



Gender attitudes and norms

Makueni residents' views and experiences

1. Introduction

Women and men in Makueni County face different challenges and obstacles. Some of these relate to physical biology – childbirth and menstruation, for example. Many more are social in origin, including attitudes and norms around the roles of women and men at home, in the wider community, and in matters of economics and governance. Unlike biology, attitudes and practices are not fixed; they can be challenged, and changed. If, as is often the case, they make people vulnerable, or hold them back from achieving their full potential, then there is a powerful justification for trying to achieve such change.

This report presents data on Makueni residents' attitudes and practices on gender and related matters. Who generally takes which decisions, and who takes on which roles and responsibilities within the home? Do residents hold views that discriminate against women and girls? And how widespread is violence against women, and

what do residents see as the main factors that contribute to such violence?

Data for the brief come from Twaweza's new *Sauti za Makueni* survey. *Sauti za Makueni* is a representative, high-frequency mobile phone panel survey. Information on the overall methodology is available at www.twaweza.org/sauti. For this brief, data were collected from 739 respondents in the fifth round of the *Sauti za Makueni* panel, conducted between 29 June and 4 July, 2021.

Key findings include:

- The main household breadwinner in Makueni is more often male than female
- Men in Makueni are more likely than women to have the final decision on home matters, though joint decisions are common

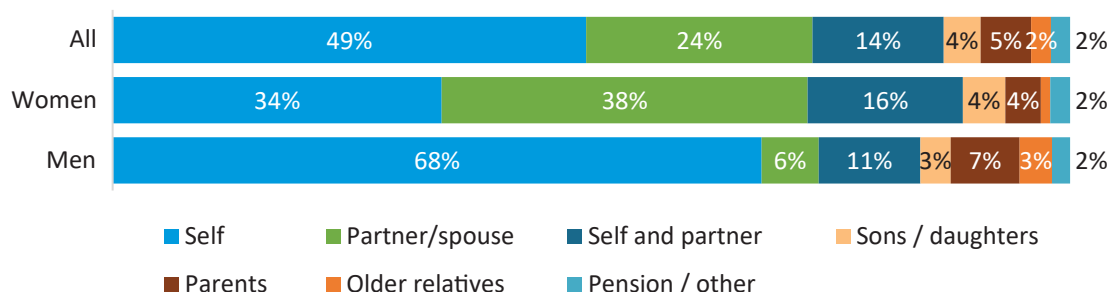
- Women in Makueni are more likely than men to take responsibility for housework
- On health matters, women in Makueni are slightly more likely than men to take key decisions
- Women in Makueni bear more of the load of caring for children than men
- Both women and men in Makueni hold a range of views on gender norms that could hold women back
- Most Makueni residents don't think giving women greater rights and opportunities means taking these away from men
- 1 out of 8 women in Makueni report being a victim of gender-based violence
- Half of residents say they have a male friend who commits physical violence against his female partner or spouse
- Half of Makueni residents say they would intervene if they saw a male friend committing violence against a woman
- 1 out of 10 women in Makueni have experienced violence or been threatened outside their home in the previous three months
- Makueni residents see alcohol as the main factor contributing to gender-based violence
- 9 out of 10 residents say that men, whatever their behaviour, should be respected by all women
- Most Makueni residents are aware of laws that address violence against women and girls

2. Makueni residents' views and experiences on gender attitudes and norms

Insight 1: The main household breadwinner in Makueni is more often male than female

One out of three women (34%) describe themselves as their households' main income provider, while twice as many men (68%) say the same.

Figure 1: Who provides the main source of income in your home?



Source: *Sauti za Makueni* mobile phone survey, round 5 (June 29 - July 4, 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=739)

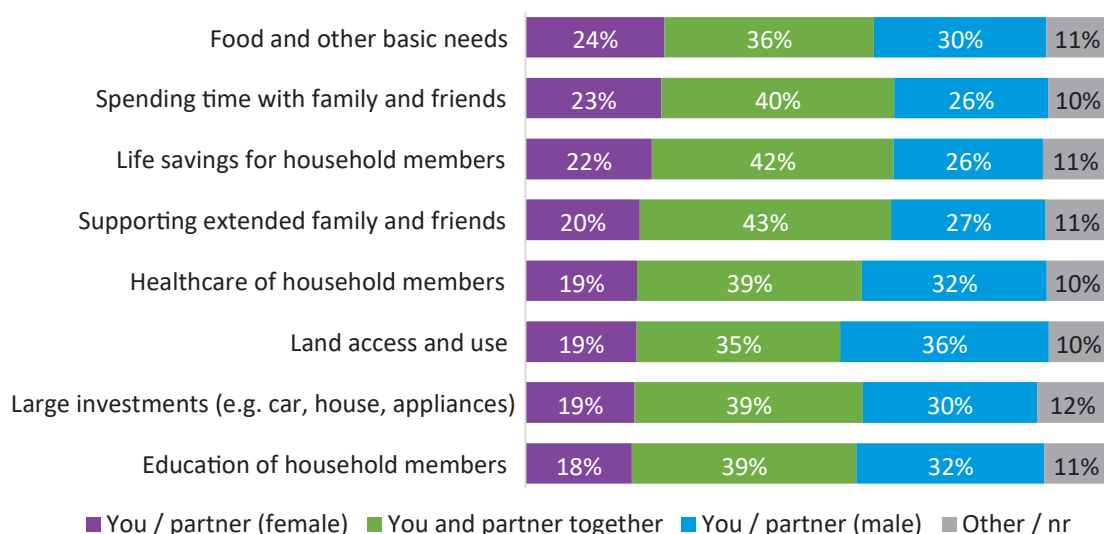
Insight 2: Men in Makueni are more likely than women to have final decision on home matters, though joint decisions are most common

Across a range of domestic matters, men in Makueni are more likely than women to have the final decision. However, in all cases, joint decision making is reportedly more common than either partner taking the full responsibility.

