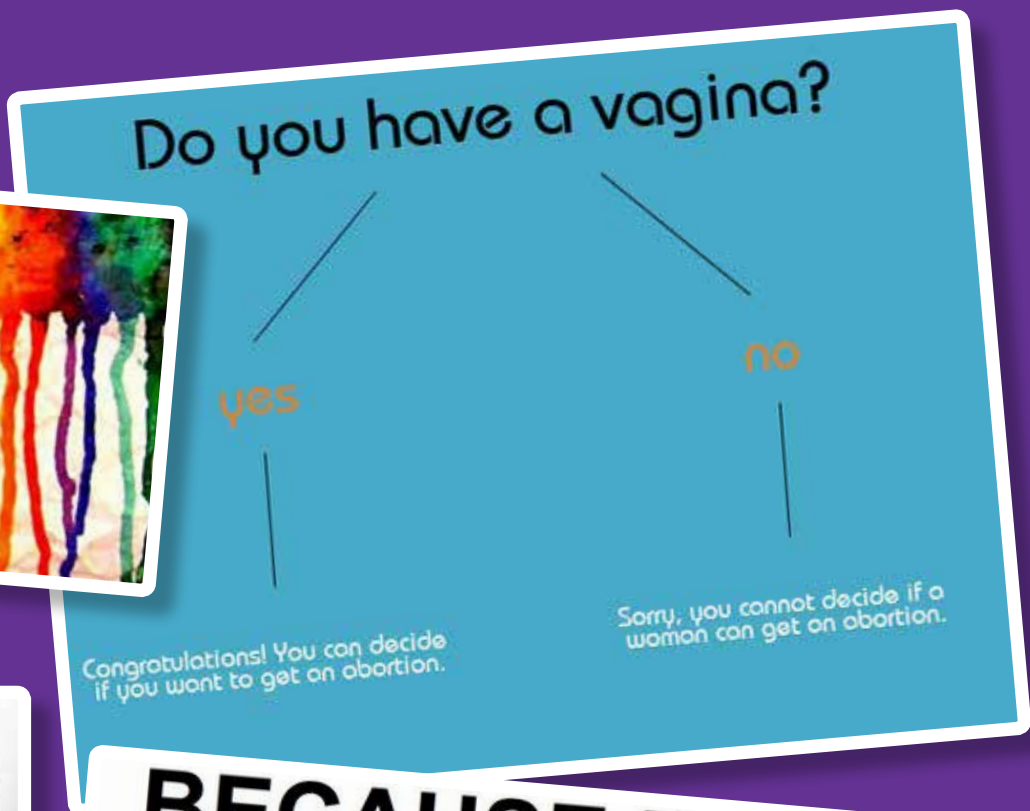
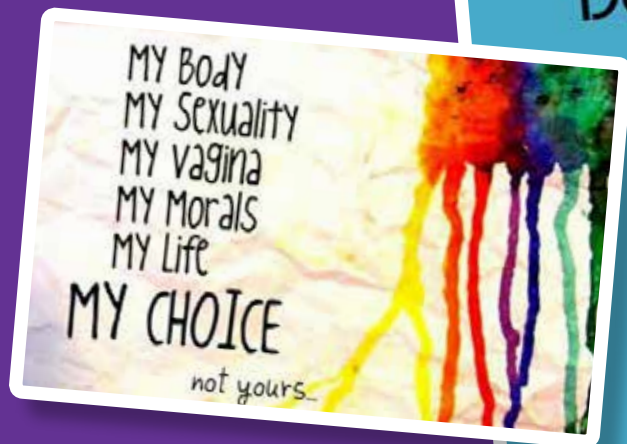


FIRE UP

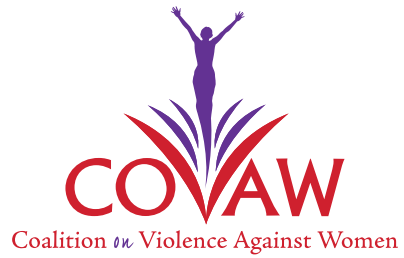




**BECAUSE RAPE
IS NEVER THE
VICTIM'S FAULT.**

Not if she was drunk. Not if she was naked.
Not if she was wearing a miniskirt or a veil. Not if
she was a sex worker. Not if the authorities didn't
believe her. Not if she was queer. Not if she was a
woman of colour. Not if she was seeking asylum.
Not if she was your partner. Not if she was
disabled. Not if the victim was male.

A poster with the text 'BECAUSE RAPE IS NEVER THE VICTIM'S FAULT.' in bold, black, sans-serif font. Below the title is a list of conditions in a smaller font, all starting with 'Not if...'. The conditions are: 'Not if she was drunk. Not if she was naked.', 'Not if she was wearing a miniskirt or a veil. Not if she was a sex worker. Not if the authorities didn't believe her. Not if she was queer. Not if she was a woman of colour. Not if she was seeking asylum.', 'Not if she was your partner. Not if she was disabled. Not if the victim was male.'



FIRE UP



ANNUAL REPORT-2012

THE RIVER OF LIFE... ♦ ♦ ♦

By Starhawk

Once a people lived along the banks of the river of life...

The river of life is a river of sweet water, that awakens the seeds of spring and nourishes all growing things.

The river of life is a storm wind, blowing fresh across the earth.

The river of life is the deep molten fire that shakes the continents.

And the people should have had all they needed for happiness and joy,

But they were plagued by a terrible monster, the triple-headed monster of Greed, Hate, and War.

Greed sucked up all the colors of life and locked them inside his fortress.

Hate severed the threads of love and taught the people to fear each other.

War threatened destruction to anyone who opposed the monster's rule.

And the people were separate, and afraid, and poor.

The threads of connection were frayed.

The fabric of care unraveled.

And War took the young and marched them off to slaughter and die in places far away.

Greed stole their future...

The river of life ran dry.

The women saw the springs go barren, the new sprouts fail, the trees die, and the hills turn brown...

And they wept and mourned, and didn't know what to do.

The women, too, were divided, for some had more and some had less.
Old wounds and present injustices kept them apart.

But as War shook his fist, and threatened to unleash
weapons to destroy the earth...

The women turned to each other; they said: "We are scraps of a torn fabric,
but if we tie them together,
we can bind wounds, dry tears,
weave a net to carry heavy loads.

"We must amplify love, and throw off dread,
Take back our power and spin a thread,
A life-line, held in our strong hands,
A living web of shining strands.

"And our hands remember how to spin.
We spin freedom on the rising wind,
We spin threads of life, the cords of fate,
We spin love into a river that can overrun hate.

"We spin justice burning like a flaming star;
We spin peace into a river that can overcome war.
And if you want to know where true power lies,
Turn and look into your sisters' eyes.

