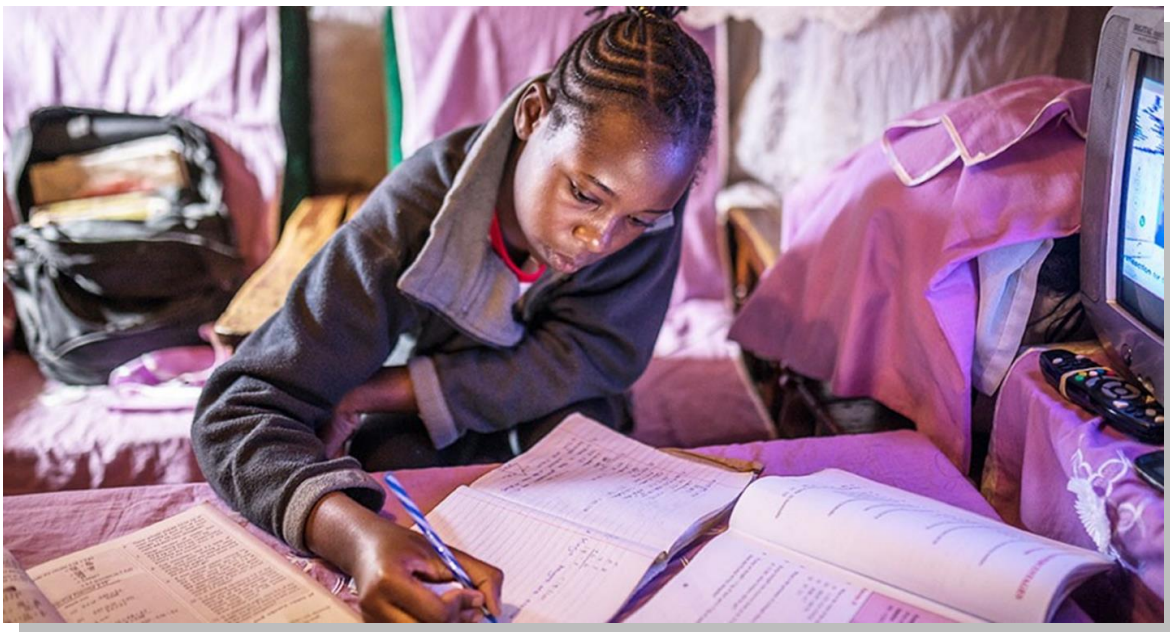


RESEARCH

Impact of COVID-19 on Children in Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi - Kenya



RESEARCH

Impact of COVID-19 on Children in Busia, Loitokitok, Marsabit and Nairobi - Kenya

Conducted and Produced by:

**African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child
Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN)**

Regional Office

Komo Lane, off Wood Avenue

P.O. Box 1768 Code 00200 City Square, Nairobi, Kenya.

Tel: +254 20 21440010, 2140011, 2140013

Email: regional@anppcan.org | Website: www.anppcan.org

© ANPPCAN 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	v
List of Figures	v
Acronyms and Abbreviations	vi
Acknowledgement	vii
Executive Summary	1
SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION	7
1.0 Background and Context	7
1.1.1 About ANPPCAN and Children Protection Programmes	7
1.1.2 The Current Situation	8
1.1.3 Justification of the study	11
1.1.4 Objective of the study	12
1.1.5 Organization of the report	13
SECTION TWO: METHODOLOGY	14
2.1 Research Design	14
2.1.1 Sites of the Study	14
2.1.2 Population	14
2.2 Sample size	15
2.3 Sampling frame	15
2.4 Data management, Analysis and Reporting	15
SECTION THREE: FINDINGS	17
3.1 General Information	17
3.1.1 Distribution of parents/guardians by gender, age, education level, occupation/ employment status	17
3.1.2 Distribution of children by gender, age, parents, care-giving	18
3.2 Education of children in the household during the COVID-19 period	20
3.2.1 Participation of children of school-going age in learning activities in schools	20
3.2.2 Participation of children in learning processes at home during COVID-19 pandemic	21
3.2.3 Prevalence of child labour during school closure	23
3.3 Knowledge about COVID-19 Pandemic	25
3.3.1 Level of awareness about COVID 19 pandemic	25
3.3.2 Level of awareness of precautionary measures for preventing infection with COVID-19 virus among children and parents	27
3.3.3 Prevalence of COVID-19 virus transmission and its effects in the sampled households	29
3.3.4 Exposure of members of households to risks of COVID-19 during COVID 19 period	30
3.3.5 Changes experienced with closure of schools	39
3.4 Child abuse/violence and their prevalence during COVID -19 pandemic	39
3.4.1 Percent reporting heard about child abuse or children being mistreated	39
3.4.2 Emerging forms of child abuse faced by children during the pandemic period	39

3.4.3	Perceived perpetrators of child abuse/mistreatment during the pandemic	41
3.4.4	Reporting of child abuse/mistreatment by respondents	43
3.4.5	Needs and priority areas for the children during the COVID 19 period	46
3.4.6	Engagement of children while at home	48
3.4.7	Priority needs by the parents and guardians during Covid-19 period	50
3.4.8	Type risks children face at homes /community during Covid-19	50
3.4.9	Failure in protecting children in the community during Covid-19	51
3.4.10	Prevalence of violations of children rights during the COVID-19 pandemic period – child labour and pregnancies in homes/communities	51
3.4.11	Reported actions taken when a child becomes pregnant or abused	52
3.4.12	Perpetrators of children pregnancies in the community	52
SECTION FOUR: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS		54
4.1	Conclusion	54
4.2	Recommendation	54
REFERENCES		57

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-1: Distribution of the sample by project region	15
Table 3-1: Socio-demographic characteristics of sampled parents/guardians	18
Table 3-2: Socio-demographic characteristics of children	19
Table 3-3: Participation of children of school-going age in learning activities in schools (in/out of school)	20
Table 3-4: Learning at home by children during COVID-19 pandemic	22
Table 3-6: Sources of information about COVID-19 pandemic	27
Table 3-6: Actions and behaviours with high risk to exposure of members of households to the COVID-19	31
Table 3-7(a): Effects of COVID-19 in the family	31
Table 3-7(b): Summary of FGDs participants' views on the impact of COVID-19 on partners' work, children and families by region	33
Table 3-8: Awareness about child abuse/mistreatment during COVID 19 period	39
Table 3-9: Forms of child abuse reported among sampled children in Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi	40
Table 3-10 (a): Perpetrators of child abuse/mistreatment and place of abuse as reported by children	42
Table 3-10 (b): Perpetrators of child abuse/mistreatment and place of abuse as reported by parents/guardians	42
Table 3-11: Percent of respondents (children and parents) reporting child abuse	44
Table 3-12: Stakeholders' suggestions on ways to address children's needs	47
Table 3-13: Type of actions taken when a child becomes pregnant or abused	52

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3-1: Distribution of children by working during school closure	24
Figure 3-2: Distribution of children and parents/guardians by awareness about Corona virus (COVID 19)	26
Figure 3-3: Distribution of respondents by level of awareness about precautionary measures about COVID 19	28
Figure 3-4: Precautionary measures against COVID 19 infection practiced by children and parents/guardians	29
Figure 3-5: Parents and guardians reporting being affected by COVID-19 in the family	30
Figure 3-6: Forms of child abuse reported among sampled parents/guardians	41
Figure 3-7: Distribution of respondents by authorities where they report cases of child abuse	46
Figure 3-8: Perception of parents/guardians regarding children staying at home since closure of schools	48
Figure 3-9: Distribution of parents/guardians with opinion that the children were better of protected in school than in the homes	49
Figure 3-10: Persons/institutions failing to protect children in the community during Covid-19	51
Figure 3-11: Prevalence of child labour and pregnancies in the family during the COVID-19 period	51

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANPPCAN	African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect
BOM	Board of Management
CAN	Child Abuse and Neglect
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
CHDs	Child Help Desks
CHVs	Community Health Volunteers
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CPVs	Child Protection Volunteers
CT	Child Trafficking
DCS	Department of Children Services
FGDs	Focused Group Discussions
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
KHIS	Kenya Health Information System
MOH	Ministry of Health
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PEEP	Parents Economic Empowerment Programme
PRC	Post Rape Care
SACCOs	Credit and Savings Cooperatives
SND	Strategies for Northern Development
TDH-NL	Terre des Hommes-Netherlands
UK	United Kingdom
VCOs	Volunteer Children Officers
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WFP	World Food Programme

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The study was conceived to elicit the impact of Covid 19 on children in Kenya, especially in the four counties, namely: Busia, Kajiado, Marsabit and Nairobi where ANPPCAN has been implementing child protection programmes. The findings of the study are to provide clarity on the specific needs of children arising from children staying at home due to closure of schools owing to the outbreak of Covid 19 pandemic.

The findings and recommendations of the study are timely and will be taken into consideration in addressing the needs of children, particularly within families and communities, where a noticeable rise on the number of child abuse and neglect cases were recorded during 19 pandemic period.

ANPPCAN would like to thank her programme officers who conceived the idea of the study, developed a concept note, mobilized resources and conducted the study in the four study sites of Busia, Kajiado, Marsabit and Nairobi, through Focus Groups Discussions and questionnaires to the respondents of the study. The staff are Sophie Omutanyi, Bernard Morara, Evan Munga, Joab Odhiambo, Dorcas Wambui and Annette Opiyo.

ANPPCAN would also like to recognize Dr Philista Onyango and Wambui Njuguna for leading the process and providing focus on the study and the valuable technical contribution on the process right from the study conceptualization to the final report writing and production.

Finally, ANPPCAN would like to thank partners and beneficiaries of the Child Protection Programmes in the 4 regions of Busia, Kajiado, Marsabit and Nairobi who volunteered their time to attend the FGDs and interview sessions. Much appreciation also goes to the consultant, Francis Odhiambo, who collated and analyzed the data and generated initial report of the study.

The study findings and recommendations contained will be followed up and implemented in order to improve outcomes in ANPPCAN's child protection programme.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report presents the findings of a study conducted by ANPPCAN in 4 Counties in Kenya where the organisation implements Child Protection programmes. The Counties are Busia, Kajiado (Loitoktok Sub-County), Marsabit and Nairobi. The purpose of the study was to ascertain the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on children and their families during the closure of schools with the intention of containing the pandemic from spreading, since March 2020.

Similarly, the study attempted to assess what the children and their parents knew of the pandemic and the measures supposed to be taken according to the Ministry of Health Regulations/Guidelines being shared with the public to protect themselves from being infected by the pandemic. Before the study, there had been reports from the Media indicating that cases of sexual abuse, such as, defilement of children, teenage pregnancies, child marriage, physical abuse, child labour and female genital mutilation (FGM) had increased during the closure of schools, all over Kenya. As such, it was important to determine the situation in the 4 Counties.

With the Covid-19 outbreak, there was bound to be shifts in the interventions on Child Protection since the entry point has been through schools than families/communities. ANPPCAN Child Protection programmes targeted children and their parents in schools, as well as, teachers and other collaborators working in those Counties. The families and communities were by and large left out. Therefore, it was important to find out what was happening to children in the 4 regions when the schools were closed.

ANPPCAN also wanted to assess if the children, their parents or guardians and other stakeholders targeted with these programmes acquired knowledge on child abuse and exploitation of children. This, it was hoped, would assist ANPPCAN change some of its approaches to broadly cover families and children in their communities instead of schools. The study was therefore conducted in Busia, Loitoktok (Kajiado), Marsabit and Nairobi, where the organization has been implementing Child Participation and Parents Economic Empowerment (PEEP), Anti-Child Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. These programmes have been financially supported by WeSeeHope (UK) and Terre des Hommes Netherlands, through its Kenya offices.

Target Groups and Methodology

The study targeted children aged 12 – 17 years both in and out of schools, parents, teachers, leaders in the communities where schools were situated, Officers from Department of Children’s Services, Education, as well as, other caregivers of children in the four (4) Counties. The study used random sampling techniques to gather information of a sample of 939 (i.e. 711 children and 228 parents) respondents using questionnaires. Key informant interviews and 28 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were also conducted with selected leaders, parents, teachers and different groups of stakeholders and partners across the four (4) Counties.

The Findings

The findings of this study revealed that many children were affected when the schools were closed, due to the fact, that majority of the parents in the 4 regions, were either self-employed in the informal sector, or were peasant farmers generating minimal incomes. The situation was aggravated by the fact that, most of the parents and guardians, had limited education, which locked them in the informal sector, both in the urban and rural areas, across the study regions. With such low levels of education, among the parents and caregivers of the children, majority of the parents were confined into non-formal employment, which the pandemic also affected by the health regulations aimed at containing the spread of the disease, which in turn prevented economic activities that lowered family incomes.

This caused a lot of stress to both the children and their parents, given the fact that majority of the children were living with both of their parents in the 4 regions, where in Loitoktok and Marsabit (66%) and Busia and Nairobi (58%) respectively, were living with their parents. A significant number of children were also found to be living with one parent only. Suffice to say that both the children and their parents were found to be facing difficulties in terms of food and gadgets, such as masks, soap, water, as well as, the recommended sanitizers to protect themselves from Covid 19 Pandemic.

Although the findings showed that the children were living at home, the reality showed that this was difficult for them. This is demonstrated by the fact that majority of the children reported that they could only read their books (notebooks) as very few had access to radio (6%), television (10%), smartphones/internet (11%), computer and laptop (2%). As such, majority of the children reported that they were learning at home using text books and exercise books as the key learning tools the children depended on (70%).

The study findings indicated that children were reported to become more vulnerable to various forms of child abuse during the Covid-19 period. Majority of the children (80%) and parents (87%) reported to have heard about child abuse cases. Similarly, majority of the parents and caregivers (75%) reported experiencing cases of child abuse or violence against children during the pandemic period (73% male and 75% female respondents). Apparently, children reported not hearing many cases of abuse and violence against children (30%) of both male and female children. The common forms of abuse mentioned by the children included; sexual abuse (44%), physical assault (42%) and child labour (55%). Besides, the children reported sexual abuse (67%) and physical abuse (65%) to be common in Nairobi, while in Busia, children reported sexual abuse and child labour to be common (50% and 53%) respectively. In Marsabit physical assault and child labour constituted (35%) and (28%) respectively, while in Loitoktok children reported child labour (68%) and neglect (77%) as the forms of child abuse they were aware of.

According to the parents and caregivers, child neglect (65%), physical assault (61%) and sexual abuse (79%) were considered as the most common forms of abuse affecting children during the pandemic

period. In Nairobi, the caregivers reported sexual abuse (81%) and physical abuse (73%), whereas in Busia they reported sexual abuse (88%) and physical assault (65%) of children. In Marsabit, neglect of children constituted (75%) and sexual abuse (55%). In Loitoktok, sexual abuse (47%) and neglect (68%) were the major types of abuse that affected children during the pandemic. Thus, the study revealed that both parents and children have heard about child abuse and violence against children during the pandemic, where sexual abuse, physical assault and child labour were reported to be common during the pandemic.

According to the children, the perpetrators of abuse and violence against children were parents (35%), neighbours (32%) and relatives (21%). Similarly, the parents, also mentioned other parents (45%) and relatives (32%), as the perpetrators of abuse and violence against children. The hotspots for child abuse were identified, as homes and villages/communities by (37%) of children and (59%) of parents and caregivers. Across the study regions, children perceived homes (Busia 35%, Loitoktok 41%, Marsabit 50% and Nairobi 37%) as the most dangerous places where children encountered abuse. Parents and caregivers, however, cited the villages and communities as the most dangerous places, where children faced high risks of abuse (Busia 35%, Loitoktok 41%, Marsabit 50% and Nairobi 37%).

The study attempted to determine the level of awareness about Covid-19 pandemic among the respondents. This awareness was found to be high amongst children, parents and guardians (100% children and 100% of parents and guardians) in the 4 regions where the study was undertaken. Both children (29%) and parents (47%) depended on radio as the source of information about Covid-19. This was followed by television, where (25%) of children and (27%) of parents got information on Covid 19.