This pattern applies across decisions on food and other basic needs, healthcare and education, large purchases, use of time, use of land, use of savings, and decisions on supporting friends and extended family members.

Across all these types of decisions, there is no significant difference between residents of rural and urban areas, or between poorer and wealthier households (not shown in charts).

Figure 2: Who in your household has the final decision on the following?



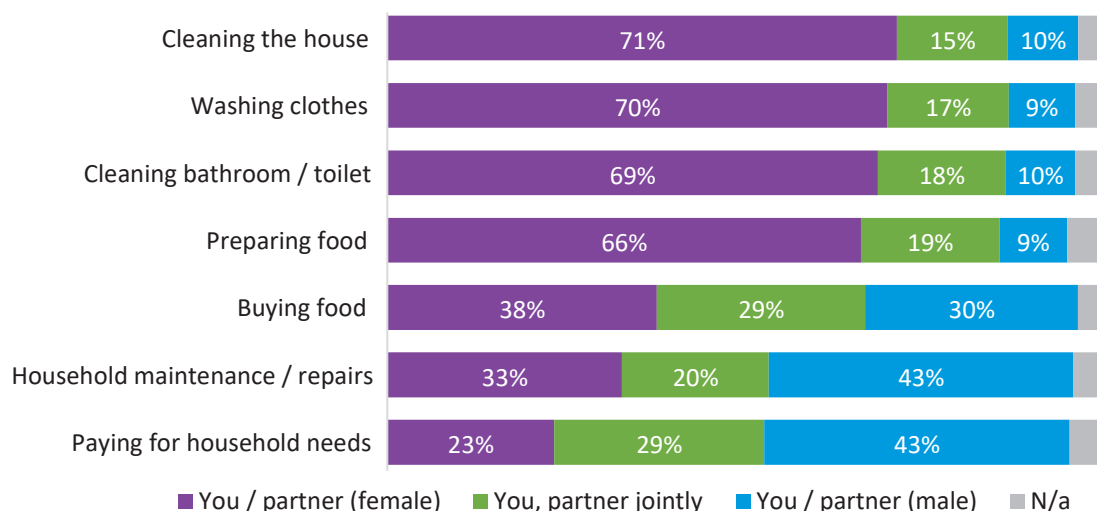
Source: *Sauti za Makueni* mobile phone survey, round 5 (June 29 - July 4, 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=739)

Insight 3: Women in Makueni are more likely than men to take responsibility for housework

Across most forms of housework, women in Makueni are more likely than men to take responsibility for the work. This applies across washing clothes, buying food, cleaning the house, cleaning the bathroom/toilet and preparing food. The exceptions, where men are more likely than women to take the responsibility, are household maintenance and paying for household needs. In the case of buying food and paying for household needs, joint responsibility is also common.

The same pattern applies broadly across rural and urban households and in poorer and wealthier households (not shown in charts).

Figure 3: Who in your household takes responsibility for the following tasks?



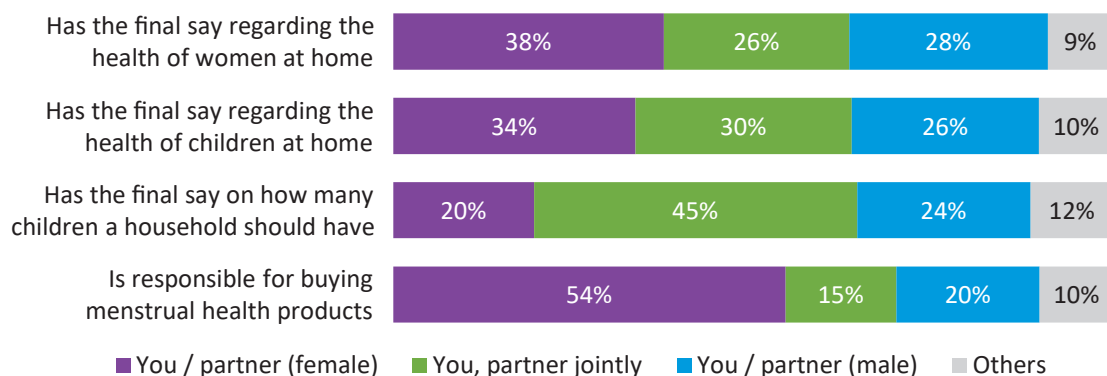
Source: *Sauti za Makueni* mobile phone survey, round 5 (June 29 - July 4, 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=739)

Insight 4: On health matters, women in Makueni are slightly more likely than men to take key decisions

Women in Makueni are a little more likely than men to make key decisions on matters relating to the health of women and children at home, and to take responsibility for buying menstrual health products. Decisions about the number of children are most likely to be taken jointly by men and women.

Across all these areas, women in poorer households are slightly more likely than women in wealthier households to take key decisions (not shown in charts).

Figure 4: Who in your family ... ?



