharing domestic care.

Opinion on Men's participation in domestic work

Participants were asked their opinion on men participating in domestic care work. For some, especially women, were of the view to train both boys and girls in doing domestic work so that when they grow up and live alone without their parents, they will be able to care for themselves e.g., if his partner is sick, he can do domestic housework without hesitation. They also cited the changing environment including gender division of labor in the global market where both men and women might perform paid care work.

"There is also need for both girls and boys to work as house helpers abroad for green pastures but if you did not teach your children both girls and boys how to do domestic care work such big opportunities would pass them. We largely encourage fellow parents outside there to equally equip both boys and girls with skills on how to perform domestic care work in Households regardless of their gender and age. Though boys tend to grow and become big headed at puberty and adolescent stage" (Women FGD, Nakyeere,Namutumba)

Despite these intentional efforts amongst women, they noted that to a large extent the biggest number of men and boys have failed to accept to take part of the domestic care work in the household because it is considered as shame yet some are doing it for purposes of income for instance men are cooking food for students in schools, in big hotels and restaurants unlike doing it to help his wife.

Domestic work is seen as emasculating for men.

Participant 4. *My husband tends to help me with domestic work only when I am sick, during labor time but when I am not, he cannot.*

Participant 5. *When I am not okay feeling fine my husband stops one of the older girl children from going and keep home to take care of me and do domestic work during that period but not him.*

Participants 1 to 8. *Men would have changed but a few who tend to help their women are mocked by their fellow men and women with bad comments like he might be witched, 'pocketed', he was 'put in the bottle', etc. and nicknaming them funny names which underrates their respect in society. This has left many men unchanged hence the burden of care work is left for women and girls … (women FGD participants on men in domestic care work).*

It was noted that an ideal Musoga man does not participate in care work. Men are culturally expected to be economic providers – go outside the home, work, earn and income and support the household. In a men's group discussion, Kangulumo Zone A, Namutumba, there was consensus that *"a real Musoga man does not engage in housework like washing utensils unless his wife is sick"*. The same group of men strongly believed that a real Musoga woman should bring food and cook for the whole family and that *"all the domestic work of a household is assigned to her"*. As such, this cultural expectation strongly restricts men's participation in care work.

Interview conversations across the two districts indicate that men's role in care work is minimal with a few of those who share domestic work with their wives being labeled as not men-enough, (bisajja-sajja), as bewitched by their wives. Community members would say *"Omusadha, omukyara yamutwama ku mutwe"* – his wife sits on him. These attitudes of disapproval of men's contribution to domestic work have a strong effect. They deter men from participation or drive those who participate into the background. Asked whether there are men who help, one male elder noted; *"They are there but they are not open, they help but it is rare. If you find a man at his home, you sit together and converse. If you leave, he will start helping the wife"*. An 80-year-old widow, asked how possible it would be, in a highly polygamous community, for men to help their multiple wives. She wondered: *"If my husband had four of us all in the same house, separated by bedrooms, whom would he help in domestic work?"*

Majority men in a group discussion noted that while men's help in care work is a possibility with educated couples, it is not possible in rural settings. They termed it *"spoiling and pampering women"* and that "*it can influence even other women to abandon their responsibilities here in the village claiming that if other men can cook, why can't you do the same".* They argued that women should not be shown much help unless they are sick"

Because of sticky norms that distance men from the domestic sphere and instead allocate them public roles (economic providers), men do not want to be seen going against this Busoga ideal norm of masculinity. For many, men's participation in domestic work feels emasculating. Norms of care work are still persisting despite shifts in the economic roles at the household level. Even when a higher number of women are not participating in economic activities, earning incomes and supporting households, men are not increasingly participating in care work.

3.6 Social norms and Women's limited participation in Civic Spaces

Generation Gender programme defines civic space as "the environment that enables people and groups – or 'civic space actors' – to participate meaningfully in the political, economic, social and cultural life in their societies". Vibrant civic space requires an open, secure and safe environment that is free from all acts of intimidation, harassment and reprisals, whether online or offline. It is equally observed that Women's civic spaces are all spaces that give women right to freedom of information and expression (including the ability to share their interest and concerns), the right of Assembly and Association, and be part of citizen's participation as well as act to shape and influence their societies. According to the Ugandan constitution, Ugandans, in particular women, are mandated by the law to have a set of civil liberties and to participate in association without restraint.

DOES AN ORDINARY MUSOGA WOMAN HAVE A VOICE WHETHER AT THE HOUSEHOLD LEVEL OR AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL GIVEN THE CULTURAL NORMS THAT EXPECT A WOMAN TO OBEY HER HUSBAND WITHOUT QUESTION?

