CONTRIBUTION OF AREA ADVISORY COUNCILS IN CHILD PROTECTION: CASE STUDY OF KITUI COUNTY, KITUI WEST DISTRICT

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NOVEMBER, 2013
DECLARATION

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DATE:  _______________________________
DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to God Almighty, whose grace is always sufficient. I am very grateful for the unaccounted love, prayer, support and patience of my family my precious husband, Gabriel and our children; Ian, Eli and Gabriella. I am deeply thankful for their understanding, inspiration and faithfulness in reminding me that they are my number one support team.

To my parents, my mother Priscilla, my late father Edward Nalianya who believed that; "Education is the best gift you can give your child!" My brothers and sisters who ignited my life and showed me the importance of education in order to achieve great academic heights and above all manage to live well with people of different socio-cultural backgrounds.
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Our lives course is influenced by all who have interacted with us, both directly or indirectly. I am forever indebted to the countless outstanding men and women who by their commitment and dedication to becoming the best they could be, have inspired me to be the same.

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<tr>
<td>ACRWC</td>
<td>African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Children Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBS</td>
<td>Community-Based Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDO</td>
<td>Community Development Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>CID</td>
<td>Criminal Investigation Department</td>
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<td>CPC</td>
<td>Child Protection Committee</td>
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<td>CPS</td>
<td>Child Protection System</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil society organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCO</td>
<td>District Children Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCS</td>
<td>Department of Children Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBO</td>
<td>Faith Based Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOU</td>
<td>Government of Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC 1-5</td>
<td>Local Council, Level One - Level 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGLSD</td>
<td>Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCCS</td>
<td>National Council for Children Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>OVC</td>
<td>Orphans and Vulnerable Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVCC</td>
<td>Orphans and Vulnerable Children Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAGE</td>
<td>Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOVCC</td>
<td>Sub-county Orphans and Vulnerable Children Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCRC</td>
<td>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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ABSTRACT

The Area Advisory Council has been in operation after the enforcement of the Children Act in March 2002. The overall objective of this study was to examine the contribution of Area Advisory Councils in child protection in Kitui West District. The study was conducted in Kitui County, Kitui West District in the Eastern Province of Kenya.

The researcher purposively chose a district that is rural and also classified as semi-arid. Such an area could have unique challenges in bringing up children. The study findings will provide a basis for comparison with other regions - that could be classified as safer- for children welfare.

The target population was community members, children aged 12-17 years, Area Advisory Council and community based structures established to deal with child protection issues and national level stakeholders. This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. Qualitative data were used to get community opinion on child protection. The primary data was collected through field work. The main method of data collection used was household interviews. A total of 120 household interviews were conducted, 7 key informant interviews and 2 Focus Group Discussions; 1 for Area Advisory Council members and 1 for children.

The first objective was to assess the composition and roles of Area Advisory Council structures in regards to child protection as provided by Area Advisory Council guidelines. The study found that the community was aware of the Area Advisory Council structure and that the membership was okay as provided by the Area Advisory Council guidelines: They, however, noted that some challenges existed on among others, leadership, child participation and participation of members. The roles of the Area Advisory Council were also understood to be very basic and did not include services on prevention, protection and response to children issues which is important in the community. The study found that there was no link between Area Advisory Council in community and the national level structure, the National Council for Children Services. It was found that the inter-ministerial collaboration existed but wasnâ€™t strong.
Community awareness on child rights and how the key players

The research findings indicate that, the understanding of child protection at community level mainly focuses on provision of basic necessities such as provision of food which is different from the understanding at district level and national level by the District Children Officer and National Council for Children Services representatives respectively who had a broader understanding of Child protection.

The third objective focused on examining how coordination mechanisms and resources in place have supported service delivery and handling of child abuse violations. The study revealed that the significance of Area Advisory Council in the community was acknowledged and was linked to the services they provided. It also revealed that child rights violations exist and are an issue of concern and that there are challenges in reporting and handling them.

The fourth objective focused on assessing the challenges Area Advisory Council face and provide recommendations on how they can be addressed. It was noted that some community members do not know about children rights and the relevant laws. Additionally, the study found that the Area Advisory Council had no clear work plan and had no thematic working groups. Further, there was lack of adequate services such as rehabilitation schools and voluntary counseling services and challenges existed in reporting and responding to cases of child abuse.

The study recommends implementation of more strategies which are community based to protect children since relying on Area Advisory Council structure alone was not adequate. This requires the government to work in close collaboration with the identified key players in the community. The report has also provided suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was enacted in 1989 to address the rights of children. Further, the African Union enacted the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children (ACRWC) in 1990. The ACRWC is a regional treaty that has provisions similar to the UNCRC but looks at the unique situation in the African context so as to address issues such as early marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and the responsibilities of children.

According to Republic of Kenya (2011), Kenya has made significant strides in addressing obstacles that stand in the way of realization of child rights. Kenya is signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and has domesticated these two treaties through the enactment of the Children Act in the year 2001 and the Constitution of Kenya in 2010. Kenya has developed specific legislations, policies and programmes to address specific rights of children. These include the provision of free and compulsory primary education and the Cash Transfer Programme to assist orphans and vulnerable children among others. The Constitution of Kenya 2010 ushered in a new era for child rights by making special provisions for children in section 53. Children issues in Kenya are addressed under the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services. Under this ministry, there are two institutions charged with the mandate to handle children rights issues. These are the National Council for Children Services (NCCS) and the Department for Children Services (DCS).

The Children Act of 2001, part V establishes the National Council for Children Services (NCCS), as a semi-autonomous government agency with two key roles: to exercise general supervision and control over planning, financing and coordination of child welfare activities; and to advise the government on issues of child rights and welfare of children in their areas of operation (Republic of Kenya, 2001)
In order to accomplish these two roles, the NCCS established Area Advisory Councils (AACs) in collaboration with the Department for Children Services. AAC represent the NCCS in their areas of operation and are charged with the responsibility of safeguarding children’s rights through community participation.

The NCCS in partnership with other stakeholders developed Area Advisory Council guidelines for the formation and operation of AAC, in the year 2006 (World Vision, 2006 and Republic of Kenya, 2011). The guidelines provide reference for the composition and mandate of AACs. The guidelines provide that AAC should devolve beyond the district level to operate at the divisional and locational levels. This is with the acknowledgement that communities understand best the issues affecting their children and those services are better delivered when they are decentralized into the communities (World Vision, 2006 and Republic of Kenya, 2011).

According to a report by the Republic of Kenya (2011) on the framework for the national child protection system for Kenya, Child Protection is regarded as a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary affair. Issues of Child protection are indeed complex and are a function of many actors. In order to address the multiple causes and to protect all children, there is great need to ensure leadership to promote and strengthen the coordinated functioning of the different components of a child protection system, both at national and local levels. In fact, it is everyone’s business including national and regional governments, civil society organizations, communities, families and children to address child protection concerns. According to Save the Children (2011) the ratification of the UNCRC and the ACRWC have an impact on the formulation and implementation of policies; networks, coalitions and programmes in place; the way services in the children sector are offered; level of involvement of children in matters affecting them at the domestic and public level; collaboration and networking between state and non-state actors and funding in the children sector among other issues.

The support of non-formal and formal leaders, such as traditional leaders, elected community officials, religious leaders and respected elders, enabled effective work by child protection groups, since it built trust and legitimacy and provided positive role modeling within the
Leaders provided needed resources, such as land, labor resources by, for example, requesting the engagement of different groups.

Giddens (2008) notes that, the community plays an important role in socialization/ linking children to the government, civil society organizations, private sector, school and other actors in their lives. Essential services such as school, health facilities, the police, legal services and the religious bodies such as the church or mosque are brought into contact with the child at the community level through the family. To provide better protection for children, the family and community requires support and relies on the government which has the primary role and mandate towards child protection.

According to Chitere and Ombati (2004) sustainable development is one of the most pressing challenges facing the human community in the 21st Century and argued that as growing populations outstrip the capacity of states to meet the needs of the people, it becomes the prerogative of the communities to seek solutions from amongst themselves to problems that were hitherto the responsibility of the central government.

Republic of Kenya (2009) underscores the role of Government as being accountable for establishing legal frameworks, developing policies, providing resources, establishing institutions and fostering networks and partnerships to fulfill the rights of children and women to enjoy protection rights in Kenya. The AAC represents the Government which is the duty bearer as required by law to ensure formulation and implementation of laws, policies, and regulations/guidelines, maintain law and order, and enhance security and essential services for the protection and wellbeing of children.

A documentation of best practices on working with Area Advisory Councils by World Vision (2008) notes that, AACs have been established in many districts but are reported to face challenges. These include; low resource allocation by government, lack of commitment from some of key members; challenge of continuity due to transfers of key members especially in
In a bid to address this situation, AACs have been trained mostly through partners who include World Vision, African Network for Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse, PLAN International and Girl Child Network.

The child protection stakeholders have tried to support both the formal structures such as the AACs and informal community structures so that issues of child protection are seen to be addressed in harmony by both parties. Despite these efforts, challenges of handling cases of child abuse have been noted. According to Republic of Kenya (2009), communities fail to report cases of child abuse due to fear of reprimand, reprisal, retribution and revenge. Such tolerant societies, who are obliged to protect the children, may be viewed as accomplices to child rights violations. In some cases, individual families that wish to go against community values also fear being ostracized.

The overall purpose for any child protection system is to promote the wellbeing of children, through prevention of violence and exploitation; ensure that when violence and exploitation occurs, prompt and coordinated action is taken to protect further abuse; and ensure that all actions taken and decisions made are in the best interest of the child (Republic of Kenya, 2011). In this regard, the role of the AAC as part of the child protection system is to support handle child protection concerns in the community.

1.2 Problem Statement

Kenya is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, enacted in 1989, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child enacted in 1990 and has domesticated these into the Children Act of 2001 and the Constitution 2010. In so doing, Kenya has made significant strides in addressing obstacles that stand in the way of realization of child rights (Republic of Kenya, 2011). Kenya has also developed specific legislations, policies and programmes to address specific rights of children. These include the provision of free and compulsory primary education and the Cash Transfer Programme to assist orphans and vulnerable children, among others. However, cases of child abuse are a serious problem in Kenya, (Republic of Kenya, 2010).
The Area Advisory Council (AAC) has been established to represent the National Council for Children Services in their area of operation through community participation. Save the Children *et al.* (2008) highlights a number of factors that have contributed to the implementation of Area Advisory Council. Some of these include; coordination mechanisms, resources, leadership, community participation and commitment of various government ministries. However, the established AAC have continued to face a host of challenges such as sustainability issues after donor funding.

Republic of Kenya (2011), also notes that, Child Protection is a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary affair. Issues of Child protection are indeed complex and are a function of many actors. In order to address the multiple causes and to protect all children, there is great need to ensure leadership to promote and strengthen the coordinated functioning of the different components of a child protection system, both at national and local levels. In fact, it is everyone’s business including national and regional governments, civil society organizations, communities, families and children to address child protection concerns. However, the roles of different actors in the communities in regards to child protection is not clearly understood or known thus making children more vulnerable to abuse.

The purpose for any child protection system is to promote the wellbeing of children, through prevention of violence and exploitation; ensuring that when violence and exploitation occurs, prompt and coordinated action is taken to protect the child from further abuse; and ensuring that all actions taken and decisions made are in the best interest of the child. The role of AACs is to support handle child protection concerns in the community. However, communities are in most cases not aware of the structures addressing child protection nor their interventions and thus fail to access the services required.

Despite the implementation of AACs as community child protection structures, some challenges have been noted. World Vision (2008) notes that the established AACs face many challenges. These include; low resource allocation by government, lack of commitment from some of key
members; challenge of continuity due to transfers of key members—especially in government line ministries and overstretched staff among others. This has existed despite efforts by partners who include World Vision, African Network for Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse, PLAN International and Girl Child Network to build their capacity.

The researcher therefore intended to review, synthesize existing knowledge about AACs and investigate existing situation so as to establish the contribution of the Area Advisory Councils in child protection, provide recommendations for strengthening community child protection structures and contribute to a knowledge base that may be used for reference in the children sector and other researches in future.

1.3 Research Questions

This study sought to respond to the following research questions:

1. How does the composition and roles of AAC structure affect its contribution to child protection as provided by AAC guidelines?
2. What is the community awareness on child rights and how have the key players contributed to child protection?
3. How have coordination mechanisms and resources in place supported service delivery and handling of child abuse violations?
4. What challenges do AACs face and how can they be addressed?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of this study was to examine the contribution of Area Advisory Councils in child protection. Specifically, this study sought to:

1. To assess the composition and roles of AAC structure in regards to child protection as provided by AAC guidelines.
2. To examine community awareness on child rights and how the key players have contributed to child protection.
3. To examine how coordination mechanisms and resources in place have supported service delivery and handling of child abuse violations.
1.5 Justification of the Study

It has been ten years since the AACs were established. However, there has been no study that has sought to examine the contribution of AACs in child protection within a given community setting. This study therefore was done to explore and analyze the existing situation of AACs so as to contribute to literature on child protection in Kenya by providing valuable information regarding contribution of AAC in child protection in Kitui West district community. This was through an assessment of its composition and roles in child protection as provided by AAC guidelines and compared to the current state in this community. Of focus was also an examination on community awareness on child rights and how the key players have contributed to child protection. The study examined how coordination mechanisms and resources in place have supported service delivery and handling of child abuse violations. This was done to also have an understanding of the situation in Kitui West and expectations of guidelines provided for its implementation. The study also assessed challenges AACs face and how they can be addressed. This study has generated new knowledge through its findings and recommendations aimed at strengthening the AAC structures for enhanced service delivery for the protection of children in the community. The study also provides solutions to problems facing AACs which are of benefit to policy makers and provides vital information that supports the review of AAC guidelines, Children Act which is currently under review and the alignment of the AAC structure in relation to the Constitution bearing in mind the devolved system of governance in Kenya.

1.6 Scope and limitations

This research focused on the contribution of AACs in child protection as per the four objectives of the study. The study assessed the composition and roles of AAC structure in regards to child protection as provided by AAC guidelines; examined community awareness on child rights and how the key players have contributed to child protection; examined how coordination mechanisms and resources in place have supported service delivery and handling of child abuse violations; assessed the challenges AACs face and provided recommendations on how they can
be addressed in Mutonguni Division of Kitui West District. The study findings are context specific and may not be generalized for the whole country.

1.7 Definitions of Key Terms

**Area Advisory Council (AAC):** refers to structures in child protection whose function is to supervise and regulate planning, financing and coordination of child welfare programmes in the district, division and location levels.

**Child:** an individual who has not attained the age of eighteen years (The constitution of Kenya, 2010).

**Child abuse:** is any physical, mental or sexual harm committed against a child (Children Act, 2001)

**Child protection:** is defined as "all measures taken to prevent, protect and respond to all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and all other forms of violence against children (World Vision International, 2011).

**Child Protection system:** is defined as a set of coordinated formal and informal elements working together to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and other forms of violence against children (World Vision International, 2011, 3). UNICEF, 2010; define a child protection system as a set of laws, policies, regulations and services, monitoring, and oversight needed across all social sectors, especially, social welfare, education, health, security, and justice to prevent and respond to protection related risks.

**Contribution:** means the help in causing a situation or event (Longman Dictionary of contemporary English)

**Violence** is defined as all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse (UNCRC, Article 19)
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction
This chapter presents a literature review on related studies on welfare and rights of children and how they are being handled and managed by government agents, NGOs, communities and families; as presented by other researchers, scholars and analysts. The study has therefore drawn literature materials from several sources and critically looked at the works of others on the topic.