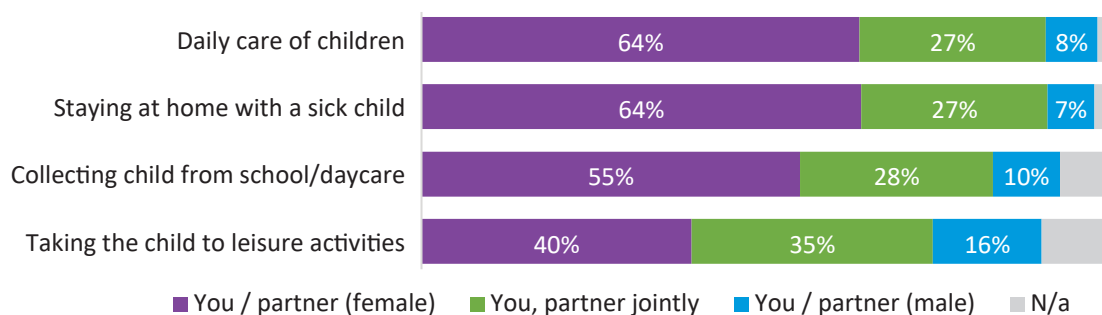
Source: *Sauti za Makueni* mobile phone survey, round 5 (June 29 - July 4, 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=739)

Insight 5: Women in Makueni bear more of the load of caring for children than men

Across a range of activities related to the care of children, women in Makueni are more likely than men to bear the load. This includes daily care of children, staying at home with a sick child and collecting children from school. In these three tasks, women are six-ten times more likely than men to bear the responsibility. Women are also more likely than men to take the lead on taking children to leisure activities.

This pattern is consistent across poorer and wealthier households (not shown in charts).

Figure 5: How do/did you and your partner distribute the following tasks related to the care of children?



Source: *Sauti za Makueni* mobile phone survey, round 5 (June 29 - July 4, 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=739)

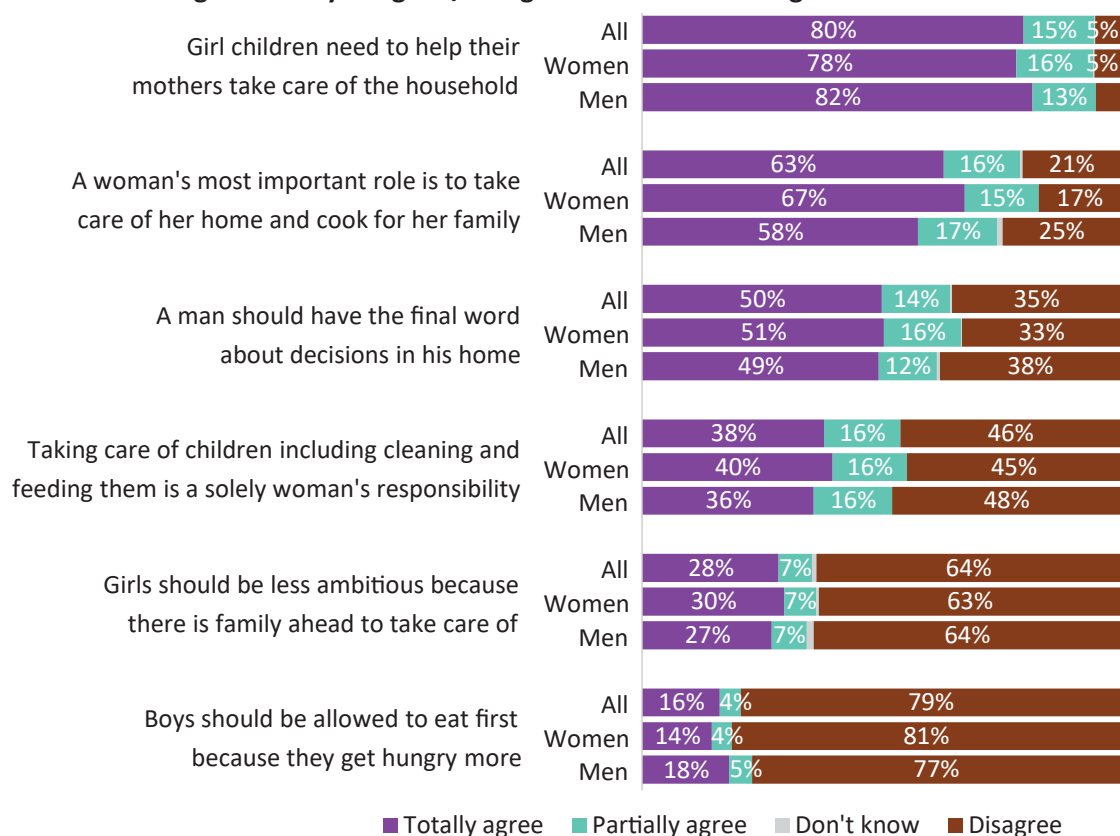
Insight 6: Both women and men in Makueni hold a range of views on gender norms that could hold women back

Residents of Makueni – both women and men – hold a range of views that could hold women and girls back from achieving their full potential. This includes eight out of ten (80%) who say girl children need to help their mothers care for the household, six out of ten (63%) who say a woman's most important role is to take care of her home and family, and five out of ten (50%) who say a man should have the final word about decisions in his home.

