

**THE ROLE OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS IN PROMOTING GENDER
POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN NAIROBI COUNTY. A CASE STUDY OF
USIKIMYE ORGANIZATION IN KAYOLE SOWETO**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF DEVELOPMENT
STUDIES OF THE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA**

MARCH, 2026

DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been represented for a degree in any other University.

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DEDICATION

To my dearest parents, Mr and Mrs Shamte, I dedicate this work. I also extend my gratitude to my siblings, who have rendered me immeasurable support throughout the course, and to the lecturers who have sacrificed their time and energy to ensure that I submit a complete research project to the Management University of Africa.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Fellow workmates, students, and lecturers, I would like to express my gratitude for the unlimited and continuous support I received during my study period. I also appreciate the management of the Usikimye Organisation in Nairobi, Kenya, for providing the necessary information for my study. For my friends and family members thank you for all the support and words of encouragement, special thanks to my supervisor, Ms. Edna Moriasi whose support, guidance, patience, and technical support cannot go unnoticed, and equally thank all the staff of the Management University of Africa in one way or another for their meaningful, unquantified, and moral support for making this research project a success. Their indomitable spirit to help make this dream a reality through their astute guidance in this project will always be cherished.

ABSTRACT

Women's empowerment and gender equality are essential pillars in shaping national and global development priorities and policymaking. Despite the presence of progressive gender policies and legal frameworks in Kenya, gender disparities and rights violations continue to affect women in informal settlements. These challenges are more pronounced in urban informal settlements, where access to formal accountability mechanisms is often weak, and implementation of gender-related policies is limited. While the government has committed to reducing gender inequalities, the translation of gender policies into tangible change at the grassroots level remains inconsistent and under-researched. Grassroots women's movements and other civil organizations play a vital role in turning gender policies into practical community action. This study is founded on the intersection of gender policy implementation and the role of Women's Rights Organizations in promoting community-level accountability and change, specifically within the context of urban informal settlements in Kenya. This study seeks to examine the role of Usikimye, a grassroots women-led organization based in Kayole, Nairobi County, in promoting the implementation of gender policies within its area of operation. The research aims to explore how the organization translates policy into community-level action, the strategies it uses to raise awareness and foster accountability, and the challenges it encounters in this process. This study will employ a qualitative case study design, relying on data collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. It will target Usikimye staff, women beneficiaries, and relevant local stakeholders. The results from this study will advance existing literature on gender policy implementation by civil society actors and offer practical insights for policy makers, development partners, and grassroots organizations working in similar contexts. Gender mainstreaming has become central to national development discourse, policy-making, and global development goals.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

WRO	Women's Rights Organization
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
INGO	International Non-governmental Organizations

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS:

Gender Policy Implementation	The process of putting gender-related laws, strategies, and frameworks into practice at institutional and community levels. It involves integrating gender perspectives into all stages of policy design, execution, and evaluation.
Women's Rights Organization (WROs)	Civil society organizations led by or focused on women, working to advance gender equality, advocate for women's rights, and provide services to women and girls.
Community Accountability	Mechanisms, structures, or efforts that hold individuals, service providers, or institutions responsible for upholding gender rights and responding to violations. It may involve community forums, legal redress mechanisms, public awareness campaigns, or informal justice systems.
Informal Settlements	There are residential areas where inhabitants lack secure tenure, adequate infrastructure, and legal recognition. They are often characterized by overcrowding and vulnerability.
Gender Based Violence	This is any harmful act directed at individuals based on gender, including physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm. It is often rooted in gender inequality and power abuse.
Advocacy	Public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy. In gender work, it includes influencing decision-makers and mobilizing communities.
Grassroots Approach	A bottom-up strategy where change is driven by local communities through collective action, often outside formal institutions.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study by introducing the topic, offering background context, and presenting the problem statement, objectives, research questions, justification, and scope. The study explores how Women's Rights Organizations contribute to the implementation of gender-related policies in informal settlements, with a focus on Usikimye, a grassroots organization based in Kayole, Nairobi County.

1.1 Background of the Study

The enforcement of non-discrimination laws and women's rights frameworks remain central to sustainable development and human rights discourse worldwide. Kenya has made significant progress by adopting legal and policy frameworks that address gender disparities and protect women's rights such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5), and the Beijing Platform for Action reflecting the global commitment to eliminating gender-based violence, promoting equal access to education, justice, health, and economic opportunities for women and girls as well as reducing structural inequalities. At the national level, Kenya has also made substantial advancement by adopting frameworks that address gender disparities and protect women's rights. These include the Sexual Offences Act (2006), designed to combat sexual violence and exploitation; the Constitution of Kenya (2010), which provides foundational guarantees of equality and non-discrimination; and the National Gender and Equality Commission Act (2011), which establishes oversight for all gender-related issues. Additionally, Kenya Vision 2030 emphasizes gender equality as a driver for inclusive development. Despite these legal and institutional frameworks, the practical implementation of gender policies in Kenya remains inconsistent, particularly in informal urban settlements. Nairobi County has several informal settlements such as Kibera, Mukuru, Mathare, Kayole and many more. These areas are often characterised by weak infrastructure, poverty, overcrowding, limited access to justice and services, and insecurity. Consequently, women and girls in such contexts suffer disproportionately from harmful cultural practices, gender-based violence (GBV), and socio-economic marginalization. The gap between

the existence of gender policies and their enforcement at the grassroots level continues to undermine progress toward gender justice. In response, civil society movements, especially Women's Rights Organizations, have become instrumental in delivering services, promoting awareness, advocating for survivors, and pressuring institutions to uphold their responsibilities. Usikimye, a women-led grassroots organization operating in Kayole, has gained recognition for its hands-on work in responding to GBV cases, offering shelter, psychosocial support, and engaging in community-based advocacy. The organization's localized and survivor-centred approach provides a compelling case for understanding how WROs contribute to the practical realization of gender policies.