In this study, we asked participants whether they felt women had access to civic spaces. Participants identified several spaces where women exercise individual as well as collective voice to mobilize and claim their rights. These include representation in local council leadership structures, village saving groups, community-based organisations, church leadership among other spaces. They talked of how communities have experienced transformation from traditional cultures that used to limit women's participation in civic spaces as follows:

- The saying of "what the man says, is what the woman follows", are talks of long ago. Things have changed now. Things are changing because of emancipation programmes by the government and the different rights groups that have come up to tell people their rights. So, the woman of today cannot just keep quiet.
- Women have a number of forums where they can voice their message, including young girls. Women's voice is supported by laws prohibiting violence and those regarding succession of property in families. "…gone are the days when they used to deprive the widow and the orphans of property. The clan members or the heir could just decide to throw away the widow and the orphans and they take away their property. Now the women have a voice against that, you cannot just do that and you think you can survive with it, it is very hard. They will report to the police and make sure that they fight for their rights".
- Keeping women behind doors is no longer practical. The woman will come up, she knows her rights and she will list her rights and demand for her rights. So gone are those days where we used to say that what the man says is what the woman follows.
- Women have voice. They are in local council leadership, there are women representatives. They also make groups, that is where they begin to reason better than us men. Because for us we don't form groups, the women form groups and that is where their voice comes from. At the village level the women in groups invite people (politicians) to speak to them on issues of development (Male participant – local council leader). His submission points to women's collective mobilization, (agency) which men do not have in most of the communities.

These voices point to women's active involvement in civic spaces. However, a number of constraints exist. Women who actively engage in these spaces are labeled by men in negative ways as 'unmanageable', 'bad mannered', as 'Museveni's women'.

Women are still not yet fully engaging in the decision-making processes because of the patriarchal nature of their communities. "It is the man who decides because he is the head of the family. He decides but I can also decide as an individual especially in situations where I foresee harm upon myself but all in all he makes the decision and I cannot decide in his presence though I also have the right to decide" (IDI Adult woman, Kasokoso). Areas in which women decide on include joining leadership positions and using family planning services.

There were several male participants that decried women empowerment programmes which they blamed for spoiling women and children through promotion of women's rights and children's rights. They felt that the discourse of women's rights eroded men's authority and led to many men abdicating family responsibility and a crisis of masculinity in the region.

Interlinkages across GBV, Care work and women's access to civic spaces.

In the study, participants were asked whether there are incidences of GBV in communities related to people's failure to perform unpaid domestic care work. Majority of the responses indicate that while this nature of violence has reduced in the recent past, there are incidences of this nature.

- Most women work so hard but gain very little because they may go to the field and grow rice but on harvest, the reward the man will pay her is by marrying another wife.

- Men have abandoned family responsibility and all the work at home. When the woman works hard to provide, the man will return home drunk asking for food, yet he did not leave money to buy food. If the food is not there, the woman will be beaten.
- Women's active engagement in local council leadership, community groups, and participation in other civic spaces has also generated tension amongst men. Men fear women who have influence.
- It's not appropriate for a man to have one wife. Otherwise, if she doesn't cook you won't be able to eat that day. If she doesn't fetch water for you, you won't shower. Fetching water is not a man's responsibility but rather a woman.
- Women can now go and work outside the home but she must make sure that she doesn't sleep away from her home or go without her husband's permission.
- Men are failing to take up their responsibilities in the family because men have been oppressed by women's rights and freedoms. For instance, you marry your wife and produce children but if you want to 'shape them' into the persons you want, the government tells you that you have no right to do that.
- In many homes, there are fights and arguments because women now have more rights and freedom from the government. To avoid fights, some men leave home for peace.
- In every household there is violence stemming from the liberties and freedoms provided by the government to women and children.

The above perceptions about women and men's relationships at the household level point to restrictive norms on what women and men expect of each other and how, when not conformed to, leads to gender based violence. For example, the study documented extensively, men's beliefs on how women's civic rights and freedoms and their active participation in community groups have led to fights in families. While women's civic engagement is expected to contribute to gender equality, some community members feel it has disrupted traditional norms about men's hegemonic positions, triggering negative reaction from men.

These findings not only reveal how violence against women is socially justified and normalized but also how these social norms on violence against women are intricately woven with notions of women's participation in unpaid care work and restricted mobility outside the home which would ideally enhance women's engagement in civic spaces. In effect, violence against women is justified when women go against the norm of shouldering heavy domestic care work or when their participation in civic spaces (voice and rights claims) are perceived as questioning men's authority in the home.

3.7 CEHURD Programme interventions

CEHURD interventions targeting prevention and response to GBV, care work and women's participation in civic spaces in Iganga and Namutumba districts are located within its broader programme on Community Empowerment programme (CEP). Community empowerment programming is aimed at building community capacities and agency in health and human rights to ensure that rights holders and duty bearers at community level participate effectively in promoting rights to health[2].

In the Busoga sub-region, CEHURD community empowerment programming on health and human rights, operates through the implementation of the Generation Gender project, whose aim is "building a transformed gender-just and GBV-free Ugandan society, through establishing and nurturing a resilient youth inclusive movement boldly advocating for social, cultural, religious, and politically located progressive laws, policies and practices that promote gender equality in Uganda". Through its baseline survey, Generation Gender programme called for:

5. https://www.cehurd.org/portfolio/community-empowerment-programme/

1. Popularizing and raising awareness on the relevant Gender, GBV and Youth policies.
2. Establishing and/or strengthening advocacy structures and knowledge base to protect youth from gender injustices including gender-based violence;
3. Creating community awareness on negative social cultural norms, how they perpetuate gender inequalities and how they can be shifted for gender just societies;
4. Creating a youth movement informed of their basic rights and freedoms and
5. Strengthening the legal and policy framework.

CEHURD programming in Busoga sub-region has been informed by its strategic objective of community empowerment for health rights as well as generation Gender calls to strengthen a youth movement for violence-free and gender just society. In particular, the programme aimed at ensuring transfer of power and resources to citizens, ensuring that vulnerable communities speak out and exercise their agency, and build locally driven initiatives on the right to health.