2.2 History of child protection and AACs
According to World Vision (2007), the history of children rights draws back in time to the drafting and adoption of key legal instruments that address child protection by the international community. This began in 1921 when the Convention against trafficking Women and Children was put in place. This was followed by the drafting of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1923. In 1924, a Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted by the League of Nations. UNICEF was established in 1946 to rehabilitate 2nd World War child victims. The UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and in 1959 the UN adopted the second Declaration of the Rights of the Child. In 1966 the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights came into place to address human rights thereof. In 1974, the United Nations Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and armed Conflicts was established. A land mark on addressing the rights of children was also recorded in 1979 when a Working group was established to draft the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This year is referred to as the International year of the Child. In the same year (1979); the Declaration on the rights and welfare of the African Child was adopted by state and Government of the organization of African Unity.

In 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20th November. This was a big achievement in the children sector. In 1990, The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Child (ACRWC) was adopted by the
ACRWC and the UNCRC are the main legal instruments and set benchmarks to their implementation. These two have formed the basis of developing the Children Act of 2001 to address children rights in Kenya, the Sexual Offences Act and the Kenyan Constitution which have provisions for the safeguards on the rights and welfare of children. The Children Act of 2001 provides for the establishment of the National Council for Children Services at national level and Area Advisory Council as their representation at community level.

2.3 Structure and Functions of Area Advisory Councils

2.3.1 Background of AAC

According to Area Advisory Council guidelines for the formation and operation of AAC, AACs were formally known as District Children Advisory Committees (DCACs) (World Vision, 2006, Republic of Kenya, 2011). They were formed in 1992 through a presidential Administrative Directive to address issues affecting children at the district level in line with the District focus for rural development policy. The DCAC faced challenges which included the fact that membership was not well defined. Operation of sub committees formed differed from one district to another; some had bank accounts and constitutions while others had none. Challenges also included funding with no particular source of funds, to enable them carry out their activities. Capacity development of members differed from one district to another. With the enactment of the Children Act in 2001, the DCAC was renamed AAC. The Children Act provides for the establishment of the NCCS and AAC. The removal of the term district meant that the AAC would devolve beyond the district to operate at divisional and locational levels. This was meant to reach the community and the child. The AAC guidelines were developed in 2006 to set contribution standards for AACs in Kenya as provided by the Children Act. Whether after the development of AAC guidelines and the decentralization of AAC to community level from the district level has facilitated the AAC in meeting its goal of protecting children, and whether services are more decentralized to reach the child was a key element of this study.
Area Advisory Councils

The AAC incorporates relevant Government Departments and Ministries, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), and the private sector in its composition and depends on circumstances in the area of operation. The composition of AACs at all levels should also ensure that all its members must have at least a third of each gender represented and children representatives at the location level. Their participation depends on their age; maturity and ability that enable them participate and represent other children in the division effectively. The researcher established whether the membership as provided by AAC guidelines has contributed to its role in child protection. The study determined the participation of children and how they have contributed to enhancing their own protection.

The AAC guidelines also provide that, the AAC is mandated to form thematic working groups subject to its level, to address the various issues relevant to the interests of children. District AACs are encouraged to form thematic groups around the following themes: Policy Development and Legal issues; Planning, Research Monitoring and Evaluation; Resources Mobilization, Management and Organizational Development and Advocacy Media Participation and Partnerships. Further to the above, the district AAC may form other thematic groups addressing the pertinent issues in that area.

At the divisional and locational level, thematic groups may be formed depending on the circumstances on the ground and issues and activities that the AAC wishes to address. These would include; OVC Care and Support, Child labour and Child Protection. This study determined how the thematic groups have supported the AAC to address the child protection issues in the community.

Bracht et al. (1999) noted that community organization is a planned process to activate a community to use its own social structures and any available resources to accomplish community goals decided primarily by community representatives and generally consistent with local attitudes and values.
It revealed strengths and weaknesses in policy, legal context, structures, challenges in child protection system. It noted that, despite the important roles played in child protection by specific government line ministries such as Education, Health, the Judiciary and others, there is no statutory guidance as to what their roles are in child protection. This thus provided the need to undertake this study to determine the case in Kitui West district as to whether the contribution of AAC in child protection is affected by its membership and capacity.

2.3.3 Functions of AACs
Area Advisory Council guidelines for the formation and operation of AAC notes that, the functions of the AACs as guided by the NCCS are; to facilitate the implementation of the decisions and policies formulated by the NCCS. Primarily, their work is to safeguard the survival, development, protection and participation rights of children as contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Children Act according to the AAC areas of operation, i.e. District, Division and Location.

2.3.3.1 Functions of District AACs
The functions of the district AAC is to supervise, plan, finance and coordinate children welfare programmes in the district by identifying needs and priority areas and recommend appropriate action to relevant authorities according to Area Advisory Council guidelines for the formation and operation of AAC(World Vision, 2006 and Republic of Kenya, 2011)). The district AAC is also mandated to create public awareness on child rights, child protection and support their implementation. AAC also form strategic partnerships and networks to support children programmes; recruit Volunteer Children Officers and build capacity on children rights. The determination of whether this is the practical situation in the community in Kitui West district became an issue of interest for this study.

2.3.3.2 Functions of the Division and Location Area Advisory Councils
The AAC guidelines also note that, the Division AAC and Location AAC have similar functions. In terms of monitoring and supervision, the Division AAC report to District AAC and the
Location AAC report to the Division AAC. This study also sought to determine the linkages of the Location AAC at the district, division and location level and how these different levels have worked together and contributed in child protection to the community in Kitui West district in Mutonguni division.

Some of the functions of the Location AAC are to identify and link children in need of care and protection such as OVC to support agencies and structures. In line with this, they respond to cases of child abuse and all forms of violation of the rights of children in the location. To achieve this, the location AAC is mandated to work with other structures such as sub-locational committees, village committees, community own resource persons (CORPS), paralegals, community health workers and home visitors. The study sought to determine how the AAC has worked with other structures at community level. The gaps and strengths identified from the study on the structure and capacity of the AAC thus provided practical information that could contribute to the review of the AAC guidelines and the Children Act that have made provisions for its formation and implementation.

2.4 Child Protection and key players
According to Republic of Kenya (2011), Child Protection is a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary affair. Issues of Child protection are indeed complex and are a function of many actors. In order to address the multiple causes and to protect all children, there is great need to ensure leadership to promote and strengthen the coordinated functioning of the different components of a child protection system, both at national and local levels. In fact, it is everyone’s business including national and regional governments, civil society organizations, communities, families and children to address child protection concerns.

The support of non-formal and formal leaders, such as traditional leaders, elected community officials, religious leaders and respected elders, enable effective work by child protection groups, since it built trust and legitimacy and provided positive role modeling within the community (Save the Children et al., 2008). Leaders provided needed resources, such as land, and played a key role in mobilizing other resources by, for example, requesting the engagement of different
have tried to support both the formal child protection community structures so that issues of child protection are seen to be addressed in harmony by both parties. This research sought to examine what constitutes child protection and key players in Kitui West district.

Chitere and Ombati (2004) noted that sustainable development is one of the most pressing challenges facing the human community in the 21st Century and argued that as growing populations outstrip the capacity of states to meet the needs of the people, it becomes the prerogative of the communities to seek solutions from amongst themselves to problems that were hitherto the responsibility of the central government.

UNICEF (2007) observed that the overall purpose for any child protection system is to promote the wellbeing of children. This is through prevention of violence and exploitation; ensure that when violence and exploitation occurs, prompt and coordinated action is taken to protect further abuse; and ensure that all actions taken and decisions made are in the best interest of the child.

In addition, Child protection programming entails processes for: analyzing and understanding the specific protective environment; integrating programmes to respond to this environment; supporting structures and systems that enhance and utilize the capacities of governments/states and non-state actors to actively promote protective environments on a sustainable manner; and monitoring these processes (UNICEF, 2007). It was thus important for the researcher to investigate the understanding of child protection in the community; what it encompasses; who are the key actors and how have they contributed to Child protection efforts in the community.

Other studies in the area of child protection structures include Republic of Uganda (2011). This encompassed an operations research test on the functionality of Child Protection Systems in Uganda in 3 sub-regions. As part of its child protection system in the country, Uganda has child protection committees which are a replica of the AAC structure in Kenya. The study in Uganda used a comparison model in which three separate study sub-regions were compared to test the
The study sought to take into account unique regional factors that affect the functioning of child protection structures and coordination mechanisms. The study revealed that, it was not possible to speak of a National Child Protection System in Uganda as yet since there was not one coordinated programme of action. The study also noted that, there were a number of systems and policies in place that govern child protection issues which include, a National Council for Children responsible for coordinating child protection across government ministries but the functioning of the council is however far from optimal. This study provided room for comparison with the situation in Uganda regarding what constitutes child protection and who are the key players in Kitui West district.

2.5 Implementation of Child Protection

2.5.1 Interventions of AAC in the community
Area Advisory Councils were developed to work around issues of child protection which is a complex issue in the community. The government has taken the lead in doing this but has placed the importance of devolving the structures to lower levels by inviting people from government, CSOs, private sector, CBOs and children among others at the different community levels to be part of this structure.

According to Khan (1982) organizing is seen as people working together to get things done. Community organizing cannot be done by one person, but different individuals can get together to form a bigger group to push forward their demands. Community organizing has short and long term benefits. Short terms benefits include getting things done and the long term benefits entail people learning something new about themselves. People organize when faced with frustrating problems that they are not able to solve as individuals and therefore organize themselves collectively to gain confidence and consider for winning. Within this realm, it was of essence to understand how the AAC has organized itself at different levels to address child protection concerns in the community.
Organizing is a process, by which a community identifies its needs or objectives, develops the confidence and will to work at these needs or objectives, finds the resources (internal and external) to deal with these needs or objectives, takes action in respect to them, and in so doing extends and develops cooperative and collaborative attitudes and practices in the community. This means that communities can develop capacity to deal with their own problems, people want change and can change, and people should participate in making, adjusting or controlling the major changes taking place in their communities. Changes in community that are self-imposed or self-developed have meaning and permanence that imposed changes do not. Thus, how the AAC structure which is part of the larger child protection system, has contributed to the community in safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of the child became a central issue in this study.

World Vision (2007) noted that knowledge of child protection and child abuse is visible in communities but this has not been translated into concrete actions towards creating a protective environment for the child nor support to existing systems and structures and effective monitoring and evaluation of efforts at community level. What exist are disjointed and stand-alone community initiatives that don’t enhance child protection. Save the Children Finland & ANPPCAN (2008) also observed that whereas violence against children in Kenya is rampant, the responses were sporadic and ad hoc sometimes leading to further violence against children and exploitation of children and families. In this regard, this study proceeded in order to determine the interventions in child protection which include; legal protection particularly regarding the role of the government in child protection. It also soughts to determine the knowledge on legal instruments, networking, child participation capabilities, and existence of child-friendly materials, issues of cultural barriers and monitoring and evaluation.

According to Chambers of Justice (2005) there were increasing trends of child rape in the past four years and that sixty three % of sexual abusers are people known to children often family members themselves who include fathers, uncles, grandparents and cousins.
that, violence against children was kept hidden because of reporting it. In many cases, people do not trust those in authority, such as the police or other local administration, as they have often been ranked as key perpetrators. In rural areas, places where one can file a report are largely inaccessible. Even when reports are filed, in most cases, the reports are not consistent or complete. Of interest for this study was the need to determine the perception of the community as regards to the AAC; how they have handled reported cases of child abuse and its contribution in addressing child protection concerns.

2.5.2 Coordination and Resources base for AACs

Coordination of AACs should be done through the Director of Children’s Services who is the Secretary of the NCCS (Republic of Kenya, 2006a). Wulczyn et al. (2010) indicate that, well-functioning systems pay particular attention to nurturing and sustaining acts of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration among all levels of stakeholders, including those managing key activities as well as those performing key functions.

Republic of Uganda (2011) observed that whilst awareness raising activities are being undertaken at various levels, there is no real coordinated approach towards awareness-raising across the key government ministries and between sectors. This study therefore sought to determine the coordination mechanisms in place that have facilitated service delivery towards child protection by AAC in the Kitui West district.

The government in conjunction with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and international agencies has played a significant role in providing resources and advocating for the formulation and enactment of laws that impact positively on children. Republic of Kenya (2006b) indicates that, the allocation of resources towards child protection programmes in the country is to contribute to the protection of all children from violence, abuse and exploitation. This is also to support national level legislative and policy work that contributes to strengthening the protective environment for children. These include building capacity of police, health service providers and social workers while linking them up with providers of legal aid, shelter and care. The question of resources is thus very important for the AAC to be effective. This research was also to determine what human resources have been invested in child protection within communities.
and financial resources. The study also looked at what support child protection in conjunction with the AAC and how all these resources have translated to effective handling of child protection concerns in the community.

According to Republic of Uganda (2011), the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) does undertake monitoring of child protection through the Probation and Social Welfare Officers. However, there are constraints such as lack of financial resources and limited knowledge and capacity of staff within the relevant departments at district level and reporting to the ministry is almost absent. The need for child protection services in Uganda far outweighs the capacity of the state to respond and most services available are responsive in nature. The study also noted that, most of the work related to child protection was significantly underfunded and that most of the funding came from international donors. This informed the need for this study to examine the AAC interventions in child protection and what the community response is. This looked at the coordination mechanisms in place and resources at the disposal of the AAC and how this has translated to service provision.

2.6 Policy recommendations on implementation of AACs

Republic of Kenya (2009) underscored the role of Government as being accountable for establishing legal frameworks, developing policies, providing resources, establishing institutions and fostering networks and partnerships to fulfill the rights of children and women to enjoy protection rights in Kenya. The AAC represents the Government which is the duty bearer as required by law to ensure formulation and implementation of laws, policies, and regulations/guidelines, maintain law and order, and enhance security and essential services for the protection and wellbeing of children. Thus, the contribution of the AAC should also be examined in light of the implementation of laws and guidelines governing children rights in the community. The study examined the challenges AACs face and how they can be addressed. This will provide room to make policy recommendations on implementation of AACs and areas of future research.

According to Save the Children (2011) the ratification of these legal instruments have an impact on the formulation and implementation of policies; networks, coalitions and programmes in place; the way services in the children sector are offered; level of involvement of children in matters affecting them at the domestic and public level; collaboration and networking between state and non-state actors and funding in the children sector among other issues.

Kenya has developed specific legislations, policies and programmes to address specific rights of children. These include the provision of free and compulsory primary education and the Cash Transfer Programme to assist orphans and vulnerable children among others (Republic of Kenya, 2011). The constitution of Kenya ushered in a new era for child rights by making special provisions for children in section 53 (Republic of Kenya, 2010). Children issues in Kenya are addressed under the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services. Under this ministry, there are two institutions charged with the mandate to handle children rights issues. These are the National Council for Children Services (NCCS) and the Department for Children Services (DCS).

It is worth noting that while social service is a critically vital ingredient of child protection, direct social service provision does not per se constitute protection since it may occur in the absence of strengthened structures thereby creating a non-protective environment for the child from a concrete and sustainable view (World Vision, 2006). Republic of Uganda (2011) indicated that, Uganda has ratified many of the key international instruments related to child protection and human rights, and the legislative framework is in place. However, the biggest challenge identified is the poor implementation of laws and policies mainly due to resource constraints and lack of regulations. As an indicator of contribution of AACs in child protection, this research
the legislations on child protection such as knowledge of protection in the community. This will also provide for policy recommendations that can be taken forward for improvements in the child protection sector.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

2.7.1 Sequential Theory of Decentralization

Falleti (2004) presented a sequential theory of decentralization and its effects on the intergovernmental balance of power. The theory analyzes decentralization from three angles; the sequences of decentralization (the question of when and how); the role and interest of other actors apart from the government including civil society organization; and territorial interest of the bargaining actors. This compares to the AAC which is decentralized from national level to district level, division level and location level and consists of government and other civil society organizations and community representatives all playing a role in child protection.