On other related matters, fewer than half of residents hold views that are disempowering to women, while the majority hold the opposite view. This includes four out of ten (38%) who say caring for children is solely a woman's responsibility, three out of ten (28%) who say girls should be less ambitious, and two out of ten (16%) who say boys should have priority over girls when it comes to food.

There are no major differences between men and women on these matters: women and men broadly share the same views.

Figure 6: Do you agree / disagree with the following statements?

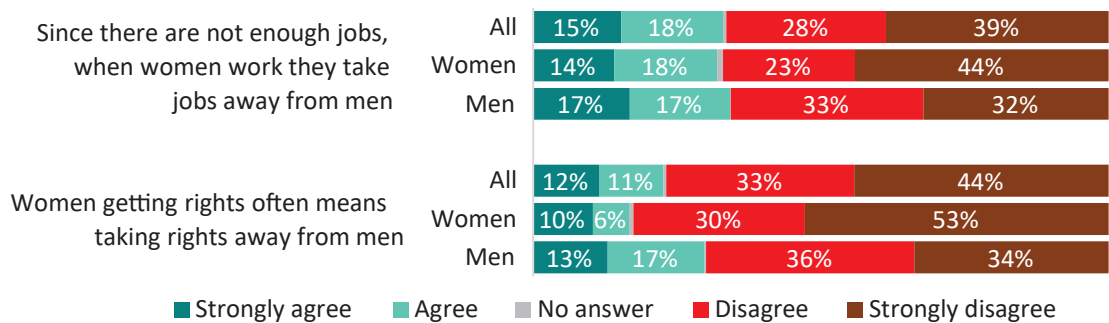


Source: *Sauti za Makueni* mobile phone survey, round 5 (June 29 - July 4, 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=739)

Insight 7: Most Makueni residents don't think giving women greater rights and opportunities means taking these away from men

A majority of Makueni residents (67%) disagree with the view that when women work, they take jobs away from men. A majority (77%) also disagree with the view that women getting rights often means taking rights away from men. Women are a little more likely than men to disagree with these statements.

Figure 7: Do you agree / disagree with the following statements?

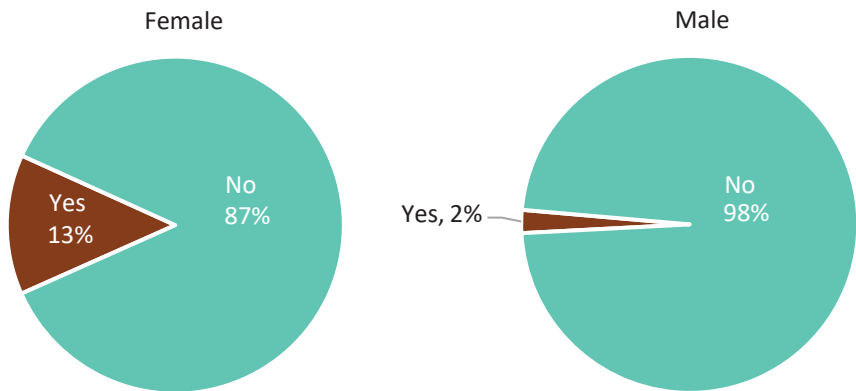


Source: *Sauti za Makueni* mobile phone survey, round 5 (June 29 - July 4, 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=739)

Insight 8: 1 out of 8 women in Makueni report being a victim of gender-based violence¹

One out of eight women in Makueni (13%) report having been victim of gender-based violence (GBV). A small number of men (2%) report the same.

Figure 8: Are you a victim of gender-based violence?

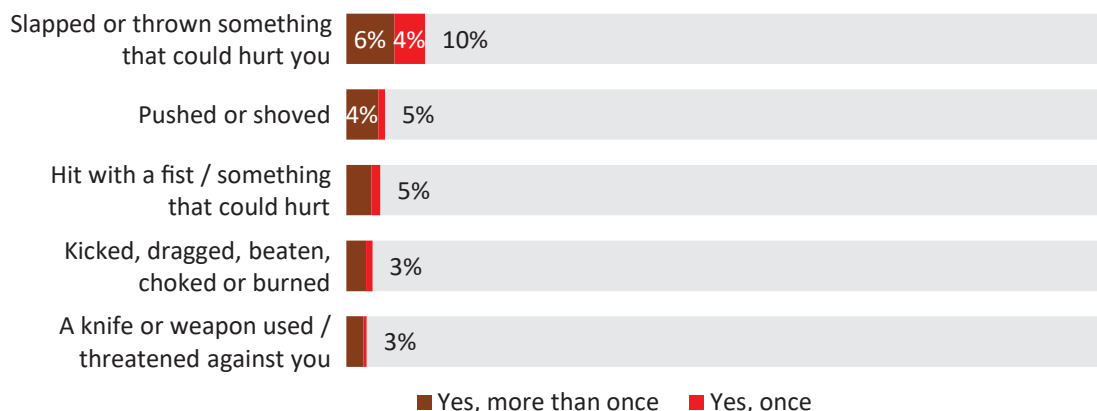


Source: *Sauti za Makueni* mobile phone survey, round 5 (June 29 - July 4, 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=739)

1 Self-reported experience of gender-based violence is likely to understate the extent of the issue, as many may not be willing to share such experiences with an interviewer.

Women report experiencing a range of types of violence by their spouses or partners.

Figure 9: Women: Have you ever experienced the following forms of violence by your spouse or partner?