This study therefore, seeks to explore the role of women's rights movements, with a focus on Usikimye Organization in promoting gender policy implementation in Nairobi County. It will explore the organization's strategies, its engagement with local actors, and the challenges it faces in translating legal frameworks into real change for women and girls in informal settlements.

1.1.1 Global Perspective on Gender Policy Implementation

The global movement for gender equality has been propelled by decades of legal reforms, advocacy, and multilateral agreements. The most significant ones are such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), all of which emphasize the obligation of states to eliminate gender-based discrimination and protect women's rights. This agenda is reinforced by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5, which specifically calls for an end to all violence against women, advancing women's legal rights, and ensuring women's inclusion in leadership and decision-making. Despite these global commitments, the implementation gap between practice and policy remains wide, particularly in low and middle-income countries. Cultural norms, structural inequalities, limited resources, and weak institutional frameworks often hinder the realization of these goals at the grassroots level, especially for women in marginalized communities.

1.1.2 National, Legal and Policy Context

Kenya has achieved substantial advancement in promoting gender equality by establishing progressive legal and policy frameworks. The country's commitment to gender equality rests on

several key laws such as The Constitution of Kenya (2010) which establishes foundational principles like equality, non-discrimination, and affirmative action for vulnerable groups, including women. This is supported by specific legislation, such as the Sexual Offences Act (2006), that criminalizes various forms of sexual violence, the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2011) and the Marriage Act (2014), which address harmful traditional practices. Gender policy implementation and oversight are spearheaded by key institutions, including the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) and the Ministry of Public Service, Gender, and Affirmative Action. This institutional work is further supported by policy documents like Kenya's Vision 2030 and the National Policy on Gender and Development (2019), which reaffirm the government's commitment to gender mainstreaming across all sectors. However, despite this progressive policy environment, there remains a significant implementation gap, particularly at the county and community levels, where awareness is low, enforcement is weak, and local accountability mechanisms are underdeveloped.

1.1.3 Gender Inequality in Informal Settlements

In Kenya's urban informal settlements, women face intersecting vulnerabilities that undermine their ability to access justice and protection. These settlements are often characterized by poverty, insecure housing, overcrowding, high rates of gender-based violence (GBV), limited health and legal services. Women and girls in such contexts are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, economic exploitation, early pregnancies and domestic abuse. Compounding these risks is the limited presence of state institutions and poor enforcement of gender-related policies. Stigma, local cultural norms, and power imbalances further discourage reporting of violations or seeking redress. As a result, the rights guaranteed under policies and national laws remain largely inaccessible to many women in informal settlements.

1.1.4 The Significance of Women's Rights Organizations

Given this challenging environment, Women's Rights Organizations (WROs), have taken shape as crucial actors in promoting gender justice. These organisations operate at the community level to provide direct services, including rescue operations, safe shelters, legal aid, public education, and psychosocial support. In addition to service delivery, they engage in capacity building, advocacy, and accountability campaigns that aim to influence institutional behaviour and policy

enforcement. Usikimye, a grassroots WRO operating in Kayole, is at the forefront of such efforts. The organization is known for public awareness campaigns, its rapid response to GBV cases, and survivor-centred services. This organization's work is grounded in community-based and feminist approaches that prioritise empowerment, dignity, and the daily realities of women and girls.

Its role presents a valuable case for examining how WROs translate gender policy into everyday action at the grassroots level.

1.1.5 Knowledge Gap and Research Focus

Despite Kenya having developed a strong policy and legal framework for gender equality, there is limited research on how these frameworks are translated into practice at the community level, especially in informal urban settlements. Most existing studies tend to focus on government institutions, national-level actors, or formal enforcement agencies, with little attention paid to the practical work of community-based organisations. This study intends to fill that gap by analysing Usikimye, a grassroots organisation working within the informal settlement of Kayole in Nairobi County. The aim is to examine how these organizations actively support the execution of gender policies, foster community accountability, and address violations of women's rights in marginalized settings. By examining Usikimye's strategies, activities, and challenges, the study hopes to influence a more grounded understanding of gender policy implementation in Kenya's informal settlements.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the existence of progressive national and county-level gender policies, many women living in Nairobi's informal settlements continue to experience frequent rights violations such as GBV, discrimination and early marriages. This situation persists largely due to limited resources, poor policy implementation, and a lack of effective accountability structures that translate policy into meaningful action. While WROs often step in to address these gaps through service delivery, advocacy, and community mobilisation, there remains insufficient localised research that documents and analyses how these organizations operate on the ground, the challenges they face and the specific strategies they use. Without such evidence, development actors and policymakers may overlook practical approaches that could strengthen gender policy implementation and accountability where it is needed most.

This study, therefore, intends to bridge this knowledge gap by conducting a case study of Usikimye to understand its role and contributions in promoting gender rights and community accountability within Nairobi's informal settlement.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 Main Objective:

To examine the role of women's rights organizations in promoting gender policy implementation in Nairobi's informal settlements. A case study of Usikimye Organization in Kayole, Soweto.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives:

- i. To explore the strategies used to promote gender policy implementation at Usikimye Organization.
- ii. To assess how the organization fosters accountability mechanisms within their respective communities.
- iii. To compare the effectiveness and challenges faced by the organization in advocating for gender justice.
- iv. To examine the role of partnerships and collaborations in enhancing Usikimye's impact on gender policy implementation.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What strategies are employed by Usikimye organization to advocate for gender policy implementation?
- ii. How does this organization promote accountability in its local context?
- iii. What are the approaches adopted and challenges faced by this organization?
- iv. How do partnerships and collaborations contribute to Usikimye's effectiveness in implementing gender policies in Kayole?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it offers a deeper understanding of how grassroots Women's Rights Organizations, contribute to the implementation of gender policies in urban informal settlements. By focusing on Kayole, an area characterized by high rates of gender-based violence (GBV) and inadequate institutional support, this research underscores the vital role community-based actors play in translating policy into real-world action. The findings will be valuable to government institutions and policymakers by providing insights into how collaboration with grassroots organizations can enhance service delivery and policy enforcement in marginalized communities.