According to this theory, decentralization is a process of state reform composed by a set of public policies that transfer responsibilities, resources, or authority from higher to lower levels of government in the context of a specific type of state. This definition has four main components: decentralization as a process of state reform, and transition to different type of state implying the start of new decentralization sequence. Therefore, the content of the decentralization policy depends on type of state the reform would seek to create. In relation to type of authority, the theory identifies fiscal, administrative and political decentralization. Depending on institutional design, a decentralization policy can decrease or increase the power at sub-national level. The institutional design depends on when these policies take place in sequence of reforms. If applied to the case of AACs, they are in existence as a result of the government devolving services closer to the people after enactment of the Children Act in 2001 and formulation of guidelines on the AAC formation. This was aimed to increase people’s participation and the need to streamline the services at different levels i.e. from national level at National Council for Children Services, Department for Children Services to Counties, Districts, Divisions and Locations.
According to Kasfir (1993) a powerful case for decentralization can be mounted. Physical and social conditions in Africa favor it as a pragmatic response to the problems of government. The inability of the central government to reach its citizens effectively suggests that something else is necessary. The continuing strength of the democratic norm in the city and countryside demonstrates the persistent desire of people to participate in the management of their own affairs. In this regard, the decentralization of AACs was as a result of the understanding that communities understand best what is best for them and to also bring services close to people in the community and increase their participation in their own development.

Ryukoku (2001) noted that, decentralization in development thinking brings public services closer to people, who have more opportunities to participate more actively in decision-making process of local policies and activities than in centrally decided ones. This participation in turn contributes to improve accountability of public services, because people can scrutinize local governments more closely than central governments. The services are also delivered more speedily than in the case of a centralized administration, since decentralization reduces often lengthy bureaucratic procedures for decision making and implementation. The author further notes that, the services then become more responsive to and is tailored for different needs of different localities. Accordingly often large bureaucracy at the center can be reduced, and limited public resources are more efficiently and effectively utilized. This line of argument parallels to that of participatory development. By encouraging people’s participation in entire development processes, more effective and sustainable development outcomes can be ensured, because people can feel more ownership of activities in which they are participating. This is as the case of AAC after being changed from DCAC which was mainly at District level and now become AAC so as to devolve to lower levels at the Division and Location. The intention was to reach the child and the community in addressing child protection issues.

Decentralization is also considered to contribute to good governance. The term “governance” tends to be differently defined depending on contexts. Broadly it is considered to be capacities in societies in which various stakeholders attempt to seek solutions that can bring positive outcomes for those who are concerned. Good governance can therefore be established when
stakeholders can reach a reasonably clear common vision, which guides their actions for mutual benefits. In this process, governments, private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as ordinary people themselves have respective roles to play. Since both governments and other actors play indispensable roles, no one can dictate other stakeholders. Instead of one controlling others, partnership is required. Therefore, a delicate balance between top-down and bottom-up communications and approaches needs to be sought. Decentralization is accordingly a version of seeking such a balance in order to reach good governance. By shifting more responsibilities and functions from central governments to sub-national governments, an adequate division of functions and responsibilities between different levels of government is considered to be established. Therefore this can enhance good governance. This theory is relevant to this study as it provides room to explore how the decentralization of child protection services from national level, to district level, division and locational levels have been achieved in implementing AACs in Mutonguni division.

2.7.2 Functionalism Theory
According to Giddens (2008), Emile Durkheim’s Functionalism theory looks at society as a whole, emphasizing the contribution a social activity makes to society. Functionalism holds that society is a complex system whose various parts work together to produce stability and solidarity. According to this approach, the discipline of Sociology should investigate the relationship of parts of society to each other and to society as a whole. This relates to this study on the contribution of Area Advisory Council in Kitui West district since it is analyzing how the AAC relates to other institutions within the community and how they have collaborated to address child protection. Robert K. Merton, whose version of functionalism has been particularly influential, stressed that manifest functions, those intended by the participants in a social activity like AACs, are sometimes less important than latent functions, the unintentional consequences of a social act. Merton believed that a major part of sociological explanation is to uncover the latent functions of social acts and institutions. This study has also focused on the composition of the AAC structure, its roles and how these affect its contribution to child protection in the community and thus this theory closely links to the study. This study has looked at the roles played by the AAC in Kitui West and compared it to functions provided by the AAC guidelines. The study unearthed the functions that are dormant and those that are prominent to the
2.8 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is based on the outcome of the implementation of the AAC as a result of synergy among factors which contribute to its functionality to enhance the child protection system within the community.

**FUNCTIONAL AAC**

- Well-structured AAC and focused functions
- Synergy among key players in child protection and Community's participation
- Coordinated interventions and adequate resources

**OUTCOME**

- Functional community child protection system
- Functional formal and informal community based child protection structures
- Children are free from abuse, exploitation, and maltreatment
- Access to protection services e.g. counseling, care and support
- Cases of abuse are reported and handled as per the law
- Key players with capacity to implement child protection
- Prevention and response services
- Human resources, funding, and infrastructure in place

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

Source: Author
Wulczyn et al. (2010) noted that increasingly, international organizations such as UNICEF, Save the Children, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), are turning to what is referred to as a systems approach to child protection in order to establish and otherwise strengthen comprehensive child protection efforts. As guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the systems approach differs from earlier child protection efforts, which have traditionally focused on single issues such as child trafficking, street children, child labour, emergencies, institutionalization, or HIV/AIDS. It is noted that, although such efforts have produced substantial benefits, this diffused approach often results in a fragmented child protection response, marked by numerous inefficiencies and pockets of unmet need. It is further noted that, a common understanding of child protection systems does not yet exist within the field at large and that such common understanding would be an important prerequisite for moving child protection efforts forward.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To assess the composition and roles of AAC structure in regards to child protection as provided by AAC guidelines</td>
<td>Structure of AAC</td>
<td>- coordination between NCCS, District AAC, Division AAC, Location AAC - inter-ministerial coordination, planning, monitoring activities,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capacity of members</td>
<td>- thematic working groups in AACs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- AAC work plan; frequency of capacity development</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- data base on child protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To examine community awareness on child rights and how the key players have contributed to child protection</td>
<td>- structures at community level</td>
<td>- the key players at different levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- functions of the key players</td>
<td>- linkages between players at different levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- roles and responsibilities of key players at different levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To examine how coordination mechanism and resources in place have supported service delivery and handling of child abuse violations</td>
<td>- information the Community have on child protection</td>
<td>- coordination, collaboration and information sharing across the structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- nature of cases reported to AAC by community and how they have been handled</td>
<td>- awareness of available child protection services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- awareness on legislations and mechanisms of protection services in place</td>
<td>- process of handling child abuse cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- means of dissemination of information</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- awareness raising initiatives</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- factors affecting handling child abuse cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- child participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Resources which include human and financial for implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To assess the challenges AACs face and provide recommendation on how they can be addressed</td>
<td>- problems facing AACs</td>
<td>- challenges of implementing child protection of various players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- what solutions are in place</td>
<td>- gaps in implementation of laws, policy and guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- recommendations</td>
<td>- solutions to the challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- recommendations on guidelines, standards in place, services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- data on available services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- source of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- information on CP violations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- gaps on service delivery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction
This chapter deals with research design, target population, sampling techniques, sample size, data collection methods and data analysis.

3.2 General Description
The study was conducted in Kitui West District in Kitui County. The district has 7 divisions. The research covered Mutonguni Division which is sub-divided into 8 locations and 20 sub-locations. The total population is 63,752 living under 14,001 households. The average household size of Mutonguni is comprised of approximately 5 people. The average population density of Mutonguni stood at 2,963, (Republic of Kenya, 2009). The study purposively chose a district that is rural and also classified as semi-arid. Such an area could have unique challenges in bringing up children and therefore the study findings will provide a basis for comparison with other, could be classified as safer, regions for children welfare.

3.3 Research Design
This research is an analytical kind of research which has also extended the descriptive kind of research so as to explain why/how the AAC are in contributing to child protection. The research has combined two research approaches i.e. quantitative and qualitative approaches. According to Neville (2007), the emphasis of quantitative research is on collecting and analyzing numerical data and concentrates on measuring the scale, range and frequency of phenomena. Qualitative research on the other hand, is more subjective in nature than quantitative research and involves examining and reflecting on the less tangible aspects of a research subject such as values, attitudes and perceptions.

This research also has considered two research philosophies/positions which are overlapping. One is the positivistic which is also referred to as quantitative, objectivist, scientific, experimental or traditionalist. The second philosophy is phenomenological which is also referred to as qualitative, subjectivist, humanistic or interpretive, (Collin, 2007).
There are basically two types of research paradigms ranging on a continuum from a positivistic to a phenomenological approach. The positivistic approach attempts to explain social phenomena by establishing a relation between variables which are information converted into numbers. This approach is referred to as quantitative research. The phenomenological paradigm, on the other hand, suggests that social reality lies within the unit of research, and that the act of investigating the reality has an effect on that reality. This paradigm pays considerable regard to the subjective or qualitative state of the individual, hence the reference to this approach as qualitative research. This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. Qualitative data was used to get community opinion on child protection.

3.4 Target Population

Target/study population is the aggregate of all cases that conform to some designated set of specifications (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996). In this study, the study population was defined as all individuals in the division who in one way or another were involved in child protection. In this case the unit of analysis was children ages 12-17 years, adults of the selected households in the study and the AAC members in Kitui West district.

The study mainly targeted the community members, children aged 12-17 years, AACs and community based structures established to deal with child protection issues and national level stakeholders. This is regarded as appropriate for child participation. It also targeted District Children Officer who is the secretary to the AAC; selected AAC members at district level, division level and location levels from government line ministries; and the National Council for Children Services at the national level inclusive.

3.5 Sampling frame and sampling design

A sample is a representation of part of a population. According to Giddens (2008) sociologists engage in sampling i.e. a small proportion of the overall group in order to study it and make generalization of results back to the population from which they were chosen. This study used purposive sampling for identifying key informants and focus group discussants. Peter (1994)
purposive sampling is obtained by the researcher using their own expert
knowledge and purpose to decide whom to select into the sampling frame. Purposive sampling
was done in this study by selecting persons that may provide the required information with
respect to the objectives of the study. This was done in respect in selection of key informant
interview persons.

Multi-stage sampling was also used. Simple random selection of 3 locations was drawn for the
study due to the vast number of sub-locations in the eight locations in Mutonguni Division. From
each of the selected locations, another simple random selection of 2 sub-locations was drawn. A
random selection of 2 villages was done from the total number of villages in each sub-location.
From each selected village, using village maps and chosen compass directions, a systematic
sampling was applied to select households whereby after selecting a household along a chosen
compass direction, the next household was skipped and then the one following was selected until
all the required number of households had been drawn. In total, 10 households were drawn per
village. This ensured maximum randomization and avoidance of bias in sample selection. This
is explained diagrammatically in table 2 below.

### Table 2: Sampling Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of units in Kitui West district</th>
<th>Selected sample size (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 Divisions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Locations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Sub-locations</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Villages</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1680 Households</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.6 Study sample size

Suitable study sample size is a critical matter as it influences the statistical significance and
power. According to Nick et al. (2009), choosing the correct size of sample is not a matter of
preference, it is a crucial element of the research process without which you may well be
spending months trying to investigate a problem with a tool which is either completely useless,
or over expensive in terms of time and other resources. The same authors argued that, not all
quantitative studies involve hypothesis-testing. Some studies merely seek to describe the
Whereas hypothesis testing will involve comparing the characteristics of two or more groups, a descriptive survey may be concerned solely with describing the characteristics of a single group. The aim of this type of survey is often to obtain an accurate estimate of a particular figure, such as a mean or a proportion.

### 3.7 Methods and Tools of Data Collection

#### 3.7.1 Introduction

According to Collins and Hussey (2003), a research method refers only to the various specific tools or ways data can be collected and analyzed e.g. a questionnaire; interview checklist; data analysis software among others. This study has employed both secondary data from the literature review of existing publications and other authentic documents and primary data from face to face interviews, administered questionnaires and focus group discussions with the community. The primary data was collected through field work using qualitative and quantitative approaches. The main method of data collection used was household interviews. 120 household interviews were conducted, 7 key informant interviews and 2 FGDs; 1 for AAC members and 1 for children.

Key Informant interviews were held with 7 AAC members (Police officer, Health officer in charge of child protection issues, Education officer, Chief, District Children Officer (DCO), NGO representative and NCCS representative at national level).

Household interviews were also conducted using structured questionnaires to establish community’s opinion on child protection and how they view the contribution of the AACs in implementing child welfare matters. Questionnaires were developed for conducting household oral interviews. This was used to answer the specific study objectives.

Focus group discussions were held with AAC members drawn from district, division and location AACs. FGD for children of school going age were also conducted to establish their views on how the community and the AACs were dealing with their affairs.
explored by reviewing minutes and reports of AAC employed these with the aid of the community as useful guides in identifying the selected households.

3.7.2. Oral Interviews

An interview is a purposeful discussion between two or more people. The use of interview can help the researcher to gather valid and reliable data that is relevant to the research questions and objectives. Oral interviews were conducted in 120 households.

3.7.3 Key informant interview

This study also used key informant interviews that were purposefully selected. According to Neville (2007) a key informant interview is a one-to-one interview with key informants in an organization (these might be face to face or by telephone). The purpose of key informant interviews was to have open-ended, in depth interviews with key informants, from; National Council for Children Services and local level stakeholders. The interview sought their views on child protection, the threats to children's wellbeing and the responses to those threats in their area. This entailed development of an interview guide with a series of open-ended questions under selected topics in child protection that were posed to individuals selected for their knowledge and experience in child protection and AACs. This also involved conducting in-depth and semi-structured interviews. The persons targeted for this included government officers such as the District Children's Officer, health care providers, law enforcers, education officer, chief, NCCS representative and NGO representative who is an AAC member. Seven key informant interviews were used to investigate issues in an in-depth way. The interviews were aimed at also helping discover how individuals think and feel about the AAC structure and why they hold certain opinions; investigate the contribution of AAC and services they offer and provide verification of information gathered from household interviews.

3.7.4 Observation

Marshall and Rossman (1989) define observation as "the systematic description of events, behaviours, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study," (p.79). According to Erlandson
Observations enable the researcher to describe existing situations using the five senses, providing a "written photograph" of the situation under study. DeMunck and Sobo (1998) describe participant observation as the primary method used by anthropologists doing fieldwork. According to Dewalt and Dewalt (2002) fieldwork involves "active looking, improving memory, informal interviewing, writing detailed field notes, and perhaps most importantly, patience". Participant observation is the process of enabling researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities. It provides the context for development of sampling guidelines and interview guides (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). Schensul, et al. (1999) defines participant observation as "the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the researcher setting."

Russell (1994) adds to this understanding, indicating that participant observation requires a certain amount of deception and impression management. The author notes that most anthropologists, need to maintain a sense of objectivity through distance. The author defines participant observation as the process of establishing rapport within a community and learning to act in such a way as to blend into the community so that its members will act naturally, then removing oneself from the setting or community to immerse oneself in the data to understand what is going on and be able to write about it. The author includes more than just observation in the process of being a participant observer and includes observation, natural conversations, and interviews of various sorts, checklists, questionnaires, and unobtrusive methods.