CEHURD interventions in Busoga Sub-region include;

1. **Nurturing Strategic partnerships** through District level Multi-stakeholder engagement, stakeholder participation, partnership and networking
2. **Community Health Advocates (CHAs)** – an established community based model to mobilise youth into a network for rights advocacy, in particular prevention and response to GBV.
    c. Community Mobilisation, Dialogues and media engagement to facilitate interactions between rights holders and duty bearers.
    d. Legal advocacy and litigation, in particular sensitizing the public about existing laws on prevention of GBV and following up cases of GBV to ensure victims receive justice (selected cases)
    e. Nurturing a local conversation on how Social Norms influence the link between GBV, Care and civic engagement.

The report elaborates on each of these roles, highlighting the impact created through these programme interventions regarding change in social cultural (gender) norms that influence GBV, Care work and women's limited access to civic space.

Strategic Partnerships

In both Iganga and Namutumba districts, CEHURD conducted inception meetings with district stakeholders working towards prevention and response to gender-based violence. CEHURD was also credited by district officials in the region for spearheading mobilisation of actors towards collective response to gender-based violence.

> *"I am glad that CEHURD is one of the CSO's though they don't sit here but they have supported in one way or the other. CEHURD has supported the coordination of the district engagement. You know approaching the reduction or the way we approach GBV, GBV isn't a one-way or you can't just sit and do it alone. While as UWONET we are doing prevention and response, there are so many factors that are needed to have GBV eradicated and some of the factors are stakeholder engagement, policy making, and this is not something you just do as an individual organization. CEHURD's role has been in bringing all stakeholders together to have a conversation on the policy measures that are necessary to address GBV" (UWONET Field Staff, Namutumba District).*

Community Health Advocates (CHAs) as a Model

CHAs are a community-based network of youth who were identified and trained by CEHURD on the existing laws on prevention and response to GBV; human rights, care work, and the negative social norms that perpetuate social injustices in the communities. While CHAs operate in 8 sub-counties within Iganga and Namutumba, the study covered 4 sub counties, (two in each district) where the CHAs network exists. The study interacted with selected CHAs in both Iganga and Namutumba districts.

The study interacted with the CHAs both as key informants and in focus group discussions, to learn from them their motivation, mode of operation, possible progressive changes in shifting social and gender norms, and interventions to strengthen the youth movement for gender justice. Through these interactions, the study established four aspects in which CHA impact has been noted.

a) Existence of a vibrant youth network of CHAs with clear coordination structure.

CHAs reported having been trained on rights issues, detection of social injustices as well as reporting often unreported cases of GBV to local authorities. CEHURD recruitment includes youth who are leaders in local structures. Some work as community development officers, while others are on youth council, and community coordinators. In Namungalwe Sub-County, Iganga District, the CHA coordinator also doubles as a spokesperson of Iganga youth forum and a member of the national youth council. Prior experiences of youth leadership have enabled CHAs to have a wider and influential network and voice and connection to community leadership structures as avenues through which they convey the message on violence free and gender just communities.

- CHA network has widened avenues for collective youth mobilisation, sensitization, identifying and reporting social injustices.
- CHAs have become part of the referral pathways to respond to GBV. CHAs identify cases (such as defilement, child marriage, domestic violence, violence against men) report them to the local council, 'mama police' (Officer in charge of Family and Child Protection department of the Uganda Police).
- CHAs work with 'mama police' and Naabakyala (women councilor) to sensitize communities against GBV and where possible offer counselling to GBV survivors.

Story of Change: CHAs as part of the referral pathways

Defilement is also very common in this community. I want to appreciate one lady that works with CEHURD. She has helped us deal with defilement cases. In my village a man defiled a young girl whose mother had been away from her home because of domestic violence. The woman was abused by the husband because of his alcoholism. So, when the woman left, she left the girl in the hands of this man who defiled her and made her pregnant. The girl run away from home and kept in hiding but informed her aunt about how the man had threatened that he would kill her if she told anyone. So, one of our CHAs went and got this information and informed us including 'mama police' through our referral pathways. This information later reached Judith at CEHURD who helped this girl. Although the man run away, the case is still in police. When we realize that the case is too serious for us to handle, we report. Our role is to report such cases. (Excerpt from an Interview with Male CHA

The above story gives pointers into CHAs as a network for Legal advocacy - especially following up cases of GBV in communities as well as creating awareness about the existing laws, on GBV, care and women's civic engagement.

b) Knowledgeable, confident and empowered CHAs

CHAs Focus group discussions showed how the youth have acquired wide knowledge on what constitutes human rights abuse, on how cultural norms influence GBV and unequal distribution of unpaid domestic care work, and how these injustices affect men and women disproportionately. Youth confidence that inspires active reporting and follow-up of cases of human rights abuse, points to a growing sense of individual and collective youth agency that has the potential to contribute towards prevention of GBV.