Additionally, the study will benefit other civil society actors and organizations by identifying effective partnerships, strategies, and challenges that can inform future advocacy efforts and programming. Academically, the research will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on gender policy implementation, particularly from a localised, community-level perspective, an area that remains underexplored in current literature. Furthermore, documenting the realities of women in Nairobi and the support mechanisms available to them, the study amplifies their voices and contributes to ongoing efforts to strengthen gender justice at the grassroots level.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of this research was limited to Usikimye, a Women's Rights Organization operating in Kayole, an informal settlement in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study focused on understanding Usikimye's role in promoting gender policy implementation at the community level. The target population consisted of women beneficiaries of the organization's services, key staff members of Usikimye, and selected local stakeholders, including service providers and community leaders. A sample of 120 respondents was purposively selected from the target population to participate in the study. This included 50 women beneficiaries engaged through focus group discussions, 20 staff members interviewed individually, 20 local stakeholders, alongside 30 one-on-one interviews with individual beneficiaries. These respondents provided the essential qualitative data required to address the research objectives.

The study was conducted between September 2025 and January 2026 and focused specifically on community accountability, gender policy awareness, partnerships and advocacy strategies, and the challenges faced in policy implementation within Kayole and Nairobi at large.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the background information on the role of Women's Rights Organizations in promoting gender policy implementation, with a specific focus on Usikimye organization in Kayole, Nairobi County. The chapter established a foundational understanding of the key concepts, variables, and context required to frame the research problem and support the study's objectives. The background of the study was analysed through a local, national and global lens, aligning with the key study themes and demonstrating the gap between existing gender policies and their practical enforcement in informal settlements. The chapter went on to define the problem statement, clarify the study objectives and research questions, and emphasize the study's significance for various stakeholders. Furthermore, it delineated the geographical area and the methodological scope of the research including the sample size, study population, and timeframe. In addition, key terms were operationally defined to ensure clarity and consistency throughout the research. The elements introduced in this chapter form the basis for the theoretical and empirical review to follow, as well as the overall methodology guiding the research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant theoretical and empirical literature that informs the study on the role of Women's Rights Organizations in promoting gender policy implementation in Nairobi County. The review begins with a discussion of theories that underpin the study, providing a conceptual lens for understanding the research problem and its variables. Thereafter, the chapter presents empirical studies conducted at global, regional, and local levels, highlighting methodologies, key findings, and existing knowledge gaps. The chapter also provides a summary of the research gaps, a conceptual framework illustrating relationships between variables, the operationalization of variables, and a chapter summary.

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

The theoretical framework provides the foundation for analyzing the role of WROs in gender policy implementation. Three main theories guide this study: Feminist Theory, Accountability Theory, and Policy Implementation Theory. These theories were chosen because they illuminate the dynamics of women's empowerment, governance, and the practical difficulties involved in turning policy into action at the grassroots level.

2.1.1 Feminist Theory

Feminist theory offers a robust framework for examining the deep-seated, systemic roots of gender inequality. It explains how patriarchal systems sustain unequal power relations, relegating women to subordinate roles in social, political and economic spheres (Tong, 2009). Beyond focusing on equality, feminist theory interrogates how laws, norms and institutions reproduce oppression and silence women's voices (Beauvoir, 2011). (Hooks, 2000) argues that feminist struggle is inherently transformative, seeking not only to integrate women into existing systems but to dismantle oppressive power structures altogether.

A critical development within feminist theory is intersectionality, introduced by (Crenshaw, 1991), which elaborates how women's experiences cannot be understood solely through gender but are shaped by intersecting identities such as class, race, age, and geography. This is highly relevant in

informal settlements in Nairobi, where women contend with compounded vulnerabilities: exposure to gender-based violence, weak state protection, poverty and limited access to justice. Intersectional feminist theory helps explain why WROs such as Usikimye design interventions that are community-specific and trauma-informed, recognising that women's needs differ across contexts.

Moreover, feminist theory highlights the importance of collective action. As noted by (Fraser, 2013), feminist movements are central to achieving both recognition of women's dignity, voices, and agency and redistribution of resources and opportunities. Usikimye's work in creating safe spaces, mobilizing survivors, and lobbying state actors reflects this dual agenda. However, scholars such as (Mohanty, 1988) caution against treating women as a homogenous category, which can lead to solutions that overlook local cultural and social complexities. For this study, this critique underscores the need for context-sensitive strategies that reflect women's diverse realities in Nairobi's informal settlements.

2.1.2 Accountability Theory

Accountability theory is a cornerstone of democratic governance, focusing on the processes by which power holders are required to justify, inform, and be sanctioned for their decisions (Bovens M., 2007); (Schedler, 1999). It distinguishes between enforceability, the ability to impose consequences for wrongdoing and answerability, providing reasons for actions. In development contexts, accountability has both a vertical dimension, where citizens hold the state actors accountable through protests, advocacy, elections, and a horizontal dimension, where independent institutions such as courts and auditors oversee government performance (O'Donnell, 1998).

For WROs, accountability theory provides a conceptual foundation for their role as watchdogs, advocates, and intermediaries. Usikimye documents GBV cases, engages survivors, and leverages social media to pressure authorities to respond, effectively strengthening vertical accountability in a context where formal mechanisms are weak.