DeWalt and DeWalt (1998) notes that, participant observation is characterized by such actions as having an open, nonjudgmental attitude, being interested in learning more about others, being aware of the propensity for feeling culture shock and for making mistakes, the majority of which can be overcome, being a careful observer and a good listener, and being open to the unexpected in what is learned.

Richard (1997) argues that, observation method provides research with ways to check for nonverbal expression of feelings, determines who interacts with whom, grasps how participants communicate with each other, and checks for how much time is spent on various activities. (On
Marshall and Rossman (1995), argue that participant observation allows the researcher to check definitions of terms that participants use in interviews, observe events that informants may be unable or unwilling to share. It is argued that when doing so would be impolitic, impolite, or insensitive, and observe situations informants have described in interviews, thereby making them aware of distortions or inaccuracies in description provided by those informants. This was put into consideration during key informant interviews.

DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) believe that "the goal for design of research using participant observation as a method is to develop a holistic understanding of the phenomena under study that is as objective and accurate as possible given the limitations of the method". They suggest that participant observation be used as a way to increase the validity of the study, as observations may help the researcher have a better understanding of the context and phenomenon under study. Validity is stronger with the use of additional strategies used with observation, such as interviewing, document analysis, or surveys, questionnaires, or other more quantitative methods. Participant observation can be used to help answer descriptive research questions, to build theory, or to generate or test hypotheses.

An observation guide as described by Merrian and Sharan, (1998) was used in this study. This encompasses various elements to be recorded in field notes. The first of these elements included the physical environment. This involved observing the surroundings of the setting and providing a written description of the context. Next, the description of the participants in detail, followed by a record of the activities and interactions that occur in the setting. This study also looked at the frequency and duration of those activities/interactions and other subtle factors, such as informal, unplanned activities, symbolic meanings, nonverbal communication, physical clues, and what should happen that has not happened. This further included observing the conversation during focus group discussions in terms of content, who speaks to whom, who listens, silences, the researcher's own behavior and how that role affects those one is observing, and what one says or thinks.
The study also used an observation guide to observe a count of attendees, including such practical map of the setting and description of the physical surroundings; a portrayal of where participants are positioned over time; a description of the activities being observed, detailing activities of interest; adult activities such as AAC meetings; how children are playing in the community; whether you see happy children faces; whether children are free with strangers or not; how parents treat children at home and how children are treated in school. The research has exacted quotes where possible; described activities in the order in which they occurred; provided descriptions without inferring meaning; included relevant background information to situate the event; separate one's own thoughts and assumptions from what one actually observes; recorded the date, time, place, and name of researcher on each set of notes (Schensul et al., 1999).

3.7.5 Focus group discussion (FGD)
Focus group discussions are used to gather data in form of opinions from a selected group of people on a particular and pre-determined topic (Neville, 2007). In this study, the FGD helped to elicit views of opinions of the target population to obtain insights on their perceptions, needs, problems, beliefs and reasons regarding AACs and child protection. The respondents were allowed to freely discuss the issue in a group of 8-10 persons. This study conducted 2 FGDs, one with children between ages 12-17 years and one with adults drawn from AACs. The purpose was to identify the main protection risks to children, the networks that support affected children, the outcomes of various channels of help and action, and the level of satisfaction with the networks and outcomes by children, parents and community.

3.7.6 Review Secondary Data
A review of current literature and all relevant documents related to the child protection systems was conducted. Information obtained from these documents also allowed for the study to triangulate and verify the data collected from the field. This was done as part of the literature review. Selected literature from Kitui West district government offices that include the DCO was reviewed so as to provide site specific information on AAC and child protection work.
Case Studies

According to Robert (2009), a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (exploratory studies). Case study research can be positivist (quantitative), interpretive, or critical, depending upon the underlying philosophical assumptions of the researcher. In this study, the study examined a few selected cases of children who have suffered abuse. This helped analyze the nature of cases of abuse in the community; analyzed the support mechanisms in place in terms of partners who handled the case; the reporting and referral mechanisms in place; the services provided to support the children and family to addressing the case; the effects of the services; any challenges experienced in handling the incidence and identified recommendations towards handling such incidences in future.

Table 3: Summary of Methods of Data Collection and Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of data</th>
<th>Method of data collection</th>
<th>Data collection tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community members</td>
<td>House hold interview</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key informants e.g.; Police, Health officials, education officer, chief, NCCS representative, NGO representative (World Vision staff within area) and district children officer</td>
<td>Key informant interview, case studies, review of secondary data</td>
<td>Key informant guide, case studies, reports and minutes of AACs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAC members</td>
<td>Focus Group discussion</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Children in school clubs -children at risk</td>
<td>-Focus group discussion -Case studies</td>
<td>-Focus group discussion guide -case study guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical structures, communities, children, organized groups etc</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Observation check list</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.8 Validity and reliability

Joppe (2000) defines reliability as “the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study.” A reliable assessment tool produces stable and consistent results. A pretest was done on the questionnaires in the field in different
As part of training of the research assistants and test of reliability of tool during the first day of the research, the questionnaire was reviewed and some questions were adjusted by merging them where appropriate. The time of administering the questionnaires was also noted as approximately 45 minutes. Once this was done, the researcher was confident that the questionnaire was appropriate and that proper administration will also be done. On the other hand, validity denotes how well a test measures what it is purported to measure. Joppe (2000) provides that validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. American Educational Research Association et al. (1999) define Validity as "the degree to which the evidence supports that these interpretations are correct and that the manner in which the interpretations are used is appropriate." In order to ensure that the tools to be used in this research are valid and reliable, the content on the data collected focused on key concepts of child protection and AAC. The research questions focused on these key questions for the different target groups. Triangulation of results was done to confirm the validity of the results of the different tools used e.g. household interviews and comparison of results from key informant interviews and focus group discussions from children and AAC members. These ensured valid results are achieved. Triangulation also ensured that the data collected is reliable so that the results from the different tools produce consistent information regarding child protection and AAC.

The principles of research ethics were also considered so that no negative impacts of the research were experienced by the participants in the research. Professional practice and ethical standards were maintained. This included; ensuring accuracy in data gathering and data processing; use of relevant research methodology as required by the research objective; appropriate interpretation of data; accurate reporting; and avoided fabrication and falsification of data. The research also upheld the ethics principle of researcher-respondent relationship by ensuring proper identification and clear outset of the explanation of the questions being covered in the research in the appropriate local language. The welfare of the respondents and ensuring free and informed consent was sought especially when dealing with children during the FGD and risk mapping exercise which required both the consent of the school and the child. Thirdly, the research upheld the researcher- researcher relationship ethics. This ensured that from the literature review, there
was clear ascription of authorship, avoided plagiarism and rightful use of authority from other researchers. The researcher ensured that the research findings reflect the attributes of the population and that conclusions drawn through the study are related to the whole population.

3.9 Data Analysis

Seidel (1998) describes data analysis as a process in which the researcher sorts and shifts data, searching for types, classes, sequences, processes, patterns or wholes. The aim of this process is to assemble or reconstruct the data in a meaningful or comprehensible fashion. In this study, the researcher adopted this definition as a guide to the study's data analysis. Data was recorded on notepads and clearly marked with the name of the interviewee, the date and place and any other relevant details. Each set of notes was then read looking for similarities and differences in a bid to find themes and to develop categories as presented in the literature review. Information on the notepads was underlined/ coded by marking each paragraph with word that depicts the appropriate category. In this study, the researcher used coding as described by Seidel (1998) to sort out information, group and summarized it for analysis. Different sentences and phrases in the paragraphs were also highlighted using different colours to differentiate the themes. Data was then arranged per theme and put together through card index system. Each notepad was marked with line numbers for cross-referencing purposes. There was a card for each theme and category which was cross-referenced with the notepads per variable of study. Data has been presented as per variables, themes and categories in a summarized form. This guided discussions in interpreting the findings on how they answer the research questions. Microsoft excel computer package and Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) was used to compute the quantitative data and create frequency tables.
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter covers data analysis, presentation and interpretation. Analysis means: categorizing, ordering, manipulating and summarizing of data to obtain answers to research questions. It is to reduce data to intelligible and interpretable form using statistics. Interpretation means: searching for meaning and implication of research results, in order to make inferences and draw conclusions and relate to the theory. Statistics: a means of finding order and meaning in apparent chaos. This chapter has conducted a quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis and a mixed methods approach in answering the research questions.

This study was aimed at establishing the contribution of Area Advisory Councils in child protection. The study covered Kitui County, Mutonguni Division. The target area was in 3 locations of Mutonguni Division i.e. Kauwi, Kivani and Kakeani. It covered 6 sub-locations i.e. 2 sub-locations in each location i.e. Kakeani, Kauwi, Kyondoni, Kivani, Kangungi and Kangii. It also covered 12 villages i.e. Kasue, Makutano, Nzemeli, Kyondoni, Kikunguu, Mulakitete, Kavoo, Matingu, Kalindangongo, Kutha, Kiamani and Nyuani.

This study sought to respond to the following research questions:

1. How does the composition and roles of AAC structure affect its contribution to child protection as provided by AAC guidelines?
2. What is the community awareness on child rights and how have the key players contributed to child protection?
3. How have coordination mechanisms and resources in place supported service delivery and handling of child abuse violations?
4. What challenges do AACs face and how can they be addressed?

The research made use of a participatory approach and adopted a qualitative multi-method of investigation, including a document review, in-depth interviews, and focus group sessions for adults and children. The interview schedules were developed in collaboration with the Kitui County Director of Children and the National Council for Children Services from the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services.
A total of 120 household interviews were conducted in the 12 villages; 10 households per village. A total of 7 in-depth interviews from key informants were conducted consisting of stakeholders in Mutonguni Division and Kitui District and one representative from the NCCS. The study also conducted 2 focus group sessions for children from 3 schools and with AAC members. The qualitative and quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS software and Microsoft excel and the notes from the FGDs and Key Informant Interviews were used to triangulate the information for accuracy. The findings have been presented in tables and charts.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics

4.2.1 Gender
As shown in table 4 below, 36% of respondents interviewed were male while 64% were female. This can be attributed to the fact that the researcher was able to find more female respondents at home during the time of the primary data collection.

Table 4: Gender of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>64.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2 Level of Education
Table 5 below shows the frequencies on the levels of parent’s education. The table shows that 12.5% had no formal education, 52.5% attained primary level, 26.7% attained secondary level, 4.2% attained tertiary level, 1.7% attained university and 2.5% attained adult education. From these findings, it is noted that most parents (over 65%) have low levels of formal education.
Table 5: Education of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education of respondents</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.3 Occupation of Respondents

Table 6 shows the occupations of the respondents. The study found out that most respondents rely on farming which stands at 51.7%, whereas other forms of occupation were business at 19.2%, formal employment at 6.7%, and casual employment at 17.5% and others at 5.0%.

Table 6: Occupation of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation of respondents</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Employment</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.4 Age of Respondents

Table 7 presents the age categories of the respondents. The study found that the age of the respondents was as follows; between 20-30 years at 11.7%, 31-40years at 26.7%, 41-50 years at 33.3%, 51-60 years at 16.7%, 60 years and above at 11.7%. It is evident that the majority of the parents interviewed were between 41-50 years of age.
Table 7: Ages of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of respondent</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and above</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.5 Religious Affiliation

The religious affiliation of respondents is shown in table 8 below.

Table 8: Religious Affiliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study also assessed the religious affiliation of the respondents as shown in table 8 above. The dominant denomination was Protestant at 55.8% followed by Evangelicals at 22.5% and Catholics at 21.7%. There were no other kinds of religions in the sampled area. This indicates that a large percentage of the population is Christians.

4.3 MAIN FINDINGS

4.3.1 Composition and Roles of AAC

The first objective of the study sought to assess the composition and roles of AAC structure in regards to child protection as provided by AAC guidelines.

4.3.2.1 Awareness on AAC and their roles

Table 9 presents the respondent's awareness about AACS.
Table 9: Awareness of AACs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heard</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not heard</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the household interviews, 67.5% respondents had heard of AACs while 30.8% had not. This is a positive step towards enhancing its usefulness in the community.

The means by which they had heard of the AAC structure for the first time is represented in table 10 below.

Table 10: Means of conveying messages on AAC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means to conveying information about AACs</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAC/Children Officer</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barazaas</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sources</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Awareness of community members on AAC is represented in table 10 above which indicates that about 27.5% of the respondents had heard of AACs through either the AAC members or the Children Officer. Another 25.8% had heard of AACs through the barazaas in the community, 8.3% from other sources and no response being the highest at 38.3%. This indicates that a majority of the community members had for the first time heard of the AAC structure through the Children Officer/AAC though awareness level are low.

Awareness of AAC representatives in the community is shown in table 11 below

Table 11: Awareness of AAC representative in the community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge of AACs Representatives</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aware</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not aware</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About 55% of the respondents also knew of the AAC representatives in the community, while 17.5% did not know of any and 27.5% had no response. It can be deduced that awareness of AAC representatives is fairly low.

The accessibility of AAC members was also sought and is represented in table 12 below.

**Table 12: Accessibility of AAC representatives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility of AACs Representatives</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easily accessible</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely accessible</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On accessibility of AAC members, 34% respondents said that the AAC members were easily accessible; 19% reported they were accessible; 6.4% reported they were rarely accessible while 11.5% had no idea about their accessibility. This data reveals that accessibility of AAC members is low and this could be attributed to transport challenges and lack of transport funds as revealed in focus group discussions.

These results were further confirmed by the key informants on their knowledge of the AAC structure. However, the administration police officer at the chief’s office interviewed as a key informant said that she had not heard of the AAC. This was because she had not participated in any of the trainings nor meetings organized by the AAC. The Chief in Kakeani Location said that, “the AAC is a structure that looks at issues of children in the grassroots.” The Area Education Officer said that the AAC is “A group of people from a particular area charged with responsibility to protect children rights sensitize community and report child abuse cases,” (personal interview). The DCO Kitui West district noted that the AAC is “A council that oversees the activities of children issues in the district to ensure they are done as per requirements of the Children Act and Constitution.” In addition to this, a focus group discussion
AAC consists of people from the community, they understand the community and are ready to work. They are selected people from the community, government and Non-governmental organizations to link the government and community on children issues.

A key informant from National Council for Children Services (NCCS) noted that the AAC is a replica of NCCS at the grassroots and implements decisions made by NCCS. It is a structure in the community that plans, coordinates and supervises services to children at the various levels - District, division, location. It is expected to set priorities in the area and also monitor implementation of policies on children, (Personal interview). This means that the AAC is mandated to handle child protection issues in the community on behalf of the national government. The mandate includes planning, implementation and monitoring of children issues.

On membership, the following were mentioned; Chair - District Commissioner, Division Officer, Chief (depends on level), Secretary-District Children Officer/Volunteer Children Officer, Government line ministries that deal with children issues, Religious leaders, opinion leaders, FBOs, NGOs in children sector, Children which depends on level, Community Based Organizations which also depends on level and Private sector. It was however noted that children do not participate as they are mostly in school. Consultations with key informants and focus group discussions revealed that the AAC membership was okay as provided by the AAC guidelines but had some challenges. These include; the participation of children; which was not being implemented as per AAC guidelines. It was also noted that the chairperson at the Divisional level i.e. D.O and chief at location level did not invite members for meetings as required since they had no time for this. The respondents said that the chairmanship is not good for chief and D.O as they are leaders and end up conducting Kangaroo courts (illegal courts). It was also noted that there has been little support from the DCO. The chief further noted that he is the one that appointed the members of the location level AAC and yet it was the role of the DCO to do so. This was however not the case at the division level. The AAC members at Divisional level said the AAC was constituted through the DCO and D.O. They said that Counselors do not attend AAC meetings. The vulnerable children were supported by the AAC through devolved funds like LATF.
entation of the Constitution of Kenya 2010, respondents expressed concerns that it was not clear how the provincial administration will be restructured and this was affecting the AAC structure since the D.C, D.O and chiefs are the chair of the AACs at different levels. They also attributed this as a factor contributing to lack of support/commitment by the persons in these positions. Another issue of concern was that the AAC membership is also affected by frequent transfers of D.C, D.O and Police of which the members have to battle with in handling child protection concerns.