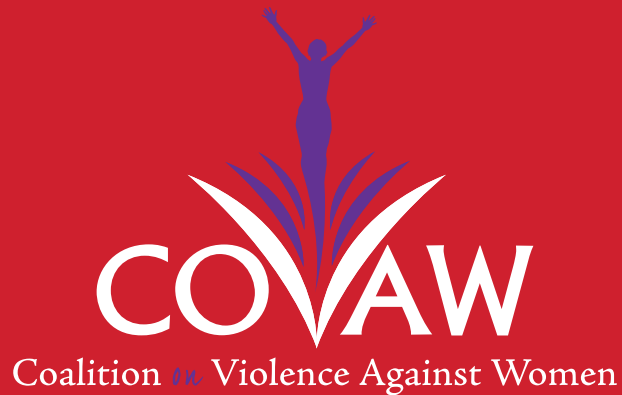
"So come mothers and grandmothers,
Lovers and daughters.
Come spinners and weavers,
Tool makers, potters,
Dancers and dreamers,

Fixers and changers,
Singers and screamers.
Forget all the dangers.
Come ancestors, guardians, Goddesses too,
You who teach us, you who speak true,
You who plant, and you who reap,
You who soar and you who creep,
You who cook, and you who drum,
You who have been, and you yet to come,
You who fight with the sword,
You who fight with the pen.
Unreasonable women,
Unmanageable men.
Come harpies and banshees and gorgons and Witches;
Come sweet loving hearts and furious bitches!"

"Break the chains that have kept us bound.
Weave a web to pull the monster down.
In the face of truth, no lie can stand.
Weave the vision, strand by strand.

"We are sweet water, we are the seed,
We are the storm wind to blow away greed.
We are the new world we bring to birth;
The river rising to reclaim the earth."

-- Starhawk



Vision is 'a society that is free from all forms of violence against women'.

Mission is 'Building Social Movements of change agents opposed to and committed to eradicating Violence against Women'.

Our Values are: Respect, Integrity, Compassion, Solidarity, Commitment and Professionalism

Theory of Change is that through working in partnership with community based organisations a critical mass will develop and work towards the eradication of violence against women. Using rights-based approach, COVAW believes that women are violated and vulnerable to violence because of unequal power relationships in the society. Therefore through building effective partnerships with women led community based organisations violence against women will be eradicated.



FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN TOP!

Asa sings, “There is fire on the mountain top... and nobody seems to be on the run”. In some ways, this speaks to the complacency that supports acts of violence against women. It also points to the need to consciously resist such acts! Fired up! outlines our resistance to impunity and the need for the government to exercise due diligence in addressing all forms of violence against women.

It is about the recognition that 2012 was a critical moment for COVAW to continue questioning violence against women especially as elections drew closer. We needed the public to start asking, and start challenging those running for public office to consider violence against women as an elections agenda. We may have not got many of them to buy in, but it got Kenyans started... we consider this an important step to start changing. It was a starting point to changing the spaces, the dialogue and the power dynamics within certain political spaces. We got Kenyans to see that elections have become a new site for violence against women.

We were bold, loud and audacious! In different spaces we questioned why there has not been action to address impunity to end sexual and gender crimes especially related to the post 2007/08 election violence. We launched a petition dubbed “use the ballot, not my body!” which heralded calls for non-violence pre-, during and post-elections. This campaign involved the collection of signatures from a diverse group of the Kenyan people, demanding that state security agents

be adequately prepared to deal with violence during the electioneering period and mechanisms put in place to prevent or effectively respond to VAW during the electioneering process.

We noted the trends such as rise in militarisation, cultural and religious fundamentalisms, that in Asa’s words, speak of being “blind” to ones “conscience and reason”. She sings “little Lucy turns sixteen and like the movies she’s been seeing, she has a lover in her daddy. She can’t tell anybody, till she makes the evening news”. These are some of the key issues we continued to question in 2012 – the trends, social drivers of violence against women and how society continues to condone VAW. We need not wait till our women and girls become statistics.

“One day the river will overflow, and there’ll be nowhere for us to go; and we will run run...wishing we had put out the fire, oh no...”

“The fire on the mountain’ is far from being put off. So we ask you to join us as we continue in this journey and thank those that have travelled with us this far. Enjoy fired up and get fired up – get up, stand up – do something about violence against women! For it is no longer welcome here!

Shukrani!
SAIDA ALI
Executive Director





African women in general need to know that it's OK for them to be the way they are - to see the way they are as a strength, and to be liberated from fear and from silence.

Wangari Maathai

1.0

**MOVEMENT BUILDING
AND COMMUNITY
ACTIVISM INITIATIVE**

MOVING BEYOND ACTIVISM

Introduction

In 2012, COVAW moved beyond training and focused on building a group of informed, bold, knowledgeable and vocal community activists, unafraid of challenging the status quo and the social ordering of community norms and practices. The activists were empowered to question patriarchy and demolish structures that relegate women to second class position through sessions held in Laikipia, Nakuru, Kajiado, Kisumu and Samburu. In these areas, COVAW identified and engaged committed change agents to advocate for the eradication of violence against women. By the end of 2012, COVAW had enhanced the knowledge of 150 activists from 65 in 2011. In moving beyond training it was important to build capacity of community based organisations to accelerate awareness on gender based violence and ensure women access to justice.

Capacity building and community ownership

In 2012, community based organisations stepped in to ensure the continuity of COVAW's work at the grassroots level to and that they took ownership of the process of eliminating violence within the society. The activists played a vital role in creating awareness on the underlying power imbalances between men and women that exacerbate VAW in the society. Through awareness, the activists continued to sensitize community members to realize the concept of power which include: power within, power over, power with and power to. This concept was used to demonstrate how understanding power and its effects can help prevent and reverse the upward trend on VAW. The activists adopted various strategies which included the use of communication materials, media and advocacy, training and audio-visual

materials to pass the message. The communication materials used interactive methods such as card games and power posters in facilitating discussions. This was aimed at creating harmonious relationships in families based on mutual respect between men and women. Social change is a process that takes years to attain and so does changing community norms and practices but it is not impossible to achieve behaviour, attitudes and mind-sets. COVAW recognised the power of the media and advocacy in an effort to heighten and scale up the creation of awareness on the trends in sexual and gender based violence. The organisation leveraged the power of local radio programmes to reach a massive audience with the messages of peace and non-violent co-existence.



As a result of the awareness created through the radio programmes, community activists have continued to receive cases of women whose rights have been violated and have become a support system as they seek justice for the survivors. The activists work in collaboration with the elders, chief's, health care workers, as well

as the local police. At times the activists accompanied survivors to the police stations, rescued girls who ran away from facing FGM, Beading of girls and early/forced marriages). These change agents are COVAW's ears and eyes on the ground and are considered gate keepers in their communities.

Celebrating champions of human rights

In recognition of their efforts to achieve justice and reparations for survivors of sexual and gender based violence, COVAW selected a group of 37 women and men who in 2012, went beyond their call of duty to assist those in their communities whose human rights had been violated. Some not only volunteered their time and resources but also their homes to create a safe haven for women and girls who suffered from violence.

Those publicly acknowledged were: law enforcement agents, paralegals, custodians of culture, community activists and health care workers who made sure that they handled all the cases brought to them with utmost professionalism.

COVAW worked with some of the progressive custodians of culture and appreciated their efforts in enhancing peace in their communities thereby greatly impacted the reach and effect of COVAW's work on the ground. These key partners made it possible for us to inch closer to the realisation of our mission and vision of a society free from all forms of violence.

16 Days of Activism Campaign

16 days of activism was an important part of COVAW's work in 2012. COVAW staff conducted various community dialogues forums, processions to escalate awareness on GBV as a women's human right issue at the grassroots, national, and regional level.