Story of Change: Nurturing youth advocacy through raising the self-esteem of youth activist

Participant 2: We have learned a lot of things through CEHURD especially through trainings on human rights. Two, it has given us confidence that if I wear that T-shirt and stand in front of people, they listen which we never used to be. So, we have learned a lot of things. We have learned leadership skills, even in the home, that a woman will be there and quarrel, but you just give it some space and time. Or sometimes, it could be a neighbor and you go tell them what to do. They have also told us that if there is this crime, you are supposed to handle it like this, because that never used to be there. For example, if there is someone who has been raped here in the village and those cases have always stopped there. But now CEHURD has told us that you can go to this office or the other office and report the case so that those issues are resolved. CEHURD has given us confidence that if you report a case, you have a right to follow up. So we have learned a lot from CEHURD (Male CHA, FGD, Namutumba, 3rd May, 2024)

c) CHAs as part of the ecosystem to respond to GBV

CHAs shared experiences of cases of GBV they have identified and reported to local authorities. As such, CHA model has contributed to building wider mass movements at grassroots and community levels as well as partnership with district-based partners (duty bearers and rights holders), especially as these youth leaders position themselves as part of the pathways to respond to GBV.

Story of Change: CHAs as part of the ecosystem to respond to GBV

We asked CHAs to share with us the force behind some of the progressive changes in prevention of GBV. In a conversation below, they share critical insights.
Participant 1 (Female): *There are so many organizations that have come to help us in the villages. Even UWONET has done a great job. They do a lot of community mobilization and sensitization. Interviewer: What organizations are these?*
Participant 3 (Female): *Action Aid, Fields of Life, CEHURD, even FH - Food for the Hungry. There are days they [FH] walk in the community and do campaigns about GBV in homes.*
Participant 2 (Male): *You are talking about other organizations, and you are not giving in ours (he laughs).*
Participant 3: *No, she asked about what caused the change in the past 5 years. And I was giving*

her the organizations because these organizations have worked together. Now CEHURD, when it came, they also do community mobilization. They collect people in different groups or categories. They train them. They engage motorcyclists, religious leaders, cultural leaders, police, etc. So they train them so that they can go and sensitize other people. Now like the religious leaders use the church as an opportunity to tell the people, the cultural leaders also have a platform, even Uganda Police. So they keep training the different groups of people and they are told to spread the gospel. CEHURD also brought us the CHAs on board. And the good thing is that they have said we shall also be able to go to the field and talk to people, do outreaches, and also have dialogues. I know that it will also cause change and prevent GBV. Because eehhh we were badly off here in Namutumba especially deep down in the villages. When UWONET had just come, there were so many cases there. But now, at least, they have reduced (CHA FGD Namutumba,).

This conversation highlights the centrality of partnerships in response to GBV. The participants point to strategic actors, networks and partnerships that have contributed to the region's response mechanisms. They highlight the role of CEHURD in building networks amongst duty bearers who also double as gatekeepers of negative social norms, taking them through sensitization and building capacities of different actors on how to be accountable to the rights holders. The conversation gives pointers on how CHAs became part of these community mobilisation efforts to build a wider and accountable rights movement to transform harmful social cultural norms.

d) CHAs as Social norms change agents:

While they are not a wide network, CHAs discussions indicate the model's potential to nurture meaningful youth participation, youth agency and positioning youth as active agents for changing negative social norms that perpetuate gender inequalities.

Story Of Change: CHAs as change agents

In A FGD with the CHAs in Namutumba, they were asked an opinion on men and women sharing domestic care work. A female CHA responded as thus:

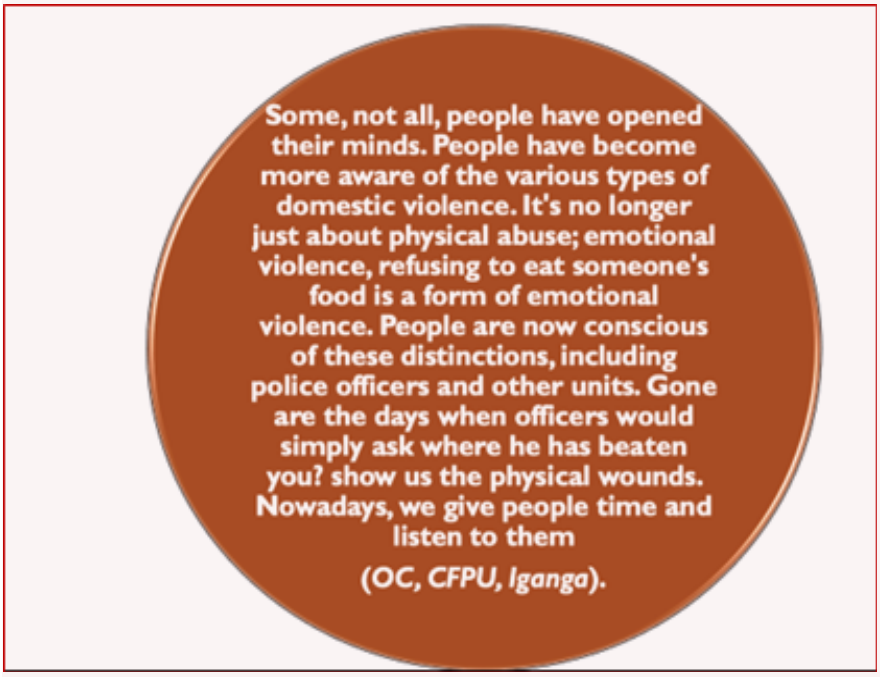
Participant 3: *In my opinion, the first thing is, CEHURD has taught us these things and we have let go of some of the thoughts that were ingrained in us by our grandparents that we are the only ones who are supposed to do all the work. Because we were really overburdened. By the time someone goes to bed, you are extremely tired and then the man will tell you, turn this side. And yet you are really tired because of the high workload. By the time he touches you, you are tired. Where does the appetite even come from? Now, in my opinion, I thank the organization for teaching us. We now know that we can divide roles. Now I see that it is very okay for us to share that domestic work. So, I am going to prepare tea, but there is no water, so, go and fetch water as I am sweeping the compound. Let me cook as you are caring for the child. But these men in Busoga are shameless. The child will cry and cry, you want to cook, mop the house but he can't even carry this child or play with the baby. Yet this is his baby as well. He wants you to carry the baby on your back as you mop and do the rest of the work. If men would hear this gospel about unpaid care work, that it can be shared by men and women, it would help a lot. Even the GBV will reduce (Female CHA in a FGD, Namutumba,).*