Similarly, both parents/caregivers and children identified the practice of hand washing (97% parents and 92% of children) and wearing masks (85% parents and 92% of children) as a means of preventing the spread and the infection of the virus. Thus, the message of stopping the infection and the spread of the pandemic was known to the majority of the parents/caregivers and the children in the 4 regions of the study.

The study also attempted to identify gaps in child protection during Covid-19 pandemic in the 4 Counties. From the findings, it became apparent that several individuals and institutions were identified as failing to protect children in the communities. The parents and caregivers were identified as those failing to protect their children during the pandemic.

Study findings showed that (86%) of those interviewed reported that parents were finding it hard to cope with children when schools were closed. This was reported to be due to the high cost of living, as most of the parents and caregivers, had lost their means of livelihood due to the pandemic. This was supported by the fact that parents and caregivers in Busia (71%), Loitoktok (83%), Marsabit (82%) and Nairobi (69%) were reported to be affected by Covid-19 in their households, reducing their earnings.

In fact, (73%) of the parents and caregivers interviewed reported to have been affected by the pandemic in terms of incomes. More women reported being affected by the pandemic than their male counterparts across the 4 regions. However, the study also revealed laxity amongst parents and caregivers towards child protection and in observing some of the health regulations, such as social distancing. For example, a large number of parents and caregivers were reported to allow their children to attend *Disco Matangas* and dance parties (discos organized to raise money for funeral expenses, during the pandemic (7% Busia, 4% Loitoktok, 17% Marsabit and 13% Nairobi). Many parents reported receiving visitors at home during the pandemic period with rural areas reporting receiving more visitors than urban areas (84% Busia, 90% Loitoktok, 73% Marsabit and 36% Nairobi).

The study also revealed that more cases of child abuse had been reported in Busia and Nairobi as indicated by children (51%) and parents and caregivers (68%) compared to Loitoktok (17%) and Marsabit (33%). According to the respondents, majority of the child abuse cases received attention (7 out of 10 children and 9 out of 10 parents). A higher proportion of children identified parents (30%), chiefs (23%) and police (30%) as the most probable authority where cases of child abuse are reported at. On the other hand, parents and caregivers interviewed identified police stations (67%) and chiefs (48%) as places to report cases of child abuse.

Majority of the respondents, both parents and children, reported that during the pandemic children needed support in the provision of basic needs, which included; food, shelter, clothing, education support and safe houses. Interestingly, parents and children did not mention masks, soap or sanitizers as support needed to prevent the pandemic.

Conclusion

This study has shown that closure of schools by the Kenya Government to contain the spread of Covid-19 virus has negatively impacted on the majority of the children, parents and caregivers of the children in the study areas as shown below:

- Majority of the parents and caregivers of children in the 4 study areas had lost their livelihoods and incomes owing to the effects of COVID-19 containment measures by the government. Most of the parents and caregivers who were affected were those in urban informal settlements and poor rural areas where ANPPCAN works and did the study.
- Parents and caregivers in the 4 study areas were less likely to have resources to adapt and implement measures needed to support their children continue with education during school closures, including providing them with access to the internet.
- Prolonged school closures had exacerbated existing inequalities, and that children who were already most at risk of being excluded from quality education had been most affected across the study regions.
- Majority of children received no education after schools closed in March 2020 across the study regions

-
- Majority of the children received no instruction, feedback, or interaction with their teachers as only a few of them could access digital platforms, with majority of them relying on their notes or text books.
 - The school closures resulted in a notable increase in child abuse cases ranging from teenage pregnancies, physical and sexual abuse; drug and substance abuse, defilement of minors, child marriages and child labour, among others, across the study regions. Engagement of children in child labour activities caused many children to drop out of school.
 - The measures taken by the Government to contain Covid 19 pandemic made it difficult for many parents to feed their children when schools were closed, many seeing their children as a burden.
 - Finally, the study revealed that the pandemic exposed the shifting of the roles that parents or families have towards the care and protection of their children to teachers in schools. Thus, majority of the parents and caregivers preferred their children to be in schools and considered children a bother to them during the closure of the schools.

Recommendations

This study recommends the following:

1. Provide direct income support to vulnerable households in the target areas

Introduce economic support packages, including direct cash-transfers, expanded unemployment benefits and expanded family and child benefits for vulnerable households, especially, women and their families. Direct cash-transfers, which would mean giving cash directly to women who are poor or lacking income, can be a lifeline for those struggling to afford day-to-day necessities during the pandemic period. These measures provide tangible help that households need right now. ANPPCAN is already implementing Parents Economic Empowerment Programmes (PEEP). This is a programme that can be redesigned and expanded to cover all the four regions.

2. Support parents and caregivers with grants and stimulus funding

- Support businesses, especially owned and led by women, with specific grants and stimulus funding, to enable vulnerable households restart their livelihoods.
- Organize food voucher programmes with local shopkeepers that allow vulnerable women-led households to obtain food in exchange for a voucher.

3. Support for school children during and post COVID-19 period

- Support children access remote learning by tracking those students participating, identify and reach out to those not participating, and try to help them engage.
- Provide sanitary facilities and free water in public schools in target areas.
- Provide targeted food assistance to vulnerable children in target schools.
- Encourage children to return to school when schools reopen; this should be over-inclusive, that is, it should be directed at children who were excluded from education due to other causes prior to the pandemic.

4. Prevent violence and abuses towards children through innovative initiatives including:

- Information campaigns and awareness raising.
- Violence-related first response.
- Temporary shelters and housing for abused children.
- Neighbourhood support.
- Virtual and informal support networks (including text-based networks in areas with low Internet coverage).
- Initiate Child Rights Clubs in the communities, to complement the clubs in schools.
- Initiate Parents Economic Empowerment programmes (PEEP) in schools and communities in the 4 regions.

5. Work with key local actors including government ministries in the targeted regions

- Need for ANPPCAN to intensify its collaboration with other players in the area of child safety and protection such as government Ministries and Departments as well as other agencies to develop a better understanding of child safety and protection at home and in community spaces during the Covid-19 crisis and beyond. In so doing, establish avenues to mitigate child sexual abuse, teenage pregnancies, child labour, drug and substance abuse, defilement of minors, female genital mutilation and child marriages.
- Need for ANPPCAN to work with others to provide remedial education for children who were unable to follow distance education and for children who were out of school due to other causes prior to the pandemic. The focus should be on children most excluded or at risk; including children with disabilities, children living in poverty, children who work, children in rural areas, paying particular attention to girls within these groups.

6. Enhance social fabric at family level

While efforts to contain Covid 19 pandemic are vital to protect health, these same efforts are exposing children to increased risk of family violence. The social isolation required by the measures taken by the Government, the impact on jobs, the economic instability, high levels of tension and the fear of the virus and new forms of relationships, have all increased the levels of stress in the most vulnerable families and, therefore, the risk of violence. It is necessary to take urgent measures to intervene in these high-risk contexts so that children can develop and prosper in a society which is likely to undergo profound changes, but in which the defense of their rights and protection must remain a major priority.

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background and Context

In Kenya, the first case of global COVID-19 pandemic was diagnosed on 13th March 2020 and one month later, six children aged between one and 15 years (2.7% out of 216 total cases) had been diagnosed with the infection, according to the Ministry of Health Kenya, COVID-19 Daily Situation Report as at 13th April 2020.

Governments reacted to the pandemic by introducing containment measures, such as, lock downs and curfews and issuing directives on social distancing, maintaining hygiene, staying and working from home, where possible, and restrictions of movement in and out of hotspot areas. The pandemic has resulted in loss of jobs, reduced hours of work, closure of businesses, banning of social gatherings and social events, as well as, restricting movements. The situation has had far reaching socio-economic impacts in many nations, communities and families.

Loss of income, loss of or ill caregivers has forced many children to beg for food, take hazardous jobs to support their families, or see their families split up in search of food, leaving them alone, unprotected and exposed to violence, abuse and exploitation. Families have been forced to marry off their younger daughters to wealthier families to help relieve the financial pressures at home, exposing them to sexual abuse and early pregnancy.

The situation is compounded following the Government control measures to close all schools, meaning children are left without a vital safeguarding support. Children are facing increasing protection risks due to the impact of COVID-19 in Kenya. For the millions of children in Kenya, normal school routines have been disrupted by the closure of schools. This has forced children to stay and learn from their homes amidst weakened child protection mechanisms.

Government agencies in charge of child protection, such as, the Department of Children's Services and Courts, have slowed down their operations due to the pandemic. Mental ill health, coupled with reduced provision of basic services to children by parents and caregivers, is aggravating the situation by exposing children to all forms of abuse and neglect.

1.1 ANPPCAN and Child Protection Programmes

ANPPCAN Regional Office has been implementing child protection programmes in Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit, Homa Bay and Nairobi Counties in Kenya for over two decades now, using different approaches. However, the four areas now comprise the top-five hotspot counties for COVID-19

pandemic in Kenya. The intervention has depended on several baseline surveys in these regions since 2006.

The organization has implemented Child Participation and Parents Economic Empowerment Programmes (PEEP) in Busia and Loitokitok since 2009. The focus of the Child Participation programme, has been to empower children to be advocates for their rights and the rights of orphans and vulnerable children. The programme has established Child Rights Clubs in schools as avenues for advocating for the rights of children. ANPPCAN has also established Child Help Desks (CHDs) in schools in collaboration with County Children Offices in Busia County to receive and respond to cases of child abuse and neglect. The CHDs have been connected with existing structures outside schools.

The Parents Economic Empowerment Programme (PEEP) targets parents of school going children to increase household incomes through savings and loaning schemes, as well as, implementing of income generating activities in schools. This has boosted the capacity of parents and caregivers to provide for the needs of children and orphans under their care and assisted many schools not only to improve the environment of these schools, but also to support children to stay in school and complete their education.

The Third programme that ANPPCAN is implementing is the Anti-Child Trafficking Programme being implemented in Busia, Marsabit and Nairobi Counties since 2015. The programme uses different approaches to prevent and respond to child trafficking, ranging from withdrawal to strengthening the economic status of households, while collaborating with stakeholders working in the targeted Counties.

The Fourth programme is the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children being implemented in Nairobi and Busia Counties, targeting children and teachers in schools, parents, social workers, community health workers, police officers, volunteer children officers and the local administration. The Programme uses different approaches to accomplish its objectives. In addition, the organization is currently implementing Education Sponsorship Programmes across the counties.

Despite these efforts, ANPPCAN has observed gaps in child protection and in the delivery of services to children, while they are at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Child abuse, neglect, as well as, risks and vulnerabilities have been reported by the media to have increased during the pandemic period. This study, therefore, sought to examine and extrapolate the underlying reasons for the increase in child abuse to inform the above 4 programmes amidst the COVID-19 pandemic while children are at home. The information obtained was to provide the direction of responding to children during the pandemic.

1.2 The Current Situation

Schools and learning institutions in Kenya were closed in March 2020 over the Coronavirus disease outbreak. For many children, schools were spaces for learning, safety and development. Reports from

the Children Offices and the media, indicate that many children in Kenya are idle and playing most of the time in community spaces, with little supervision from their parents, a situation that has exposed them to abuse and other risks. Children living in institutions of care, have not been spared from the impact of the pandemic, according to the emerging reports.

While at home, children are lacking the connections and peer support they had established in schools. With little or no guidance from their parents who are busy in the farms, businesses or jobs, the children are not adequately informed about the pandemic and the dangers to their safety lurking in homes and community spaces. Peer influence is pushing many children to engage in potentially abusive rendezvous.

For example, in Busia, 82 children were found partying in a house and drinking, with risk of exposure to sexual abuse, drug and substance abuse, among other vices (Makuba, 2020). The children were arrested and taken to the Child Protection Unit based at the Busia Police Station for counselling. A large number of children are found to be attending “*Disco Matanga*” in Busia, where they are exposed to abuse, including, sexual abuse and drug abuse.

Children who are using technology for virtual learning at home are at high risk of being exposed to online abuse. Stakeholders have expressed concern on the rise of cyber bullying and attacks via internet, especially over the Zoom Platform where, attackers infiltrate and post porn content. The virtual platforms that children are using for learning purposes, while at home could be exposing them to online abuse as well.

Media reports indicate a spike in teenage pregnancies following the outbreak of COVID-19, where the perpetrators are reported to be older men and family members. It is important that these allegations are confirmed, through a study as the one being proposed. There have also been reports that children are being brought from Ethiopia into Kenya through the Northern borders, only to land in some slums in Nairobi.

The COVID-19 containment measures and restrictions imposed by the Government, has resulted in reduced hours of work, closure of businesses, job losses and limited cash circulation, leading to reduced household incomes (Economic Survey, 2020). Subsequently, many parents are likely to force their children to work in exploitative situations e.g. hawking, sand harvesting and in agriculture. While this may be considered child labour, the reality is that parents see this as a survival strategy.

The COVID-19 situation in Busia, Loitokitok and Nairobi has been aggravated by disasters, such as floods, droughts and locust invasions, which have hit families hard, reducing household incomes and disempowering parents and guardians in providing children with basic needs. This further explains why children are being involved in labour activities. This will worsen in the coming months and years as the effects of COVID-19 bites hard.

The pandemic has increased and worsened the vulnerability of children to sexual exploitation for the 13 – 18 years' cohort. The rise in teenage pregnancies reported during the COVID-19 period is a source of worry for the Government and stakeholders alike. Busia recorded 2,690 cases of while Kajiado and Nairobi recorded 5,834 and 11,734 cases of teenage pregnancies respectively in the period January to June 2020 (KHIS, 2020). This confirms that children are now closer to sex predators, such as, “*Boda Boda*” riders and other pedophiles lurking in families and community spaces.

Currently, it is reported that a reduction in the level of operation by child protection agencies e.g. the police, Department of Children’s Services and Courts due to COVID-19, leading to a slow pace in the handling of children matters and issues affecting children not being prioritized. Restrictions, imposed on social gatherings has meant that actors in the children’s sector cannot meet and deliberate on the status, welfare and immediate needs of children. The impact of this measure needs to be ascertained through a study, as the one proposed.

Even though a spike on the number of CAN cases has been recorded in the first half of 2020, a quick observation reveals existence of a poorly functioning and disconnected referral mechanisms at the community level, with many cases of child abuse being settled and disposed of informally, not reaching the children office, police stations and psychosocial support agencies. Reports have also shown that the local administration officers (chiefs and their assistants) are presiding over criminal cases involving children, as recently being reported during an Area Advisory Council meeting in Teso North. Similarly, the various child protection laws and policies, regulations and guidelines are not well understood by many duty bearers such as the local administrators and police, among others.

The need for clearly defined systems of enforcement, including strengthened capacity of law enforcers and the judiciary in child protection issues, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic period is very necessary. This gap is further worsened by a shortage of resources, very few child protection units, minimal legal aid and psycho-social support, as well as, referral systems and services towards strengthening families during this difficult period when children are at home.

The pandemic has disrupted normal routines forcing people to adapt to new situations. With school closure and lack of interaction with social workers, teachers and other children in the school, many children find themselves subjected to new situations, where they are either confined at home by parents or are exposed to the outside world with strangers. This has made many children vulnerable, pushing them into challenging situations; such as, criminal gangs, abusive situations, child labour, child trafficking and sexual exploitation and abuse. The National Crime Research Centre (2015) indicated that child trafficking featured as the most prevalent form of child abuse at 39%, with trafficking for labour and for prostitution being at 31% and 25% respectively. This number is likely to increase during and post COVID-19 times.

Kenya's Framework for National Child Protection System, 2011, acknowledges that children continue to be abused and exploited in the home, school and community spaces, and the very settings that are supposed to protect them. On the prevention realm, the aim of the system, includes, supporting and strengthening families to reduce social exclusion and to lower risk of separation, violence and exploitation. However, the National Council for Children's Services (2011) notes that in Kenya, this system, often fails or breaks down. With the pandemic, the system may not operate at all, or its operation may be reduced to minimal.