The main campaign theme for the 16 days of activism 2012 was ***"From Peace in the Home to peace in the World: Let's challenge militarism and end violence against women"***. The theme's focus was on challenging violations of women in conflict situations. . The theme resonated with the Kenyan situation in the violence that followed the disputed 2007/2008 presidential election. An estimated 3000 women and girls were subjected to physical and sexual violence. COVAW realizes that in times of conflict perpetrators use all sorts of means to justify SGBV as women's bodies are used as weapons to taunt and humiliate their opponents. . With sub theme of ***"My Vote My Choice for Peace"*** and in Kiswahili to mean ***"Kura Yangu Sauti Yangu kwa Jamii isio na Dhuluma"*** COVAW continued creating awareness in Tana Delta, Nairobi, Nakuru, Kisumu, Laikipia and Kajiado through processions, drama outreaches and community dialogue forums.

During the 16 days of activism campaign period, COVAW reached an estimated 1500 community members through dissemination of peace messages.

A dreadful rite of passage for girls

"I have been cutting girls for the last 15 years, this is part of our tradition and culture that we value and have held dear for many generations. The girls I have cut are now mothers and others grandmothers. I do not know if there is anything wrong about the practice because it is culturally accepted. I am here today because I want to learn more and I do not want to get arrested. I hear that the Kenya Government has a law that will get me and others in my profession arrested if found out. What will happen to me if I get jailed at my age? I am 85 years old and I believe if I get arrested I will die in prison. I would like to change." - Female circumciser, Samburu.



These were the sentiments of female circumciser in Samburu who attended a training conducted by COVAW to create awareness on the negative effects of FGM and the FGM Act of 2011.

Statistics from the Kenya Demographic Health Survey (KDHS) 2008/9 indicated that 28% of women in Kenya have undergone FGM. This has led to loss of life and other health complications especially during child birth.. The discussion on the FGM Act and the negative effects of FGM were an eye opener for female circumcisers. COVAW used a film showing in great detail how women and girls suffer after FGM. The female circumcisers further urged COVAW to conduct more awareness trainings and to include men since they play a major role in decision making processes that involve cultural practices.. At the end of the training the women circumcisers supported the idea of using other ways of initiating girls into adulthood. **Silence of women during Tana Delta Skirmishes**

Fact finding mission in Tana Delta and medical camps
21st-16th September and 7th-12th October

“I have a two month old baby, I cannot run away with such a small child, I am not the only one. I am feeling let down by the same government that is supposed to protect me. As women we do not have a problem with each other we only want these senseless killings to stop” – Woman Leader, Tana Delta.

Tana Delta is home to Ormas, Pokomos and Wardei. Ormas are pastoralists while Pokomos are farmers. Their incompatible lifestyles have for the years resulted in perennial conflict over ownership and use of land, pasture and water resources.

In 2012, the Tana Delta violence hit an all- time high.. Women and children were targets of violence and were brutally killed and burnt alive in the ensuing chaos. It was reported that 43 women, 22 children lost their lives. An estimated 20,000 people were internally displaced. Through support from Urgent Action Fund- Africa and other Civil Society Organizations COVAW undertook a fact finding mission whose objectives were bringing out experiences of women during the conflict as well as the gendered aspects of the conflict.



One of the major findings was the lack of access to medical care. Women and children living in the internally displaced persons (IDP) camps were in need of medical attention and care. In Ongonyo, an IDP camp located in Chara location, COVAW met over two hundred children with various types of skin infections. Expectant women were not receiving health care because the Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) had been displaced.. The need for psychosocial support was also evident. COVAW embarked on a journey of providing medical and psychosocial support to those

affected in the clashes. Medical camps held from 21st to 27th September in Tana River.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) held a medical camp in Tarasaa, Witu, Ongonyo, Dide Waride, St. Emmanuel church and Mtangani. Majority of women and children got medical attention and psychosocial support from health providers and counsellors. In Tarasaa IDP camp there were two reported cases of sexual violence that happened during the clashes. The survivors shared the incidents in confidence through a counsellor during the medical camp. The survivors were referred to GBVRC Mombasa for assistance after being examined by the doctors present during the camp. The fact finding mission in Tana Delta created opportunities for other CSOs to respond to the emergency situation in the region. The sad stories of women killed, loss of livelihood as well as loss of bodily integrity were disheartening

GBV study tour

Since inception, COVAW has partnered with other CSO's, non-governmental organizations(NGO's), development partners, state agencies and departments, in order to advance the scope, reach and impact of her work impact within the Kenyan society. We recognize that we cannot work alone in the advancement of women's rights. It is through partnerships that the concept of one stop center for women was realized in Kenya which is implemented through the Gender Based Violence Recovery Centers (GBVRC) situated in different referral, district and provincial hospitals in different parts of Kenya. After rigorous selection procedures, Kenya through COVAW was chosen to showcase the seamless service chain of access to justice for women to Pakistani professionals. These

professionals were lawyers, doctors, psychologists and case managers.

The main objective of the GBV study tour held in May 2012, was to expose participants to new models of handling GBV, organisation structures, practices and procedures that would equip them with knowledge and skills of how to develop and implement a similar chain of reporting SGBV in their country.

"I am a lawyer from Pakistan, in my daily duties I help women who have undergone different forms of violence to access justice through our judicial system. In my line of duty I experience challenges where violated women are still disturbed by the ordeal and cannot talk about it. It becomes challenging for me to get the right information from them in order to press charges. In Pakistan there is no streamlined integrated service chain for survivors. I am happy to be one of the participants to participate in the Gender Based Violence (GBV) study tour dubbed Training for Pakistan to see how the service chain is implemented in Kenya and how I can champion for it to be developed in our country" - Shabana Arif

The tour created an opportunity for the professionals to learn what has worked in Kenya in regards to the integrated services for survivors.. According to Jodah Bokhari (Training and capacity building specialist at Aurat Foundation): *"Through visiting different stakeholders working towards ending VAW I liked the one stop center where different stakeholders work together to help survivors of GBV, I now realise the importance of having integrated services for survivors at one service point"*

The story of Agnes in Kajiado – Written by Yvonne Godia

Agnes Kongu is a custodian of culture and a community Activist from Sajiloni, Kajiado County. Agnes is widowed but in her care she has 3 girls aged 14 years, 13 years and 11 years. Without much Agnes has housed these girls she rescued from the streets. As if they were her own children, she has to worry daily about what the three will eat and how they will get to school. In all ways, Agnes is a mother to these young girls, at the beginning of their teenage years. She is vocal in talking about issues of Violence against Women, how much power and potential women have and also HIV/AIDS. Agnes empowers her community about the various types of VAW and is outspoken on the positive impact in the community when issues of violence against women are adequately addressed and eliminated. In more ways than one, Agnes is a women's human rights crusader who demands that women should be respected in equal measure as their male counterparts because they have the same potential as the men.

Agnes comes from the Masasi community which still holds on to the retrogressive culture of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The fact that others in her community see her as going against the grain has not deterred her to condemn the hidden practice. Her headache has been FGM and Early Marriage among young girls in Kajiado. She has partnered with centres to refer girls who have been rescued from forced marriages and FGM. Being a Custodian of Culture and at the same time fighting traditions that harm the girl child has made her a celebrated hero in Kajiado.