From these discussions, it is clear that the AAC is a community child protection structure that consists of representation from community and government and is a link between the community and government as regards to children issues though it is coupled with challenges as mentioned above. A focus group discussion with AAC members noted that it would be prudent for the AAC to have more community members than government officials/persons in positions. This was due to the fact that, community members would be more available and serious in handling their own issues in the community. This data is corroborated by Chitere’s (2004) argument that sustainable development is one of the most pressing challenges facing the human community in the 21st Century and that as growing populations outstrip the capacity of states to meet the needs of the people, it becomes the prerogative of the communities to seek solutions from amongst themselves to problems that were hitherto the responsibility of the central government.

### 4.3.1.2 Roles of AACs

The awareness on the roles of AACs members is represented in Table 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness on roles of AACs</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 role</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 roles</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 roles</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 roles</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The roles of the AAC were known by some of the community members (50%) who reported to know the four main roles that AAC members played that is; identification of children in need of care in terms of support to provision of food, support to health needs, clothing and shelter and education; secondly; linking the OVCs to support agencies, third; responding to cases of child abuse, violence and denial of rights. The fourth role was to sensitize communities. 6.7% reported to know that AACs performed at least one of the 3 main roles, while 3.3% and 2.5% 2 roles and 1 role respectively.

In regards to identification of children in need of care and protection, the AAC do varied roles as represented in table 14 below.

**Table 14: Awareness on roles of AAC in regards to identification of children in need of care and protection (CNCP)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge on roles of AACs in identification CNCP</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 role</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1 role</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The AAC is also mandated to perform the role of identifying children in need of care as represented in table 14 above. This refers to roles such as provision of food; support to health needs; support to provision of clothing and shelter; and support to education. In this regard, this study revealed that; 46.7% knew at least more than one of these roles in this category while 8.3% knew at least one role in this category.

**Table 15: Awareness of Linking OVC to support agencies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness on roles of AACs in identification CNCP</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aware</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>59.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not aware</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In regards to the second role of linking of OVCs to support agencies, 59.2% were aware of this while the rest were not aware as shown in table 15 above.
Table 16: Responding to cases of child abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness on role of responding to cases of abuse</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aware</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not aware</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the third role of responding to cases of child abuse, violence and denial of rights 55% reported to know of this role while the rest did not.

Table 17: Role of sensitizing communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness on role of responding to cases of abuse</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aware</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not aware</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the fourth role of sensitizing communities 55% knew of this while the rest did not know of this role.

These results indicate a confirmation of the important role of the AAC in terms of its functions as provided by AAC guidelines as cited in the literature review. However, the AAC structure in this community is known more for identification of children in need and this is in regard to the provision of basic services like food, support to education unlike other issues in child protection which are of importance. This would be attributed to the challenges posed by the food security situation and the socio-economic wellbeing of the community. Table 6 above shows that most respondents’ main occupation is farming which stands at 51.7% which is however hampered by unreliable rainfall patterns.

At community level, the key informants said that the functions of the AAC is to look at children issues and report them as they occur and that the AAC are the "eyes" of the community. At the district level, they inspect charitable children institutions to ensure they meet standards. From focus group discussion with selected AAC members, this study revealed that the role of AACs
A key informant from NCCS noted that the role of the AAC was as follows: plan, supervise, finance and coordinate children’s activities; mobilize resources for children activities; create awareness on children issues; build partnerships and networking; inspect and recommend registration or deregistration of CCIs; capacity building of stakeholders; conduct data collection and manage databanks; and monitor, evaluate and report on implementation of child rights and welfare activities to NCCS.

Other roles as mentioned by NCCS representative were not prominent at community level for instance; plan, supervise, finance and coordinate children’s activities; capacity building of stakeholders; data collection and maintain databanks; monitor, evaluate and report on implementation of child rights and welfare activities to NCCS. This then means that these roles are dormant and may need to be revisited with review of the AAC guidelines and the Children Act to allocate to other stakeholders appropriately.

### 4.3.2 Community Awareness on Child Rights and Key players in child protection

#### 4.3.2.1 Awareness on Child Rights

The second objective of the study sought to examine community awareness on child rights and how the key players have contributed to child protection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness on children rights</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aware</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>93.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not aware</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18 shows the results of awareness on children rights by respondents. The table shows that 93.3% of sampled households reported to have heard about children rights while 6.7% had not
The study also sought to examine the means by which the community received information regarding children rights in the first instance. Table 19 presents the results of means of awareness raising on children rights.

**Table 19: Means of awareness raising on children rights**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means of awareness raising</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church/mosque</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAC</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical centre</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 19 above shows that the main means of awareness raising on children rights was through the radio which was at 25.8% followed by the school at 20.8%, then the religious bodies like the mosque and church at 15.0%, the AAC at 15.0% and other sources such as medical center at 4.2%, friends at 4.2%, and neighbors at 2.5%. The results indicate that the source that reaches most people on raising awareness on children rights is the radio and the school.

The household interviews also revealed that most of the respondents were mainly aware of life and survival rights which include right to life and food. 60% of the respondents reported to be aware of these kinds of rights whereas those who reported to be aware of Protection rights were at 28.3%. From these findings, it is evident that most community members are aware of the basic rights while issues of protection, child participation and development rights are not well known. These results were also confirmed by interviews with the key informants. From key informant interviews, it was noted that child protection was understood to mean "looking at the child to be free from abuse, neglect," Chief Kakeani Location. The health officer said that child protection is full activities geared towards protecting children from harm/anything that will disrupt the normal
According to the Education Officer, child protection is, "all about ensuring that we give our children the best in terms of care, their rights as children, providing for basic needs such as education, health, clothing, medication and giving the child what he deserves. AAC members defined Child protection as, "giving the child basic needs e.g. food, clothing, shelter, education, child participation and decision making on issues affecting them, children have leisure time and also medical care.

The District Children Officer said child protection is more of an intervention of organizations and individual government to ensure that children issues are addressed and rights are safeguarded. An interview with a representative from the National Council for Children Services noted that child protection constitutes "the actions individuals, organizations, communities and countries take to prevent and respond to both intentional and unintentional harm to children. This is aimed at safeguarding the rights and welfare of children and preventing violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. These findings thus reveal that, the understanding of children rights and child protection in general differs between the community and the stakeholders at different levels. There is thus a disconnect which affects the protection of children rights.

### 4.3.2.2 Key players and responsibilities

The level of community awareness of key players in child protection is presented in Table 20.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aware</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not aware</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 20 shows that 83.3% of the household interviewees reported to be aware of such organizations while 15.0% were not aware of them and 1.7% had no response. This is a positive step to enhancing collaborations in child protection.
report to cases of child abuse, the household data also showed that 75.0% of the respondents knew other organizations that they can report cases of abuse to while the rest were not aware. Of the ones who were aware of these organizations, they mentioned the following bodies as shown in table 21 below.

**Table 21: Organizations that support child protection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Labour Organization, World Vision, Rosemina, and Watu Wangu Centre</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government representatives who include the chief, and the District Children Office and social services</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21 above shows that; International Labour Organization, World Vision, Rosemina, and Watu Wangu Centre which were mentioned by 6.7% of the respondents. The respondents also mentioned government representatives who include the chief, and the District Children Office and social services at 33.3%. In addition to these, the key informants also mentioned the church, teachers, village elders, police, family, community, health staff, DCO, Probation office, civil registration department, education department, department of gender; NGOs like Child Welfare Society, AMREF, Kitui development authority, CBOs, Catholic Diocese of Kitui, Child Fund and Compassion International and children themselves. The findings indicate low levels of awareness of the community on organizations supporting child protection represented by 60% non-response. The data also reveals the important role of the government in child protection (33.3%) which is higher than the one of Civil Society organizations (6.7%).

The data above is corroborated by Republic of Kenya (2009) which underscores the role of Government as being accountable for establishing legal frameworks, developing policies, providing resources, establishing institutions and fostering networks and partnerships to fulfill the rights of children and women to enjoy protection rights in Kenya. The AAC represents the Government which is the duty bearer as required by law to ensure formulation and implementation of laws, policies, and regulations/guidelines, maintain law and order, and enhance security and essential services for the protection and wellbeing of children. Thus, the
Awareness on key players in handling cases of child protection is also important and also linked to the collaboration in service delivery and community’s perception on where to find assistance when in need. Table 22 below provides a summary of the key players, their roles and areas of collaboration as confirmed by the key informants and household respondents. The table also indicates that the communities including children have a role to play in child protection. The role of the community leaders seemed not well defined though they played a big role in handling cases of child abuse. This then would mean that they may be left out when collaborating in child protection issues. This creates a gap in the child protection system. At the community level, the child was mentioned as a key player but their role in child protection was not clearly defined thus making children appear to be more of beneficiaries/recipients of services from adults. However, at national level i.e. NCCS, it was noted that the role of the child is to participate in matters affecting their life and reporting cases of abuse. From the household interviews, most respondents noted that the child feared adults/parents and thus did not report cases of child abuse. This thus has an implication on reporting of cases of child abuse occurring at home and in school. This also indicates the limited capacity of the child to protect themselves and others while faced with abuse thus making them more vulnerable.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key players</th>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Areas of collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Department of Education</td>
<td>Ensuring children access school</td>
<td>• Supporting rescue of children from child abuse and referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Department of Civil Registration</td>
<td>Birth certificates</td>
<td>• Support to issuance of birth certificates to children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3. Department of children services | Receive reports of child abuse cases and follow up | • Support handling cases of child abuse, referrals, conduct trainings on children rights, awareness raising on children rights and child protection on how to prevent, what to do should they happen. They do this in community meetings or through children clubs in schools.  
• planning events like national celebration days like Day of African Child  
• AACs  raise awareness on child protection matters, ensure service delivery to children, implement laws and policies on child protection, ensure cases of child rights violations are dealt with Government agencies (including DCO, Police, Chiefs, courts etc)- formulate laws and policies for child protection, coordinate services to children, provision of services, advocate for child rights, capacity building of providers and partners, reporting of cases (depending on the levels) |
<p>| 4. Department of health     | Immunizations, prevention of diseases,     | • Support referrals for abused children by offering medical support, filling in P3 forms at hospitals. |
| 5. Provincial administration-chiefs | Cases of child abuse are reported to their office | • Awareness raising on children rights and child protection on how to prevent, what to do should they happen. They do this in community meetings. They also do referrals for children who have been abused |
| 6. Department of gender     | Support handling of children with disabilities | • Awareness raising on children rights and child protection on how to prevent, what to do should they happen. They also focus on children with disabilities and orphans. They do this in community meetings |
| 7. Department of Police     | Security, investigation and arrest of culprits | • Support handling cases of child abuse and arrest of perpetrators |
| 8. NGOs- World Vision, Child | Provide information on children including those who | • Awareness raising on children rights and child protection on how to prevent, what to do should they happen. They do this in community meetings. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AMREF, Kitui development authority, CBOs, FBO e.g Catholic Diocese of Kitui, Child Fund and Compassion International.</strong></td>
<td>They finance programmes for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support planning for children events like Day of African child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provision of services, capacity building of providers and children, reporting of cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Village elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Business community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 level the key players had more elaborate roles and was mentioned by respondents from AACs, police and chief at community level. The roles at community level are not clearly understood. The role of business community is also not recognized as shown above and yet they would support in resource mobilization and support to vulnerable children. This shows a gap in understanding at the two levels. It would then be deduced that if the community level respondents shared the same understanding as district level and national level, the protective environment for children would be more effective due to collaboration in roles of each partner. The role of community thus needs to be emphasized for the AAC to be successful in its functioning.

4.3.3 Coordination mechanisms, resources and handling of child abuse violations

The third objective of the study was to examine how coordination mechanisms and resources in place have supported service delivery and handling of child abuse violations.

4.3.3.1 Coordination Mechanisms

Coordination, collaboration and cooperation of the AAC is linked to the level of community awareness of AAC representatives as presented in Table 11 which indicated that 55.0% of the respondents were aware of a representative of the AAC structure, 17.5% were not aware while 27.5% gave no response. Table 12 also represents the accessibility of the AAC members in the community. On accessibility of the AAC representatives to address community child protection concerns, 34% said that the AAC members were easily accessible, 19% said they were accessible, 4% reported they were rarely accessible and 43% had no response. This indicates that community members were aware of AAC respondents though fairly low. This may have an impact on collaboration and cooperation with the community.

A key informant from NCCS noted that, as the representatives of NCCS at community level, AACs take action on reported cases of child rights violations. AACs also implement the policies and decisions of NCCS e.g. closure of Charitable Children Institutions where child abuse has been reported. The NCCS monitors the performance of AACs periodically through field visits e.g. by attending their meetings and giving technical advice.
It was further revealed that the performance of AACs is dependent on their empowerment and
initiative of the DCO. It was however appreciated that there are aspects of their work that
they carry out diligently; like inspection and recommendation of CCI. The AACs that have been
trained are able to prepare work plan to guide their activities and follow them. Few have been
able to undertake data collection and establishment of databanks. Most are able to mobilize
resources and plan activities which include and not limited to celebration of children events. It
was noted that the function that poses a serious challenge to the AAC is submitting reports to
NCCS.

Key informants at community level however differed with this. They noted that the AAC had no
clear work plan. They revealed that during AAC meetings, a list of issues of concern in the
community was developed e.g. child abuse cases reported and these were then addressed
accordingly by different members. It was further noted that there was no clear database on child
abuse cases by AAC and that members relied on minutes of AAC meetings. In addition to having
no clear work plans in AACs, the other issue was that there were also no thematic working
groups to address issues of child protection in the community. Collaboration, coordination and
cooperation mechanisms also relied on the presence of chairperson of AACs at the different
levels who are drawn from the provincial administration. This meant that the absence of a
Division Officer (D.O) affected the functioning of the Division AAC. This also affected the
accessibility of AAC members to serve the community as revealed in household interviews in
Table 9.

A key informant from the ministry of health revealed that inter-ministerial collaboration existed
but were not strong. This was attributed to the fact that the AAC representatives from the various
government departments were not fully engaged in AAC activities and meetings. This was
caused by issues such as understaffing at the different government departments e.g. health,
education, police, among others. The persons that were invited from these departments were
mainly heads of divisions and also performed other jobs within their office jurisdiction leaving
them with little time for other matters outside their job specifications which included and not
limited to AAC. Due to a lean over-stretched staffing in these departments, their participation in
AAC activities became hampered. A recommendation was made of having most members of the
The decentralization of AAC to community level was aimed at bringing them closer to the people even in terms of travel. However, key informants and focus group discussants from AAC members noted that the collaboration mechanisms were also hampered by transport challenges. Most government departments had no vehicles to support their movement and public transport was also a challenge. The issue of transport also affected the CBO/NGO representatives. Members of CBOs also said that they had no money to pay for transport to attend meetings. If they received no facilitation from NGOs funding or DCO, they would not then be able to participate in the meetings.

The AAC members also revealed that there was an overlap of roles and responsibilities and membership for the division and district AAC. Collaborations between Location AAC and Division AAC were a challenge as members of the LAAC felt intimidated by Division AAC members who joined them in some collaborative meetings. This brought rifts between them. A key informant from Ministry of health also said that the Division AAC is also not clear of its existence since it has an overlap with District AAC and at some point it got swallowed up to form the new District AAC yet to be launched with the new changes in boarder districts.