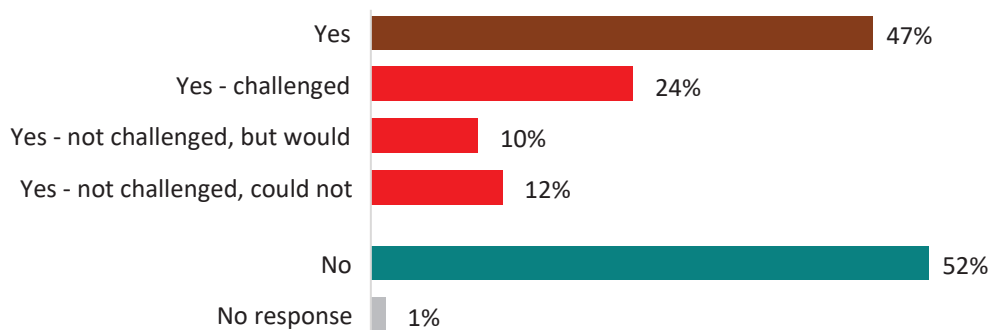


Source: *Sauti za Makeni* mobile phone survey, round 5 (June 29 - July 4, 2021);
Base: all female respondents (n=478)

Insight 9: Half of residents say they have a male friend who commits physical violence against his female partner or spouse

Half of Makeni residents (47%) say they have a male friend who commits physical violence against his female partner or spouse. A quarter (24%) say they have challenged their friend about this behaviour. Others say they might challenge their friend some time (10%) or that they could not do so (12%).

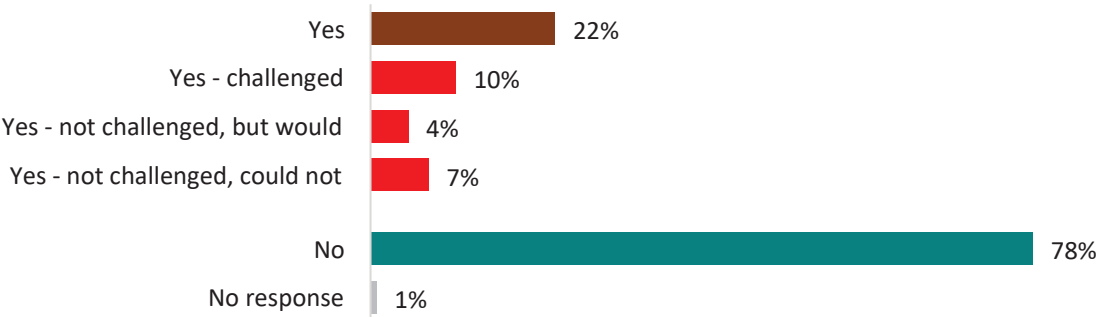
Figure 10: Do you have a male friend who commits physical violence against his female partner / spouse? Have you ever challenged his behaviour?



Source: *Sauti za Makeni* mobile phone survey, round 5 (June 29 - July 4, 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=739)

One out of five residents (22%) reports having a female friend who commits physical violence against her male partner or spouse. One out of ten (10%) have challenged this behaviour, while a similar number (11%) have not done so.

Figure 11: Do you have a female friend who commits physical violence against her male partner / spouse? Have you ever challenged her behaviour?



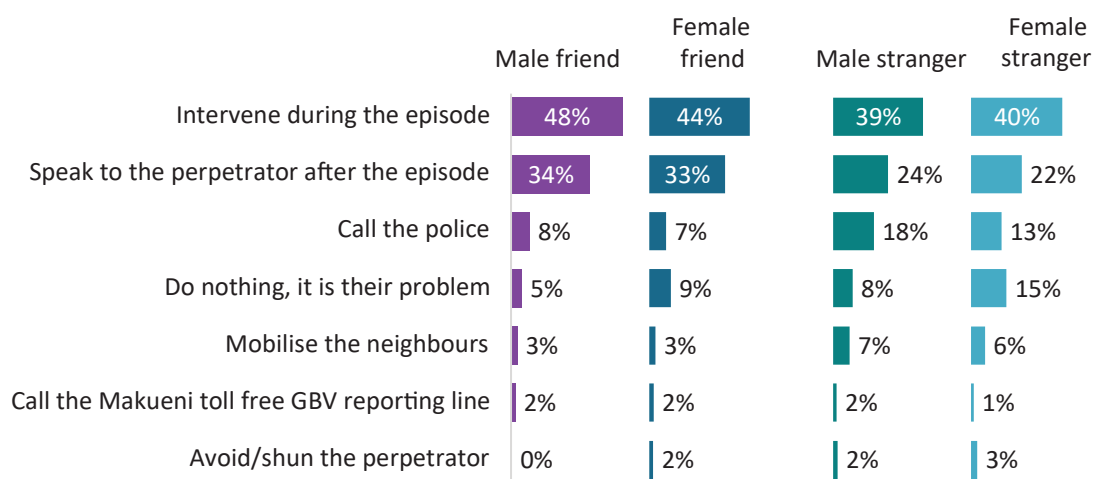
Source: *Sauti za Makeni* mobile phone survey, round 5 (June 29 - July 4, 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=739)

Insight 10: Half of Makeni residents say they would intervene if they saw a male friend committing violence against a women

Half of Makeni residents (48%) say they would intervene during the episode if they saw a male friend committing violence against a woman, and a further 34% say they would speak to the perpetrator later about this behaviour. One out of ten (8%) say they would call the police, and a small number (5%) say they would do nothing.