Recent scholarship also introduces social accountability where citizen-led initiatives improve governance through public forums, participatory monitoring and citizen report cards ((Fox, 2015); (Joshi, 2012). This is particularly relevant in informal settlements in Nairobi, where community monitoring empowers women to demand justice collectively and helps fill governance gaps.

Nonetheless, accountability theory faces critiques with some arguing that accountability processes often favour bureaucratic compliance or elite capture over genuine empowerment. This suggests that WROs must carefully design accountability initiatives to remain transformative and inclusive rather than tokenistic.

2.1.3 Policy Implementation Theory

Policy implementation theory explores the persistent gap between real-world outcomes and policy formulation. Classic studies highlighted how bureaucratic complexity can derail policy delivery, while later scholarship emphasized the top-down approach, where central authorities prescribe actions for lower-level actors to execute. However, scholars like (Lipsky, (1980))and Sabatier (1986) argued for a bottom-up approach, highlighting the role of communities, street-level bureaucrats, and local organizations in shaping implementation.

In contexts like Kayole, where state capacity is limited, bottom-up implementation is crucial. WROs like Usikimye become policy translators turning national gender frameworks into practical interventions such as awareness campaigns, survivor support, and referral systems. Implementation theory also draws attention to policy networks, emphasizing that effective implementation depends on collaboration between NGOs, government, communities and donors. Yet, implementation is inherently political. Policies addressing gender justice often face resistance from entrenched resource constraints, patriarchal norms, and political manipulation ((Mazmanian, 1989). Understanding these challenges through the lens of policy implementation theory helps explain why WROs must adapt advocacy, strategies, sometimes using litigation, or building coalitions to push gender policies beyond paper commitments toward real change in informal settlements.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

Empirical research on women's rights organizations has largely focused on their role in promoting accountability, shaping gender policy implementation, and addressing gender-based inequalities. Studies across Africa and beyond reveal that such organizations operate at the intersection of community and state, employing diverse approaches to influence change while navigating significant structural challenges. The literature further emphasizes that their effectiveness depends on context, with grassroots organizations in marginalized urban settings facing unique dynamics

that differ from national-level actors. Building on this scholarship, the following section reviews empirical studies organized around four key variables relevant to this study: challenges, strategies, accountability, and partnerships.

2.2.1 Strategies Used by Women's Rights Organizations

Empirical studies demonstrate that women's rights movements deploy community-centered interventions, awareness campaigns, advocacy, and to influence social and policy norms. For example, (Nazneen, 2014) found that women's groups in Bangladesh relied on grassroots legal literacy campaigns and coalition-building to challenge patriarchal systems. In Kenya, (Kabira, 2012) documented that civic education, training forums, and leadership capacity-building enabled women in informal settlements to articulate their demand, rights and inclusion in local decision-making. Similarly, (M, 2011) highlights the use of culturally resonant strategies in African contexts where state capacity is weak. In the context of Kayole, Usikimye has mirrored these strategies through, community-based advocacy, gender-based violence (GBV) response initiatives, and safe spaces for women and girls. These approaches resonate with global empirical findings that grassroots-led strategies are effective in contexts of limited state accountability. In South Africa, (Hassim, 2006) demonstrates how women's coalitions used policy advocacy, protest, and public mobilization, to institutionalize gender mainstreaming post-apartheid. Importantly, strategies are not limited to formal advocacy since grassroots groups often rely on informal and digital activism to reach wider audiences. This is reflected in Kayole, where Usikimye deploys social media campaigns and exhibitions like the recently concluded femicide exhibition that was held in Westlands, Nairobi to highlight GBV cases, to mobilize community support and pressure state actors into action. They also provide psychosocial support and safe spaces, aligning with global findings that survivor-centered approaches improve access to justice, and reporting. (Amadiume, 2015)

2.2.2 Accountability Mechanisms

Women's rights organizations are widely recognized as crucial accountability actors, particularly in contexts where state oversight is weak. (Bovens M., 2007) frames accountability as answerability, a function WROs fulfill by making visible the gaps in gender policy implementation, and monitoring state performance. (Ahikire, 2014) shows that in Uganda, women's groups used citizen report cards and community dialogues to monitor health service delivery, resulting in measurable improvements in maternal care. (FIDA-Kenya, 2016) demonstrates that legal aid clinics and litigation can compel state institutions to comply with gender laws, while highlighting the value of social audits and public forums in creating pressure for systemic change. More recent evidence (Fox, 2015) points to strategic social accountability, where citizen-led efforts are linked with institutional reforms to achieve sustainable outcomes. In Kayole and the greater Nairobi area, Usikimye's approach mirrors these findings: they document GBV cases, publicize them through online platforms, exhibitions, and directly engage with healthcare providers, police, and courts to demand action. This community-driven monitoring not only pressures duty bearers but also builds trust between local justice systems and survivors. However, empirical studies caution that accountability mechanisms are only effective when backed by institutional responsiveness otherwise they risk retraumatizing survivors and reinforcing mistrust ((Joshi, 2012).