ANPPCAN has always used schools as an entry point in reaching out to children, teachers and parents, educating them on child rights and child protection. With the advent of COVID-19 pandemic and closure of schools, it is important to follow up the children in their homes and community spaces and find out what is working, what is not working and how the pandemic has affected them.

Besides, offering education, it would appear that schools provided protection and met the needs of children, such as food, shelter, clothing, and health care. Now that children are at home, this study will provide an opportunity to find out who is responsible for the protecting children from abuse and in providing basic needs and services. The increase in child abuse in the communities during the COVID-19 period is already pointing to weaknesses in the community child protection system that would need to be addressed. The findings of the study will seek to assign responsibilities for child protection in the communities where children stay while out of school.

1.3 Justification of the study

The three Counties of Busia, Loitoktok and Nairobi registered high numbers of COVID-19 infections in Kenya. Loitoktok and Busia Counties are border points to neighboring countries of Tanzania and Uganda, with a high movement of trucks, increasing the spread of the virus. The study went to explore how the pandemic had affected adult and children in these two high risk border areas and what children knew and were doing to halt the spread of the pandemic. It was also to highlight some of the ways and practices that were being promoted in the two counties to protect adults and children from the scourge of the pandemic.

Nairobi County being the capital city, has many slum communities and is characterized with overcrowding, rapid movements, many market centres, high levels of violence, exposure to internet and video dens, which pose dangers to children.

With the onset of COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of schools in Kenya, the responsibility for the care, protection and development of children, shifted from schools to families and communities. However, the rising number of child abuse and neglect cases, witnessed over the COVID-19 period, was symptomatic of an ill prepared, ill equipped and low skilled parents and communities to protect children from abuse and provide them with basic needs and services at all times.

The pandemic exposed weaknesses in knowledge, skills and capacities of families and communities on child protection, in providing children with basic needs, while preventing and protecting them from abuse. Cases of child abuse and teenage pregnancy increased during the period, while many children were reportedly being pushed into labour and exploitative situations, such as, hawking, sand harvesting and working in farms for money.

Besides the effects of COVID-19, there could be other factors pushing children into exploitative situations. This study sought to shed light on all these scenarios and to find out more about the current situation with the hope of identifying the child protection concerns to be addressed and to improve the response mechanisms on the concerns.

A weak link in the child protection has been the lack of prosecution of cases relating to child abuse, violence and exploitation. Long and delayed court processes, non-committed parents to follow through the cases, attend court processes, as well as, poor evidence collection and handling, make many perpetrators of child abuse get minimal sentences or none, prompting repeat offences. Additionally, there is limited community interventions. This study, sought information to inform approaches to strengthen community structures and family units to effectively protect children from abuse.

In July 2020, the Ministry of Education announced that schools were to re-open in January 2021. This created a lot of anxiety in children with the implication that children continue to be idle and vulnerable for the next six months or more. In his address to the nation, the President acknowledged the increasing cases of gender based violence and violation of children's rights. The President directed the National Crime Research Centre to probe the situation and prepare an advisory to security agencies. This explained the vulnerability in which children found themselves in during the COVID-19 period that needed to be assessed in a study like this one to inform appropriate action.

It was the time to assess the extent of the impact of COVID-19 on children, parents, teachers, leaders and stakeholders that form part of the child protection system in Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi, since the pandemic was affecting everyone. The study sought to explain the underlying causes of increasing incidences of child abuse prior to and during the COVID-19 period and establish gaps in child protection occasioning increase in child abuse. The study, also sought to find out what different people knew about what ANPPCAN had been doing in the 4 study areas and how the COVID-19 pandemic was affecting them when children were at home.

Recommendations from the study were to inform the 4 programmes currently being implemented by ANPPCAN in Busia, Loitoktok Marsabit and Nairobi with a view to addressing child protection concerns holistically in schools, families and communities, leading to effective acceleration and realization of child rights in the 4 Counties.

1.4 Objective of the study

This study, therefore, was an exploratory research into the factors that contribute to child abuse and violence against children with the ultimate goal of identifying needs and best practices to deal with the issues identified as affecting children and their families during the pandemic period. The study intended to explain how to empower and strengthen different stakeholders involved in child protection to reduce cases of child abuse, considering that with the current COVID-19 outbreak, there was bound to be shifts in the interventions of child protection that had been based on entry through schools, instead of the families and communities.

1.5 Specific Objectives

This study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- i. To identify the main causes, risks and vulnerabilities affecting children out of school in Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi Counties during the pandemic period.
- ii. To determine how COVID-19 had affected the protection of children, as well as, their families in Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi Counties.
- iii. To review the gaps in child protection amid COVID - 19 pandemic in Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi Counties and make recommendations.

1.6 Organization of the report

This report is an outcome of concerted efforts from strategic players interacting directly or indirectly with ANPPCAN addressing child protection concerns and is thus organized in the following five sections:

- **Section One** introduces the history behind About ANPPCAN and children protection programmes, the Current situation, justification of the study, objective of the study and organization of the report;
- **Section Two** examines the study approaches and methodology which include research design, sites of the study, population, sample size, sampling frame, data management, analysis and reporting as well as challenges and limitations;
- **Section Three** presents the findings of the study that are captured from three dimensions. There is the part on general Information on demographics, knowledge about COVID-19 as well as the part on forms and prevalence of children abuse / violence during COVID -19 period;
- **Section Four** gives the conclusion and recommendations of the study;
- **Section Five** outlines the annexes which include tools for the study, list of sources of information, data set and an analysis sheet.

SECTION TWO: METHODOLOGY

This section of the study presents the research design, area of study, population, study method, instrument for data collection and method of data analysis.

2.1 Research Design

This research adopted a survey research design that was deemed the best placed method to answer the objectives of the Study. A survey research is one in which a group of people is studied by collecting and analyzing data considered to be representative of the entire group. Further, only a part of the population is studied and findings from this population are expected to be generalized to the entire population (Nworgu, 1991; McBurney, 1994). The study was done by use of questionnaires and sampling methods.

2.1.1 Sites of the Study

The sites for the study were Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi Counties. These are the areas that ANPPCAN has been implementing child protection programmes for over a decade. The study areas provided an opportunity for ANPPCAN to engage children and caregivers on what they know about on what has been done such as, the forms of abuse, risks and vulnerabilities for children, especially those resulting from COVID-19 pandemic. This was meant to inform further interventions or redesign of the current programmes to address child abuse and meet the needs of children.

2.1.2 Population

The target population of the study were children, parents, teachers and leaders, as well as, other caregivers of the children in the three counties. A sample of children, parents, teachers, leaders and other caregivers was drawn from the population and a questionnaire administered to them by a team trained local enumerators to elicit their views regarding what was happening to children and families when schools were closed. The study targeted children aged 12 – 17 years in all the 4 regions, namely; Busia, Kajiado, Marsabit and Nairobi Counties.

2.2 Sample size

The study reached 711 children and 228 parents in Teso South, Teso North, Matayos, Budalangi (Busia); Kibra (Nairobi); Loitoktok (Kajiado); and Moyale (Marsabit) through questionnaires. Also, 140 persons comprising of teachers, out of school children, local administrators (chiefs), parents/ guardians; including officers from the Department of Children's Services, were reached through Focused Group Discussions (FGDs).

2.3 Sampling Frame

The study adopted a purposive sampling frame with quantitative and qualitative sampling techniques, where a questionnaire and focus group discussions methods were used. The questionnaires were administered to children, parents, teachers and local leaders to get their views on what they were experiencing when schools were closed and what they would like to see happening. Focus group discussions were undertaken with some teachers, parents, selected leaders and groups working in the 4 regions.

Table 1-1: Distribution of the sample by project region

Methods	Total	Busia (Teso South, Teso North, Matayos, Budalangi)	Kajiado (Loitoktok)	Marsabit (Moyale)	Nairobi (Kibra)
Individual parents/guardians interviews	228	105 (M – 46; F – 59)	29 (M – 12; F – 17)	22 (M – 11; F – 11)	72 (M – 28; F-44)
Individual children interviews	711	390 (M – 161; F – 229)	123 (M – 59; F – 64)	91 (M – 43; F – 48)	107 (M – 47; F – 60)
Focused Group Discussions	28	16 (4 teachers, 4 local administration, 4 children out of school; and 4 parents/guardians)	4 (1 teacher, 1 local administration, 1 child out of school; and 1 parent/guardian)	4 (1 teacher, 1 local administration, 1 child out of school; and 1 parent/guardian)	4 (1 teacher, 1 local administration, 1 child out of school; and 1 parent/guardian)

2.4 Data Management, Analysis and Reporting

Data was collected from children and family members in the 4 identified regions. This was using a questionnaire developed to capture the forms of child abuse, causes, risks and vulnerabilities affecting children out of school over the COVID-19 period. Children’s knowledge on the COVID-19 pandemic was captured, as well as, their feelings about schools’ closure and recommendations on how they could be engaged during this time they were at home.

The tools were administered by the Field Officers and Volunteers who had been working and interacting with children from the 4 projects being implemented by ANPPCAN in Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi. As the data was being collected the Research Assistants were asked to strictly adhere to the Government regulations on Covid-19 pandemic mainly, wearing face masks, keeping social distance and using sanitizers which were provided.

The data collected from selected children and family members by use of questionnaires has been collated using qualitative and quantitative data analysis. A data analyst was engaged to code the findings, which have been used to generate both qualitative and quantitative findings of the study. In this report, summarized tabulations and charts had been used in order to generate descriptive statistics.



A Focus Group Discussion on the Impact of Covid 19 on Children with pupils at Okuleu Primary School in Teso North Sub County

SECTION THREE: FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of study. It is organized by the key questions broadly around knowledge about COVID-19 and prevalence of children abuse / violence during COVID-19 period. Quantitative and qualitative data are presented alongside each other to give a comprehensive picture of interrogation of facts. Summary characteristics of respondents (children and parents/guardians) sampled are presented in **Table 3-1** for easy read and flow of this report. Data has also been disaggregated in gender, County and the respondent category (children and parents/guardians).

3.1 General Information

1.1.1 Distribution of parents/guardians by gender, age, education level, occupation/employment status

The characteristics of a household determines the socio-economic status of its members. The household is where decisions about holistic development and growth of its members, especially education, health, children safety and general social welfare are made and acted upon. Usually, those of the upper social class tend to send their children to private schools that are deemed to have far superior resources compared to the public schools that are often characterized by inadequate funding, poorly (un)paid/underpaid teachers, and decaying infrastructure.

A summary analysis of Table 3-1 indicates that the majority of the parents and caregivers in Marsabit County (63%), Busia (41%) and Nairobi County (41%) were self-employed. Further, the study findings further show that majority of the parents and caregivers in all the counties (Nairobi (61%), Loitokitok (57%), Busia (56%), and Marsabit (50%)) were female with the majority (below 34 years olds) representing 55%, 44% and 38% of those respondents interviewed in Marsabit, Loitokitok and Nairobi Counties, respectively.

The majority of parents and caregivers in Loitokitok (88%), Busia (75%), Marsabit (60%) and Nairobi (59%) have no formal employment. This mirrors the current situation in Kenya where in many households, livelihoods had been lost due to COVID-19 pandemic; where most affected populations being in rural areas. The main source of livelihood in Busia County, from the respondents' views was self-employment (business) at 41%, while farming was second (crop or livestock) at 28%. In Loitokitok, the main occupation identified was farming (crop or livestock) at 70%; formal salaried employment at 20% and self-employment (business) at 20%. In Nairobi and Marsabit Counties, the main occupation identified was self-employment (business) (43%, 63%) and formal salaried employment (31%, 25%) respectively.

In regard to education attainment, Nairobi County had the highest percentage of parents and caregivers with secondary education and above (67%) in comparison to Marsabit County (49%), Loitokitok (41%) and Busia County (47%). Both Marsabit and Loitokitok, had the highest percentage of parents and caregivers (24%, each) with no formal education, while Nairobi and Busia Counties had 8% and 7% of the respondents with no formal education respectively.

Table 3-1: Socio-demographic characteristics of sampled parents/guardians

Percent distribution of parents/guardians by status age, gender, education level attained, employment status and occupation, Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi, 2020

	Busia	Loitoktok	Marsabit	Nairobi
Age				
18 & below	0	3	0	0
19 -24	1	3	11	9
25 - 34	26	38	47	29
35 - 44	39	31	21	41
45 - 54	22	17	11	14
55 & above	12	7	11	9
Gender				
Male	44	43	50	39
Female	56	57	50	61
Education level attained				
No schooling	7	24	24	8
Primary	47	35	29	26
Secondary	30	28	29	28
Vocational training	4	3	5	13
Middle level college	13	7	5	13
University	0	3	10	13
Employment status				
Yes	25	13	40	41
No Job	75	88	60	59
Occupation				
Crop and/or livestock farming	28	70	0	13
Formal salaried employment	19	20	25	31
Self-employed business- trade/services	41	10	63	41
Other occupations/ entrepreneurship	8	0	0	3
Farm laborer on other farm	0	0	0	0
Livestock and livestock product trading	0	0	0	0
Casual worker - informal	1	0	0	13
Others	3	0	13	0

1.1.2 Distribution of children by gender, age, parents, care-givers

Table 3-2: Socio-demographic characteristics of children

Percent distribution of children by status age, gender, and who living with, Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi, 2020

Age	Busia	Loitoktok	Marsabit	Nairobi
10 & below	0	8	2	1
11 - 14	56	53	46	50
15 - 18	44	39	58	49
Gender				
Male	41	48	47	44
Female	59	52	53	56
Parents				
Mother only	14	17	21	23
Father only	7	3	1	4
Both parents	74	72	71	62
Orphan	5	8	7	11
Person living with				
Mother	20	21	24	24
Father	7	3	0	3
Both parents	58	66	66	57
Relatives	9	8	9	11
Neighbor	1	0	0	0
Friend	0	1	0	0
Alone	1	0	1	3
Others	4	1	0	3

Table 3-2 above indicates that the majority of the children in all the target counties of Busia (74%), Loitoktok (72%), Marsabit (71%) and Nairobi (62%) had both parents alive. In addition, the majority of the children in all the counties (Loitoktok and Marsabit (66%, each) and Busia (58%)) were living under the care of both of their parents.

In terms of age, the study indicates that a higher proportion of children in Loitoktok (61%), Busia (56%) and Nairobi County (51 %) were between 10 and 15 years of age while in Marsabit County (52%), majority of the children were of ages 15 years and above.

3.2 Education of children in the household during the COVID-19 period

Children need to acquire the right knowledge and skills to become fulfilled and productive workers, good parents, and responsible citizens. Learning takes place in many environments (home, school and workplace) but most investments in learning take place in schools. These investments need to happen during childhood and adolescence as they are needed for earlier pay off in the lives of the young learners.

3.2.1 Participation of children of school-going age in learning activities in schools

Study results in Table 3-3 indicate that in all the regions, 100% enrollment has not been achieved as there are children of school-going age who are not in school. Study findings indicate that 1%, 6%, 8% and 8% of the children in the households sampled were attending school in Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi Counties, respectively. In Loitoktok and Marsabit regions, the study found majority of children of school-going age not attending school to be boys whereas in Busia and Nairobi counties the girls were found to be the majority.

Table 3-3: Participation of children of school-going age in learning activities in schools (in/out of school)

Percent distribution of children by class attending (in/out of school) and gender, Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi, 2020

	Busia			Loitoktok			Marsabit			Nairobi		
	M	F	Overall	M	F	Overall	M	F	Overall	M	F	Overall
Not in school	1	2	1	9	3	6	9	6	8	11	7	8
Lower primary	1	1	1	4	7	6	2	6	4	2	5	4
Upper primary	72	78	76	72	66	69	61	48	54	61	57	59
Secondary	26	18	21	16	25	20	26	40	33	26	31	29
Vocational training	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0

The study established several factors that had led to the absence of children of school going-age from schools across the regions studied. As shown in Box 1 below, lack of money for fees; lack of money for other education costs (uniform, etc.) and illness (both for parents and children) in the family were identified as major reasons preventing children from going to school.