As indicated earlier, the challenge of reporting to NCCS was also revealed. It was revealed that reports from Location AAC were shared with Division AAC then to District AAC. This is when the AAC were being financed by an NGO in the community. When the NGO’s project ended the funding stopped and the functioning of AACs at the Division and Location levels was affected. This was also echoed by a key informant from the ministry of education who said that reports were submitted up to district level but no feedback on the same was provided. The expectation was that the DC would provide some action on them but this was also not the case. The key informant from Ministry of health also said that there was no link with the national level. There were linkages at Divisional and locational level but weak with District level and non at national level.
On a positive note, the collaborations of AAC with NGOs had led to capacity development of members in collaboration with DCO. Capacity development was however limited. A key informant from ministry of health reported that the last time AAC members were trained was 3 years ago with support from an NGO during their formation. No subsequent trainings for AACs have been held. It was noted that the government had not financed any of the AAC trainings and that the AAC relied on partners who include APHIA Plus, World Vision, to support financially. These partners also supported trainings of other stakeholders who were not members of the AAC and during such trainings; a few members of the AAC would be invited to participate. The key informant from NCSS also confirmed the fact that; capacity development depends on the particular area. An area with many partners had many child protection activities undertaken well. In places with none or few NGOs existed was a challenge as all the work is left to the Government agencies especially the Department of Children Services which does not have officers up to the grassroots. Most of the other Government key players like the provincial administration are not properly empowered in terms of knowledge on issues of child protection.

This is also confirmed from findings in the literature review. World Vision (2008) notes that AACs have been established in many districts but are reported to face challenges. These include; low resource allocation by government, lack of commitment from some of key members; challenge of continuity due to transfers of key members especially in government line ministries and overstretched staff. In a bid to address this situation, AACs have been trained mostly through partners who include World Vision, African Network for Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse, PLAN International and Girl Child Network.

The key informants also noted that, monitoring of AAC activities was also not being done. Field visits were mainly conducted to charitable children institutions to check compliance of the standards. In terms of collaborations and clear roles of AAC members, there was a general feeling that AAC members pushed all cases to the DCO, some of which could be handled by the chief or by leaders at community level. The AAC members at community level however felt that the buck stopped with the DCO in handling cases of abuse.
a children which were reported to be very weak or nonexistent in most cases. Children’s participation in the AAC was not there as reported by some key informants. The reason provided for this was that children were in school.

4.3.3.2 Child abuse violations in community

Respondents also responded to encounter to child abuse cases as represented in Table 23.

Table 23: Encounter to Child abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Encountered child abuse</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>71.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As regards to the issue of child abuse, 71.7% of the respondents reported to have encountered cases of child abuse, while 26.7% reported not to have encountered cases of abuse. This indicates that child abuse is a serious problem in the community. It is also collaborated in the literature review (Republic of Kenya, 2010).

Types of violations of child rights are represented in table 24. For the 86 households who reported to have encountered child abuse as shown in table 23 above, only 80 of them responded to the types of abuse encountered as shown in table 24 below.

Table 24: Types of Child rights violations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of abuse</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child labour</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The forms of child abuse violations reported from households were; child sexual abuse which were very common and were committed by persons known to the child such as relatives and teachers at 53.8%. This includes case of early pregnancy, sexual abuse of children with disabilities, and sexual abuse resulting to infection with HIV/Aids.
There were reports of physical violence which includes use of violent means to discipline children. These was due to various reasons such as children coming home late from school and this is committed by parents, relatives and teachers at 6.3%.

There were reports of emotional abuse (27.5%) which included cases of children being left alone by parents while parents were away in the *shamba* and child neglect such as failure to provide for basic needs which include clothes and denial of food. There were reported cases of drug abuse, domestic violence reported and cases of disinheritance. There were other varied forms of abuse which included the issue of children not attending school/denial of education by reasons such as being forced to drop out; being beaten and miss school; parents not paying school fees; parents not taking them to school; caregivers not educating children to desired level or even up to secondary school; teachers sending children on errands such as buying mandazi, *chapatis* which was reported as a common occurrence during classes. All these were categorized under emotional abuse.

There were also reports of cases of child labour which were reported by 12.5% of the households. These results reveal that sexual violence is the most rampant, followed by cases of emotional abuse, child labour and physical abuse. Some of the households revealed that some cases are hidden and this is attributed to some of the respondents who provided no response in regards to their encounter with child abuse. This is corroborated with the report by Republic of Kenya (2010) on the study on violence against children in Kenya which indicated that violence against children in Kenya is a serious problem in Kenya.

This data was corroborated by a key informant from the NCCS reported that, sexual abuse and exploitation including defilement, incest, use of children in prostitution; physical abuse, trafficking, child labour, pornography, FGM, child marriage, harm by internet etc are the key child abuse cases. Other key informants and focus group discussants reported that the main issues are; neglect, defilement though hidden by family members/caregivers and usually not reported. Sodomy was said to be rare and 1 case had been reported on the same. Other cases also
and hotels and physical beatings. The main perpetrators are family members who include: grandparents, uncles and parents. Grandfathers were mainly mentioned as perpetrators of defilement cases. When asked why this was the case, it was reported that they were close to the children since they lived with them.

4.3.3.3 Reporting and efficiency in handling of cases of child abuse

Of the 86 households that had encountered cases of child abuse the reporting of the cases is represented in table 25 below.

Table 25: Reporting of encountered cases of child abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting of cases</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reported case</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not report</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents (72.9% i.e. 51.7% of total sampled households) revealed that they reported cases of child abuse while the rest did not. The level of reporting is low since it needs to be 100% to avoid exposing children to further abuse.

Of those that reported cases of child abuse, they reported the cases to various leaders as shown in table 26 below.

Table 26: Reporting of cases of child abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting of cases</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police station</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Children Officer</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAC</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community leaders</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most cases were reported (table 26 above) to the chief as reported by 44.8% while 27.6% said they reported cases to the police station. Only 12.1% reported case to the DCO; 10.3% to AAC and 5.2% to community leaders. This means more persons reported to chief’s office than the rest. This could be attributed to the chief’s office being located in the community or how accessible they are. These respondents are only 48.3% of the total household respondents sampled which
indicate that there is a problem on reporting of child abuse cases. The results also reveal that role of abuse is very low.

When cases of child abuse were reported, various responses have been received. This is represented in Table 27 below;

Table 27: Response to reported cases of child abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses to reported cases of abuse</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Received attention</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>94.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not received attention</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the cases were reported, 94.3% of the respondents (41.7% of total sampled households) reported to have received the necessary attention while 5.7% said they had not received attention. These respondents are only 46.7% of total sampled household respondents. This indicates that response to cases of child abuse is very low. This also contributes to low levels of reporting in table 25 and low reports to the key leaders in table 26.

Reasons for not receiving required attention is represented in table 28 below

Table 28: Reasons for not receiving attention after reporting child abuse cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for not receiving attention</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief not cooperating</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>97.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police reluctance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of evidence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reasons for not receiving the necessary attention as represented in table 28 were that the chief did not cooperate (97.6%), police were reluctant (0.8%) and wanted evidence (0.8%) yet the respondents felt that the children who had been abused were suffering. This indicates that the chief received most child abuse cases as indicated earlier in table 26 yet the responses were negative. This indicates frustration on the part of community in service delivery in this regard.
The efficiency of handling cases of child abuse is represented in Table 29 below.

**Table 29: Efficiency of response in handling child abuse cases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Efficiency of response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immediate response</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>70.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat immediate</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delayed response</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>58</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the efficiency of handling cases of abuse for those who had reported the cases, Table 29 indicates that 70.7% of the respondents said that the response was immediate, 22.4% said it was somewhat immediate, 6.9% said it was delayed. This indicates that the efficiency of response was very low despite high levels of cases being reported as the 70.7% who reported immediate response only represent 34.2% of total sampled households. This thus frustrates efforts to protect children in the community.

On adequacy of assistance in response to child abuse cases the following was reported as shown in Figure 2 below.
Figure 2: Adequacy of Assistance in response to cases of child abuse cases

On adequacy of the assistance accorded as represented in chart 1 above, once a case of abuse had been reported 5.8% reported it to be very adequate, 36.7% as adequate, 3.3% as inadequate, while the rest had not reported cases thus had no response on this. From this analysis, the services offered by AAC, have not met the expectations of the community thus not effective in service delivery.

Some of the respondents noted that there were incidences in the community that were not reported by the community members because they were not aware that it was a violation against children rights. Some felt they were exposing their families. Some reported that some cases happened secretly at home. Some said it was because parents were strict on their children and some children were denied their rights and no one bothers. Some feared being discriminated against by community members once they reported the cases to the authorities. Some are not reported even when known openly.
reasons were provided by respondents that have been associated with parents, or close relatives of the child being abused failing to report cases of abuse to relevant authorities. These included the issue that there were corrupt people in the authorities. Parents also feared to report the financially able perpetrators. Some said they did not know where to report cases of child abuse. Families also did not want to expose cases of child abuse to the outside world and that family issues cannot be openly be discussed. There was also fear of reporting and some were ignorant on their own rights and children rights. There was also fear of disputes between family and/relatives. There was also fear of shame/embarrassing their families.

Some family members said they had no money to up the cases. While some felt that it was expensive and feared the resultant litigation expenses. In case a child is abused by a teacher, if the parent complains, the student may be expelled. Some feared being hated; some felt they needed to protect their integrity. Some families were not united to support each other thus felt they should not interfere with other families welfare. Some said offices were located far from them thus not easy to access them and they lack transport costs. Some parents are also silenced by money thus do not pursue cases against their children. Since some of the culprits are relatives, the cases are solved at family levels. Some fear to be followed up after reporting. Family members also hide children with disabilities who may have been abused because they were preserving the family integrity. There is also the fear of reporting their friends.

On the other hand, the children who have suffered abuse feared reporting incidences of child abuse because they did not know where to report; affected children feel inferior, they may be too young to report or provide relevant details, may only report to the mother only, or may not be aware of their rights. Children may also not know when they have been offended; children fear punishment from elders and intimidation. The other reasons were the fear of losing their parents support: denial of basic needs if they reported incidences of abuse: excommunication: and parents, guardians and authorities. They also feared being victimized, being arrested once they reported, and being beaten by parents, teachers and others in authority. Some said that the responsible authorities were not available to children. Students did also not know they were being misused and or abused by teachers. Children reported of fear of the reaction of teachers
children cannot report their seniors and hence children fear reporting their parents to authorities.

These findings are also confirmed by the literature review findings, for instance Republic of Kenya (2009). The study noted that communities fail to report cases of child abuse due to fear of reprimand, reprisal, retribution and revenge; such tolerant societies, who are obliged to protect the children may be viewed as accomplices to child rights violations. In some cases, individual families that wish to go against community values also fear being ostracized. This then brings in the question of the contribution of the AAC in undertaking its mandate.

4.3.3.4. Significance of AACS in service delivery

Significance of the AAC in the community is represented in table 30 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance of AAC</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very significant</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insignificant</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this study as indicated in table 30 above, the significance of the AAC in the community was reported as follows. About 19% of the respondents said that AAC is very significant while 57.5 said it was significant, 4.2% responded that AACS were insignificant and 18.9% had no idea. This data indicates that those who were aware of AACS recognized that the AACSs were significant. The reasons provided for the significance of AACSs were that AACSs organized regular seminars to educate people on child rights and child abuse. They also said that the AAC forms a link between the community and children on children rights. They also said that AACSs have helped the community to be able to protect the rights of children and to ensure that children are not abused. Focus group with children also revealed that the AAC had also helped lift the standards of children by educating them about their rights. AAC members also responded to cases of child abuse and put in strategies to curb it and provided pieces of advice on how to avoid it. AACSs have educated children on their rights and in Katheka primary there is good
provision of faciliti
dies and education is flowing easily as reported by children in a focus group discussion. They have also enabled people access relevant offices. The AACs have also helped children access food, shelter and education and that parent were warned of the failure to take their children to school. They reported that some children were educated by World Vision who is a member of the AAC.

4.3.4 Challenges facing AACs and how they can be handled

The fourth objective of the study was to assess the challenges AACs face and how they can be addressed.

4.3.4.1 Challenges facing AACs

a) Composition and Membership of AACs

Most of the members of the AAC were government officers from relevant ministries which is good but their participation was a challenge due to them being stretched. It was noted that the chairperson at the Divisional level i.e., the D.O and chief at location level did not invite members for meetings as required since they had no time for this. The respondents said that the chairmanship is not good for chief and D.O as they are leaders and end up conducting Kangaroo courts (illegal courts). It was also noted that there had been little support from the DCO. The chief further noted that he is the one that appointed the members of the location level AAC and yet it was the role of the DCO to do so. On membership, the following were mentioned; Chair – District Commissioner, Division officer, Chief (depends on level), Secretary-DCO/VCO, Government line ministries that deal with children issues, Religious leaders, opinion leaders, FBOs, NGOs in children sector, Children - depends on level, Community Based Organizations - depends on level and Private sector. It was however noted that children do not participate as they are mostly in school.

There was also a challenge in the implementation of the Constitution of Kenya 2010. Respondents expressed concerns that it was not clear how the provincial administration will be restructured and this was affecting the AAC structure since the District Commissioner, Division officer and chiefs are the chair of the AACs at different levels. They also attributed this as a factor contributing to lack of support/commitment by the persons in these positions. Another
Membership is also affected by frequent transfers of D.C, D.O and Police of which the members have to battle with in handling child protection concerns.

The police officer interviewed also said that she had not heard of the AAC. This is an issue of concern as the police are mandated to enforce the law on child protection and lack of awareness on AAC and their role in Child protection may be a reason of making children more vulnerable to abuse by perpetrators.

b) Challenge of reporting child abuse cases

Table 31: Unreported cases of child abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting of child abuse cases</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondents who had experienced cases of child abuse but not reported</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced child abuse and reported</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From household interviews as shown in table 31 above revealed that 76.7% of the community members who had experienced cases of child abuse had not reported the cases to any relevant authority, 18.3% said they had reported and 5.0% had no response.

Table 32: Reasons for not reporting cases of child abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for not reporting of child abuse cases</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Varied reasons</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not aware of laws</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 31 above represents the reasons provided for not reporting cases of child abuse. The reasons provided were that they were not aware that it was a violation of children rights; do not know about them because no one was talking about them in the community; some did not want to expose members of their families. From household interviews; 43.3 % of the respondents
revealed other challenges which include; settling some child abuse cases outside the court; cases
of abuse not taken seriously; the children office has no officers on the ground; the laws are
lenient; settling cases out of court due to lack of transport to go and report the case; poor
application of the law; culprits being set free after arrest; corruption; laws having loop holes and
lack of transparency.

c) Low levels of awareness on children laws protecting children

The household interviews revealed that 52.5% (table 32 above) of the respondents said they were
not conversant with the laws on children rights; were ignorant on the laws of children and
ignorant on reporting such cases. Some of them felt there were no laws to punish those who
abused children. Others indicated that they were not conversant with the provisions of the
constitution as regards to child protection. With communities experiencing cases of abuse and
failing to report them makes it difficult for the AAC members to help address them and children
are also made more vulnerable to abuse due to continued abuse.