In the case of a female friend committing violence against a man, the numbers are very similar. Where the violence is being committed by a stranger rather than a friend, fewer residents say they would intervene or speak to the perpetrator later, and more say they would call the police or do nothing.

Figure 12: What would you do if you saw the following committing violence against a member of the opposite sex?



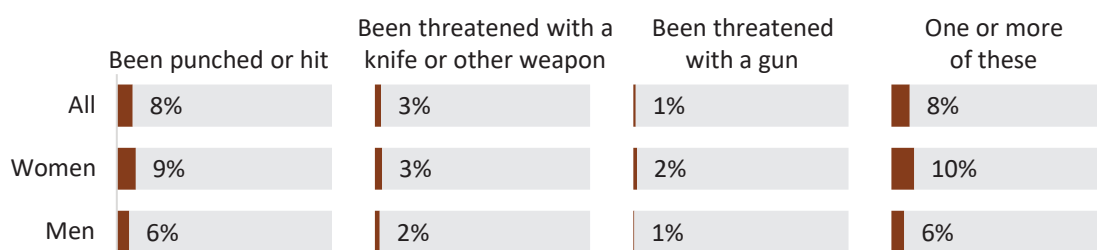
Source: *Sauti za Makueni* mobile phone survey, round 5 (June 29 - July 4, 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=739)

Insight 11: 1 out of 10 women in Makueni have experienced violence or been threatened outside their home in the previous three months

One out of ten women in Makueni (10%) has experienced physical violence or been threatened with a knife or gun outside their home in the previous three months. One out of ten (9%) were punched or hit, while others (2-3%) were threatened.

Men in Makueni are a little less likely to have been punched or hit (6%), or to have experienced any of these forms of violence or threat (6%).

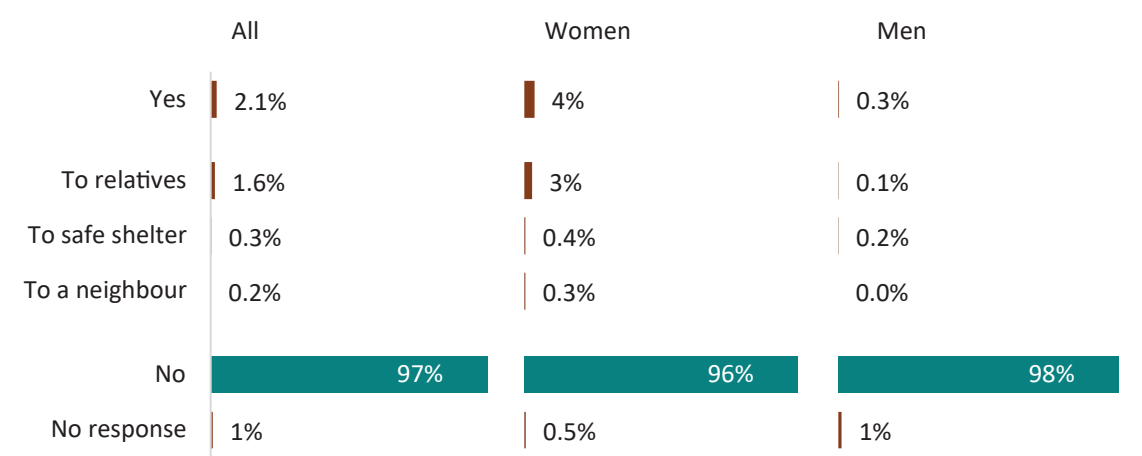
Figure 13: Have you experienced any of the following forms of violence outside your home in the last 3 months?



Source: *Sauti za Makueni* mobile phone survey, round 5 (June 29 - July 4, 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=739)

Four percent of women (4%) report having been chased away from their home in the previous three months. In most of these cases, they sought refuge from relatives (3%).

Figure 14: Have you, in the past 3 months, been chased away from your home / residence? If so, where did you seek refuge?



Source: *Sauti za Makueni* mobile phone survey, round 5 (June 29 - July 4, 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=739)

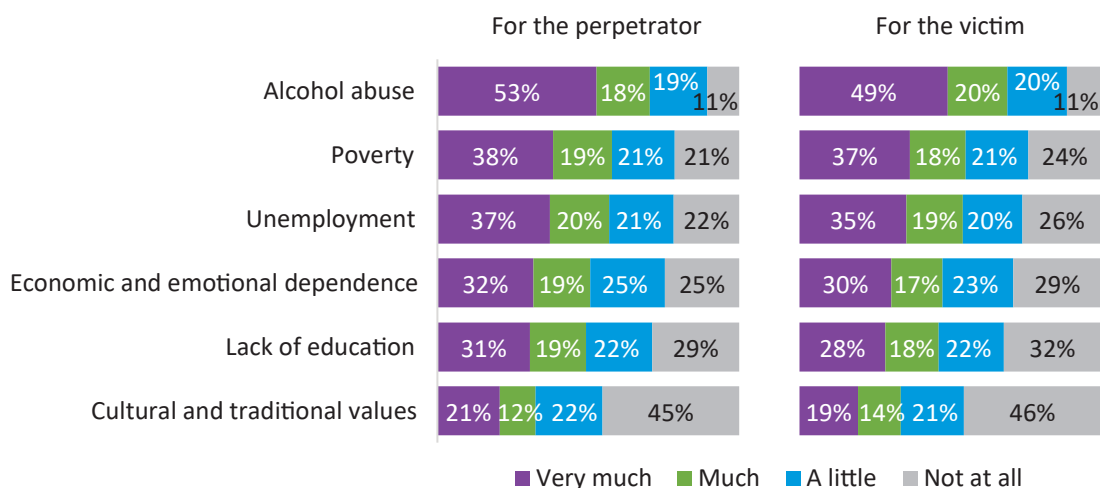
Insight 12: Makueni residents see alcohol as the main factor contributing to gender-based violence

Seven out of ten Makueni residents (71%) say alcohol abuse contributes to gender-based violence in Makueni, either very much (53%) or much (18%). This is higher than for any other contributing factor mentioned.