Box 1: Reasons preventing children of school-going age from attending school

A summary of reasons preventing children of school-going age from attending school

- Poor Health (both for parents and children)
- Lack of learning materials
- Lack of school fees
- Teenage pregnancy
- Drug and substance abuse
- Child labour – household chores, casual paid labour
- To look after the cattle/animals
- Disinterest in education- not willing to repeat class.
- Disability
- Early marriages

3.2.2 Participation of children in learning processes at home during COVID-19 pandemic

The closure of all learning institutions countrywide by the Kenyan government to contain the spread of the virus has impacted majority of the learners whose learning has been totally disrupted across the country. The potential loss of 2020 school calendar year, is threatening the loss of education gains and the implementation of a new competency based curriculum.¹

In an effort to keep learners engaged, and mitigate loss of essential learning time, the government of Kenya through the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) has stepped up measures to facilitate learning through different platforms. These include Kenya Education Cloud, TV, radio, ed-tech apps, and mobile phones. These modes of learning, though effective, may only benefit a few students, who have access at home to computers, smart phones and the appropriate technology.

In **Table 3-4** below, this study established that 81% of children interviewed were participating in some form of learning at home during this COVID-19 period (from March to date). Further, study findings indicate that 84%, 82%, 77% and 73% of the children in the households sampled, were learning at home in Busia, Nairobi, Marsabit and Loitoktok counties, respectively.

¹ With an ever increasing infection rate of coronavirus, rising to over 8,000, the Cabinet Secretary for education Prof George Magoha announced on July 7th that the “2020 school calendar year will be considered lost due to COVID-19 restrictions”.

Table 3-4: **Learning at home by children during COVID-19 pandemic**

Percent distribution of children by learning at home during this COVID-19 period (from March to date), Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi, 2020					
	Busia	Loitoktok	Marsabit	Nairobi	Overall
Participating in learning at home during this COVID 19 period (from March to date)					
Yes	84	73	77	82	81
No	16	27	23	18	19
Means of learning at home					
Text books and exercise books	69%	83%	70%	63%	70%
Radio	7%	6%	5%	5%	6%
Television	10%	5%	4%	17%	10%
Smart phone	11%	6%	18%	11%	11%
Computer/laptop	2%	0	3%	4%	2%
Tutorials	1%	0	0	0	1%

For the vast majority of students, learning has been totally interrupted due to lack of access to electricity, internet connectivity² and digital technology to fully take advantage of existing innovative learning platforms such as one promoted by the KICD. This may further widen the education inequality gap, in equity, access and quality of education as this study has revealed.

This is corroborated by the study findings that established a generally low access to radio (6%), television (10%), smart phone/internet (11%), computer and laptop (2%) among the children in this study. In contrast, a higher proportion (70%) of children were dependent mainly on text books and exercise books as the form for learning at home.

Some of the identified factors contributing to non-participation in learning at home by children during the COVID-19 period are presented in Box 2 below.

² Although according to 2019 reports by the Kenya Communication Authority, internet penetration stands at 90%, internet affordability remains a huge hurdle Kenya still needs to cross to ensure access to digital learning.

Box 2: Factors for non-participation in learning at home by children during the COVID-19 period

Factors contributing to non-participation in learning at home by children during the COVID 19 period

- Lack of money for tuition
- Lack of digital electronic learning supporting devices (radio, TV, internet etc.)
- Household chores
- Casual labour
- Non conducive environment for learning
- Teenage pregnancy
- Food shortages
- Disinterest in learning – decided to repeat class upon school reopening
- Electricity and internet connectivity

3.2.3 Prevalence of child labour during school closure

One unmissable impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in all the study regions is the reality of children engaging in child labour, which portends, children eventually dropping out of school. Overall, the study established that 58% of the children interviewed across the study sites are currently engaging in work with 60% and 57% of boys and girls, respectively to be working as study results indicates in figure 3-1 presented below. In Busia county, the study found 60% and 66% of boys and girls, respectively were working, whereas in Loitoktok 77% of girls and 75% of boys were engaged in some form works. On the other hand, 25% of girls and 42% of boys were found to be working in Nairobi County.

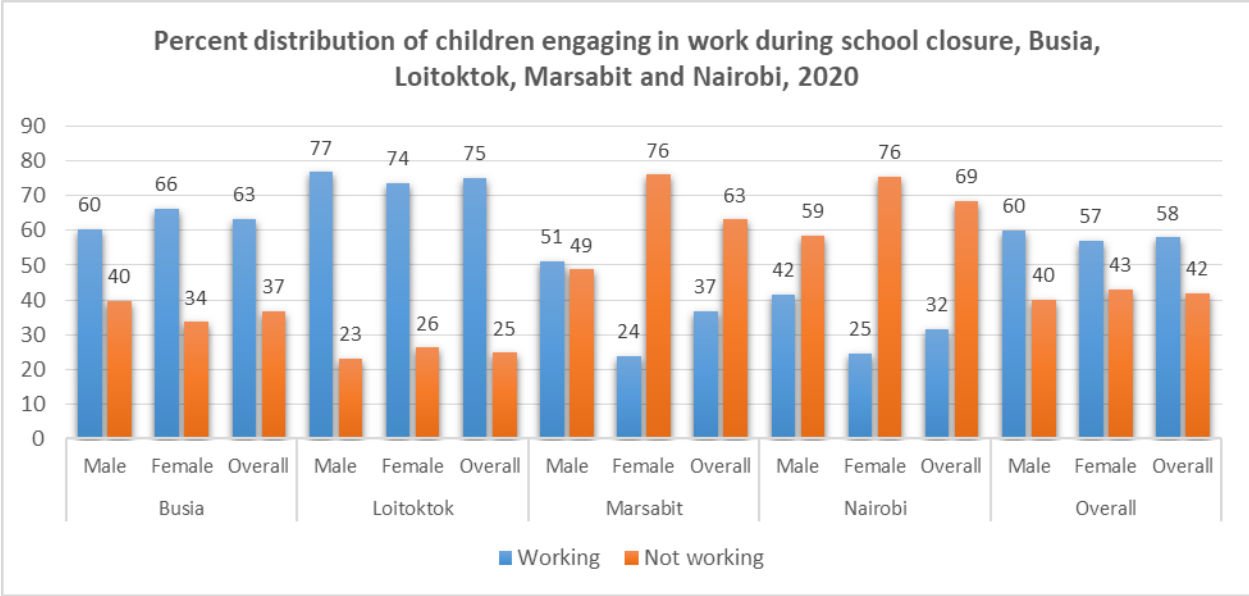


Figure 3-1: Distribution of children by working during school closure

From the parents and caregivers interviewed, 37% had children working in their homes, while 78% were aware of children working in their community. Further, the study finding established that majority of parents and caregivers in Loitoktok (54%) and Marsabit (59%) to be having children working within their households. Similarly, a higher proportion of the parents and caregivers in Busia (79%), Loitoktok (75%), Marsabit (85%) and Nairobi (74%) reported presence of children engaging in various forms of work in their communities.

The study has established that the need for survival among other reasons (see box 3, below) has been main reason why children are engaged in work during this COVID-19 pandemic period. Analysis from this study confirm that the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on children is effectively eroding the gains of the National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour (2004– 2015).³ While some of the measures in the Plan⁴ has largely contributed to fulfilling their objective of encouraging children enrolment in schools, their contribution to the household budgets, is rather small and as a consequence, these measures are not sufficient to address income security for children and their families on a large scale, especially, as has been witnessed during this pandemic. From these findings, it is evident that, COVID-19 pandemic underscores the desperate need to rethink the delivery of effective strategies for addressing child poverty through improvements of income security of children – cash transfer which targets orphans and vulnerable children in poor households.

³ The National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour (2004– 2015) stipulates the government’s commitment to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2015 by targeting vulnerable populations and addressing the root causes of child labour, such as poverty and lack of access to education. The Plan prioritizes law enforcement, awareness creation, and universal basic education.

⁴ Existing programmes for children focus primarily on reaching universal access to education through the capitation grant, the school feeding programme and the free exercise books programme in public schools.

Box 3: Types of work and reasons for engaging in work among children

Types of work children currently engaged in:	Reasons for engaging in work during school closure:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Household chores e.g. cleaning utensils, sweeping the compound• Shop attendant,• Selling water• Selling vegetables/fruits• Selling milk• Casual jobs like fishing, looking after cattle, serving local brews• Operating motor bike• Hawking• Mechanic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To earn money to support family• For self-sustenance• To buy learning materials e.g. books• To avoid bad influence/idling• To raise school fees

3.3 Knowledge about COVID-19 Pandemic

3.3.1 Level of awareness about COVID 19 pandemic

There is a high level of awareness of COVID-19 pandemic among the children and parents (100% each), respectively in the sampled households across all regions. Further, analysis by gender also revealed a similarly high level of awareness among the respondents.

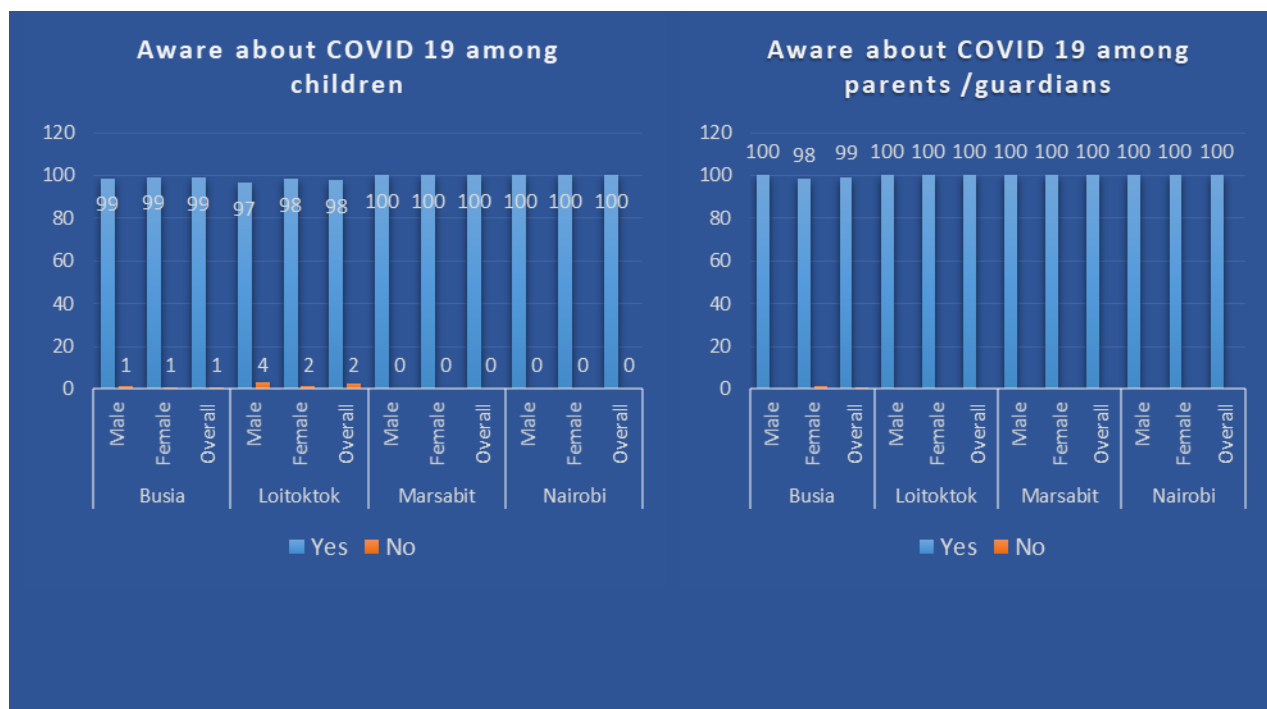


Figure 3-2: Distribution of children and parents/guardians by awareness about COVID-19 virus

Study findings further, revealed a good understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic and on how to prevent the spread of infections among the partners. They are also aware of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on their work, children, families and communities (See table 3-7 (b) on Page 28.

The survey responses in **Table 3-6** below indicate that both children (29%) and parents (47%) rely on radio as the main source of information about COVID-19, followed by television (25% and 27%) among children and parents respectively.

Table 3-6: Sources of information about COVID-19 pandemic

Percent distribution of respondents by sources of information about Corona virus (COVID 19), Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi, 2020

Respondent	Sources	Busia	Loitoktok	Marsabit	Nairobi	Overall
Children	School	18	31	22	13	20
	Home	10	16	8	13	11
	Friend	11	13	13	10	12
	Radio	32	26	29	16	29
	TV	25	12	25	46	25
	Heard	3	2	3	2	3
Parents/guardians	Radio	47	62	43	45	47
	TV	23	27	43	29	27
	Children	14	4	0	6	9
	People	10	4	3	5	7
	Social media platforms	2	4	10	13	6
	Newspaper	4	0	0	0	2
	Health Centre	1	0	0	0	0
	Chief	1	0	0	0	0
	Posters	0	0	0	2	1

Additionally, it is worth noting that overall awareness of local administration and health centres, as possible source for information about COVID-19 pandemic, is quite low among the respondents in the regions. Of greatest concern is the fact that nearly all respondents have not received any information from the local health centre in their communities since the pandemic was first reported.

3.3.2 Level of awareness of precautionary measures for preventing infection with COVID-19 virus among children and parents

The government is undertaking various measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 virus, including limiting movement in places with reported cases; closure of public spaces with high human traffic, such as, schools and public events; dusk-to-dawn curfews; and ensuring basic hygiene and social distancing.

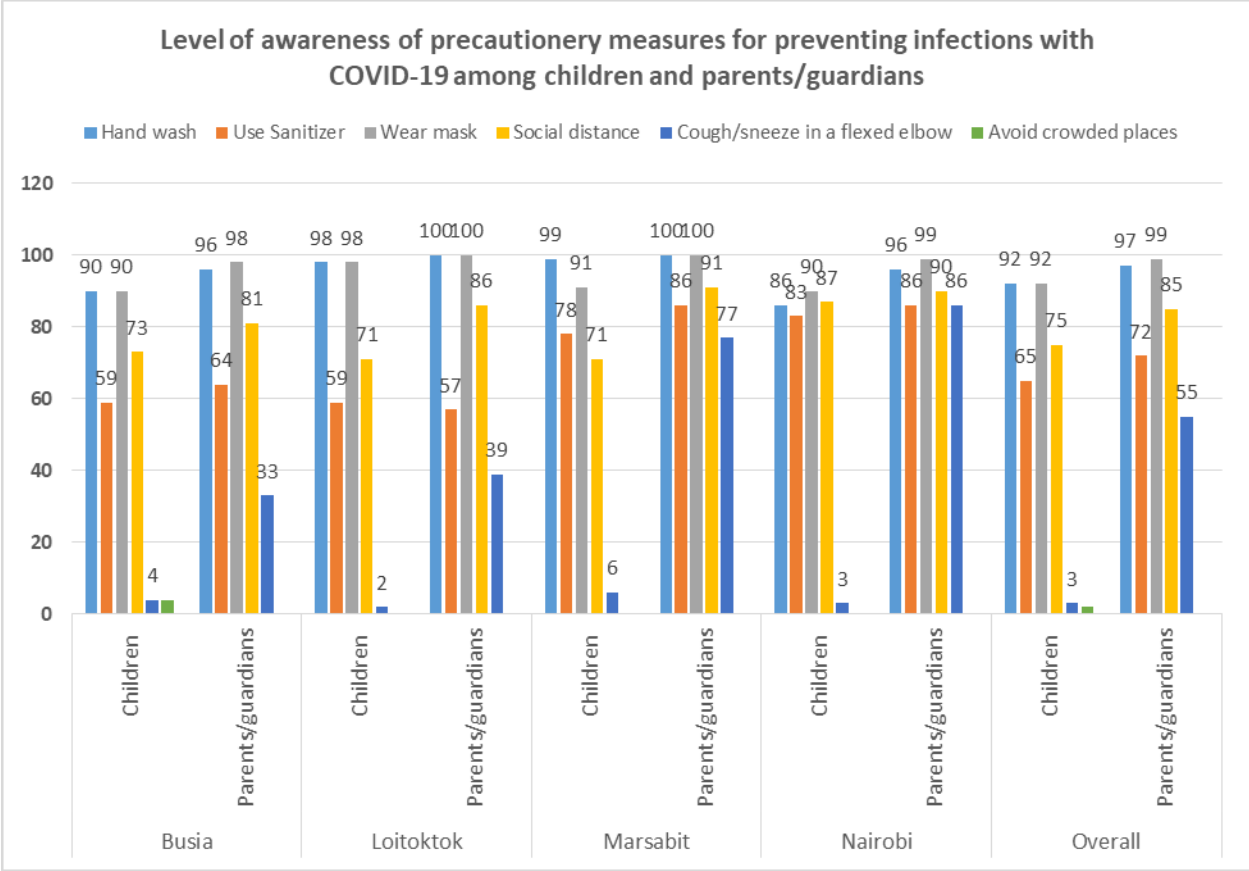


Figure 3-3: Distribution of respondents by level of awareness about precautionary measures about COVID-19

In this study, basic hygiene measures, such as, practise of hand washing (97%) and wearing of masks (85%) have been identified by parents and caregivers as the main precautionary measures for the prevention of the spread and infection of the virus. Similarly, the study established that the practise of hand washing (92%) and wearing of masks (92%) as the main precautionary measures for the prevention of spread and infection of the virus identified by the children interviewed across all the 4 regions as presented in Figure 3-3 above.