What approaches does she use to reach the women?

Her activism goes beyond the call of nine to five;. You will find Agnes in the market as she talks tirelessly to people about the need to empower and support women. She has devised a strategy where she leverages the power of media to change people's mindsets and ultimately behaviour. She also does not shy away from knocking on people's doors, churches, women groups, in her undying quest to create awareness and educating her community. Agnes does not shy away from asking and getting slots in community radio stations and taking advantage of forums by asking for a chance to address crowds in political or other forums.

What has changed in Kajiado in terms of women's rights?

Majority of the women now know their rights and how the power imbalance plays out in her community. She empowers the women to -

- Demand for property in their matrimonial and parents' homes. Challenge some of the old cultural practices such as FGM, early marriage.
- They now know they can take their girls to school as the constitution dictates and that girls are as important as boys when it comes to their education.

What has been the impact of COVAW where she works?

1. Most women are now coming out to challenge the negative cultures that subjugate women.
2. More women are now seeking legal aid for economic, social and physical issues that need to be resolved.
3. There is a demand for COVAW to carry out women forums, trainings and community awareness sessions in the vast Kajiado County.
4. Women are now standing up and taking leadership positions in the county.



2.0

**ACCESS TO JUSTICE
AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS
INITIATIVE**

HOPE RESTORED

2012 goes down in the history books of COVAW as one of the most successful and fruitful year for the Access to justice and women's rights strategic initiative. The programme offered legal aid to an estimated 200 women from different parts of Kenya who experienced difficult circumstances of a diverse nature ranging from sexual to domestic and physical violence to women's property and inheritance rights violations. Besides provision of legal aid, the programme enhanced the capacity of health care workers and law enforcement agents whose aim was to enable them offer better services to survivors of GBV.

The story of Annie

Annie (not her real name) is only 3 years. Her story best exemplifies what the Access to Justice and Women's Rights Initiative is all about.

Annie is a little innocent cutie who seems wiser than her age. She stares at people with a blank gaze looking a little unsure of her next move. Strangers terrify her. From her little sunken eyes, one can tell that little Annie has never known or experienced love in her short lifetime. She is unusually reserved as other kids her age. Though she longs to be embraced, human beings instill fear in her. When you stretch your arms to lift her, she coils in fear, and she becomes very restless and uncomfortable. She almost cries but even that she withholds. She does not speak much like children her age; in fact she only mutters one or two words in her mother tongue. She does not speak a word of English or even Kiswahili.

Annie's story is heartrending. It is quite disturbing to realize how at the tender age of only three she has gone through so much pain and agony. In December, most

kids Annie's age receive toys and have tremendous fun with family and friends but she has no such memories. In December 2012, Annie was allegedly defiled by her biological father in what we would later learn was something he had done repeatedly. The very person she looked up to for protection, love and care had turned against her, becoming a monster she would rather be protected and taken away from.

Four young boys going on with their business and doing what boys their age do during the month long break from school, witnessed what would be the most horrifying incident for them and the little girl. They saw Annie's father on top of her as she screamed in pain and fear. They ran to their mothers who in turn reported the matter to the area chief. A well-wisher rushed the girl to hospital then proceeded to report the matter to the Police. The well-wisher followed up to ensure that the police P3 form was filled and all the original documentary evidence including medical reports were submitted to the police for further investigation and prosecution. All the while, this well-wisher lived with Annie.

After a while the accused was apprehended. On 20th December, 2012 the area chief, received a group of unwelcome visitors in her office. The accused, accompanied by police officers and officers who claimed to be from the Criminal Investigation Department(C.I.D) threatened the chief to stop supporting Annie's case and to ensure that she was returned to the custody of her twisted father. The well-wisher and the chief were told that the original P3 form, and key witness statements had gone missing, hence dissuading them from following up on the matter. This would not deter them from pursuing justice for the girl.

Of greater alarm however was the charge sheet filled by the investigating officer which stipulated that the accused was charged of “subjecting the child to cruel punishment under section 18(1) as read with section 20 of the Children’s Act.” This was despite the clarity of the P3 form and the medical report clearly describing the injuries occasioned by the sexual violence to Annie. The P3 form had clearly indicated that the child was “defiled” and had a “ruptured hymen”. Cruel punishment under the children’s Act attracts a sentence of twelve months or Ksh.50, 000 fine. Defilement of Incest against a minor below 11 years, on the other hand, carries a punishment of life imprisonment. When the well-wisher came to COVAW for help we contacted the Investigating Officer (I.O) asking him to rectify the charge sheet. To our shock he stated that he believed that was the proper charge as per his investigations, and he did not even remember the name of the accused. *Had his hands been greased?*

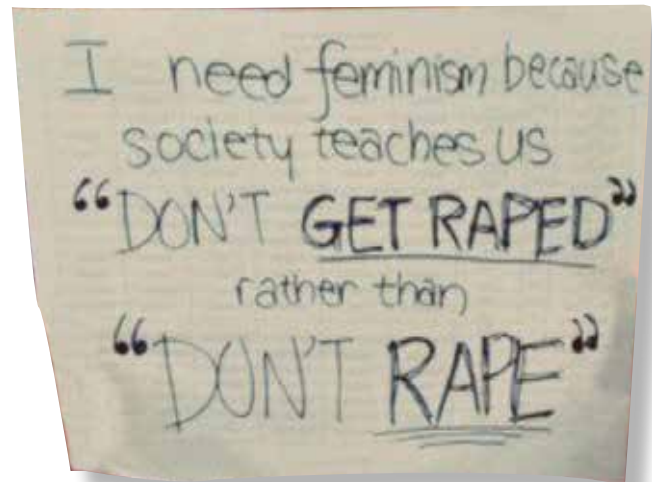
The concern we raise is around role that the law enforcement agents, in ensuring that justice is served. Poor investigations and accepting bribes to compromise on evidence and tamper with witnesses leads to weak cases which in the end the courts cannot rule on for lack of sufficient evidence.

COVAW took up the case and appointed an advocate who argued for the substitution of the charge sheet to reflect the actual crime/ violation that was committed against little Annie. The advocate also applied that Annie stays at a safe house to safeguard her safety and security. Family members of the accused including little’s Annie biological mother all along supported him and hoped to convince the witnesses to drop the case and arbitrate the matter outside the court. .

The successes of this case are many;

1. The charge sheet was successfully changed to reflect defilement
2. The accused is in remand as the case proceeds.
3. Our little Annie is in safe hands and enjoying playing like kids her age.
4. Annie has been going through counselling and is more receptive to visitors and well-wishers. It may be difficult to restore her innocence which was violently robbed from her but there is hope. The last time we spoke to her, she had learnt some Kiswahili and English after interacting with other children. Annie is now bubbling with energy.

The wheels of justice may be slow but we are hopeful that our shining star Annie will find justice she so deserves.