Other contributing factors seen as playing a substantial role include poverty, unemployment, dependence and a lack of education.

In comparison, fewer residents see cultural and traditional values as something that contributes significantly to gender-based violence in the county. Close to half (45-46%) say this has no contribution at all, and a further two out of ten (21-22%) say it has a small effect.

Figure 15: In your opinion, how much do the following factors contribute to gender-based violence for the perpetrator / the victim in Makueni?



Source: *Sauti za Makueni* mobile phone survey, round 5 (June 29 - July 4, 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=739)

Insight 13: 9 out of 10 residents say that men, whatever their behaviour, should be respected by all women

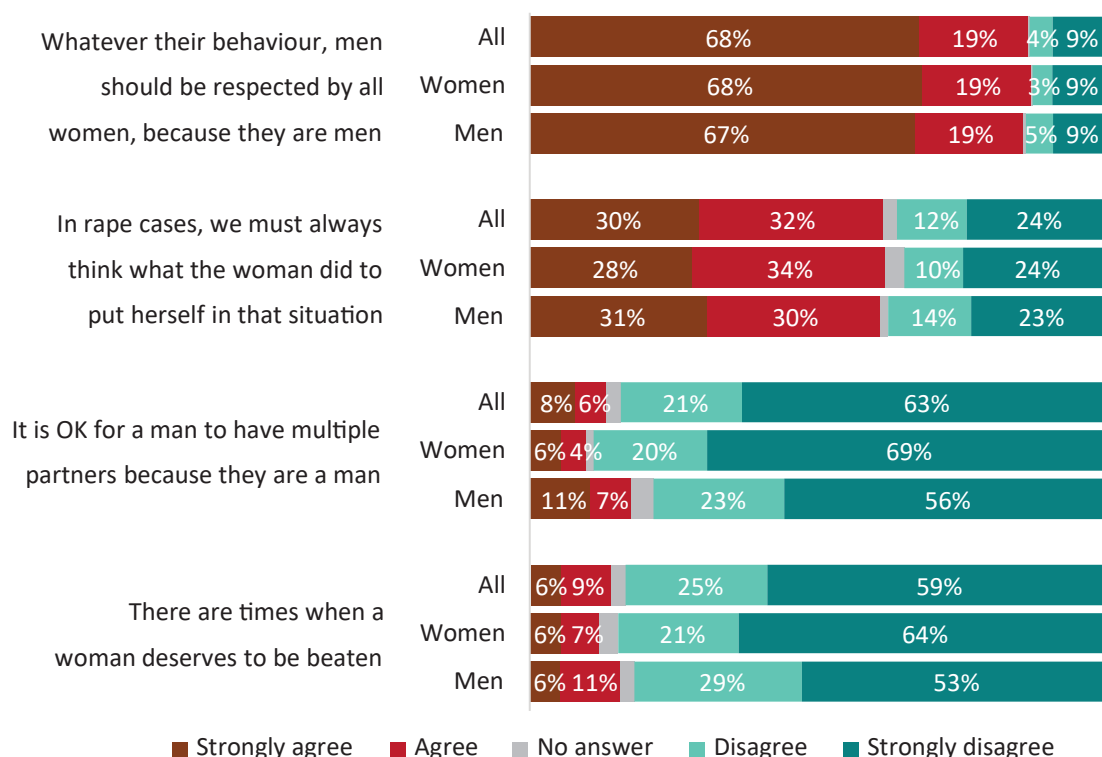
Nine out of ten Makueni residents (87%) say that men, whatever their behaviour should be respected by all women, because they are men. This view is held equally by both women and men.

A majority (62%) agree with the view that in rape cases we must ask what the woman did to put herself in the situation. Again, this view is held by both women and men equally.

A large majority of residents (84%) disagree with the statement that it is acceptable for a man to have multiple partners because they are a man, though men (18%) are more likely than women (10%) to agree with this statement.

A significant minority of residents (15%) agree with the view that there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten. Men (17%) are a little more likely than women (13%) to hold this view.

Figure 16: Do you agree / disagree with the following statements?