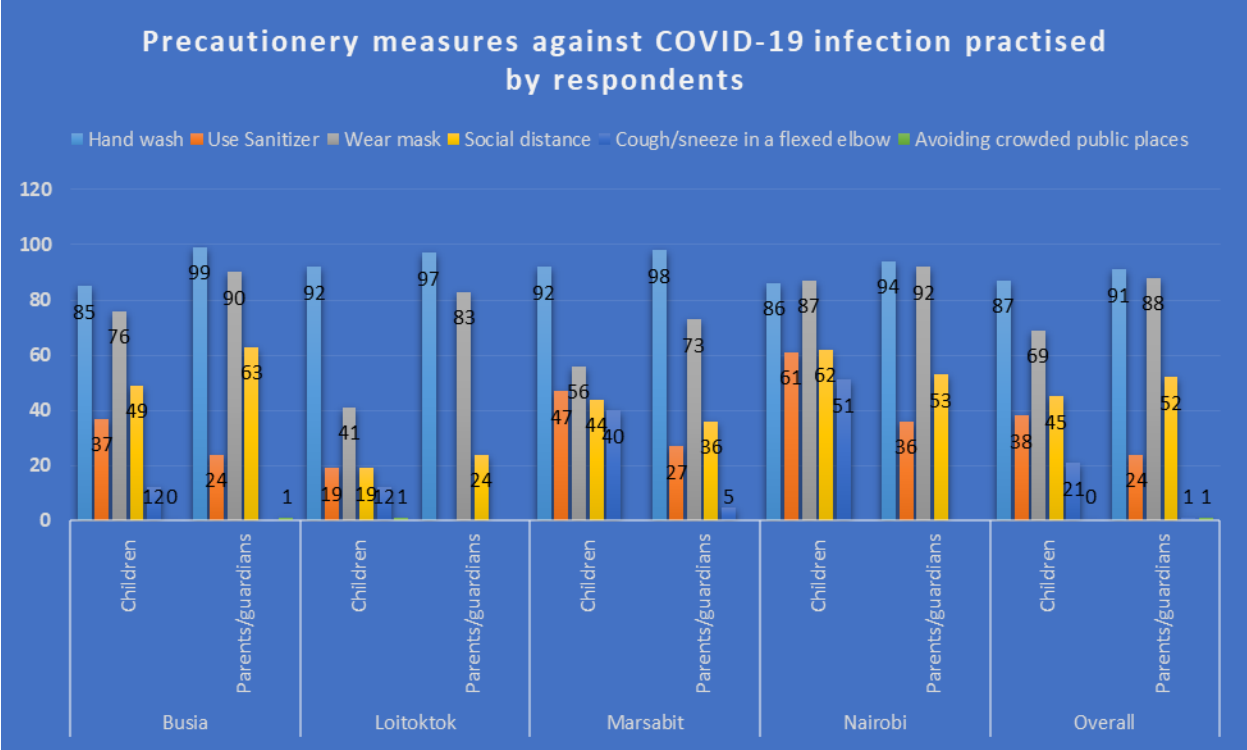


Figure 3-4: *Precautionary measures against COVID-19 infection practiced by children and parents/guardians*

COVID-19 has brought to light the disparities and inequalities between the regions, children and their parents and caregivers, in terms of precautionary measures against infections practiced. Study findings in figure 3-4 above indicates that Nairobi County, which has a higher percentage of parents and caregivers, who are in formal employment, compared to other regions, were able to provide children with basic hygiene items, such as, hand sanitizer (51%) and masks (87%). In contrast, majority of both children and parents in Busia, Loitoktok and Marsabit, were practicing hand washing, as a precautionary measure against virus infection.

3.3.3 Prevalence of COVID-19 virus transmission and its effects in the sampled households

Since the first case of the novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) was announced in Kenya, there has been widespread increase of virus cases mainly due to intra-county movement of people, poor hygiene and lack of adherence to government measures.

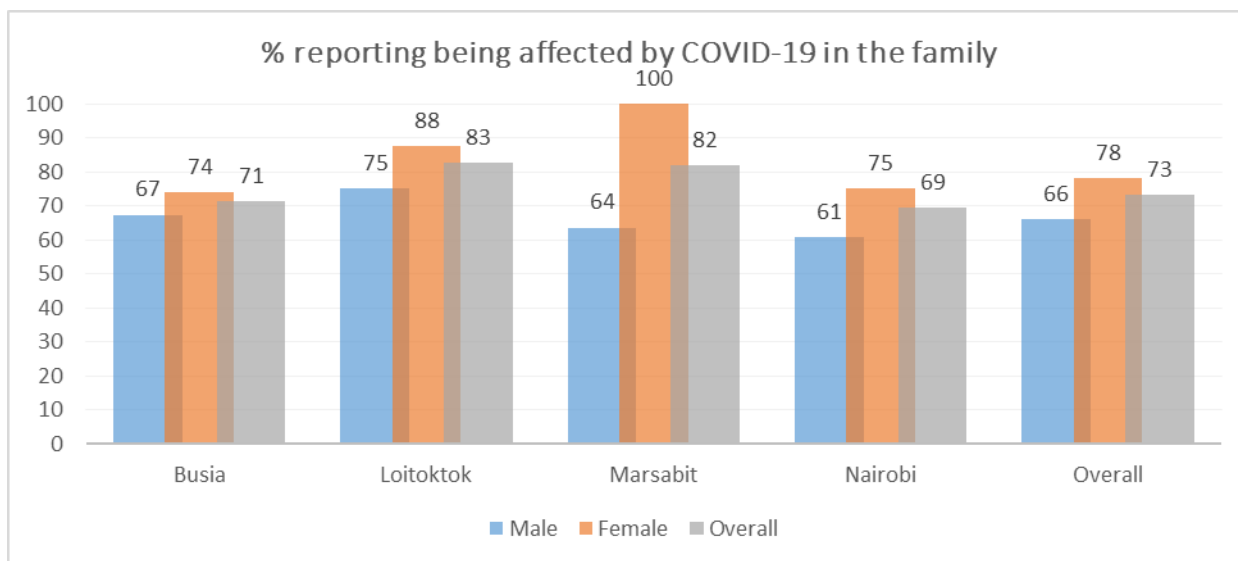


Figure 3-5: Parents and guardians reporting being affected by COVID-19 in the family

Study findings in figure 3-5 above indicate a higher proportion of parents and caregivers in Busia (71%), Loitoktok (83%), Marsabit (82%) and Nairobi (69%) to have been affected by the pandemic in their households. Overall, 73% of the parents and caregivers interviewed reported being affected by the pandemic, with more women in comparison to male counterparts, across all the study regions, reportedly affected.

3.3.4 Exposure of members of households to risks of COVID-19 during COVID 19 period

The study found existing laxities in child protection among parents and caregivers in the study regions. This was happening despite existing control measures by the government for instance, ban on social gatherings and visitations to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 virus. **Table 3-6** below, indicates that 68% of the respondents across the study regions received visitors in their houses during the pandemic, exposing children to the risks of COVID-19 pandemic. The proportion was even higher than the average in rural counties of Busia (84%), Loitoktok (90%) and Marsabit (73%) compared to Nairobi (36%). In all the regions, majority of the visitors were identified as relatives (93%) and church members (9%). On the other hand, 9% reported having children attending “Disco Matanga” and dance parties during the pandemic. Analysis by region indicates a prevalence of 7%, 4%, 17% and 13% in Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi, respectively.

Table 3-6: Actions and behaviors with high risk to exposure of members of households to the COVID-19

Percent distribution of respondents with actions and behaviours with high risk to exposure to COVID - 19, Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi, 2020

	Busia	Loitoktok	Marsabit	Nairobi	Overall
% reporting having visitors come to their house	84	90	73	36	68
Type of visitors					
Nuclear family members	14	0	63	0	13
Relatives	90	100	88	100	93
Church members	12	0	13	0	9
Schoolmates	4	0	0	0	3
Workmates	8	0	13	0	6
Social workers	1	0	0	0	1
Government officials	1	0	0	0	1
% reporting having children attending “Disco Matanga” and dance parties	7	4	17	13	9

Table 3-7 (a) below presents a summary of the direct effects of the Covid 19 pandemic across the 4 study regions. The effects are as a result of the government having undertaken various measures to curb the spread of the virus. These measures included limiting movement in places with reported cases; closure of public spaces with high human traffic, such as schools and public events; dusk-to-dawn curfews; and ensuring basic hygiene and social distancing.

Table 3-7 (a): Effects of COVID-19 in the family

Percent distribution of parents/guardians by types of effects of COVID-19 in the family disaggregated by sex, Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi, 2020

	Busia			Loitoktok			Marsabit			Nairobi			Overall		
	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot
High cost of living	69	62	65	10	10	10	33	75	64	10	96	97	75	77	77
Loss of livelihoods and income	27	10	17	0	0	0	33	13	9	0	0	0	20	5	10
Food shortages	8	18	14	0	0	0	33	13	18	0	0	0	8	10	9
More responsibilities for orphans adopted	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

Retrenched from work	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Closure of schools and learning institutions	12	33	24	0	0	0	33	13	18	0	11	8	10	22	18
Bad influence on children	8	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	5	3	3
Social/family gatherings restrictions	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1

Table 3-7 (b) below presents a summary of the study findings on the impact of COVID-19 on the partners' work, children and families/communities during the FGD sessions with children, parents, teachers, members of the local administration and representatives from key government departments and partners across the 4 study regions.



A Focus Group Discussion on the Impact of Covid 19 on Children with parents at Okook Primary School in Teso North

Table 3-7(b): Summary of FGDs participants' views on the impact of COVID-19 on partners' work, children and families by region

	Busia County	Loitoktok (Kajiado County)	Moyale (Marsabit County)	Kibra (Nairobi County)
Impact of COVID-19 on the Partners' Work	<p>Partners' views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers working in various Government Departments and agencies are no longer going out for field work. This has led to a reduction in the provision of services to their clients, including children Many offices operate for fewer days and hours in a week Many programmes operated by local based partners have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The partners reported to have come up with an alternative Plan for continued implementation of activities, albeit on a reduced scale e.g. (Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) groups run by Akukuranut Development Trust in Teso North adopted Mobile Money plan Children's Offices in Busia have been receiving a high number of child abuse cases Support to families has reduced due to the containment measures on Covid-19 	<p>Partners' (local administration) views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deaths Communities and families are 'burdened' with children. Teenage pregnancies has been on the rise – mostly perpetrated by peers Increase in child labour activities such as hawking goods, casual work, harvesting tomatoes, sand harvesting, cattle herding, etc. Increase in the number of defilement cases – because children idle at home, and are much more exposed / vulnerable to dangers in the community Domestic conflicts leading to separation Chiefs noted that it would be good if children gather and be engaged in some lessons and in productive activities instead of loitering 	<p>Partners' views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased criminal acts by young children, especially boys. Increased cases of teenage pregnancies. Increased cases of child/ early marriages. Witnessed deaths Reduced household incomes Businesses affected, others closed Communities and families are 'burdened' with children. Increase in child labour activities such as hawking goods, casual work, cattle herding, etc. Increase in the number of defilement cases – because children are idle at home and are much more exposed / vulnerable to dangers in the community Loss of jobs - parents are unable to provide for their children Led to the closure of schools and churches Children are idle and freely 	

			roaming / loitering around in the community spaces and are falling into abuse, leading to sexual abuse and teenage pregnancies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic conflicts leading to separation • Children above 18 years who are still in primary school are the common victims of sexual violence. 	
Impact of COVID 19 on Children	Partners' views: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No learning as schools closed and children are at home • Most of the children are idle at home, restless and uncontrollable • Increased vulnerability of children to abuse while at home e.g. some children are engaged in child labour activities e.g. sand harvesting, breaking stones to make ballast and involvement in the <i>boda boda</i> business. For example, in the 1st week of September, a 7-year-old boy was found hawking bananas stashed in an overhead tray to truck drivers along the Malaba Highway. Many children are doing the same in other markets and along the streets in major towns in Busia and Loitoktok • Children are increasingly vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation, perpetrated by their peers and truck drivers • Increase in the number of teenage pregnancies (149 cases were reported in Teso North and 600 cases in Teso South between March and July 2020) affecting girls between 10 and 19 years old. The perpetrators of teenage pregnancies are children themselves (peers) and <i>boda boda</i> operators. 	Children views: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No learning, boredom and uncertainty about the future especially for Class 8 candidates. • Truancy among some children • Fear of infection among children • Too much work at home • Boy child in Loitoktok has been out with cattle in the wild in search of pasture for some time now. • Fighting among children [siblings over small issues such as TV remote and chores] • Teenage pregnancies • Children engaging in labour at construction sites carrying bricks, sand harvesting and hawking • Missing school, teachers and friends 	Parents' views: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of child exploitation activities like offloading and loading of goods especially for boys in Moyale. • No schooling and depression. • Madrassa classes closed • Some children are susceptible. • Children are idle at home, restless and uncontrollable • Increased vulnerability to abuse while at home e.g. involvement in child labour activities • Children are increasingly vulnerable to sexual abuse by <i>boda boda</i>, peers, truck drivers • Increase in the number of defilement cases and sexual exploitation of children • Increase in the number of teenage pregnancy 105 cases in Moyale between March and August 2020 for girls between 	Children out of school's view: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some children have moved to the streets • Engaged in small jobs for pay e.g. hawking masks, sweets and collecting scrap metals • Idleness • Formed play groups i.e. teams where they play various games Teachers' views: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idleness among children • Drug and substance abuse among children; children have joined what