This is a story that points to CEHURD's invested efforts in training the youth leaders in the region to identify social norms (around GBV and care work and the impact of these norms in burdening women and contribute to social tensions in the home. The story equally points to CHA's change in belief and attitude that care work is not a natural and exclusive role of the woman and that the norm "all domestic work is for women" can indeed change. While she is able to imagine this possibility of change, the CHA equally enables us to appreciate how this change can be sustainably arrived at – involving men in these trainings. Hear appeal -- "If men would hear this gospel about unpaid care work, that it can be shared by men and women, it would help a lot" – resonates with one of the core principles of Gender transformative approaches, that of engaging men and boys alongside women and girls. Gender transformative approaches argue that "challenging the traditional views of masculinity enables men to live positively, and work and live with women as equals" (FAO et al., 2020, p. 15).

Other interventions to address gender inequalities in the region.

The study enquired from participants whether they have observed any processive change towards GBV prevention, care work and women's civic engagement. The question "Have you observed any change in the last 5 years?" generated mixed reactions. There were participants who pointed our progress while others identified areas in which social norms remain sticky.

Registered Progress in prevention and response to GBV



» Increased sensitisation and response to GBV by the local government and non-governmental organisations such as Action Aid, UWONET, CEHURD, Food for the Hungry (FH). In Namutumba, UWONET has become synonymous with response to GBV. "Because eehhh we were badly off here in Namutumba and deep down in the villages. When UWONET had just come, there were so many cases there. But now, at least, they have reduced" (Female CHA, Namutumba District).
» Increased awareness about the law on GBV. People know that it is a human rights abuse to beat a wife. "We know that you beat your wife, you would have beaten your pocket" (Male elder,

Namungalwe, Iganga).

- » "Yes, we have observed some change because we know that if they deny you sex today, you just keep quiet. Because if you complain and fight, they can take you to prison (laughing) (Male youth, Namutumba).
- » There is increased understanding of what GBV entails. Participants from the police noted a change in the way GBV is perceived. They noted "we no longer ask victims of GBV to show us the physical wound. We know violence can also be emotional and psychological" (OC, FCPU, Iganga).
- » Communities' awareness about pathways for reporting GBV. Many people know where to go to report – 'Naabakyala', 'Mama police', CEHURD, UWONET. "Anyways, people have been sensitized and told where to report. So, if a man is reported to the mama police the first time, he will be scared. He will say, 'aah we just came back form mama police, we can't go back again".
- » Right to inherit. People are now aware that a girl child has a right to inheritance. Initially the community knew that its only boys that have a right to inheriting their father's property, but this is slowly changing.
- » The change I have noticed is that you rarely see married couples fighting. Well, they fight but they know the law will catch up with them.

Registered progress in Care work

- » Gender equality and women empowerment programs by the government and NGOs have changed people's mindsets and attitudes. Women can also buy somethings at home like men, unlike in the past. Men also need to help women in domestic care work in households. A woman who works eases work at home (Male FGD, Kangulumo, Namutumba Town Council).

Registered Progress in women's access to civic Spaces

- » The women who started in village savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) are now leaders in the local councils at the parishes, sub-county, districts. For example, our LC 2 chairperson and area member of parliament currently are women (and many others) whose journey begun with community leadership (Male FGD, Kangulumo, Namutumba).
- » Women participate in community savings groups, have their own administration and leadership structures, they select leaders amongst themselves to run their activities without men's influence. These leaders also represent women in other bigger associations at the district.
- » Women in communities are inspired by women politicians in the region. "Usually when you ask women here who your role model is, most of them, the biggest percentage would mention Rt Hon Rebecca Kadaga. So, she is a big influence to the women in the region. Such figures influence how women participate in civic spaces because a women like Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga from Kamuli district is a pioneer of women's political participation and civic engagement.

3.8 Positive Social Norms in the region

Social norm change is possible, albeit generally complex and iterative. It calls for multisectoral, holistic and culturally sensitive approaches. In this report, (See table below), we identify areas in which norms that regulate women and men's behaviours especially those that perpetuate gender based violence, and gender inequality in general are changing. We also indicate sources of these positive changes. Positive social norms are marked by change in attitute towards women and girls, community realisation of the value for girls education, number of laws, ordinances prohibiting gender discrimination and their implementation in communities, changing stereotypes about gender division of labour, space, and decision making in families and community, among others.