2.2.3. Challenges Facing Women's Rights Organizations

The literature consistently identifies financial, structural, and political barriers as major constraints for WROs. (Tripp, 2009) argues that donor dependency often undermines autonomy and leads to short project cycles that limit long-term impact. (Molyneux, 2003) highlights tensions between professionalised NGOs and grassroots activism, where donor-driven agendas sometimes sideline local priorities. Context-specific studies in Nairobi's informal settlements reveal additional constraints such as threats to personal security, weak institutional support and political interference, reduce the effectiveness of women's groups. (Oduol, 2015) Gendered social norms also perpetuate stigma against survivors of GBV, making community mobilization challenging (Mutua, 2018). For Usikimye, these challenges manifest as burnout among staff and volunteers, funding insecurity, and limited collaboration from duty bearers. Patriarchal backlash, including online harassment of activists, further complicates their work. These findings align with wider

African research that underscores the need for stronger linkages with state actors, legal protection for activists and sustainable funding models to mitigate risks (Abwunza, 2016)

2.2.4. Partnerships and Collaborations

Empirical evidence underscores that partnerships amplify WROs' impact and reach. (Cornwall, 2015) argues that alliances between transnational feminist networks, INGOs, and grassroots organizations, help scale advocacy and secure resources. In Kenya, (Abwunza, 2016) observed that partnerships with international donors enhanced capacity but sometimes introduced power asymmetries that constrained local agency. Similarly, collaborations with state institutions prioritising technical solutions over systemic transformation can dilute radical feminist agendas. (Moghadam, 2005). Nevertheless, well-structured collaborations are shown to yield significant gains. In Latin America, (Alvarez, 1999) documents how feminist-state partnerships institutionalized gender budgeting frameworks, while in Uganda, (Mutibwa, 2020) shows that coalition-building improved enforcement of domestic violence laws. For Usikimye, partnerships with INGOs, government agencies and CBOs, and have been instrumental in providing access to shelters, legal services, and psychosocial support and scaling their GBV response interventions, However, consistent with empirical literature, these collaborations also expose them to donor dependency and agenda-setting risks, underscoring the need for balanced, community-driven partnership models that keep survivor needs at the centre.

2.3 Summary and Research Gaps

Table 2.1: Research Gaps

Author(s)	Year	Title/Study Focus	Findings	Research Gap	Focus on the Current Study
Nazneen & Sultan	2014	Voices within: Dialogues with women's rights activists in Bangladesh	Found that coalition-building and legal literacy campaigns are effective strategies for women's rights movements.	Conducted in South Asia lacking contextual analysis of strategies by grassroots organizations in African informal settlements.	Examines strategies used by Usikimye in Kayole to influence gender policy implementation and GBV response.
Kabira & Kimani	2012	Female leadership in Kenya	Documented that civic education and training forums enabled women in informal settlements to demand inclusion in local governance.	Limited to broad women's leadership roles; does not specifically analyze accountability mechanisms in grassroots organizations.	Focuses on how Usikimye employs advocacy and civic engagement to strengthen community accountability.
Ahikire	2014	African feminism in context	Found that women's groups in Uganda used citizen report cards to monitor service delivery.	Lacks exploration of how grassroots women's organizations in urban informal settings implement accountability measures.	Explores how Usikimye documents GBV cases and pressures local institutions to act.
FIDA-Kenya	2016	Pursuing justice for women (Annual Report)	Reported success in litigation and legal aid as accountability tools.	Concentrates on formal legal processes at national level; overlooks grassroots-level accountability dynamics.	Analyzes localized accountability approaches by Usikimye in Kayole.

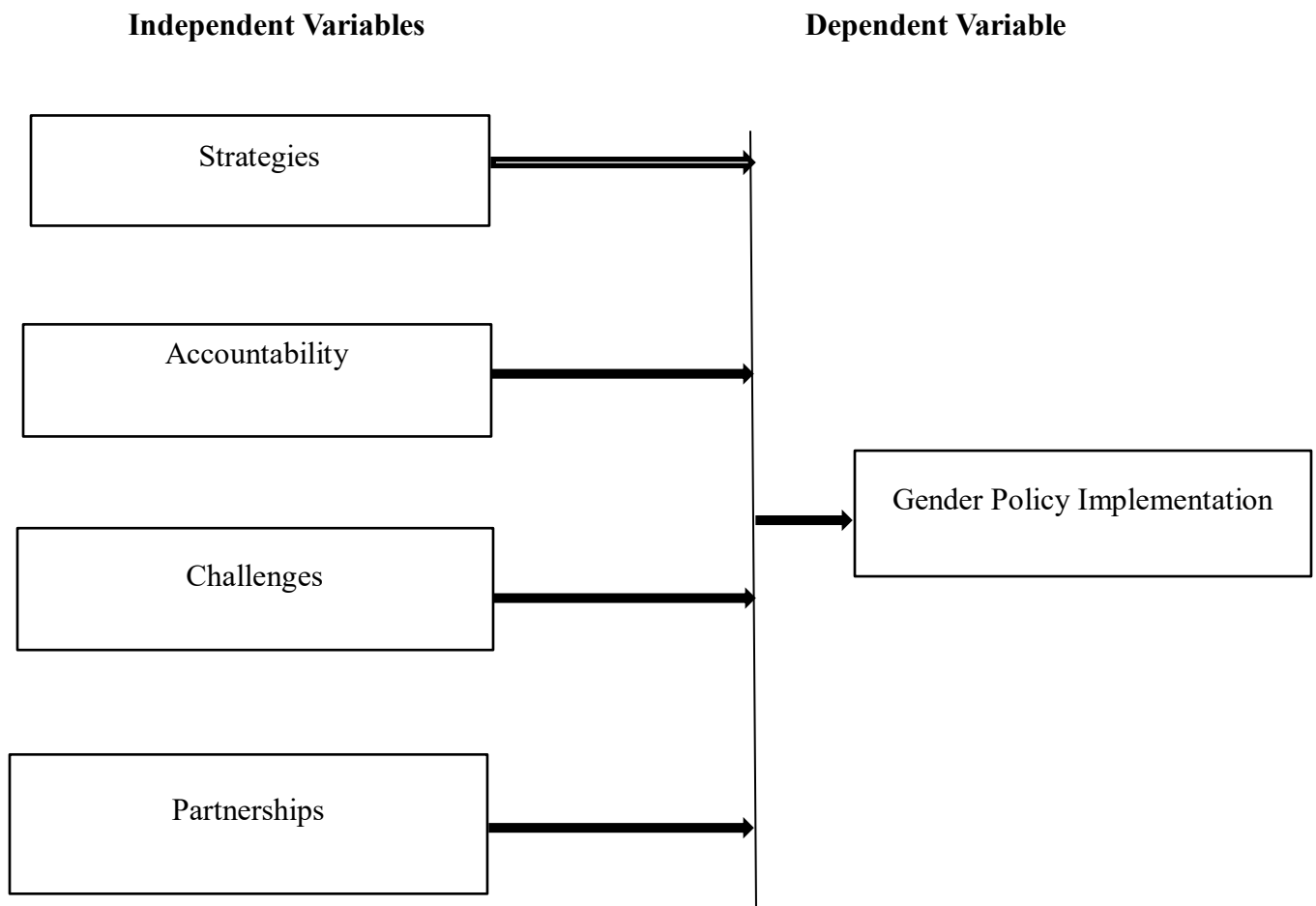
Tripp et al.	2009	African women's movements: Transforming political landscapes	Highlighted donor dependency and fragmented agendas as challenges for women's movements.	More focus on national and continental women's movements, not informal settlement grassroots organizations.	Investigates organizational challenges faced by Usikimye, including funding constraints and insecurity.
Oduol	2015	Women and political participation in Nairobi's informal settlements	Found that women's groups face harassment, limited resources, and insecurity in informal settlements.	Did not examine organizational sustainability or partnerships in depth.	Explores how Usikimye navigates structural, political, and security challenges.
Cornwall & Rivas	2015	From gender equality and women's empowerment to global justice	Found that alliances between grassroots groups and global networks amplify advocacy.	Focused on transnational networks; little on local partnership dynamics in informal settlements.	Examines Usikimye's partnerships with INGOs, CBOs, and state actors in Kayole.
Abwunza	2016	Women's organizations and development in Kenya	Found that partnerships with INGOs enhanced women's groups' advocacy capacity.	Highlighted national-level organizations more than grassroots actors in settlements.	Investigates how Usikimye manages partnerships while retaining autonomy.