This is just one of the many complicated cases that COVAW has intervened in and ensured that victims of violence find not only justice but are able to move on

beyond the incidents to become survivors. COVAW receives many cases of women and girls in need of legal representation. To ensure that the cases are handled with the urgency that is required, we work with pro bono lawyers who assist in taking up some of the matters. They are advocates who are passionate on women's rights and are willing to offer their services for free by providing legal advice and representation to women and girls whose rights have been violated but cannot afford an advocate.

COVAW's pro bono scheme has grown from two active pro bono lawyers to 21 active pro bono lawyers in 2012. Currently, we are supporting 11 cases in Court. 2012 also saw the launch of a process to develop a manual for COVAW pro-bono advocates which will be a resourceful collection of precedents, case law, research, standardized templates of draft legal documents and other materials that advocates will find useful when preparing for a brief from COVAW. In two words the pro-bono scheme in COVAW is "fired up!" It could only get better!

One successful case handled by one of COVAW's pro bono is on domestic violence.

Legal aid

Through one on one legal aid provision, the Access to Justice team handled a total of 71 cases in 2012. Cases of intimate partner violence were 32 in number, ranking highest, followed by maintenance/separation matters which were 10. There were 9 cases of sexual violence, 5 cases of threat to life, 5 cases of women property rights, 4 cases of divorce, 2 cases of sodomy, 2 of psychiatric issues, 1 abduction and 1 assault by a stranger.

Zainab(not her real name) had been undergoing domestic violence silently. For years her husband battered her and refused to provide for her and their two children despite the fact she was unemployed and a stay at home mum. She sought assistance from COVAW and a pro bono lawyer who took up her matter was able to file for divorce and maintenance as per Zainab's request.

The Court ordered the husband to pay Kshs. 50,000/= per month as the case was being heard. Finally the matter was concluded, divorce was granted and the husband was ordered to pay maintenance for Zainab and the children on a monthly basis and school fees. COVAW is proud to have taken part in restoring hope, dignity and self-worth to Zainab who is now living at peace with her two children.

In 2012, COVAW's legal officers supported over 50 cases through Kenyatta Hospital GBVRC and 20 cases in Mbagathi District Hospital. Kenyatta National Hospital's out-patient registry recorded a total 450 cases in 2012. The data in the registry was not segregated by type of GBV until August 2012 when the segregation was done to identify 'IPV' from other 'GBV' cases upon COVAW's intervention. Since then the segregation showed 52 cases of IPV and 148 cases of GBV. Mbagathi District Hospital's records showed that in 2012 there were 23 cases of GBV. In following up these cases, some were referred to other civil society organizations, some were solved by engaging the provincial administration, i.e the chiefs and district children officers, some

were given support and legal advice and encouraged to represent themselves with COVAW's support, some were referred to pro-bono advocates and some clients opted out of the legal avenues.

SGBV/Public Interest Litigation CASE

In the run up to the 2007 elections, various atrocities were committed against women and girls. The government took no initiative in undertaking investigations or prosecution of SGBV cases during the Post-Election Violence. COVAW being a women's rights organization, whose core mandate is eradication of all forms of violence against women and girls identified this gap.

In 2012, COVAW began the ground work in as far as the filing of the petition was concerned. This involved planning; contacting key partners, tracing survivors and subsequent interviews with them in different parts of the country. The women and men affected had heart rending testimonies on what they underwent in the hands of the perpetrators. Many women stated that they were turned down from hospitals and police stations whenever they went to report these incidents.

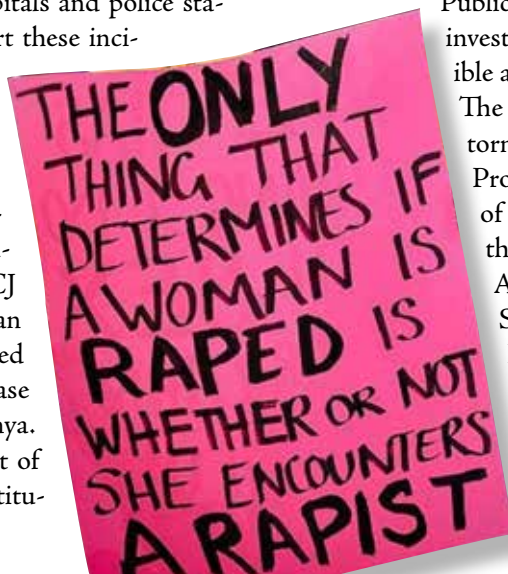
On 20th February 2013, 6 women and 2 men survivors of SGBV in the 2007/08 Post Election Violence, together with 4 Civil Society Organizations (COVAW, ICJ – Kenya, Physicians for Human Rights and IMLU), successfully filed the Public Interest Litigation case against the Government of Kenya. The 8 petitioners who formed part of this case are a representative constitu-

ent of the larger community who were violated during the 2007/2008 PEV.

The petitioners claim that the government failed to properly train and prepare the police to protect civilians from sexual violence. In the aftermath, that the police refused and/or neglected to document and investigate claims of SGBV, leading to obstruction and miscarriage of justice. Furthermore, the government denied emergency medical services to victims at the time, and failed to provide necessary care and compensation to address their suffering and harm. Ultimately, the petitioners want the government to;

1. Publicly acknowledge and apologize to the victims for their failure to protect the rights of Kenyans.
2. Provide appropriate compensation, including psycho-social, medical, and legal assistance to the victims.
3. Investigate the sexual violence and prosecute those who are responsible.
4. Establish a special team within the Department of Public Prosecutions to ensure that such investigations and prosecutions are credible and independent.

The respondents in the case are the Attorney General, the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Inspector General of the National Police Service and the Independent Police Oversight Authority, the Ministry of Medical Services and the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation. COVAW has restored hope to the victims by bringing the government to account for failure to protect its citizenry.





COVAW REBORN

LYDIA MUTHIANI

Deputy Executive Director/Programmes Manager

“What has changed at COVAW?”

I remember when I was leaving COVAW in September 2011, I wished that numerous changes would be effected as a matter of urgency to reflect an organization that listened and cared for the needs of not only staff but also the women we serve. Nevertheless, I had loved working at COVAW: the camaraderie amongst staff members had been invaluable and even proven that there could be something referred to as a ‘work family’. Further, the work that I had been involved in for more than a year had shaped me into an individual who now respected the situation of the larger citizenry, a majority of whom are unaware of their individual rights; Working at COVAW opened my eyes to look outside the ‘bubbles’ that we live in our daily lives. I was truly humbled and blessed to be part of the work that COVAW does at the community, national, regional and international levels.

However, things needed to change. I have seen that change since I returned to COVAW in November 2012. First, there is now a more responsive management team which takes on the question of and responsibilities under ‘true leadership’. COVAW’s current Executive Director, Saida Ali, has embraced and led the onslaught towards a ‘reformed and empowered COVAW Team’ guided by the principle of respect for self and others. She responded to all issues raised by the COVAW Team working under the previous management, prioritized and facilitated an organizational culture change processes. She displays the quality of a new-age manager who opens her door allowing all members of staff to express themselves without fear of reproach. She treads carefully; very measured in her actions and reactions. She has proven to be a mentor and exemplifies burning passion, commitment and solidarity with the Kenyan

women and in the rights movement. Such inspiration and leadership has rubbed off on all those who work within COVAW, energetic and dynamic team of young professionals. This has also caused a tidal wave of empowered women and men committed to the struggle against Violence against Women. Such leadership is one of the reasons why I returned to COVAW. When we say COVAW is fired up, we mean every word of it.