These study findings also revealed that the understanding of children rights and child protection
in general differs between the community and the stakeholders at different levels. These
disconnect needs to be addressed so as to strengthen the protection of children rights.

d) Challenge of access to response services for child protection

From key informant interviews, it was revealed that there was lack of voluntary counseling
services; lack of rehabilitation schools and inaccessibility to relevant service body.

e) Gap of not tapping into community resources

Table 33 below represents the view of cultural values and belief and implementation of children
rights
Table 33: Cultural values and beliefs and implementation of children rights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very supportive</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat supportive</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not supportive</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents (80.9%) cited that cultural values and beliefs were supportive of implementation for children rights while 19% said it was not supportive and the rest (3.3%) had no response. This indicates that some cultural values and beliefs can be tapped to support the implementation of the rights of children. These include some attributes respondents mention like supporting education for all children, boys should not stay freely with girls, teaching good morals, cultural values have abolished FGM, culture demands that girls do not sleep with girls, culture does not allow fathers to mingle freely with their girls, and culture is against girls mingling with men/boys among others. These can be used for developing messages on issues around child protection.

f) Challenge of resource allocation

Information on resource allocation for AAC was gathered through key informant interviews. A key informant noted that policies are in place but implementation is not uniform. Implementation depends on the commitment of staff working in different areas of the country. Resources allocated to NCCS are minimal and is only able to give each district AAC Kshs 20,000 per quarter totaling to 80,000 per year which is not adequate to carry out much work. Due to inadequate staff at NCCS and funding, monitoring of AACs is not done on a large scale. The NCCS staffs are only able to visit about 50 AACs out of the current 164 district AACs.

g) Weak implementation of AAC

The key informants revealed that the AAC had no clear work plan. It was further noted that there was no clear database on child abuse cases by AAC and that members relied on minutes of AAC meetings. In addition to having no clear work plans in AACs, the other issue was that there were also no thematic working groups as guided by issues of child protection in the community.
Collaboration, coordination and cooperation mechanisms also relied on the presence of chairpersons of AACs at different levels who are drawn from the provincial administration. This meant that the absence of a Division Officer (D.O) affected the functioning of the Division AAC.

h) Overlap of roles between NCCS and Department for Children Services

The DCOs who are the secretaries of the AACs are not directly answerable to NCCS but to the Department of Children Services. There also seems to be an overlap on some key roles of the NCCS and Department of Children services at national level e.g monitoring and reporting on the progress of the AACs which also hinders service delivery to communities. With review of the Children Act and AAC guidelines, this issue needs to be addressed.

4.3.4.2 Suggestions on handling the challenges

From household interviews, the following suggestions were provided to address the challenges; a focus group discussion with AAC members recommended that it would be prudent for the AAC to have more community members than government officials/persons in positions. This was due to the fact that community members would be more available and serious in handling their own issues in the community.

It is also recommended that AACs should be strengthened and given more powers. Cases of child abuse must be addressed in the community. There is need to create awareness on children rights in the community and how to handle cases of abuse so that members of the public know the reporting and referral mechanisms for handling cases of child abuse. The results of this study indicate that the source of awareness that reaches most people on raising awareness on children rights is the radio and the school. This can be tapped into when reaching the community members. Some respondents recommended that children should be cared for by their parents by provision of basic needs. Others suggested that children should be guided till they matured into adulthood and be reminded of their kins.

It was also suggested that children should be sensitized on how to protect themselves from such cases of abuse and be informed about their rights. This will help them have the confidence to
Children should be given time to study and not be sent on errands while at school. Corrupt officers should be sacked and prosecuted. It is also recommended that there is need to employ more Volunteer Children Officers for better education on human rights so as to have more officers closer to the people. This will support in enforcing laws protecting children. Organizations working with children in the community also need to be empowered to address children welfare issues. The government to implement strict measures on children welfare as NGOs cannot do it alone. The government needs to provide adequate funding for AACs so as to facilitate implementation of their roles. There is also need to improve on trainings on children rights. The AACs have a training manual which needs to be updated to address the current pressing issues affecting children as regards to reporting and referral mechanisms. Laws on child protection need to be enforced so that perpetrators of abuse are brought to book so as to act as a deterrent measure of likely perpetrators. The community also need to support orphans as their responsibility as parents. The roles of the AAC should mainly be prevention of child abuse and response to the same. The community members also recommended that AAC roles need to be clearly understood and recognized. With community participation on child protection, the community will be aware of child protection issues. The study also has revealed that the culture and beliefs of the Akamba people in Kitui West is supportive of implementing child protection in the community and this can be used as an avenue to promote child protection in the community. This then calls for strengthening the role of the community leaders to advocate for this.
5.0 Introduction
This chapter provides a summary of this study. This highlights the background, the objectives and the findings of the study. It also provides a conclusion based on the summary. This chapter also provides recommendations arising from the study findings and finally areas for further research.

5.1 Summary
From the study objectives, this study sought to find out whether after the development of AAC guidelines and the decentralization of AAC to community level from the district level, this has facilitated the AAC in meeting its goal of protecting children. This study revealed that, 67.5% respondents were aware of the AACs structure while 30.8% were not. This indicates that a majority of the community members were aware of the AAC structure through the Children Officer/AAC though more awareness needs to be created on the same. This is a positive step towards enhancing its usefulness in the community. The study further revealed that about 55% of the respondents also knew of the AAC representatives in the community. It can be deduced that awareness of AAC representatives is fairly good but there is need for community members to be informed of the AAC representatives who would help them address child protection concerns. This would be done during initial stages of AAC formation by launching the structure in the community as a means to raise awareness on the members.

The study also sought to find out whether services are more decentralized to reach the child. The provision of services is influenced by accessibility of AAC members. The study revealed that it’s only 34% of the respondents that reported that the AAC members were easily accessible. This data reveals that accessibility of AAC members is low and this needs to be improved on to have adequate support to community child protection concerns. This could be attributed to transport challenges and lack of transport funds as revealed in focus group discussions.

The researcher also established whether the membership as provided by AAC guidelines has contributed to its role in child protection. It was revealed that membership as provide by the
These include; low participation of children. It was noted that children do not participate as they are mostly in school and they also did not participate even during school holidays. The key informants also revealed that, the chairperson did not invite the AAC members for meetings and thus they did not meet frequently as required (quarterly) since they had no time for this. This affected the working of the AAC and its sustainability. The membership of the AAC has also been affected by frequent transfers of government representatives. If the AAC had more local community representatives, this would help stabilize and ensure sustainability of the AAC.

With implementation of the constitution and devolution, it was evident from the study that the provincial administration was not sure of their positions. This affected the functioning of the AAC as its chairpersons were the provincial administrators. This uncertainty had also affected the functioning of the AAC. They also attributed this as a factor contributing to lack of support/commitment by the persons in these positions. This also needs to be addressed as the AAC guidelines are revised to be in alignment of the constitution.

The respondents said that the chairmanship is not good for chief and D.O as they are leaders and end up conducting Kangaroo courts (illegal courts). It was also noted that there has been little support from the DCO. The formation of the location AAC was also an issue to look into in regards to appointment of members. The chief reported that he is the one that appointed the members of the location level. However the AAC at Division level was okay as reported by the AAC members as it was constituted through the DCO and D.O. The AAC also needs local leadership support but leaders such as the Counselors did not attend AAC meetings.

The study also determined the participation of children and how they have contributed to enhancing their own protection. The study reveals that children are aware of their rights but have low capacity in protecting their rights since they fear reprimand or are intimidated by adults.

The roles of the district AAC, Division AAC and Location AAC are clearly spelt out in the AAC guidelines. The determination of whether this is the practical situation in the community in Kitui West district became an issue of interest for this study. The results indicate a confirmation of the
This study determined how the thematic groups have supported the AAC to address the child protection issues in the community. It was clear from the results that there were no thematic groups in the AAC. The AAC members handled the issues of child protection as they emerged. The roles were mainly inspection of charitable children institutions at district level while at division and location levels child abuse cases. This indicates that at community level, the AACs are more reactive than preventive. They need to also strengthen prevention of child abuse by awareness raising to ensure a protective environment is achieved for children. This was also revealed from the findings on the roles played by AACs. The roles were more on survival rights such as providing food for vulnerable children while the role on protection was not as prominent. This would be attributed to the challenges posed by the food security situation and the socio-economic wellbeing of the community more awareness on the role of prevention needs to be strengthened to match the role of response to issues. Roles of AACs for instance; plan, supervise, finance and coordinate children’s activities; capacity building of stakeholders; data collection and maintain databanks; monitor, evaluate and report on implementation of child rights and welfare activities to NCCS were not prominent at community level. This then means that these roles are dormant and may need to be revisited with review of the AAC guidelines and the Children Act to allocate to other stakeholders appropriately.

The roles of the AAC members also need to be clearly spelt out in revision of AAC guidelines. The role of the community especially local leaders needs to be revisited in order for the community to take up their role in ensuring protection of their own children. This will ensure the
Republic of Kenya (2009) revealed strengths and weaknesses in policy, legal context, structures, functions and capacities, among other challenges in child protection system. It noted that, despite the important roles played in child protection by specific government line ministries such as Education, Health, the Judiciary and others, there is no statutory guidance as to what their roles are in child protection. This study thus confirms that this is also the case in Kitui West district and that the contribution of AAC in child protection is affected by its membership and capacity.

This study also sought to determine the linkages of the AAC at the district, division and location level and how these different levels have worked together and contributed in child protection to the community in Kitui West district in Mutonguni division. This study confirms that there are linkages between the locational AAC and Division AAC though weak between the Division and District level. From district level to NCCS is also weak. Reports are not submitted to national level and this needs to be strengthened through ensuring reports are submitted as required. The study also revealed a problem with monitoring of AAC from national level to district level. This is revealed to be wanting and this needs strengthening.

This research sought to examine what constitutes child protection and key players in Kitui West district. The study sought to determine how the AAC has worked with other structures at community level. The study revealed that they have worked with the Local Authority Trust Fund (LATF) to get support for the vulnerable children. There are other Civil Society Organizations e.g World Vision, APHIA plus who supported build the capacity of members. There is however need for the AAC to tap into its own local resources e.g business community and local leaders to strengthen its capacity. These two have not been fully exploited.

This study proceeded in order to determine the interventions in child protection which include; legal protection particularly regarding the role of the government in child protection. It also sought to determine the knowledge on legal instruments, networking, child participation capabilities, and existence of child-friendly materials, issues of cultural barriers and monitoring
the community perceives the government as playing a however faced with challenges such as funding of AAC thus relying on CSO funding. The government needs to increase the funding of AAC for it to function effectively. The role on legal protection of children is weak thus compromising justice to children who have suffered abuse.

Of interest for this study was also the need to determine the perception of the community as regards to the AAC; how they have handled reported cases of child abuse and its contribution in addressing child protection concerns. The study revealed that the AAC played an important role in handling case of child abuse but it was faced with challenges. It was revealed that the community relied more on the DCO to handle issues of child protection unlike the AAC members who were at community level. This could be linked to capacity in handling cases of child protection and accessibility of AAC. This study indicates that child abuse is a serious problem in the community (71%). It is also collaborated in the literature review (Republic of Kenya, 2010). Child sexual abuse is very common and was committed by persons known to the child such as relatives and teachers at 35.8%. Respondents (51.7%) revealed that they reported cases of child abuse while the rest did not or had no response. The level of reporting is still low and awareness needs to be created on the same. The role of the local leaders in receiving cases of abuse is very low and this needs to be tapped into by strengthening. This indicates that the services offered by AAC, have not met the expectations of the community thus not effective in service delivery.

5.2 Conclusions
From these discussions, it is clear that the AAC is a community child protection structure that consists of representation from community and government and is a link between the community and government as regards to children issues though it is coupled with challenges as mentioned above. There are challenges on its composition, roles and capacity thus affecting its service delivery. The study reveals that the community members preferred having more community members than government officials/persons in positions. This was due to the fact that, community members would be more available and serious in handling their own issues in the community. This argument is corroborated by Chitereâ€™s (2004) argument that sustainable
One of the most pressing challenges facing the human community in the 21st century is that growing populations outstrip the capacity of states to meet the needs of the people, it becomes the prerogative of the communities to seek solutions from amongst themselves to problems that were hitherto the responsibility of the central government.

It can also be concluded that those who were aware of AACs recognized that the AACs were significant and played important roles in community to protect children. The roles included; organizing regular seminars to educate people on child rights and child abuse; providing linkages between the community and children on children rights; helped the community to be able to protect the rights of children and to ensure that children are not abused. Focus group with children also revealed that the AAC had also helped lift the standards of children by educating them about their rights; have also enabled people access relevant offices; helped children access food, shelter and education and warned parents of the failure to take their children to school. They reported that some children were educated by World Vision who is a member of the AAC. It is therefore important to strengthen AAC members so as to perform their role effectively.

However, it is noted that, even after the development of the AAC guidelines and decentralization of the AAC to the community level from district level, this has not facilitated the AAC in contributing to its goal of protecting children. The services have also not been effectively decentralized to reach the child.

This study provided room for comparison with the situation in Uganda regarding the contribution of AAC in child protection. The study carried out in Uganda revealed that Uganda has a number of systems and policies in place that govern child protection issues which include, a National Council for Children responsible for coordinating child protection across government ministries but the functioning of the council is however far from optimal. This study presents almost a similar situation for Kenya. In addition, just like Uganda, Kenya also faces challenges of coordination of child protection services/players. These challenges have tried to be addressed through development for guidelines for the child protection system in Kenya document (Republic of Kenya 2011). This is however yet to be translated to community level. Both
5.3. Recommendations
This section has covered recommendations to the community; the government; NGOs and recommendations for future research. The recommendations are as follows;

5.3.1 Recommendations to Community
There is need to create awareness on the rights of children and laws protecting these rights including the Constitution, where to report cases of abuse and all necessary information around reporting and referral mechanisms in the community. This would also ensure proper handling of cases and also in a timely manner. There is also the need to sensitize parents on positive parenting so as to address issues of neglect, abuse and parents not supporting their children when they have been abuse. This will also enable parents and community to put into place mechanisms of adults supporting children including orphans to increase the sense of belonging to children in community. It was recommended that the community comes up with ways to eradicate corruption to avoid cases being settled out of court. Suggestions made included upholding and implementation of Laws on child protection and garnering support from District Children Office.

Awareness raising on children rights would also be made through the media, display of posters in the community and not at the government offices as observed during interviews with key informants. This would broaden sources of information from reliance on community meetings. Capacity of children needs to be built to increase their resilience and life skills so as to be able to speak out issues affecting their lives both positively or negatively. The participation of children cannot be under estimated as children have some contribution to make towards their own development. Community members also need to be empowered to know that they have a solution to the problems of their children and not relay on formal structures that consist of members from outside the community. Solutions from persons outside the community are good but may be temporal as dictated by finances and commitment of responsible persons to the detriment of the community at large. If community members formed their own community based child protection mechanisms which are driven by them themselves, the protection of the child would be more sustainable and more effective.
child abuse cases in the community. The study reveals that a majority of community members are Christians and that the community has cultural values and beliefs that promote child protection. If the AAC taps into these and widely disseminates them into the community, this would enhance the protective environment for children reduce incidences of child abuse.

5.3.3 Recommendation to NGOs
Non-governmental organizations play a complimentary role to government in child protection. As regards to implementation of AACS, NGOs need support government devolve AAC though government should take the lead role in financing and coordination to avoid confusion of running the AAC once formed and enhance sustainability after NGOs phase out their projects. NGOs should also support educate members of the community on children rights and issues of parenting. Issues affecting children are diverse and would require diverse players. Religious bodies, business community and other informal structures need to be involved.