	<p>Teachers' views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closure of schools and halting of learning • Children are idle, not learning at home and are found roaming in community spaces • Many children are being involved in exploitative activities e.g. hawking goods to truck drivers. In the process, girls get lured to sexual abuse • Parents over-working children in family farms and sometimes engaging them in child labour activities e.g. casual work in large farms e.g. harvesting tomatoes, working in construction sites (<i>mjengo</i>), etc • Many girls being lured into sexual abuse and sexual exploitation by <i>boda boda</i> operators • Increase in the number of child abuse cases because of Covid-19 containment measures issued by the Government • Boys are found to be drinking alcohol and consuming drugs. In the process, the boys are being arrested and locked up in police stations • Cases of indiscipline amongst children at home • Moral standards amongst children have been compromised – children are interacting with people with bad influence e.g. drugs abusers • Increase in the number of cases of teenage pregnancy and child marriage (a teacher at St. Eugene Primary School confirmed 10 cases of teenage pregnancy) • Children staying at home for a long period of time, thereby being exposed to risks and vulnerabilities - child labour, sexual abuse and other vices. • Lack of sanitary pads for girls. <p>Children's view:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning stopped, boredom and uncertainty about the future especially for Class 8 candidates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing extra-curricular activities at school such as choir, drama, outings and sports. <p>Teachers' views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closure of schools • Many children are not learning at home, increased idleness • Children staying at home for a long time and being exposed to risks and vulnerabilities - child labour, sexual abuse and others vices. • Some children have lost their parents to the pandemic • Many kids are idling around in the community spaces and falling into abuse • Increased cases of child labour e.g. herding of cattle and harvesting tomatoes 	<p>10-19 years old). The perpetrators are children themselves, and <i>boda boda</i> riders- (Source MOH)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of children involved child labour e.g. <i>boda boda</i>, building and construction <p>Teachers' views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are idle and are more susceptible to abuse. • Malnutrition • Halting of school feeding programme • Lack of sanitary pads for girls (used to get this in schools) • Many children are being involved in exploitative activities • Many girls are married off. • Female genital mutilation and child sexual abuse resulting in increased teenage pregnancies among the Burji, Borana, Gurreh, Gabla, Sakuye and Kona communities. • Boys are forming or joining criminal groups • Some boys are now forced into worst forms of child labour in construction sites • Young children mostly boys are engaged in hawking, offloading and loading of goods within town in Moyale in trucks and Lorries. • Cases of indiscipline amongst 	<p>teachers call bad groups where they have been inducted into abusing drugs. Common types of drugs abused include, <i>bhang</i>, <i>miraa</i>, <i>kuber</i> and tobacco. Others are drinking alcohol. In the bad groups, they are also engaged in petty thefts, extortion and fighting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teenage pregnancies and abortion on the rise – dead foetus spotted at dumping sites has been on the rise in recent past. • Children are engaged in child labour – fetching water for sale, collecting scrap metals and plastic and doing laundry for pay [they sometimes accompany parents to do casual jobs] • Children are being engaged in
--	---	--	--	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truancy among some children • Fear of infection among children • Too much work at home • Boy child in Loitoktok has been out with cattle in the wild in search of pasture for some time now. • Fighting among children [siblings over small issues such as TV remote and house chores] • Teenage pregnancies • Children engaging in labour at construction sites carrying bricks, sand harvesting and hawking • Missing school, teachers and friends • Missing extra-curricular activities at school such as choir, drama, outings and sports. 		<p>children have increased at home, partly because parents cannot provide for their children and also due to peer pressure</p>	<p>cleaning streets by County government, <i>kazi kwa vijana</i> for pay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases of child headed households are on the rise as parents move out of the city to look for jobs elsewhere • Child marriage
<p>Impact of COVID 19 on families</p>	<p>Partners' views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rise of conflicts in families due to loss of jobs, reduced household incomes leading to increased stress amongst parents in providing for the needs of the families • Many people are requesting to be enrolled in the Government Cash Transfer Programme to enable them cope the difficult economic times • Many cases of gender based violence are being reported at the Department of Children's Services (DCS) offices • Increase in the number of cases of incest given that children are at home. Cases of incest do not reach child protection actors such as DCS, police and hospitals because family members hide and guard information on the abuse to protect the family name. Sometimes, the chiefs were reported to be playing a mediation role in incest cases • Increase in the number of cases of children accessing contraceptives • Increase in the number of children, majority of 	<p>Children views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of basic necessities such as food because of reduced incomes among some families. • Increased cases of conflicts in the families • Congestion in some households • Some parents are not going to work – lost jobs <p>Teachers' views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job losses • Reduced incomes • High consumption at household leading to lack of food <p>Parents' views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rise of conflicts in families due to loss of jobs, reduced 	<p>Parents' views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased cases of exploitation and laxity in protection and preventive service delivery • Many offices operate for fewer days in a week • Many programmes such as Child Trafficking (CT), World Food Program (WFP) have been affected. • The Children Office has been receiving increased number of cases of teenage pregnancy- 105 class 8 cases (Those that are recorded that could be more) in Moyale are reported to be pregnant. 21 girls are now victims of early marriage. • Support to families has reduced. • Those few who are employed share their merger resources 	<p>Children out of school views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicts – domestic violence is common • Lack of food in some households • Parents lost jobs • Fighting among siblings • Relocation of families from the city back to rural areas

	<p>them girls, who have joined domestic work</p> <p>Teachers' views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of jobs for parents and teachers under the school (Board of Management (BoM)). • Closure of businesses or limited hours of operation. Subsequently, parents are hardly able to provide the basic needs for their children e.g. food, medical care, clothing, etc. • Increase in family conflicts due to low incomes and loss of jobs by parents, leading to family separation. • Parents are involving their children in exploitative activities such as sand harvesting, <i>mjengo</i> (work in construction sites), <i>boda boda</i> or hawking goods in the urban areas to cope with reduced incomes resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic • Increase in poverty levels - due to loss of jobs and disruption of businesses • The banning of church services <p>Local administration officers' views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led to deaths • Reduced household incomes • Businesses were affected, others closed • Communities and families have been 'burdened' with children. • Teenage pregnancies has been on the rise – mostly perpetrated by peers • Increase in child labour activities such as hawking goods, casual work, harvesting tomatoes, sand harvesting, cattle herding, etc. • Increase in the number of defilement cases. This has been on the rise because children are idle at home and are much more exposed to dangerous situations in family and community spaces • Loss of jobs - parents are unable to provide basic needs to their children 	<p>household incomes leading to increased stress amongst parents in providing for the needs of the families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many people are requesting to be enrolled in the Government Cash Transfer Programme to enable them cope the difficult economic times • Many cases of gender based violence are being reported at DCS offices • Increase in the number of cases of incest given that children are at home. Cases of incest do not reach child protection actors such as DCS, police and hospitals because family members hide and guard information on the abuse to protect the family name. Sometimes, the chiefs were reported to be playing a mediation role in incest cases • Increase in the number of cases of children accessing contraceptives • Increase in the number of children, majority of them girls, who have joined domestic work 	<p>with community members who are needy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicts in families due to loss of jobs, reduced household incomes and therefore stress in providing for the families • Many people are requesting to be enrolled in the Government Cash Transfer Programme to enable them cope the difficult economic times <p>Teachers' views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led to many cases of child neglect. • Parents and guardians have little concentration on how to handle children. • Loss of jobs; many breadwinners who were on casual basis jobs are now at home leading to conflicts as well. Teachers who were under the BoM are now jobless with the closure of schools • Many of the parents' businesses closed or operate under shorter hours. Subsequently, parents are hardly able to provide for the needs of their children • Increase in family conflicts due to low incomes and loss of jobs by parents, sometimes leading to separation. • Parents allow children to engage in herding, loading and offloading goods from trucks, 	
--	---	---	---	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Led to the closure of schools and churches Children are idle and freely roaming / loitering around in the community and falling into abuse, including sexual abuse and teenage pregnancies Domestic conflicts leading to family separation Chiefs noted that it would be good if children gather and be engaged in some lessons and in productive activities instead of loitering <p>Children's views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of basic necessities such as food because of reduced income among some families. Increased cases of conflicts in the families Congestion in some households Some parents are not going to work – lost jobs 		<p>lories and other in exploitative activities such as early marriage, <i>mjengo</i> (work in construction sites), <i>boda boda</i> or to hawk goods in the urban areas to cope with low incomes, job losses as a result of Covid-19</p>	
--	---	--	--	--

3.3.5 Changes experienced with closure of schools

The majority of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) participants observed that the extended school closures have disadvantage children in urban informal settlements of Nairobi County and poor rural counties of Busia, Loitoktok and Marsabit. Participants during FGD sessions across the regions are particularly concerned about increase in child labour, drug and substance abuse, teenage pregnancies, defilement of minors and child marriages.

These study findings corroborate recent media reports citing health data from the government that have shown an increase in teenage pregnancies correlating with school closures. Other reports indicate that poor families are offering their children up for early marriages to richer families in order to receive financial assistance, thereby jeopardizing the education of many young girls. Young adolescent boys are also reported to be engaging in crime in the wake of the extended school closures.

3.4 Child abuse/violence and their prevalence during COVID-19 pandemic

3.4.1 Percent reporting heard about child abuse or children being mistreated

During this study, respondents (both children and parents) were asked whether they had heard about child abuse or children being mistreated in their community. Study finding reveal that majority (80%, children; and 87%, parents) of the respondents had heard about child abuse cases as presented in **Table 3-8**.

Table 3-8: Awareness about child abuse/mistreatment during COVID-19 period

Percent distribution of respondents by awareness of child abuse disaggregated by sex, Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi

	Respondent	Sex	Busia	Loitoktok	Marsabit	Nairobi	Overall
% heard about child abuse	Children	Male	81	60	81	93	79
		Female	84	71	87	86	83
		Overall	81	65	84	89	80
	Parents/guardians	Male	70	100	46	79	85
		Female	69	100	64	77	88
		Overall	90	69	91	89	87
% experienced child abuse or violence during COVID-19 period	Children	Male	41	28	18	31	34
		Female	29	26	13	31	27
		Overall	34	27	15	30	30
	Parents/guardians	Male	89	67	82	86	73
		Female	90	69	100	91	75
		Overall	70	100	55	78	75

From the analysis the level of awareness was, especially high among the female respondents for both children and parents, across all the regions of the study. In contrast, majority (75%), i.e. (73%, male; and

75%, female), of parents and caregivers reported experiencing child abuse or violence during COVID-19 period, while this remain severely low (30%) among the children (34%, male; 27%, female) respondents.

3.4.2 Emerging forms of child abuse faced by children during the pandemic period

Engagement with partners and other stakeholders including the teachers and children during the FGD sessions across the regions established emerging forms of child abuse facilitated by children being at home as follows:

- Children are being over-worked in family farms
- Child labour (e.g. construction work, sand harvesting, selling charcoal, casual work, *boda boda*, herding animals, hawking and sand harvesting) for children aged 14 years old and above
- Negligence – parents not providing basic needs for their children e.g. food, clothing and sanitary pads (for girls)
- Sexual abuse – for children aged 12 and above, mostly child to child
- Teenage pregnancy
- Child marriage/ forced marriage – girls have been married off. A teacher reported knowing a case of a child who was married off in Busia County.
- Physical abuse (assault)
- Drug abuse (consumption of alcohol)
- Psychological abuse – due to non-provision of sanitary pads for girls
- Reported cases of child marriage in Busia and Loitoktok
- Drug abuse – children are increasingly abusing drugs such as alcohol, bhang, chewing *Muguka*, *Kuber*, etc. while at home; and
- Female genital mutilation – this is done secretly and is enabled by children being at home.

From **Table 3-9** (a) below, 44%, 42% and 51% of the sampled children reported the most common abuses affecting children as sexual abuse, physical assault and child labor, respectively during this pandemic period.

Table 3-9: Forms of child abuse reported among sampled children Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi, 2020

	Busia	Loitoktok	Marsabit	Nairobi	Overall
Sexual abuse-rape	50	18	22	67	44
Physical assault	42	23	35	65	42
Child labour	53	68	28	50	51
Neglect- No basic needs	36	27	25	35	33

Emotional/mental abuse	15	3	1	31	14
Early marriages/forced due to pregnancies/bad cultural practices	17	15	36	5	17
Social abuse	4		1	1	3
Child trafficking/Kidnapping	7	5	3	26	9
Drug abuse	4	6	1	6	4
Female genital mutilation	1	1	23	1	4
Increased crime rate/recruited into gangs	0			1	0
Abortion				1	0

In Nairobi County, the study found that most children were affected by sexual abuse (67%) and physical assault (65%), whereas the sampled children in Busia County reported sexual abuse (50%) and child labor (53%). Sampled children in Marsabit reported physical assault (35%) and child labor (28%) and in Loitokitok children sampled reported child labour (68%) and neglect (27%).

As regards the forms of child abuse reported, figure 3-6 below, 65%, 61% and 79% of the sampled parents and caregivers indicates the most common abuses affecting children as child neglect, physical assault and sexual abuse, respectively during the pandemic period.

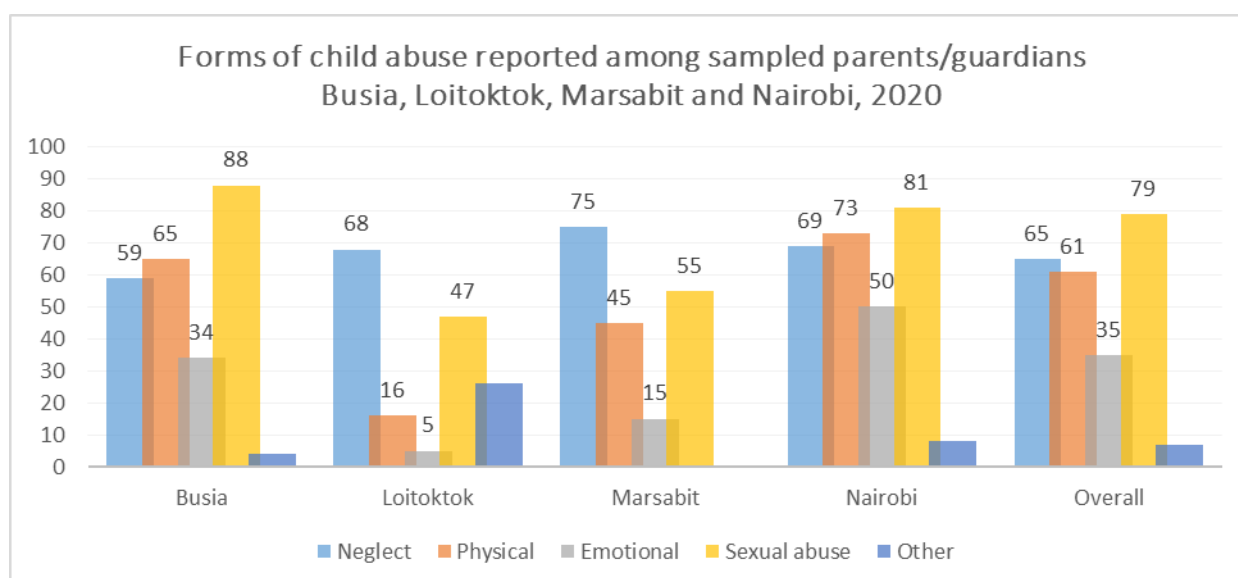


Figure 3-6: *Forms of child abuse reported among sampled parents/guardians*

In Nairobi County, the study found out that most children (81%) were affected by sexual abuse and followed closely with physical assault (73%). Whereas in Busia County reported sexual abuse (88%) and physical assault (65%), in Marsabit child neglect (75%) and sexual abuse (55%), and Loitokitok sexual abuse (47%) and neglect (68%).

3.4.3 Perceived perpetrators of child abuse/mistreatment during the pandemic

Drawing conclusion from **Table 3-10** (a) below, majority of children perceived parents (35%), neighbours (32%) and relatives (21%) as the main perpetrators of child abuse. Similarly, the study established that a

higher proportion of parents and caregivers perceive parents (45%), neighbors (45%) and relatives (32%) as the main perpetrators of child abuse during this pandemic period as illustrated in **Table 3-10 (b)** below.

Table 3-10 (a): Perpetrators of child abuse/mistreatment and place of abuse as reported by children

	Busia	Loitoktok	Marsabit	Nairobi	Overall
Perpetrator					
Parent	32	43	39	37	35
Sibling	7				4
Relative	23	20	15	20	22
Neighbour	32	30	39	27	31
Others	11	13	8	27	14
Place abuse occurred					
Home	35	41	50	37	37
Relatives House	13	16		6	12
Friend's Home	25	28	14	26	25
In a neighbour's house	35	22	36	34	33

Analysing the hotspots for abuse of children, the study established that 37% of children and 59% of parents and caregivers indicated that children are most likely to face child abuse while at home and village/community spaces, respectively. Across the regions, children perceive home (Busia, 35%; Loitoktok, 41%; Marsabit, 50%; and Nairobi, 37%) as the most dangerous place where they face abuses.