Second, there is now a true appreciation of the COVAW staff’s needs. I remember asking in 2010 and 2011, whilst serving as the COVAW Legal Officer, for staff to be availed with debrief/ counseling sessions. However, my pleas were long ignored. There is now a happier and healthier staff at COVAW. Staff wellness has always been a priority area for me, as a human rights defender and crusader. I always asked, “How can we do the work when we are no longer able to do so owing to ill-health and/or secondary traumatization?” In the present-day COVAW, staff are all obliged to attend monthly, if not weekly, counseling sessions. These sessions have personally helped me to draw a divide between that which makes me stronger that which causes me to become a spectator in my own life, and that which keeps me committed to the work that I do. I am happier and healthier and, I can see and hear the same from almost all COVAW staff.

Third, COVAW has re-defined her identity: not as a women’s rights organization that shies away from uncomfortable topics such as LGBTI rights and the right to safe abortions, but as an organization which holds all violations against women as gross human rights violations, hence deserving equal attention and response. COVAW can now stand as a human rights organization that defends against all violations against women. For



instance, Girl Beading within the Samburu Community has led to numerous cases of unsafe abortions forced on girls some as young as eleven (11) years old. COVAW has since taken up this issue and has prioritized Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights for women and girls: especially, the right to safe abortions and contraception. I am proud to be part of an organization which can see 'the rights' within what would otherwise be classified as 'immoral'.

Fourth, the definition of support to/for survivors has been widened. Previously, COVAW could not even offer transport reimbursement to survivors of Sexual and Gender Based Violence who walked through her doors. This was always in consideration of strict budget lines which did not allow for the same. However, and even before new projects and budgets were put in place to respond to such as basic need, COVAW management appreciated that there cannot be provision of legal aid

without there being facilitation of transport costs for a survivor who presents at the organization's offices to report a case. The necessary adjustments were effected to respond to this need. Relatedly, COVAW now follows up on cases with a revamped pro-bono lawyers' database whose facilitation and support has been renegotiated.. This, to me, is what defines a responsive organization: enhanced in appreciation of victim/survivor issues and armed with effective and immediate response mechanisms.

Last, there is a greater appreciation of staff within COVAW. Simple practices such as celebration of birthdays or having monthly sit-downs where-during certain members of staff can be applauded for progress made within their projects have been adopted. This has enhanced my understanding of a 'work family', and this reality makes me wake up on Monday mornings ready and rearing to get to work.



“I call myself a feminist.
Isn’t that what you call
someone who fights for
women’s rights?”



—the Dalai Lama XIV

3.0

ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGN MANGEMENT

Key highlights for 2012

The 2007/08 elections violence continued to be a thorn in the flesh for Kenya as a country and specifically to COVAW. Many women faced human rights violations as a result of the mayhem resulting from the disputed elections. As a result COVAW strategically engaged with initiatives to address the gaps that existed which if adequately addressed would have led to no woman being violated in the post-election violence of 2007/2008. One area that was identified was the failure of the State to protect its citizens and specifically the vulnerable groups. The Security Agents were allegedly perpetrators in some

cases and were accused of human rights violations. To this end, COVAW engaged in the on-going police reforms initiatives through the Police Reforms Working Group. COVAW also launched a public petition rallying 1 million signatures calling for the establishment of mechanisms to prevent the occurrence of Sexual and Gender Based Election Violence during the March 2013, election.

The Petition was launched in November 2012. Survivors of the 2007-2008 Post election violence shared the painful moments that they underwent in the hands of marauding goons after the disputed presidential results were announced. These stories brought into sharp



Inspector General of Police David Kimaiyo signs the “use the ballot not my body” petition in his office. Looking on is Gitonga Murang’a, former Programme Officer Advocacy and Campaign Management.

Our Mantra remained, one woman raped is one rape too many

focus the flagrant failure by the government to assist the survivors. Some were turned from police stations and others were barred from accessing medical help. When no support was forth coming from the government , COVAW in partnership with KNH and Mbagathi District hospital, offered crucial pyso-social support to the

At the launch of the petition, participants symbolically cast their signed petitions in a make shift ballot box. The campaign went on to reach out to other members of the public in various regions where COVAW utilized its paralegals network, volunteers and champions to rally the public to sing on the petition. Though there was skepticism surrounding the signing of the petition as many voters feared the identity card number would be used to deny them the right to vote in 2013, COVAW managed to get signatures from Kisumu, Nairobi, Samburu, Kajiado, Nakuru among other areas. The petition was also signed and by the Inspector General during a courtesy call to his office.

The Police Reforms Working Group that brings ten civil society groups utilized the coalition to engage

with the National Police Service Commission on police reforms. Among the highlights that the PRWG were able to deliver is;

1. The PRWG enjoined in a case filed in court to stop recruitment of the Inspector General and 2 Deputies until after the March general election. The Working Group stalled the process that denied the case from obtaining an injunction that would have delayed police reforms. The working group mobilized various civil society members to protest and advocate for police reforms outside the court that further gave legitimacy to the cause.
2. The PRWG continued to issue various media statements that urged the State to speed up the recruitment of the Inspector General that finally led to the announcement that interviews will be undertaken.
3. PRWG were invited by the NPSC to provide information on how effectively they could carry out the interviews and were further granted space to send monitors to observe the interviews. The PRWG was able to share its interview tool proposed for the interviews and made recommendations on how the NPSC can obtain further information and participation from members of the public.
4. The PRWG prepared a report on the interviews that were conducted and proposed suitable candidates for the positions based on their scoring on various aspects that the PRWG ascertained as pertinent that included a record of fighting human rights violations or potential to do so. The report was utilized by the PRWG in its final report that indicated the impact the PRWG had on the final results.



5. The PRWG shared a vetting tool for the NPSC to be used for the vetting of police officers in line with the constitutional expectations that were intended to bring institutional reforms. The NPSC received the vetting tool and agreed to utilize it with amendments to fit their needs.

2/3RD GENDER RULE

The Advisory Opinion brought to the Supreme Court by the Attorney General on the implementation of the Gender Principle requiring that not more than two thirds of either gender should be represented in any elective body or appointment generated a lot of public interest. COVAW was interested in this case as its implications would have a reverse gear on women rights gains if the women rights issues are not articulated from different perspectives to allow the court to make an informed decision. COVAW's interest was linking the non-representation of women as a continued form of discrimination and one of the effects that continue to undermine the fight against continued violations on

women. Although COVAW was unable to be enjoined in the case, the organisation was heavily involved in the publication of articles on the two thirds case and contributed its resources to provide legal support and research to the parties that had been enjoined in the case. The court opined that “social imperfection which led to the adoption of Articles 27(8) and 81(b) of the Constitution: that in elective or other public bodies, the participation of women has, for decades, been held at bare nominal levels, on account of discriminatory practices, or gender-indifferent laws, policies and regulations. This presents itself as a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women in Kenyan society and its resultant diminution of women’s participation in public affairs has had a major negative impact on the social terrain as a whole.”

