

# GIRLS ADVOCACY ALLIANCE POLICY BRIEF

## Policy And Programme Opportunities For Engendering Informal Employment Sector To Prevent Sexual Violence And Economic Exclusion



Girls during a GAA advocacy meeting

### Introduction

The informal sector has a fluid definition, but easily recognisable as noted by the father of the original term, Hans Singer in 1970 as “difficult to define by usual standards, but easy to recognise when you meet one”. This refers to the fluidity in the definition of the term informal sector but one that was easily recognisable as a means to accrue wealth and income. Due to this varying definition from different authors the 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians held in 1993 defined informal sector as “activities performed by production units of the informal sector are not necessarily performed with the deliberate intention of evading the payment of taxes or social security contributions, or infringing labour , or other legislations or administrative provisions. Accordingly, the concept of informal sector activities should be distinguished from the concept of activities of the hidden or underground economy”.

In Kenya informal sector is widely recognised as “Jua Kali” a term that was encouraged by the then Minister of Technical Training and Applied Technology in 1998 to replace informal sector (Andrew Henley, November 2006).

### Informal Employment Sector and Economic empowerment

Worldwide the informal sector is estimated to employ 61 percent of the global employed population (Florence Bonnet, January,2019). This phenomenon is noted to be more prevalent in developing countries than developed nations, and is driven by lack of other means of livelihood. In the informal agricultural sector, women comprise 92% while men comprise 87% (ILO, 2018). However, the majority of women found in informal sectors, were found in unpaid or underpaid family work and agriculture. In Kenya, it estimated that about 57% of the total informal sector labour force is generated by male owned enterprises while 43% is generated by female owned enterprises (ICEG,1999). As of today, the jua kali sector in Kenya represents 90 percent of employment (KNBS, 2016). An overview of employment growth in both formal and informal sectors since independence shows that while the formal sector employment (private and public) has been on the decline, informal sector employment has grown rapidly at an average of 33% between 2002 and 2006 and thus forms the most important backbone of the Kenya’s economy (Manda 2002).

## Lessons from GAA project

### Gaps in gender and workplace policy and Programmes in devolved government structures

While the opportunity to create employment for men and women in the informal sector and the persistent gender inequity are well articulated, policy and programme actions that have best potential to promote gender equity has not been fully explored. A study by African Institute for Children studies on Netherlands Funded Girls Advocacy Alliance programme implemented in the country by Terres des Hommes and Plan international, established men to be the biggest perpetrators of social norms that promoted gender inequity.

### Capacity in existing policies and Programme to bridge gender gap at workplace

The study established that in Kenya policies have been made recognising women as productive labour and equal to men. Kenya has also committed to various international and national instruments (programmes and policies) to guarantee women equal working conditions, with equal pay for equal work.

This includes; Uwezo Fund, Youth Enterprise Fund, National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF), County government Policy on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (2017), Model Legislative Framework on SGBV for County Governments (2017), Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO), Women Enterprise Fund (WEF), Gender and Education Policy (2007), Kenya National Policy on Gender and Development (2011), National Plan of Action for Children in Kenya (2015-

2022), National Plan of Action (NPA) for Combating Human Trafficking (2013-2017) and National Plan of Action against Sexual Exploitation of Children (2013-2017).

Despite the fact that informal sector offers employment to the majority of Kenyan population, women being the majority, legal and policy frameworks on gender that seek to correct the inequalities that have historically been created have been made to cater for formal employment sector, with setbacks noted in lack of mechanisms in tracing how gender policies and standards are expressed and enforced within the informal sector, this has made it challenging to monitor and report rights deficits in employment. This not only makes it challenging to trace application and monitoring but also contributes to the overwhelming gender inequity experienced in the Kenyan job market (Rodgers Agwaya, 2019).

### Policies and Programmes that offer best opportunity in addressing gender gap (GBV and EE) in informal sector

Assessment of policies and programmes in Kenya in the Girls Advocacy Alliance programme, established that only two of the aforementioned policies of CEDAW and National Plan of Action for Children in Kenya 2018-2022 were the most responsive policies integrating measures for anti-GBV and economic empowerment. The average score on fulfilment of the five components of responsive policies are presented in the spiderweb (Figure 1).

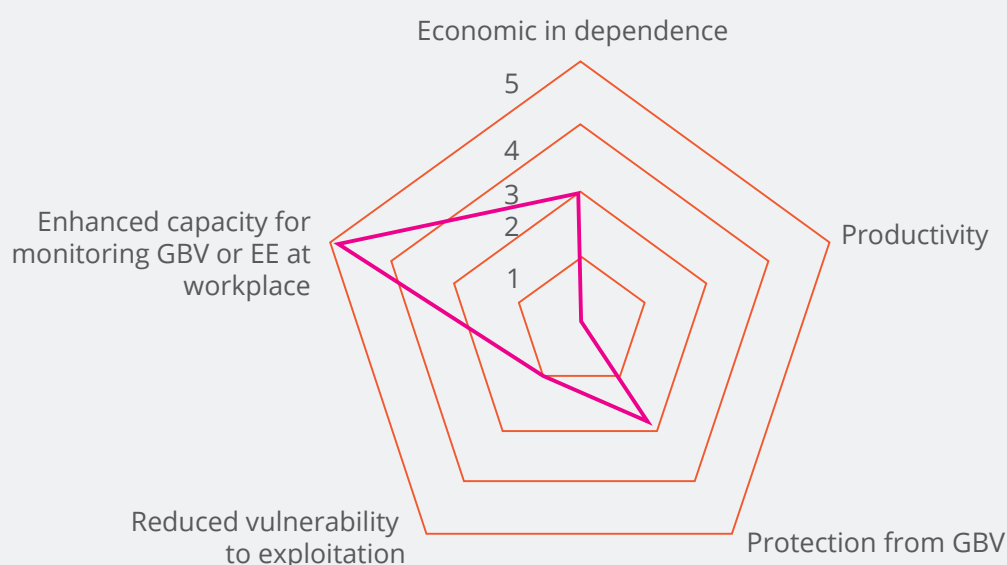


Figure 1: Scores on components of responsiveness by the policies analysed using GAA data

The policy analysis using data from the Girls Advocacy Alliance programme in Kenya indicated that most policies focused on enhancing capacity for monitoring GBV and / or economic empowerment of women and girls at workplace but very limited provisions to promote productivity at workplace.