#	Negative social Norms	Positive change in the social norms	Source of progressive change
1	VAW as normal and acceptable, rooted in the patriarchal power	• Women increasingly report Domestic Violence to Uganda Police, GBV shelters, local councils to seek for help • Some men report cases of violence against them. GBV Shelter in Namutumba District Acknowldged that some men walk into the GBV coordination office to seek for help.	Continous sensitisation by District Local Government, NGOs, Uganda Police – Family and Child protection Unit, CEHURD, Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) GBV Shelter.
2	Good women/wives stay home, serve their husbands and raise their children	• Increasing access to girls education. Girl children can now access education • Increasing women's participation in community civic spaces, local politics. • Women are inspired by women political leaders in the region, e.g., Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, former Speaker of Parliament • The norm around women as domestic actors is slowly changing	Progessive laws on Affirmative Action in education, women's political participation, Role models from women in politics have normalised women's political participation
3	Young girls as brides/ marriage material/ girls as a source of wealth	• Increased awareness about child marriage as form of GBV • Increased cases of girls enrolling and staying in schools	CHA campaigns against GBV, sensitisation against child marriages
4	Women submission to male authority. Men expected to exercise coercive control over women and girls Low valuing of Girls and women eg., seen through limited access to education	• Women have voice: "what the man says, is what the woman follows, are talks of long ago. Things have changed now. So, the woman of today cannot just keep quiet" • Women attaining economic empowerment: in most household have been empowered through government income generating activities. • Women supporting children's education: Women have formed community associations where they get money to support children's education	Government programmes on women's economic empowerment e.g., youth livelihood programme (YLP), Uganda Women Empowerment Programme (UWEP), Parish Development Model (PDM). Things are changing because of emancipation programmes by the government and the different rights groups that have come up to tell people their rights.
5	Domestic violence as acceptable form of disciplining women and children for non-perfomance of care work	• Increasing awareness about and abiding by existing law prohibiting gender inequalities e.g., DVA, 2010, Succession Act, and women's rights in general -- "If you beat a person, you beat your pocket" • People increasingly know that it is a human rights abuse to beat a wife	CHAs working with 'mama police' and Naabakyala (women councilor) to sensitize communities against GBV and where possible offer counselling to GBV survivors. CEHURD sensitisation on existing laws against gender discrimination

		• Change in perception on what GBV entails – Police officials noted "we no longer ask victims of GBV to show us the physical wounds, we now know violence can also be emotional and psychological" • Meaningful youth participation, youth agency in challenging negative social norms	CEHURD trainings to CHAs on human rights and referal pathways for GBV
6	Men as sole household heads and providers	• Women perform economic roles (casual business, membership in Village savings groups), earn and support majority of households in the region. • Some women invest jointly in business with spouses. • Women starting business for their husbands	NGOs programme on women's economic empowerment
7	Limited mobility of women outside the home	• Women are free to move within communities, attending community savings groups meeting. Women dominate school and church meeting. • Some men (especially those in educated homes) participate in unpaid care work	CHAs community sensitisation of sharing domestic care work
8	Lack of inheritance for girls	• Change in attitude towards girls and women inheriting family property. Communities are now aware of the succession Act, 2022 • As an emerging practice, Parents are now naming their daughers' after their fathers.	Existance of progressive law on Succession, CEHURD community sensitisation
9	Community structures that are gatekeepers of social cultural norms	• Some of the traditional leaders and religious leaders are supportive of the work on gender equality. • Thriving grassroot youth movement against GBV – made of CHAs through grassroot mobilisation; partnership with district-based partners (duty bearers and rights holders) e.g., Action Aid, Fields of Life, CEHURD, Food for the Hungry, and many others.	CEHURD through inception meetings on strategic partnership building in Iganga and Namutumba. Championing CHA as a community mobilisation model. CEHURD community trainings and sensitisation – "CEHURD engages motorcyclists, religious leaders, cultural leaders, police, etc. They train them so that they can go and sensitize other people.

In the table above, we highlight a few positive norms that are changing regarding gender based violence and gender justice. Social norms are shaped by mutual expectations within the social network e.g., family, school, religion, media, tradional cultura systems, among others. It is thus notable that a lot of expectations about women and men, about gender roles, gender division of spaces, and decision making patterns are all changing albeing slowly. For instance, it is nolonger strange for women to perform economic roles, earn incomes and provide for households.

While some of the changes are attributed to Generation Gender programme, most of the progressive changes result from long term government interventions in the region on gender equality and women's economic empowerment, and the implementation of progressive laws. Notably Generation Gender programme has created impact especially amongst youth through sensitisation and awareness creation but this impact has not been wider and long-lasting to influence sustainable change in negative social norms.

3.9 Community perception about positive social norms in community

While there is notable progressive change in awareness about gender equality and women's rights, laws prohibiting human rights abuse, and gender division of roles and responsibilities, these have triggered inadvertent effects in some communities.

» Men who share in domestic care work are denigrated, stigmatised and ridiculed as not men-enough, as bewitched by their wives
» There is general disgruntlement that gender justice interventions (by NGOs and government) lean strongly towards women and girls leaving out men and boys. There is indeed general public outcry that women empowerment programmes have left out the 'boy child'.
» There are misconceptions that women and children rights discourse is the root cause of gender-based violence in communities.
» Empowered women are percieved by some community members as bad mannered and agianst culture. For some male participants, empowered women were characterised as rebelious and turning children agianst their fathers.
» Gender equality and women's empowerment has transformed the gender division of labor in communities with most women joining public sphere in formal and informal income generation activities, earning and sustaining their families. These changes have altered men's roles and expectations.