NGOs need to work closely with government in coordination and monitoring of AACS to improve service delivery to communities. NGOs should also support revision of AAC guidelines and Children Act to align to Constitutional provisions for children. NGOs also need to support dissemination of key legislations, policies and guidelines on the child protection system at community level. NGOs need to strengthen community capacity to address their own child protection concerns. This would include community mobilization to ensure community leaders take up issues of children and provision of resources for vulnerable children.

5.3.2 Policy Recommendations
There is need to do more awareness on the AAC structure in the community. Once AACS are formed, they need to be launched as a way of providing community awareness on their existence. Identification of AAC members is also important e.g providing them with budges.

Composition of AAC needs to be looked into. The AAC guidelines need to be revised to review the membership of the AAC. The roles of different government ministries should be legislated to
There is need to ensure improved community participation by the AAC. This would help improve on sustainability of the AAC and improve community being more aware of their roles in child protection. The participation of children in the AAC is a big challenge. This needs to be addressed and guidelines laid out on how children will participate in the AAC.

The chairmanship of the AAC needs to be looked into. If it remains as it, how can it be strengthened to avoid compromise of services to the community and sustainability of AAC structure? The participation of local leadership in AAC and even handling child protection concerns needs to be strengthened. The role of the DCO cannot be overlooked either. The DCO should have AACs as part of performance plan to ensure AAC get full support at all levels, not only at district level.

There is need to strengthen AACs by ensuring they have a clear work plan and thematic groups that would enable them work together as a team. This would also succeed with adequate funding of the activities by not only NGOs but also main support from government. AACs would also be strengthened through appointing key persons from the relevant government ministries to participate in all meetings and not whoever is available from these relevant offices. There is also need for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the AAC structure.

The partnership of AACs with other informal child protection players/structures needs to be strengthened. This includes the religious organizations, business community and local leaders. This would ensure that the protective environment of children is achieved even when AACs are faced with challenges. The government needs to support collaboration, cooperation and coordination of partners by appreciating the role played by each partner and a clear clarification of roles of each partner and especially community participation and representation.

The services of AACs have mainly focused on response. There is need to strengthen their role towards supporting prevention of child abuse which is a big problem in the community. Capacity
Linkages between NCCS, County level, District AAC, Division AAC and Locational AAC needs to be strengthened through monitoring and sharing reports from community level to national level and provision of feedback on the same. Without feedback and monitoring, the performance of the AAC is compromised.

The government needs to budget for legal aid for children, counseling and medical support for children who have suffered abuse. This will help reduce cases of corruption while handling cases of child abuse and enhance psychosocial support and medical care for cases of incest and other child abuse cases. The Children Act provides for this but, implementation is low and needs to be looked into.

Cases of child abuse are a serious problem in the community. This is especially on cases of sexual abuse (incest). There is need to create awareness on this, laws protecting children, importance of parenting and also built capacity of AAC members on case management. The capacity of children also needs to be built to protect themselves and others. The implementations of laws at community level needs to be enforced by ensuring perpetrators are brought to book. There is need to build capacity of all stakeholders supporting case management e.g police, chief, local leaders to avoid compromise of justice to children who suffer abuse. If this is done, the community members will have more confidence in reporting cases of child abuse. The AAC needs to also closely monitor these cases through follow up of required services to ensure the community is supported without compromise from leaders. The issue of incest needs to be looked into by community leadership. The use of positive community cultural values, beliefs and religious teachings would help also address morality issues in addition to the above. The community also needs to be sensitized on importance of reporting cases of child abuse.

The challenge of implementation of legislations and guidelines at community level needs to be addressed. This needs to be done through continuous dissemination of the same. Posters for
in community e.g at market places and not only in offices. The use of local FM station is also recommended. AAC members also need to be rewarded through recognition e.g awards of appreciation to build their morale on performing their challenging work.

5.2.4 Suggestions for future research work

From the findings presented in this study, it would be important for more research to focus on enhancing implementation of legislations, policies in the community as regards to child protection. This has been identified as a major gap in this study.

There is also need to focus on the role of community leaders and role of the child in community based a child protection system which is also a gap. Another area of focus would be the reporting and response mechanisms in community and how they can be enhanced to address child abuse cases in community. A research on genders specific cases of child abuse may also be conducted in future. Another area of focus is on parenting and challenges facing parents in protecting the rights of children.

A study on how to deter child abuse by relatives or persons close to the child and how to support families speak out on familial child abuse cases would be important as this is a gap. There is also need to study on The mindset of a child abuser, why target children? There is need to understand how a pedophile operates and how he/she can be helped get out of this situation. More research needs to be conducted on enhancing collaboration, cooperation and coordination mechanism/linkages between the national level and local level child protection systems.


Newspapers, Magazines and Electronic sources


Title: Contribution of Area Advisory Councils in Child Protection: Case study of Kitui County, Kitui West District

Questionnaire

Household Questionnaire

Good morning/afternoon? I am Caroline Nalianya, an MA student at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting an academic survey on the contribution of AACs in child protection. You have been randomly selected to participate in this survey. I would like to ask you some questions on child protection issues. The interview will take about 30 minutes. Your answers will remain strictly confidential and they will be used only for research purposes on aggregate.

Do I have your consent to continue with the interview?

Section 1. Bio-data

1. Divisioné é é é é é é é é é é é é é é Locationé é é é é é é é é é é é é.
2. Sublocationé é é é é é é é é é é é é Villageé é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é.
3. Gender: □ Male (1) □ Female (2)
4. Highest level of education □ None (1) □ Primary (2) □ Secondary (3) □
   Tertiary college (4) □ University (5)
5. Main occupation of the respondent □ Farmer (1) □ Business (2) □ formal employment (3) □ casuals (4) □
   other (5)
6. Age of respondents (above 18 years) 20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, and above 60
7. What is your religion/denomination?
   □ Catholic (1) □ protestant (2) □ Evangelical (3) □ Islam (4) □ Hindu (5)
   □ Other (specify)é é é é é é é é é é é é é.

Section 2 General questions on awareness on children rights

1. Have you ever heard of the term “children rights”? □ Yes (1) □ No (2) If No, go to Qn 5, if yes proceed to Qn 2.
2. What was the means through which you heard about children rights for the first time?
3. What are some of these rights that you are familiar with?
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

4. Are you aware of organizations that are addressing the rights of children in the community? Yes (1) No (2) If No proceed to Qn 5
If yes, which group(s) or organization? ____________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

5. Have you ever heard of AACs?
Yes (1) No (2) If No proceed to question 10.

6. How did you come to know about them?
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

7. Do you know of any of their representatives in your community? Yes (1) No (2)

8. If yes in Q.7, are these representatives easily accessible whenever there is need for service?
Easily accessible (1) Accessible (2) Rarely accessible (3) No idea (4)

9. What sort of roles have you seen AACs perform in the community?
a) Identification of children in need of care:
Food (1) Health (2) Clothing and shelter (3) Education (4)
b) Linking of OVCs to support agencies Yes (1) No (2)
c) Responding to cases of child abuse, violence and denial of rights Yes (1) No (2)
d) Sensitization of communities Yes (1) No (2)

10. Are child abuse and violation of child rights common in your community?
Rampant (1) Moderate (2) Rare (3) Never heard of (4)
12. Have you ever encountered a child abuse/violence related incidence in your own community in the past 3 years? □ Yes (1) □ No (2)

13. What was the nature of the abuse/violence? __________________________________________

14. Did you or member of the community report the case to any relevant authority or individual(s) in the community? □ Yes (1) □ No (2) if No why?.....
To whom was the case reported? □ Police (1) □ Chief (2) □ AAC (3) □ community leader (4) □ District Children Officer (5)

15. Apart from the person(s) you reported the case to, are there other bodies in the community you are aware about to whom you could have sought assistance for the child? □ Yes (1) □ No (2)
If yes, provide the name(s) of the service body __________________________________________

16. When you reported the case, were you given the necessary attention? □ Yes (1) □ No (2). If yes, proceed to 17; if no please explain and proceed to 21.

17. How quick was the response when the matter was reported? □ Immediate (1) □ Somewhat immediate (2) □ Delayed (3)

18. What sort of assistance was given to the child after reporting the case? __________________________________________

19. How would you rate the adequacy of the assistance, considering the intensity of the nature of the abuse, violence or denial caused to the child? □ Very adequate (1) □ Adequate (2) □ Inadequate (3) □ very inadequate (4)

20. What else would you have expected the relevant service body to do in assisting the child? __________________________________________
In your opinion, are there cases of child abuse, violence or denial of rights that are not reported in the community? Yes □ (1) No □ (2) (explain either)

22. a) On the part of parents or closest relatives of the child being abused, what do you think could be the likely reasons for not reporting child abuse and violence cases to relevant authorities? ________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

b) On the part of the victims (affected children), is there anything that could be preventing them from reporting cases of abuse directly by themselves?
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

23. To what extent do you think the cultural values and beliefs in your community support the rights and welfare of the children?
□ Very supportive (1) □ Supportive (2) □ somewhat supportive (3) □ Unsupportive (4)
Give reasons to support your answer above ______________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

28. In your opinion do you think the AACs’ existence and role(s) you have mentioned above is of any significance in the community? □ Very significant (1) □ Significant (2) □ Insignificant (3) □ No idea (4)
Give reasons to support your argument? ______________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

24. What are the challenges in handling child protection issues as regards to the implementation of the laws on child protection and services offered?
25. Do you have any other comments or suggestions that you would like to make as regards the welfare of the children in the community?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

-END-

I am very grateful for giving me your precious time to talk to me, May God Bless You
Title: Contribution of Area Advisory Councils in Child Protection: Case study of Kitui County, Kitui West District

Key Informant Guide (for health officer, education officer, police, DCO, chief, NCCS and NGO partner)

Good morning/afternoon? I am Caroline Nalianya, an MA student at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting an academic survey on the contribution of AACs in child protection. You have been randomly selected to participate in this survey. I would like to ask you some questions on child protection issues. The interview will take about 45 minutes. Your answers will remain strictly confidential and they will be used only for research purposes on aggregate.

Do I have your consent to continue with the interview?

Section 1 Bio data
1. Name of respondent 
2. Location of residence 
3. Main occupation/position of the respondent 
4. Gender 

Questions on child protection
1. What is your understanding of child protection?
2. Who are the key players in the community on child protection?
3. What are the roles of the key players in child protection?
4. Comment on the capacity of partners to implement child protection (focus on qualifications and continuous trainings)
5. What are the areas of collaboration among key players?
6. What would you suggest should be done in order to improve these collaborations?
7. What is your understanding of AAC?
8. What is the composition of AAC members? (composition, where do they draw their mandate, check appointment process)
9. What are the key functions of the AAC in the community?
10. Explain the implementation of AAC activities (work plan; thematic working groups; planning and monitoring of activities and data base).
11. How is the collaboration of AAC? (With: NCCS; at different levels; inter-ministerial and other partners in child protection)?
12. What trainings/courses on legal or human rights issues have you participated in that are relevant in managing your current roles in the AAC?
What are the Child abuse cases in this community?

How do you get information about such cases?

How do you deal with such situations once they are reported?

Do you feel the existing AAC structure has the capacity to manage the reported cases efficiently? Explain.

What are the things that can be identified by the community that the AAC has done in assisting children in need and the AAC can be proud of?

Which ones do you think have been easily accomplished?

How are children involved in child protection and AAC activities?

What challenges have you faced in fulfilling the mandated roles of the AAC?

How have the challenges been addressed?

What recommendations would you make on addressing the mandates of AAC in child protection?
Focus group discussion guide for District, Division and Location AAC

Good morning/afternoon? Thank you for participating in this focus group discussion today. Your attendance shows how much you care about your children. I am Caroline Nalianya, an MA student at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting an academic survey on the contribution of AACs in child protection. You have been randomly selected to participate in this survey. I would like to ask you some questions on child protection issues. The interview will take about 1 hour. Your answers will remain strictly confidential and they will be used only for research purposes on aggregate.

Do I have your consent to continue with the interview?
1 What is your understanding of child protection?
2 Who are the key players in the community on child protection?
3 What are the roles of the key players at different levels in child protection?
4 Comment on the capacity of partners to implement child protection (qualifications and continuous trainings)
5 What are the areas of collaboration among key players?
6 What would you suggest should be done in order to improve these collaborations?
7 What is your understanding of AAC?
8 What is the composition of AAC members? (check appointment process, gender representation at different levels)
9 What are the key functions of the AAC in the community?
10 Explain the implementation of AAC activities (resources-human and financial, work plan, thematic working groups, data base, planning and monitoring of activities, data base)
11 How is the collaboration of AAC? (With NCCS, at different levels, inter-ministerial and other partners in child protection)?
12 What trainings/courses on legal or human rights issues have you participated in that are relevant in managing your current roles in the AAC?
13 How do you identify needy children in the communities?
14 How are you able to link the children in need of service to support agencies and structures?
15 How do you identify priority areas in the communities?
16 Briefly describe how you respond to cases of child abuse and other forms of unfair treatment in the community?
17 a) What public awareness campaigns on children rights, protection and support do you conduct in the district, division and location? How often are the awareness campaigns?
the awareness campaigns done?
Who leads? __________________ Role(s) children play in the program _______

18 How effective do you think the District, Division and Location AACs are in performing their respective duties?

19 What do you comment on the structures and functionality of the AACs generally?

20 How often does the district submit progress reports to the line ministries and to the location AACs and collaborating partners?

21 In the event that the district report is submitted, how do you comment on getting feedback from the Ministries and collaborators?

22 What do you think are the major challenges you are experiencing at the district level in running the AAC (Policy, guidelines, reporting of AAC cases, source of information, service delivery)

24 What would you suggest as likely solutions to each of the constraints stated above?

25 What recommendations would you make on addressing the mandates of AAC in child protection?

26 Any other comments?

-END-
I am very grateful for giving me your precious time to talk to you, May God Bless You
Focus Group Discussions for children

Good morning/afternoon? Thank you for participating in this focus group discussion today. Your attendance shows how much you care about your issues as children. I am Caroline Nalianya, an MA student at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting an academic survey on the contribution of AACs in child protection. You have been randomly selected to participate in this survey. I would like to ask you some questions on child protection issues. The interview will take about 1 hour. Your answers will remain strictly confidential and they will be used only for research purposes on aggregate.

Do I have your consent to continue with the interview?

1. What are children rights?
2. How did you get to hear about these rights?
3. What are some of these rights that you are familiar with?
4. Do you know Area Advisory Councils?
5. If yes, what do they do in the community?
6. Do children participate in AACs? □ Yes (1) □ No (2)
7. What child abuse and violation of child rights are common in your community?
8. Where do children report cases of abuse?
9. What happens when the case is reported?
10. How do children feel with the outcome?
11. Do children who have been abused and their families receive any kind of support (material, financial, counseling) and from whom?
12. What roles are children playing in helping this community to become safer, among their peers, in their families and in the wider community?
13. What could the community do to change the way protection problems affect children?
14. What is needed to support affected families and children better?
15. What could government, community and other stakeholders do to facilitate these changes?
Observation Guide for observation during FGD meetings and in the community

1. How is the physical environment; the surroundings of the setting—physical map of the setting and description of the physical surroundings; a portrayal of where participants are positioned over time; a description of the activities being observed, detailing activities of interest; adult activities such as AAC meetings;

2. Provide the description of the participants, count number of attendees, demographics as age, gender;

3. What are the activities and interactions that occur in the setting?

4. Observe and record the frequency and duration of the activities/interactions and other subtle factors, such as informal, unplanned activities, symbolic meanings, nonverbal communication, physical clues, and what should happen that has not happened.

5. Note and observe the conversation in terms of content, who speaks to whom, who listens, silences

6. Observe how children are playing in the community; whether you see happy children faces; whether children are free with strangers or not; how parents treat children at home and how children are treated in school