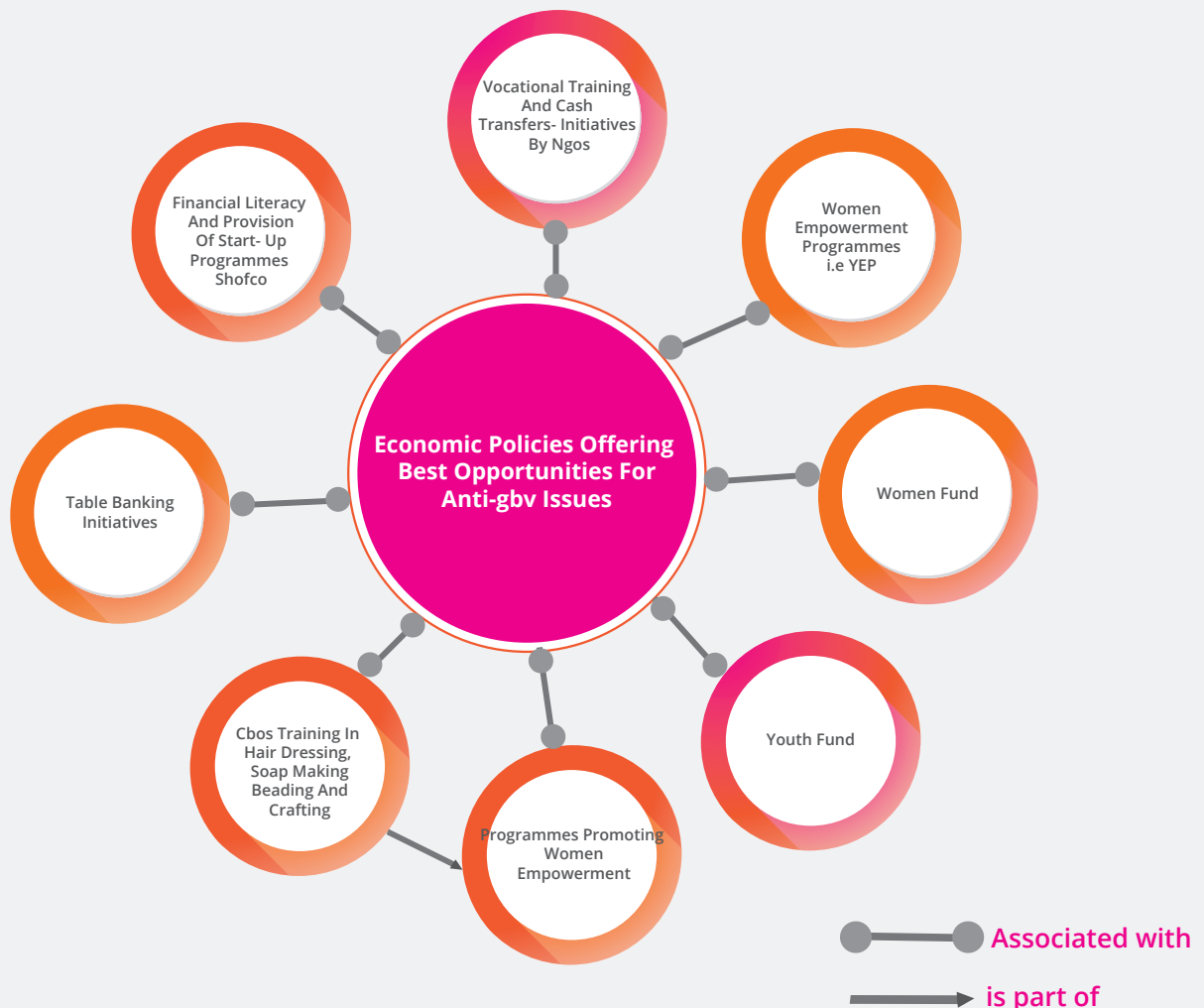
While programmes offering best measures for promoting equality through offering cushion against gender-based violence and economic empowerment of women revolved around, financial literacy initiatives, table banking and economic capacity building initiatives that enabled self-reliance amongst girls.

### Conclusion and policy level recommendations

The informal sector is a major employer of the labour market in Kenya. Findings from various authors points towards new jobs being increasingly created in the informal sector compared to the formal sector. A World Bank report on informal enterprises in Kenya reveals that there exists a gender productivity gap in Kenya's informal

enterprises in favour of men despite females being the majority in this field. To bridge the gap of gender equity in Kenya, especially in productivity and income generation there is a need for gender targeted innovation and inventions in the area of the informal employment sector. The sector holds the key to unlocking women potential and also contains a majority of women hence policy and programmes revision needs to be aligned to the needs of this sector.

Gendered policies geared towards women empowerment should involve the informal employment sector in drafting and implementation of these policies. Current policies should also be ratified and a means to cascade them to macro levels provided, in order to fully unleash their potential in regards to women empowerment. There is also a need for capacity building of the informal employment sector members to be able to implement and monitor these laws at their current workplace, ensuring adherence to the provisions that will automatically translate to more productive empowered females in Kenya labour market.





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