Empirical studies therefore illustrate that while women's rights organizations have made significant contributions to advancing gender equality, their effectiveness is context-specific and shaped by local realities. Evidence from Kenya and other countries underscores that strategies such as partnerships, accountability initiatives and advocacy, yield results but are constantly challenged by structural barriers including insecurity, limited resources, and entrenched patriarchal norms. The case of Usikimye organization in Kayole provides a unique opportunity to examine these dynamics within an informal urban settlement, where both the resilience and vulnerabilities of grassroots organizations are most visible.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The research variables are presented in a diagrammatical structure that is described as the conceptual framework that relates and establishes the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework



2.5 Operationalization of Variables

The study variables will be measured using a combination of 5-point Likert scales, binary scales (Yes/No), and nominal/ordinal categories depending on the nature of the indicator. The Likert scale is particularly suited for capturing perceptions, attitudes, and levels of agreement among respondents, while binary scales capture the existence of specific mechanisms or practices. Nominal and ordinal categories will be applied for classification variables such as representation in decision-making and policy adoption levels. This mixed approach ensures both subjective perceptions and objective presence of factors are captured, allowing for robust descriptive and inferential analysis.

Table2.2: Operationalization of Variables

Variable	Indicators	Measurement Scale	Tools of Analysis
Role of Women's Rights Organizations	- Existence of programs - Collaboration with state actors - Resource mobilization capacity - Influence in local governance	Nominal scale, Likert Scale	Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages); Regression analysis
Advocacy Strategies	- Awareness campaigns - Legal aid provision - Policy dialogues - Media and community mobilization	Likert Scale, Frequency scale	Descriptive statistics; Correlation and regression

Accountability Mechanisms	• Monitoring frameworks • Reporting systems • Community scorecards • Transparency practices	Likert scale, Binary scale	Descriptive statistics; Cross-tabulation
Community Participation	• Engagement in decision-making • Representation in forums • Participation in program monitoring • Feedback and grievance channels	Likert Scale, Nominal scale	Descriptive statistics; Chi-square test
Policy Influence	• Adoption of gender-sensitive policies • Budget allocation for gender programs • Integration of gender in local plans • Legislative reforms	Ordinal scale, Likert Scale	Descriptive statistics; Regression
Gender Policy Implementation & Accountability	• Improved service delivery • Reduction in gender-based disparities • Enhanced community accountability	Likert Scale, Outcome indicators (percentage change, service delivery ratings)	Descriptive statistics; Regression and correlation analysis

-
- Policy enforcement effectiveness
-

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the existing theoretical and empirical literature concerning the role of women's rights organizations in advancing gender equality by focusing on four key variables: strategies, accountability, challenges, and partnerships. The review highlighted that while these organizations employ diverse strategies and accountability mechanisms, their work is often constrained by structural and contextual challenges. Partnerships play a pivotal role in scaling interventions but also raise questions of autonomy and power.

The review also identified research gaps in the limited empirical attention to grassroots organizations in informal settlements, particularly those like Usikimye in Kayole, Nairobi, which operate at the frontline of gender-based violence response and advocacy. The conceptual framework developed for this study links strategies, accountability, challenges, and partnerships, providing a lens through which the operations of Usikimye can be systematically examined. The operational definitions of these variables establish the basis for the research methodology that will be presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter details the research methodology used to guide the study. It describes the research design, target population, sampling technique, and data collection instruments, alongside the procedures for the pilot study and data collection. Finally, it covers the methods of data analysis and presentation, as well as the ethical considerations addressed. The methodological choices were made to ensure the study achieves its objectives and generates reliable and valid findings.