Despite this majority of the Court was also of the opinion that the one third gender principle as provided for by the constitution could not be enforced immediately and was to be applied progressively: progressively being by 27 August 2015. The court stated that, “legislative measures for giving effect to the one-third-to-two-thirds gender principle, under Article 81(b) of the Constitution and in relation to the National Assembly and Senate, should be taken by 27 August, 2015.

This decision did not go well within the women’s movement in Kenya but it provided an avenue for continuous engagement with aall the stakeholders.



COVAW recognizes that culture plays a huge role in oppression of women. As such we seek to address negative cultural practices such as FGM and beading of girls that are both human rights violations and forms of torture.



4.0

**RESEARCH
DOCUMENTATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS**

Where Old age is a crime

Kisii land in Western Kenya is perhaps the only place in the world where being old is a deadly crime. In other parts of the world old age is cherished, in fact very few people would like to die young.

95 % of those suspected of being witches are women who are murdered in the most painful and bizarre manner. They are dragged from their homes by a mob singing war songs wielding machetes who douse them with petrol before setting them and their houses on fire. Every attempt to escape from the raging flames is met with more violence and the victims are returned to the fire to be consumed for good. In some cases the village mobs in their hundreds lock the victims inside their grass thatched houses and burn them to ashes. Their cries of mercy are often met with deaf ears.

This well-orchestrated plan to kill the elderly women in this part of Kenya, begins with the drawing up of a list of names of old, frail poor women who are suspected of practicing witch craft. The list is then secretly circulated to ensure the 'witch' does not escape. As they roam the villages killing those on their "most wanted list" they tick the names off the list and do not leave until the victims die.

In 2012, COVAW commissioned a research on the motive behind the burning of witches in this part of the country which has now been dubbed Kenya's "sorcery belt" due to the high number of mob attacks on old- widowed women suspected of practicing witchcraft.

In contrast to the quite frequent media attention the issue has received in the past few years, little if nothing has been done. There has not been a single person who has been

prosecuted on committing murder.

COVAW also produced a documentary to complement the research. This documentary has provided information on the unreported criminal activities as well as relevant contextual factors that have contributed to the continuum of violence in Kisii Land.

In the documentary COVAW sought to

- To debunk the myth that all old, frail widowed women with no sons in Kisii are witches
- To complement the research commissioned by COVAW
- Establish the extent of the women's human rights violations in Kisii.
- Gather anecdotal evidence that the burning of witches in Kisii is directly related to land grabbing.
- Establish the inter-linkage between alleged witches and Women's rights to property ownership
- Document that witch hunting as a violation of not only women's rights but also a violation of a fundamental human right to freedom. In actual fact this is MURDER.
- Lead to a better understanding of the issue and influence policies as a measure for the development of appropriate prevention strategies.

Basic Facts about the Kisii people

- More than 75% of Gusii are Christian, but there are some who do still hold to their traditional monotheistic religion.
- Their god is called Engoro, who was the supreme creator.
- He was the cause of thunderstorms and lightening.
- People could communicate with Engoro only through the spirits of their dead ancestors. Witchcraft is still feared, even among the Christian Kisii, as well as other types of evil spirits.



The Gusii community
has a saying “*tiyanya
gokwa etaberegeti
getondo*” which means
that nobody dies
without a reason.



5.0

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM FOR COVAW

Background Information

COVAW adopted a Results Based Management approach that seeks to utilize a result Based Monitoring and Evaluation System which focuses on the impact(s) of our strategic initiatives. COVAW has also adopted the use of both quarterly and annual reflection sessions to measure outcomes. This will enable the organization to transition from activity reporting and take time to track these outcomes and long term program impacts. The core strategy encompasses the application of a six element Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) system including a decision to undertake a participatory.

The development of a web based M & E system as part of COVAW's organizational growth process and strategic changes is a major breakthrough. This was birthed by the idea of enhancing effectiveness in M & E through the development of infrastructure to demand and support use of information. Thus the need to develop a database for M & E will ensure effective information management. COVAW sought to develop a system that facilitates precise, valid and reliable data collection, analysis and dissemination.

M & E system Development Process

COVAW emphasised on developing a monitoring and evaluation system that is web based to ensure timely and continuous data collection, quality,

confidentiality, budget tracking, activity tracking and reporting, easy generation of reports and data storage such that all approved budgets and proposals including donor reports will be stored.

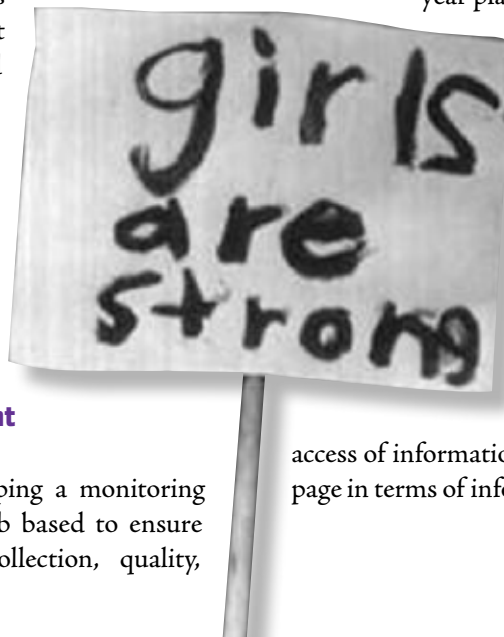
In summary, the M&E system will be able to:

- Store data: including case records and information, activity reports, financial reports and approved budgets in the data base
- Generate comprehensive reports from data entered into the system at different reporting levels in relation to the indicators set to be measured
- Efficient management of work plans and departmental schedules
- Help in decision making based on the availability of valid and reliable information.

The use of the revised strategic plan was very helpful as it guided the whole process in line with COVAW's next 5 year plans. The system has been designed in

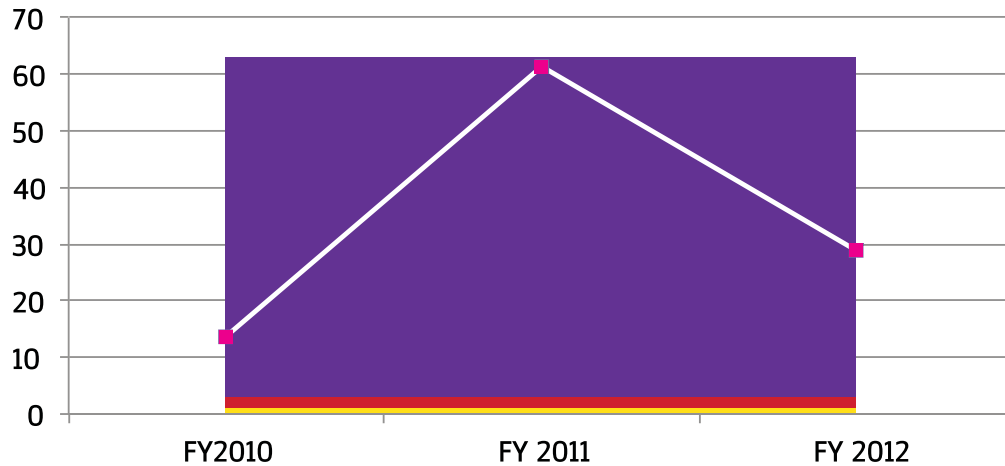
such a way that it will still invoke analysis from the user and not make the person redundant. One will be able to collect data and the questions raised in the tools for capturing data will enable in-depth analysis and feedback from the COVAW staff responsible for a particular activity.