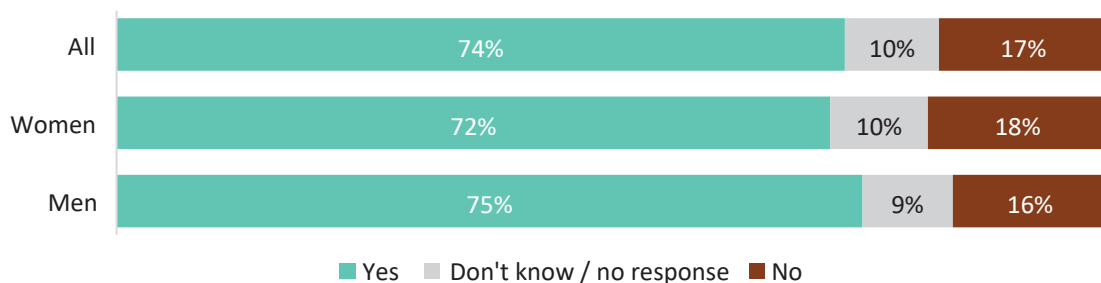
Source: *Sauti za Makueni* mobile phone survey, round 5 (June 29 - July 4, 2021);
 Base: all respondents (n=739)

Insight 14: Most Makueni residents are aware of laws on violence against women and girls

Three out of four residents of Makueni (74%) are aware of laws in Kenya / Makueni on violence against women and girls. A significant number (17%) are unaware of such laws.

Awareness levels are similar for women and men.

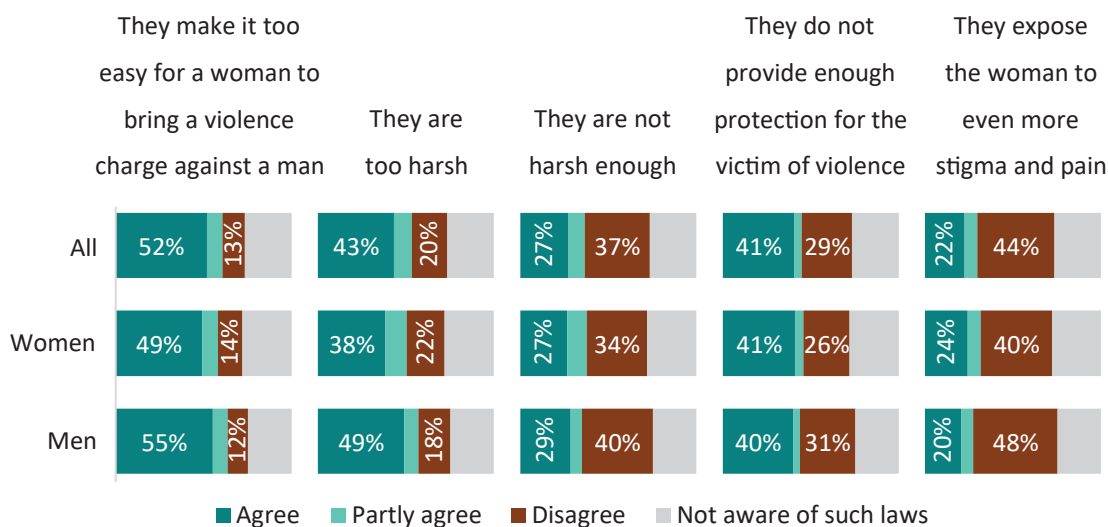
Figure 17: Are there laws in Kenya / Makueni on violence against girls, women?



Source: *Sauti za Makueni* mobile phone survey, round 5 (June 29 - July 4, 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=739)

Half of residents (52%) saw such laws make it too easy for a woman to bring a charge of violence against a man, compared to 13% who disagree. Both women and men hold similar views on this point.

Figure 18: About these laws, do you think that ...?



Source: *Sauti za Makueni* mobile phone survey, round 5 (June 29 - July 4, 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=739)

3. Conclusions

This report paints a rich and detailed picture of how residents of Makueni perceive gender issues. The detail is important, and should not be forgotten, but a few headline findings stand out.

First, when it comes to most domestic matters, there is a clear division of roles between male and female household members. Women take the lead on care of children, and on healthcare matters, while men are more likely to lead on major financial decisions. We should not overstate this, however, as on many responsibilities and decisions, Makueni residents are more likely to report that responsibility is shared between male and female household members than to report that it is born by one or other partner.

Second, there are also some widely held attitudes towards the roles of women and men. Both women and men agree in large majorities that a woman's most important role is to care for her home and family, and that girl children need to assist their mothers with this. Nevertheless, there are some views that are more supportive towards women: few say girls should be less ambitious than boys, few say boys should have priority over girls when it comes to food, and few say that giving women opportunities means reducing men's opportunities.

Third, on violence, it is worth noting how widespread violence against women appears to be. Half of residents say they have a male friend who commits physical violence against his female partner or spouse, and a significant number of women (13%) report that they personally have been the victim of gender-based violence. This last figure is likely to be an underestimate, as women may be unwilling to share these types of experiences with interviewers.

Nevertheless, the headline finding on violence is a contradiction in residents' attitudes. There is a clear recognition that violence against women is unacceptable, as evidenced by the large number who say they have intervened or would intervene if they witnessed such violence, and by the very small number who agree with the statement that sometimes women deserve to be beaten. Nevertheless, these views are held alongside widespread agreement with the views that all men should be respected by all women just because they are men and that we should always ask about the woman's behaviour in cases of rape. Further, both men and women feel that laws on violence are biased in favour of women.

Across several of these areas, there are signs in this report of a difference between expressed norms and expectations on the one hand, and actual behaviour on the other. We don't want girls to be less ambitious than boys, but we give girls extra responsibilities within the home that will likely impact their schooling. And on violence, we recognise that violence is unacceptable, and yet we look to blame the victim in rape cases and demand that women show respect for men.

Such contradictions are not unusual. Indeed they are common across all patriarchal societies – which remain dominant across the world. Nevertheless, empowering women and girls will prove to be difficult as long as we speak of equal rights while continuing to hold them back in practice.