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design. A case study design is particularly suitable for research that seeks to explore, describe, and analyze contemporary social phenomena within their natural settings (Yin, 2018). It allows the researcher to capture in-depth perspectives of participants while considering the broader community and institutional context. Focusing on Usikimye, a women's rights organization in Kayole, Nairobi, provided an opportunity to examine its role in promoting gender policy implementation in an informal settlement. The case study design was chosen because it facilitates a detailed understanding of organizational strategies, community experiences, and institutional linkages, which would not be adequately captured through broader survey methods.

3.2 Target Population

The target population for this study consisted of individuals and groups directly connected to Usikimye's interventions in Kayole, Nairobi. According to (Kothari, 2014) a target population refers to the entire group of individuals, objects, or events from which a researcher seeks to draw conclusions. In this study, the population included Usikimye staff and volunteers, community members who benefit from the organization's programs, and local government officials and other stakeholders engaged in gender and community development work. These groups were identified because they hold unique and relevant perspectives that contribute to understanding the role of Usikimye in promoting gender policy implementation.

Table 3.1: Target Population

Category of Respondents	Target Population	Percentage (%)
Women	50	41.7%
Usikimye Staff Members	20	16.7%
Local Stakeholders	20	16.7%
Individual Beneficiaries	30	25%
Total	120	100%

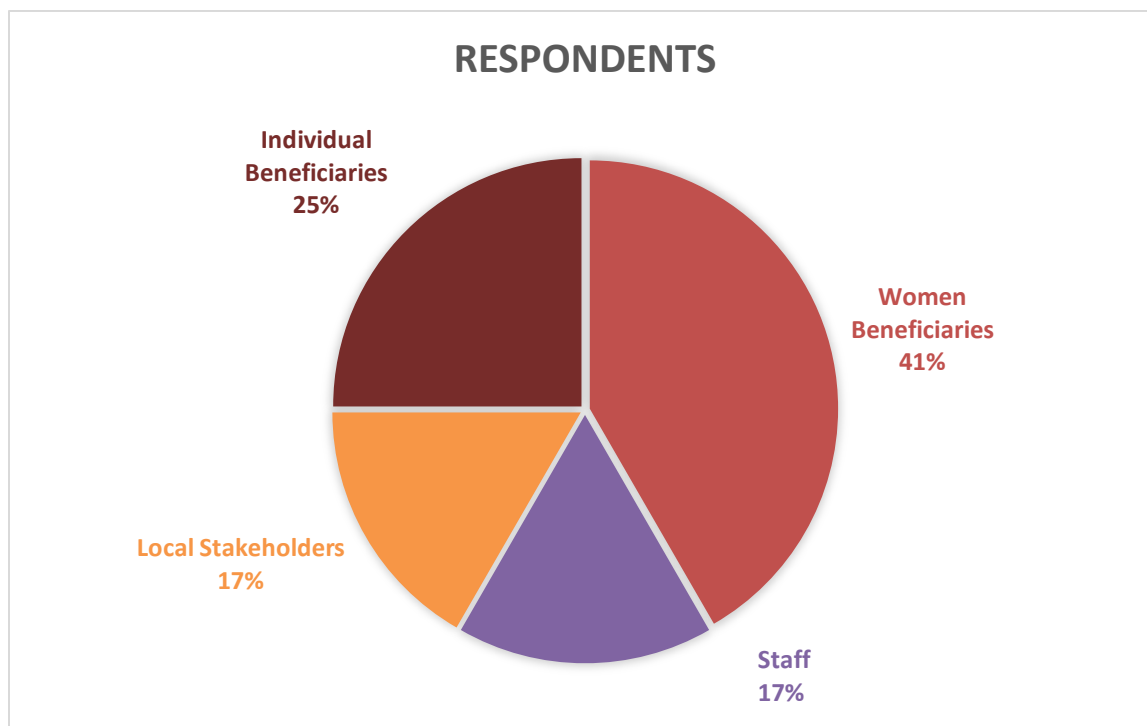
3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample is a subset of a population selected to participate in a study, from which conclusions about the whole population can be drawn (Mugenda, 2003). Since this study focused on a specific organization and its direct stakeholders, a purposive sampling technique was applied. Purposive sampling, as (Patton, 2015) explains, enables the researcher to intentionally select individuals who possess rich, relevant, and diverse insights related to the research objectives. This approach was suitable because it ensured inclusion of participants who are actively involved with or impacted by Usikimye's programs.

Table 3.2: Sample Size

Category of Respondents	Target Population	Sample Size	Percentage (%)
Women Beneficiaries	50	50	41.7%
Usikimye Staff Members	20	20	16.7%
Local Stakeholders	20	20	17%
Individual Beneficiaries	30	30	25%
Total	120	120	100

Figure 3.2: Sample size



3.4 Instruments

The study employed qualitative instruments tailored to capture both organizational and community perspectives. Semi-structured interview guides were used to collect in-depth insights from Usikimye staff and local stakeholders, allowing flexibility to probe emerging issues while maintaining focus on the study objectives. Questionnaires were developed to engage survivors of gender-based violence and community members, providing a platform for collective reflection on strategies, accountability, and challenges. Key informant interview schedules were also utilized to obtain expert views from institutional actors. In addition, a document review checklist guided the systematic examination of Usikimye's reports, case records, and relevant secondary sources to supplement primary data (Bowen, 2009)

3.5 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted prior to the main fieldwork to test the clarity, appropriateness, and effectiveness of the instruments. The pilot was carried out with a small group of practitioners from another women's rights organization outside Kayole to avoid contaminating the main study sample. Feedback was used to remove ambiguity, refine questions, and ensure alignment with the study objectives.