- Men have abdicated family responsibilities and left women to be in charge.
- Child labor with majority of the boy children into manual, casual roles such as sugar cane cutting.
- Inadequate articulation of men's vulnerability in the region (poverty, experiences of violence against men, illiteracy, …).
- Men have reduced physical violence against women. However, there is reported increase in economic, emotional and marital violence against women. Men move out of households and leave provision and care to women.

3.10 Community Perception about Non-binary persons

CEHURD interventions in Busoga sub-region emphasised promoting principles of inclusivity, diversity and non-discrimination. Despite programming and advocacy for the rights of non-gender binary people, there is persistent resistence towards the discourse on same sex relations. In a male focus group discussion in Namutumba district, participants cited norms that define women and men in ways that normalise heterosexuality while denigrating and stigmatising non-binarism.

Participant 6: "A man should not marry a fellow man. You can even be expelled from the village. This is a great crime".

Participant 8: "A woman should not engage in sexual relationship with another woman. It is an abomination. You can even be expelled from Busoga". (Male participants in a FGD, Namutumba District)

These two submissions above highlight deeply entrenched social perceptions around identifying outside the hegemonic heterosexual relations. Participants cite how soceity finds it criminal and abominable. The idea of non-binary relations as abominable and criminal resonates with the national level homophobia recentlt witnessed in the passage of anti-homosexuality Act, 2024 as well as during the legislation on Sexual offenses Bill, 2019. Participants' views indicate how identifying as non-binary attracts repercussions such as excommunication from the community. These views also highlight continued stigmatisation of the non-bibary relations in the region destipe the interventions.

Persistent Social Norms

» Not many men are reporting cases of GBV for fear of being socially stigmatised. Many decide to keep quiet or move out of their homes. "We do not have anywhere to report these cases because men are considered strong and if you report such a case of GBV they laugh at you and you lose respect (Male FGD, Kangulumo, Namutumba Town Council)
» In Busoga, it is still very clear that a man has to eat food that is prepared by his wife.
» The belief that domestic care work is a woman's responsibility is held strongly amongst rural households.
» Stigmatisation of non-binary people as abominable and criminal. The sense of fear from social repecusions prohibits people from openly identifying as non-binary.