In addition, parents and caregivers in the regions (Busia, 35%; Loitoktok, 41%; Marsabit, 50%; and Nairobi, 37%) cited the village/community as the most dangerous place where children face high risk of various forms of abuses. (**Table 3-10 (b)**).

Table 3-10 (b): Perpetrators of child abuse/mistreatment and place of abuse as reported by parents/guardians

	Busia	Loitoktok	Marsabit	Nairobi	Overall
Perpetrator					
Parent	53	47	14	36	45
Sibling	12	5		5	8
Relative	37	21	14	41	34
Neighbor	52	21	71	43	45
Other	3	5		10	6
Place abuse occurred					
At village/community	64	48	88	49	59
At home	35	52	13	55	41
On the road	2	0	0	0	1
Hotel	2	0	0	0	1
At school	5	0	0	0	2
Bar and lodging	2	0	0	0	1

During the FGD sessions, participants were able to identify three main perpetrators of child abuse as: peers – child to child; adults and parents – fathers defiling their own children in their community. Further discussions listed key factors that facilitate child abuse as follows:

- Poverty – has pushed many families to marry off their children and/or to engage them in exploitative activities
- Low awareness on child rights, child abuse and reporting of child abuse amongst parents and community members
- Unresponsive local administration, which accommodates and sanitizes child abuse
- Drunkenness / alcohol abuse
- Family conflicts leading to family separation

3.4.4 Reporting of child abuse/mistreatment by respondents

In **Table 3-11** below, the study established that there was a generally high rate of reporting of child abuse among both the children (51%) and parents and caregivers (68%) across the regions except for parents in Loitoktok and Marsabit counties. The participants in various FGD sessions identified main channels for reporting child abuse cases as follows:

- Child Protection Volunteers (CPVs) – For instance in Busia County, 10 CPVs in Teso South, 12 CPVs in Teso North were identified
- Community Health Volunteers (CHVs), Voluntary Children Officers (VCOs), *nyumba kumi*, village elders and opinion leaders
- Partners - Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and churches
- The Local administration (chiefs, assistant chiefs and village elders)
- Hospitals
- Police
- Department of Children Services
- School administration and teachers, when schools are open

However, it emerged from the FGD sessions conducted that there are significant challenges in reporting child abuse in the regions largely due to the following factors:

- Communities accept, condone and accommodate child abuse
- Community gatekeepers who handle and settle child abuse cases locally
- Many cases of child abuse are settled at home, the cases are reported to authorities when a deal is violated by a party in the case
- Enabling culture e.g. in the Maasai Community, parents would rather marry off their daughters who get pregnant.

- In Loitoktok, children fear being victimised by caregivers if they resist female genital mutilation and/or child marriage
- Ignorance – people in the communities know very little about child rights, child abuse and the need to report cases of child abuse
- Resistance – members resist reporting child abuse in order to protect the family name and reputation
- Children are found to sleep in different houses from parents, a practice that has both protective and abusive dimensions
- Defilement cases are being reported late, when the Child Protection Volunteers (CPVs) have come across the cases
- In many instances, community members do not report child abuse to the formal child protection mechanisms. DCS confirmed arrangements at the local level (Kangaroo Courts) where cases of child abuse are referred to, determined and settled.
- Some community members lack the means to travel to hospitals and police stations to report cases of child abuse and obtain a P3 or Post Rape Care (PRC) form (e.g. long distances and absence of physical offices in Loitoktok)
- Culture is an impediment to reporting cases of child abuse. At times, child abuse is tolerated as long as it is culturally sanctioned and the *Jars Sarole (nyumba kumi)* are not pressing for its prosecution.
- Lack of know-how on where to report cases of child abuse e.g. the *Jars Sarole (nyumba kumi)* handled a case of child abuse that they did not know the procedure for reporting and handling the case.
- Chiefs and lower level structures e.g. *nyumba kumi* ask for money/ bribes to arbitrate cases of child abuse.

However, during FGD session, teachers observed that cases of child abuse are not reported largely due to fear of the perpetrator; preference for local settlement of child abuse matters in lieu of the formal justice system; ignorance on child rights, child abuse and reporting channels; lack of self - expression by both the child victims of abuse and their parents; and irresponsibility amongst the parents, among other factors.

Table 3-11: Percent of respondents (children and parents) reporting child abuse

		Busia		Loitoktok		Marsabit		Nairobi		Overall	
		Children	Parents	Children	Parents	Children	Parents	Children	Parents	Children	Parents
% reported the abuse	Male	47	69	53	14	71	33	46	100	50	67
	Female	45	75	38	20	63	33	82	88	52	69
	Overall	46	72	47	17	67	33	69	92	51	68
% who reported getting help from reported cases	Male	65	91	71	100	100	100	100	87	73	90
	Female	55	89	67	0	86	100	84	96	68	90
	Overall	61	90	71	33	92	100	88	93	71	90

More significant, the study established that the reported cases of children abuses received help. The study findings indicates that the majority of child abuse cases reported by the children, 7 out 10 cases received desired attention. Similarly, 9 out of 10 cases reported by parents/caregivers received necessary attention as shown in **Table 3-11** above.

During the FGDs sessions, it emerged that community groups through their own initiatives are taking action by working closely with duty bearers in addressing child abuses in their communities. For instance, in Teso South (Busia County), the DCS has been holding awareness raising seminars/talks on child sexual abuse with the chairpersons of the *boda boda* SACCOS; has been working with the police in identifying and arresting the perpetrators of child abuse; and also has been working with the Child Protection Volunteers in the identification and referral of cases of child abuse.

Of significance, is that there was a general consensus among the participants that still more efforts are required to improve reporting of child abuse cases in their communities. The participants agreed on a number of action points required, which included:

- Educating community members on child rights, child abuse and existing reporting channels for child abuse cases
- Training of child protection actors and mechanisms, such as, the local administration, members of *nyumba kumi*, Local Area Advisory Councils, Community Health Volunteers and Child Protection Volunteers on handling and responding to child rights violations
- Designating a Child Protection Officer in the communities, who is well known and accessible to everyone, where adults and children can freely report cases of child abuse
- According to the teachers, the chiefs and members of *Nyumba Kumi* are not in a position to handle cases of child abuse. The officers need training on child rights, child abuse and reporting channels

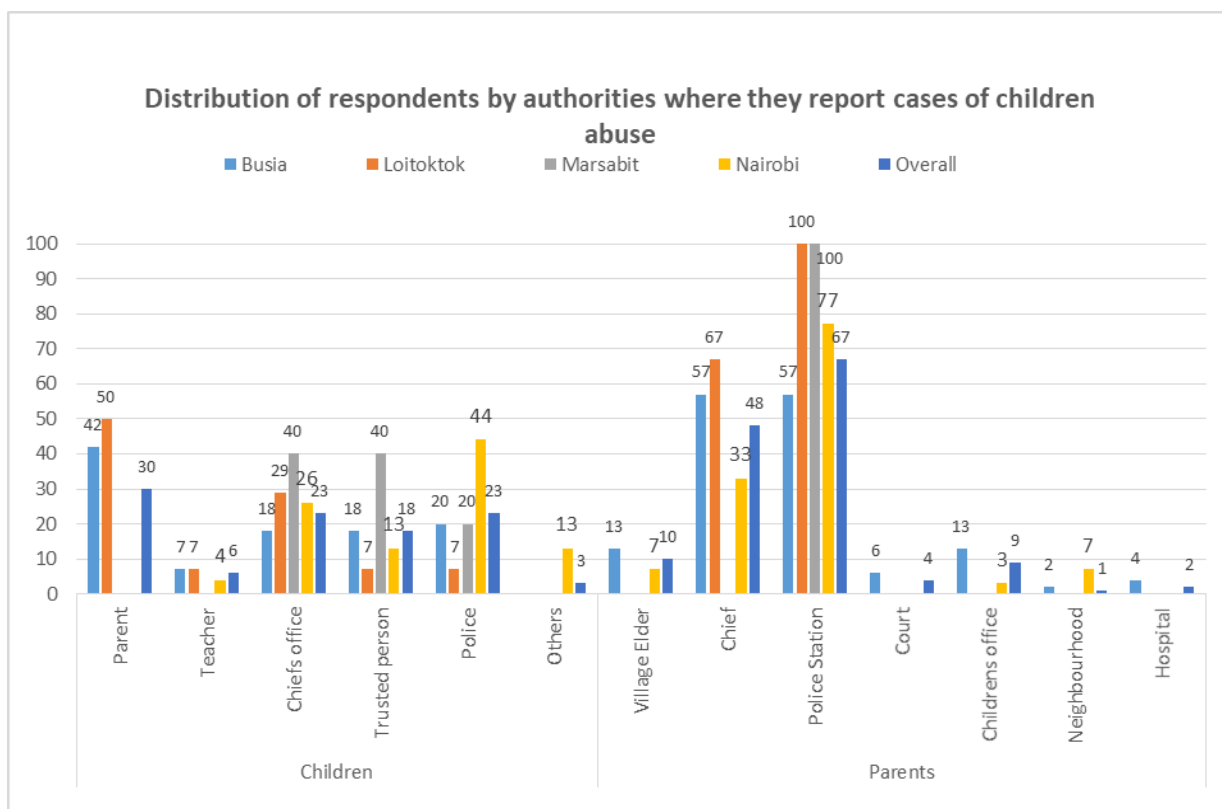


Figure 3-7: Distribution of respondents by authorities where they report cases of children abuse

In figure 3-7 above, higher proportion of children identified parents (30%), chiefs (23%) and police (30%) as the most probable authority to report the cases. In contrast, among the parents and caregivers interviewed, higher proportion identified police station (67%) and chief’s office (48%).

3.4.5 Needs and priority areas for the children during the COVID-19 period

In Busia County, the FGDs sessions with partners, established that the priority areas children need most, were playing materials, such as balls for games and sports in schools and community spaces to keep them busy. Quotes reflecting priority needs for children by the various target groups were captured during the FGD session as follows:

‘Girls would like to receive sanitary pads which are scarce at home. They received the pads regularly in schools before closure due to Covid-19. Boys are asking to be provided with under-wears’, a participant and representative of a local partner in Busia County

‘Children would like to receive training in life skills. In June 2020 alone, DCS and partners identified 135 children who had been sexually exploited’ a participant and representative of local partner in Busia County

The following is a summary of the respondents' views on how children's needs can be met during these trying times of COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 3-12: Stakeholders' suggestions on ways to address children's needs

Children views	Parents/caregivers views
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanitary towels • School uniforms • Learning materials-text/exercise books • School fee • Schools to be opened so that we can learn • Tutor to help me with revision • Want to stay with grandparents/home • Protective equipment like mask, gloves, sanitizers • Financial aid • Work for my family/myself • Support with digital learning equipment • Provide sports/games equipment • Create awareness to kids through the activities • Medical care • Provision of counselling services to drug abusers • Parental care (re-union of families) • Reinstatement in previous job position • Open shopping outlets • Close all entertainment joints • Vaccinate everyone • More education on COVID-19 • To be taken to children home or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing learning materials • Parents sensitization • Government intervention • Educate them • Listening to their views • Girls provided with pads
	Teachers views
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for schools to be reopened soon as they act as good safe spaces for children • Need for NGOs and partners to start engaging children at this time while they are home • Need for parents to be trained on positive parenting skills for them to mentor their children • Need for teachers to be supported to move around in the communities and to follow up on the status of the pupils / learners • Need for increased support to Community Based Learning to help in engaging children in the communities. • Local radio stations to dedicate some hours teaching children and keep them

<p>orphanage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much work at home • Re-union with friends • Transfer to another school • Introduce community learning • Provide security • Extension of the term for another year 	<p>engaged and involved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mosques to be allowed to train children in madrassas to ensure discipline is maintained. • “<i>Jars Sarole</i> “meaning elders to be trained to ensure cases of child abuse are reported and supported.
---	--

An analysis of these views on how children’s needs can be met during these trying times of COVID-19 pandemic revolving around basic needs, which include food, shelter, clothing and housing.

3.4.6 Engagement of children while at home

Most of the parents and caregivers (86%) perceive it very hard to cope with children staying at home, since the closure of schools, due to the COVID-19 pandemic as illustrated in figure 3-8 below. This perception is driven by the fact that costs of living have increased for families as, more children are at home, while earnings for parents have tremendously decreased, meaning families are struggling with the cost of food and other essentials.

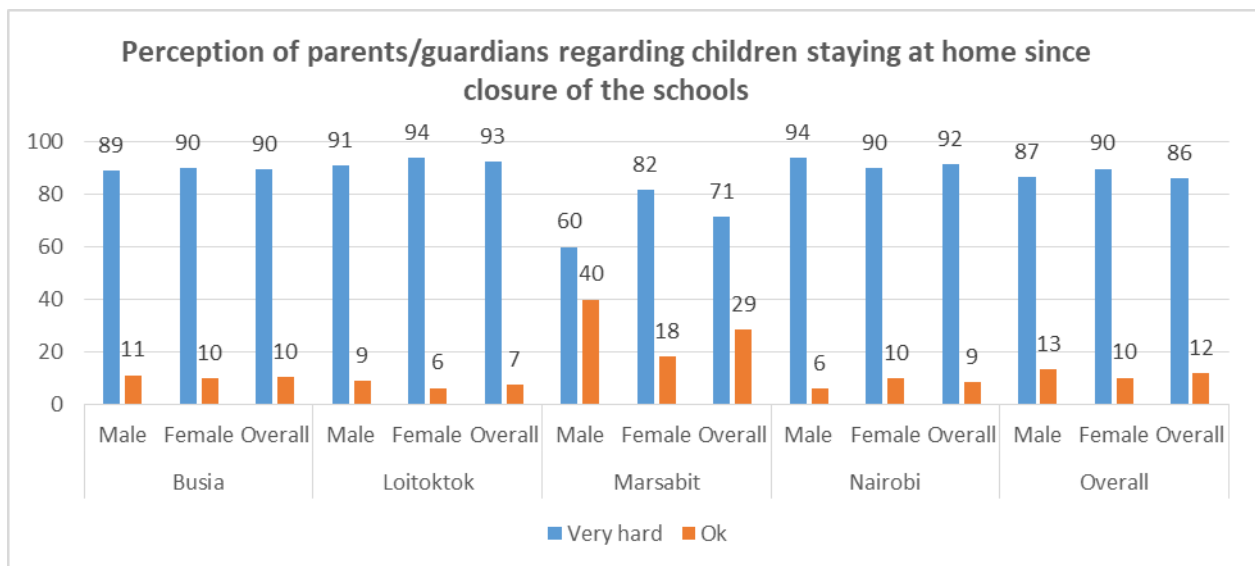


Figure 3-8: Perception of parents/guardians regarding children staying at home since closure of the schools

In contrast, there are several initiatives that have been taken to ensure that children are being engaged while at home. For instance, FGDs participants in Teso North (Busia County) reported that learners in the communities were issued with Constituency Development Fund (CDF) tests; life skills training sessions targeting children were being offered; and in Teso South, the Ministry of Health, through Chama cha Mama Toto is offering life skills and sex education to teen mothers.

Local administration representatives, who participated in FGD sessions reported that the Department of Children’s Services in Busia is implementing a programme known as ‘Coaching Boys to Men.’ The programme targets 9-14 years old boys with life skills. In addition, it was established that the DCS has been implementing a programme targeting teenage mothers – with mentorships on child care, life skills and economic empowerment.

In Moyale (Marsabit County), the Department of Children’s Services and Strategies for Northern Development (SND) have engaged law enforcement agencies on child protection programmes. Further, livelihood programme by SND is targeted at strengthening vulnerable families in Moyale. Other on-going initiatives, included projects by SND, ANPPCAN and Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH-NL) on Building the Foundation for Child Trafficking Free Zones in Urban and Rural Kenya that, empowers families and communities on child protection and strengthen child protection structures to be able to prevent and respond to child trafficking and other related abuses. SND, ANPPCAN and TdH-NL are working together in supporting vulnerable families (50) with cash transfers from April up to December 2020. Also, there is programme on food relief in Moyale by SND and World Food Program (WFP) that supports families to reduce hunger.