The system has also merged all the departments and will facilitate easy access of information to ensure everyone is on the same page in terms of information access and documentation.

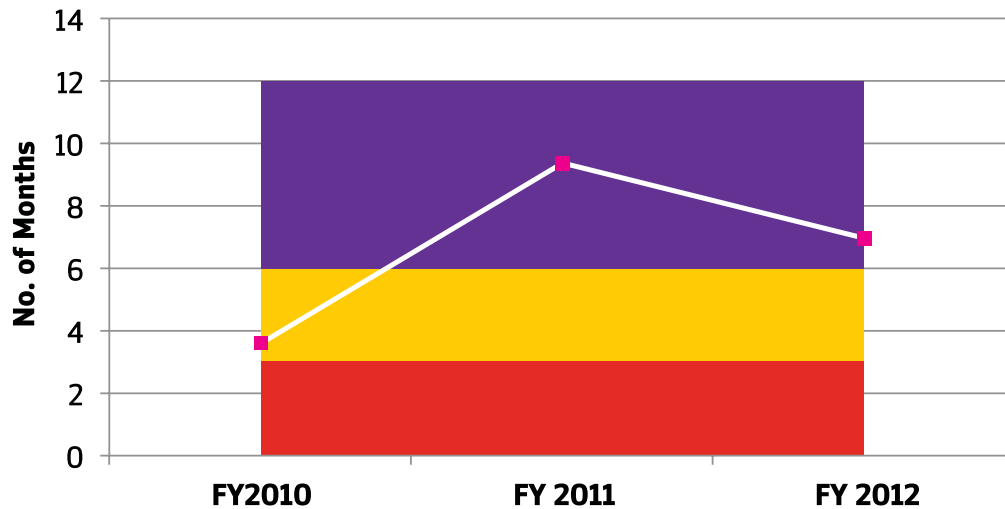


5.0

**FINANCE AND
ADMINISTRATION**

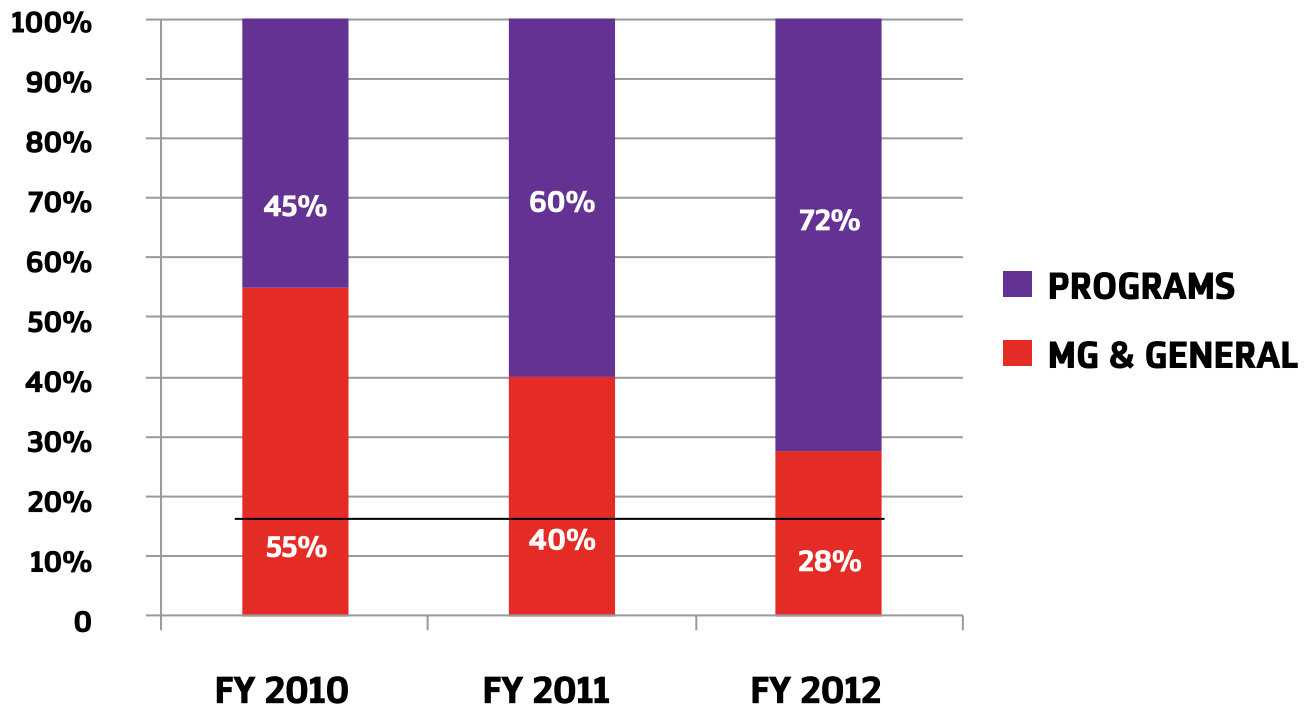
CURRENT RATIO=CURRENT ASSETS/CURRENT LIABILITIES

In year 2010-2011, Covaw's liabilities were more than the current assets but this changed in year 2012 where current assets are more than liabilities

DEFENSIVE INTERVAL=TOTAL NET ASSETS/MONTHLY OPERATIONS

This compares the monthly expenses to net assets and there was an improvement in 2012 where expenses were less than the assets

FUNCTIONAL EXPENSE RATIO



*Programmes expenses should always be 75% against Management and General expenses at 25%.
There was an improvement on this in 2012.*



Sexual and gender
based violence in Kenya
has become trivialised



— *Saida Ali, Executive Director COVAW*

COVAW DONORS

UN Women

Ford Foundation

Urgent Action Fund-Africa

German Technical Cooperation-GIZ

Christian Aid/DFID

Christian Aid/EU

Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa

Raising Voices

Open Society-International Women's Program

Trocaire

IIE/USAID

IRC/USAID

Anonymous Donor



Know the people who lit the fire in COVAW's belly in 2012



SAIDA ALI
Executive Director



ANNASTACIA KIOME
Admin Assistant



ALICE MUTUMA
Documentation and
Communications Officer



CHELANGAT RUTTO
Executive Assistant to ED



SOPHIE NYAGA
Accounting Officer



ESTHER KIMANI
Programme Officer,
Movement Building and
Community activism



EVELYN MILANOI
Programme Officer Access
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MARCELLA OBILO
Operations Assistant



JOSEPHINE MWATIBO
Programme Officer Sexual
and Reproductive Health
and Rights (SRHR)



BEATRICE MUIYURO
Finance and Administration
Manager



JOHN MWONGELA
Office Assistant/Driver

BOARD MEMBERS

FLORENCE MPAAYEI

NANCY AMAYO

SAIDA ALI
Ex officio member

DR. CALLIE ODULA-OBONYO

“There is a special place in hell for women who do not help other women.”

- Madeleine Albright

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