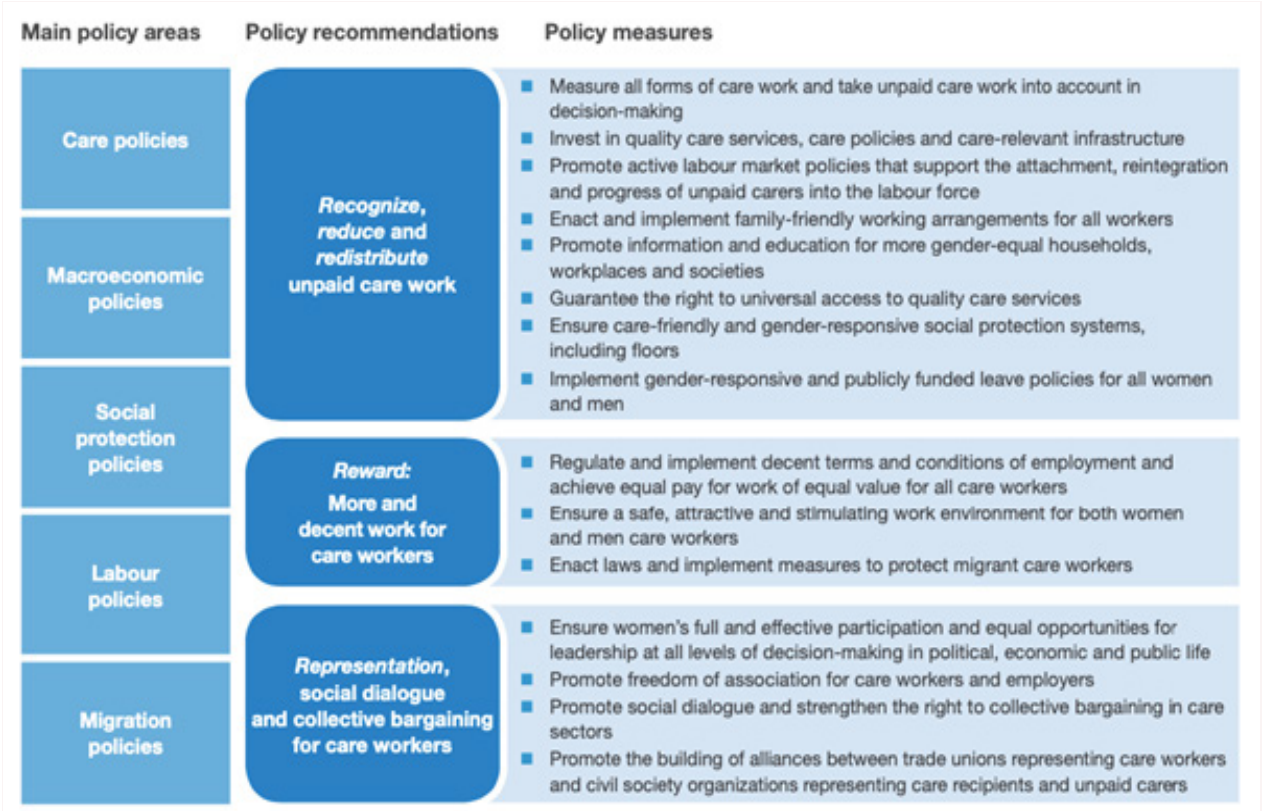
Limitations to the CEHURD Interventions

» Stories of change from CEHURD CHA model indicate how this intervention has created a shift in certain social norms around GBV and care work, towards gender equality. However, the shift in some of the norms has been realized at the Community Health Advocates' individual level. Substantive stories of Realisation of how negative social norms impact everyday life of women and men and the possibilities for change are from CHAs and a few community leaders who have been exposed to constant sensitization and less felt in the general community especially in rural areas.
» The study also noted that CEHURD trainings and community mobilisation interventions have not yet targeted communities massively. Sensitization meetings that have occurred are apparently convened in hotels in urban areas, missing the opportunity to directly impact local communities.
» Equally, the project interventions have only lasted for a few years – since 2021 yet the number of years of project interventions matter. Participants observed that short-term projects have minimal impact on deep rooted gender norms.

3.11 Study Recommendations on how to shift the negative social norms

◊ Conceptual unpacking of social norms, care and civic engagement. Nurture an intellectual conversation to unpack and make familiar the concepts and their implication to the communities. Do we have enough knowledge on what care work is? Or are we imposing these concepts on the communities to make choices about? Do men understand unpaid care work and how it can be remedied, or they think we now want them to do women's work at home or start paying their wives? Do we know the 5 Rs – Recognize, Reduction,

Redistribution, Representation in policy making spaces and Rewarding care workers[3]? (see 5R framework below). Interventions for care work need to start in institutions of learning to create that knowledge and awareness.



Source: ILO, 2018: Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work

According to ILO (2018), the "5R Framework is a human rights-based and gender-responsive approach to public policy. The Framework creates a virtuous circle that mitigates care-related inequalities, addresses the barriers preventing women from entering paid work, and improves the conditions of all care workers and, by extension, the quality of care.

» **Re-think the approaches to community change:** who are we targeting? With what interventions and for how long? NGO actors need to think through approaches used in addressing GBV to avoid duplication of similar strategies that have not delivered in the past; Think through specific target audience - men need to be targeted more for social change. Target norm holders and gatekeepers in their spaces – e.g., drinking joints.

» **Deliberate male engagement to foster gender transformative change.** There is need to think of male involvement as a gender transformative approach/intervention. We need to engage men and women in the same setting if we want to see a change in the social norm because over time, women's capacities have been built but when they return to households, women's agency triggers GBV. Having joint (men and women) sensitization creates room for collective critical reflection on harmful norms, negative masculinities and opportunities for change.

» **Sensitize women to overcome backward submissiveness** – they must be able to be submit to their husbands while express a level of assertiveness and decision making on things that concern their lives.

6 https://www.ilo.org/publications/major-publications/care-work-and-care-jobs-future-decent-work

» **CSOs should engage these men more in GBV prevention programmes**. When women are invited in these meetings and men (most of whom are perpetrators) are left out, the latter cannot experience change. They should be brought on board. "Sensitizing men and women at the same time would be the best way to manage the community change.

» **Train both girls and boys in care work, personal hygiene, responsibility.** It is like telling the girl that you should be clean when you are not telling the boy that you should be clean. This leads to a generation of men that do not care.

» **Continuous Sensitization of community members**;

- Sensitization in schools to target boys and girls on living violence-free life, sharing care roles at home and in the community, building confidence and self esteem of both boys and girls; nurture children into responsible grown-ups.
- Hold community dialogues within the community: CSOs should desist from using money as a motivation for mobilizing community dialogues. When CSOs use money, people would not listen, but they would wait for that time when they would be signing for the money.
- Community sensitization should start with smaller groups and scale up interventions after impact. It is better to start with small groups of people, serve and create impact than targeting bigger communities whom you not going to serve at the same time.
- Target sensitization in Higher Institutions of learning. Advocate for integration of GBV, care work and women's civic spaces in the syllabus.
- Address community sensitization through multiple dimensions to be able to contribute to social norm change.

» **Continuous learning from communities**: This study interfaced with diverse stakeholders (duty bearers) and community members (rights holders), and documented norms. Interview conversations acted as a space for advocacy, training and awareness creation on how norms influence GBV, Care and Civic engagement. There are Participants (especially in group discussions) who appreciated and looked at the research as an avenue for sensitization (omusomo) and requested for more. Others wished these conversations targeted them and their spouses, or the entire community. That way, the study would have sowed a seed of norm change.

» **Strengthening the CHA Model**. This can be done through forging strategic partnership and working relationship with the lower and higher local council system, and traditional leadership structures (gatekeepers of social norms) e.g., the office of Mukunganya. These strategic collaborations can ensure wider reach and impact in the community of the Community as well as the youth activists working through already established structures.

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CENTER FOR HEALTH, HUMAN RIGHTS & DEVELOMENT

Plot 4008, Justice Road,
Canaan Sites, Nakwero,
Gayaza - Kalagi Road.

P.O. Box 122329, Kampala.

Tel: +256 200 - 956006,
Tel: +256 414 - 532283,
Toll free - 0800 300 044

info@cehurd.org

www.cehurd.org

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