However, there is notable increase in childcare responsibilities for parents while children are not in school, and without the possibility of help from family networks (such as grand-parents). In this regard, 93% of parents/guardians agreed that children were better of protected in school than in the homes.

On the other hand, children interviewed expressed varied opinions about their feelings on treatment by their parents and caregivers during the pandemic period. They described their parents/guardians as caring and loving, offering them counselling services, while other children saw them as harsh and frustrated, not wanting to stay with them anymore.

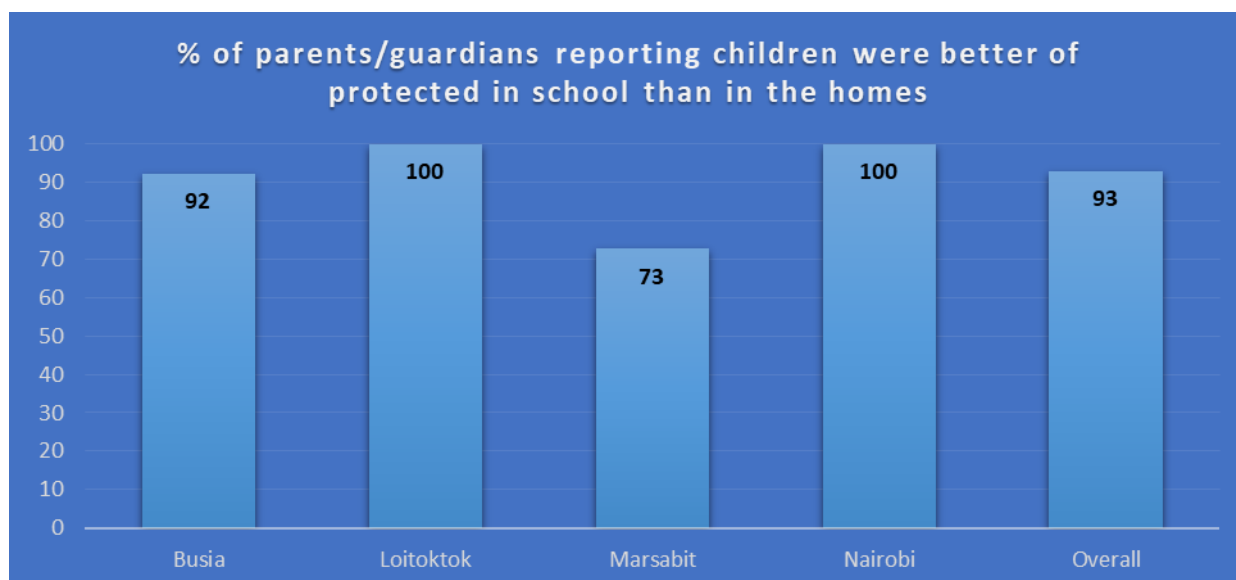


Figure 3-9: Distribution of parents/guardians with opinion that the children were better of protected in school than in the homes

3.4.7 Priority needs by the parents and guardians during Covid-19 period

The Coronavirus pandemic has disrupted the life of every child in the target counties and, thus the following is a summary of what was identified as areas needing support by parents:

Box 5: Priority needs by the parents and guardians during Covid-19 period

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education• Business revival• Money• Sanitizer• Food• Masks• Clothes• Medication• Encouragement• Personal protective equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prayers• Security• Hand washing routine• Work• Sanitary pads• Beddings• Shelter• Spiritual guidance
--	--

3.4.8 Type of risks children face at homes /community during Covid-19

Interviews with parents and guardians identified the most common risks faced by children at home and in community spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic to include the following:

Box 6: Risks children face at homes /community during Covid-19

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased injuries• Enmity• Drugs• Bad influence• Child labour• Pregnancies• Early marriage• Lack of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sexual abuse• Neglect by parents• Theft• Physical abuse• Emotional abuse• Death• Mental abuse• Child trafficking
---	---

3.4.9 Failure in protecting children in the community during Covid-19

From the analysis of the respondents in figure 3-10 below, it is evident several individuals and institutions were identified, as failing to protect children in the community, but the biggest blame lay on parents/caregivers and the community at large.

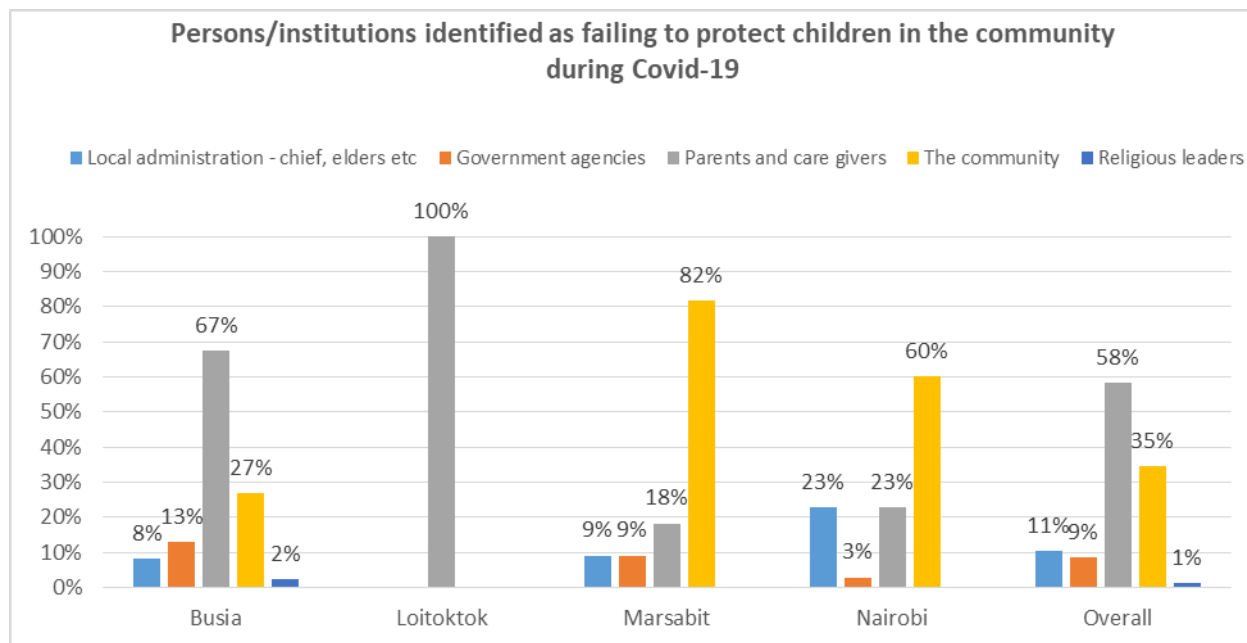


Figure 3-10: *Persons/institutions failing to protect children in the community during Covid-19*

3.4.10 Prevalence of violations of children rights during the COVID-19 pandemic period – child labour and pregnancies in homes/communities

Study findings indicate that across the three target counties it is evident that, on average 60% were aware of children who had since become pregnant, during the Covid-19 period.

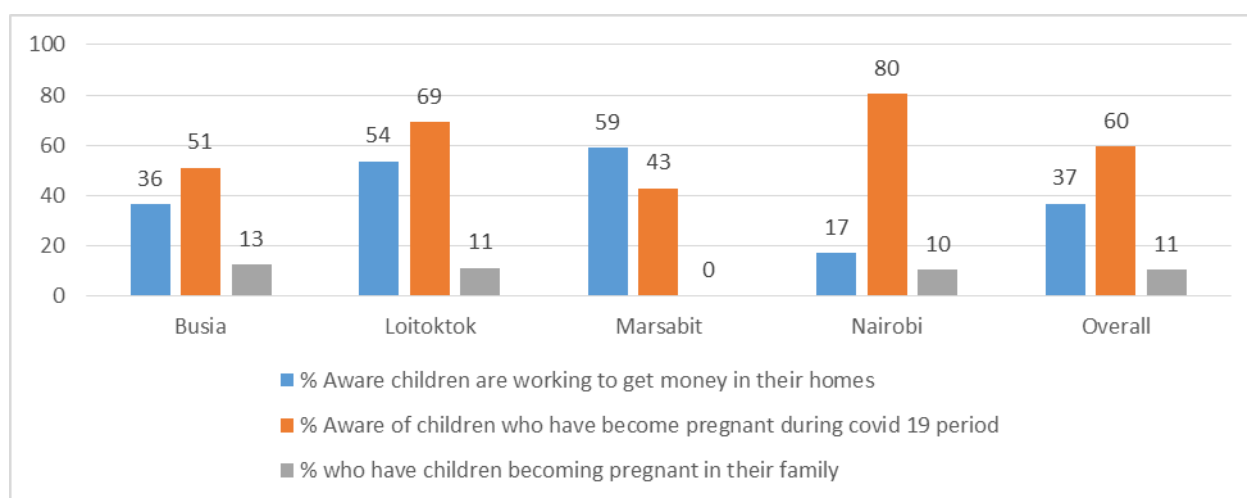


Figure 3-11: *Prevalence of child labour and pregnancies in the family during the COVID-19 period*

3.4.11 Reported actions taken when a child becomes pregnant or abused

The following is a summary of actions taken by individual respondents when cases of child pregnancy or abuse were reported to them.

Table 3-13: Type of actions taken when a child becomes pregnant or abused

Summary of actions taken by respondents		
On cases of pregnancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing • Reported to police • Taking child to hospital • Reported to chief • Reported to elder • Married off • Abortion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child neglect • Child is hidden • Reported to assistant chief • Children’s office • Taken to court • Guidance and counselling • Child chased away • Negotiation of both parties
On cases of abused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action taken • Report to chief • Report to police • Report to child protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiation of parties involved • Story is hidden • Court • Pastor • Hospital • Village elder

3.4.12 Perpetrators of children pregnancies in the community

Analysis from the respondents on perpetrators of children pregnancies in the community reveals that category of people bare the heaviest brunt;

Box 7: Identified perpetrators of children pregnancies

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boyfriends • Adults • Motorcycle riders • Strangers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fellow students • Truck drivers • Being raped • Taxi drivers
--	---

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neighbour• Teachers• police officers• Relatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Touts• Fishermen• Businessmen• Sand harvesters
--	---



An Focus Group Discussion with teachers on the impact of Covid 19 on Children at Okook Primary School in Teso South Sub County

SECTION FOUR: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3 Conclusion

This study has shown that closure of schools by the Kenya Government to contain the spread of Covid-19 virus has negative impact on the majority of the children, parents and caregivers of the children in the study areas as shown below:

- Majority of parents and caregivers of the children in the study areas had lost their livelihoods and incomes owing to the effects of COVID-19 containment measures by the government. Most affected parents and caregivers, being in urban informal settlements and poor rural areas, in which ANPPCAN works and did the study.
- Parents and caregivers in the 4 study areas were less likely to have resources to adapt and implement measures needed to support their children continue with education during school closures, including providing access to the internet.
- Prolonged school closures had exacerbated existing inequalities, and that children who were already most at risk of being excluded from quality education had been most affected across the study regions.
- Majority of children received no education after schools closed in March 2020 across the study regions
- Majority of children received no instruction, feedback, or interaction with their teachers as only few of them could access digital platform, with majority relying on their notes or text books.
- The school closures has resulted in a notable increase in child abuse cases ranging from teenage pregnancies, physical and sexual abuse; drug and substance abuse, defilement of minors, child marriages and child labour, among others, across study regions. Engagement of children in child labor portends children eventually dropping out of school.
- The measures taken to contain the pandemic made parents find it difficult to feed their children when schools were closed and saw the children as a bother.
- Finally the study revealed that the pandemic challenges exposed the shifting roles of parents or families have towards their children to schools. Thus the majority of parents and caregivers preferred their children to be in schools and considered children a bother to them during the closure of the schools.

4.4 Recommendations

This study recommends the following:

1. Provide direct income support to vulnerable households in the target areas

Introduce economic support packages, including direct cash-transfers, expanded unemployment benefits and expanded family and child benefits for vulnerable households, especially, women and their families. Direct cash-transfers, which would mean giving cash directly to women who

are poor or lacking income, can be a lifeline for those struggling to afford day-to-day necessities during this pandemic. These measures provide tangible help that households need right now. ANPPCAN is already implementing Parents Economic Empowerment Programmes (PEEP). This is a programme that can be redesigned and expanded to cover all the four regions.

2. Support parents and caregivers with grants and stimulus funding

- Support businesses, especially owned and led by women, with specific grants and stimulus funding, to enable vulnerable households restart their livelihoods.
- Organize food voucher programmes with local shopkeepers that allow vulnerable women-led households to obtain food in exchange for a voucher.

3. Support for school children during and post COVID-19 period

- Support children access remote learning by tracking those students participating, identify and reach out to those not participating, and try to help them engage.
- Provide sanitary facilities and free water in schools.
- Provide targeted food assistance to vulnerable children in schools.
- Encourage children to return to school when schools reopen; this should be over-inclusive—that is, it should be directed at children who were excluded from education due to other causes prior to the pandemic

4. Prevent violence and abuses towards children through innovative initiatives including:

- Information campaigns and awareness raising
- Violence-related first response
- Temporary shelters and housing for abused children
- Neighbourhood support
- Virtual and informal support networks (including text-based networks in areas with low Internet coverage)
- Initiate child rights clubs in the communities, to complement the clubs in schools.
- Initiate PEEP programme targeting parents with school going children in the 4 regions.

5. Work with key local actors including government ministries in the targeted regions

- Need for ANPPCAN to intensify its collaboration with other players in the area of child safety and protection such as government Ministries and Departments as well as other agencies to develop a better understanding of child safety and protection at home and in the community spaces during the Covid-19 crisis and beyond. In so doing, agencies should seek to establish avenues to mitigate sexual abuse, teenage pregnancies, child labour, drug and substance abuse, defilement of minors, female genital mutilation and child marriages.
- Need for ANPPCAN to work with others to provide remedial education for children, who were unable to follow distance education and for children who were out of school due to other causes prior to the pandemic. The focus should be on children most excluded or at risk; including children with disabilities, children living in poverty, children who work, children in rural areas, paying particular attention to girls within these groups.

6. Enhance social fabric at family level

While efforts to contain the virus are vital to protect health, these same efforts are exposing children to increased risk of family violence. The social isolation required by the measures taken by the Government, the impact on jobs, the economic instability, high levels of tension and fear of the virus, and new forms of relationships, have all increased the levels of stress in the most vulnerable families and, therefore, the risk of violence. It is necessary to take urgent measures to intervene in these high-risk contexts so that children can develop and prosper in a society which is likely to undergo profound changes, but in which the defense of their rights and protection must remain a major priority.



A Focus Group Discussion on the Impact of Covid 19 on Children with representatives from key Government departments and civil society organisations at Amukura, Teso South Sub County

REFERENCES

1. Government of Kenya (2020). Kenya Health Information Systems.
2. <https://nairobinews.nation.co.ke/editors-picks/covid-19-govt-alarmed-by-spike-in-teenage-pregnancies-domestic-abuse>.
3. Kenya National Bureau of statistics (2020). Economic Survey.
4. Kwalimu, David (2020). Covid-19: Kenya Government alarmed by spike in teenage pregnancies, domestic abuse *nation.co.ke* June 23rd, 2020. <https://nairobinews.nation.co.ke/editors-picks/covid-19-govt-alarmed-by-spike-in-teenage-pregnancies-domestic-abuse>.
5. Makuba, J. (June 2020). 82 minors arrested partying, drinking alcohol at friendly's house
6. Ministry of Health, Kenya (2020) Daily Situation Report - <https://www.health.go.ke>
7. National Council for Children Services, 2011. Framework for National Child Protection Systems for Kenya.
8. The National Crime Research Centre (2015).
9. World Vision, 2020. Aftershocks – a perfect storm: millions more children at risk of violence under the lock down and into the 'new normal' https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Aftershocks%20FINAL%20VERSION_0.pdf.