3.5.1 Validity

Validity refers to the degree to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure (Cohen, 2019). To ensure validity, the instruments were reviewed by academic supervisors and gender experts. Triangulation of the data collection methods (Questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis) further enhanced validity by cross-verifying findings from multiple sources.

3.5.2 Reliability Test

Reliability is the consistency with which an instrument yields the same results under repeated trials (Mugenda, 2003). The pilot study helped test reliability by assessing whether similar responses emerged across participants facing comparable experiences. Instruments were revised to ensure consistency and clarity in data collection.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

Data for this study was collected through a combination of qualitative tools designed to capture diverse perspectives from key stakeholders. The researcher first sought formal approval from relevant authorities and Usikimye Organization before initiating fieldwork. Once consent was obtained, interviews were conducted with staff and management of Usikimye to gather information on organizational strategies, accountability mechanisms, challenges, and partnerships. Questionnaires were used with community members and survivors of gender-based violence to document their lived experiences and perceptions of Usikimye's interventions. In addition, key informant interviews were held with state actors such as local administrators and police officers to capture insights on collaboration and institutional response. Secondary data, in the form of organizational reports, case records, and published materials, was also reviewed to supplement the primary findings. The researcher ensured confidentiality and informed consent throughout the process, with data collection scheduled over a one-week period in Kayole.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

The study employed thematic analysis to interpret the qualitative data collected. Interviews and questionnaires were transcribed, coded, and categorized according to the four variables guiding the study: strategies, accountability, challenges, and partnerships. Emerging themes were then compared against the empirical literature to identify similarities, differences, and context-specific insights. Data from organizational reports and secondary sources was analyzed through content analysis to validate and triangulate primary findings. The analysis process therefore, used two methods of coding: inductive coding, which allowed key themes to emerge directly from the data, and deductive coding, which was guided by the study's conceptual framework and objectives. The findings were presented narratively, supported by quotations from respondents, and summarized in thematic tables and figures to ensure clarity and coherence.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The study strictly followed ethical standards, ensuring the rights and dignity of all participants were safeguarded.

3.8.1 Informed Consent

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and signed consent forms before participation.

3.8.2 Voluntary Participation

Participation was entirely voluntary, and every participant retained the unconditional right to withdraw from the study at any time.

3.8.3 Confidentiality

Information provided by participants was kept confidential and securely stored. Only the researcher had access to raw data.

3.8.4 Privacy

Interviews and questionnaires were conducted in safe, private locations to protect participants.

3.8.5 Anonymity

Participant identities were protected by using codes instead of names in transcripts and reports.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed the methodology utilized in the study, outlining the research design, the target population, and the sample size of 120 participants drawn from different categories including Usikimye staff, beneficiaries, women participants, and local stakeholders. The chapter also described the instruments used, the pilot study, data collection procedures, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations. The next chapter presents the findings and analysis of the data collected.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the study's findings as derived from the research questions and structured by the questionnaire. The researcher collected and analyzed the data using simple descriptive statistics. The results are organized into different subsections corresponding to the main variables of the study. The data is presented thematically, accompanied by tables and figures where applicable. The discussion integrates both primary findings and secondary evidence, connecting these findings to the research results presented in distinct subsections, following the main variables of the study.

4.1 Presentation of Findings

4.1.1 Strategies Used by Women's Rights Organizations

The findings revealed that Women's Rights Organizations in Kayole employ multifaceted strategies that integrate awareness creation, advocacy, digital activism and service delivery, to enhance gender policy implementation. As indicated in Table 4.1, respondents cited advocacy campaigns (82%), safe spaces for survivors (74%), and social media activism (65%) as the most effective strategies.

Table 4.1: Strategies Adopted by WROs

Strategy	Frequency (%)
Advocacy & awareness campaigns	82
Safe spaces for survivors	74
Social media campaigns	65
Legal aid and referral services	59
Community training and capacity building	48

Participants explained that advocacy efforts in Kayole often involve public forums, direct community engagement, and training sessions aimed at empowering women with knowledge about their rights. One respondent, a local leader, noted:

“Usikimye has changed how women speak about their rights here. Before, most didn’t even know about national gender policies. Now they can demand action from the police or the chief.”

Similarly, Usikimye’s digital strategies were found to be instrumental in both mobilization and awareness. The organization runs active online campaigns under hashtags such as #EndSGBV and #MakeFemicideACrime, while operating Kenya’s first 24-hour non-governmental GBV hotline (+254 718 158 400). Data from media reports indicate that by 2021, over 4,385 women and girls, 361 children, and 14 infants had been rescued or supported by Usikimye through this hotline and their safe houses across Nairobi, Thika, and Kiambu (Nation Africa, 2021; Standard Media, 2021). The organization’s Safe Haven Program provides temporary shelter, legal referrals, and psychosocial counselling for survivors of gender-based violence. Additionally, their feeding program, in collaboration with Mövenpick Hotel, targets vulnerable women and children to reduce household stressors that often escalate domestic violence. This integrated approach highlights how WROs operationalise gender policy through both preventive and responsive measures.

The findings are consistent with studies by (Nazneen, 2014) and (Kabira, 2012) which argue that education, service delivery, and advocacy remain core mechanisms through which women’s movements translate gender policies into community action. From a theoretical standpoint, these strategies reflect the Feminist Theory’s emphasis on collective action to challenge systemic inequalities and the bottom-up approach of Policy Implementation Theory, where local actors reinterpret national gender frameworks to fit community realities.

4.1.2 Accountability Mechanisms

The study found that WROs in Nairobi, using the example of Usikimye, are pivotal in ensuring gender policy accountability through both formal and informal mechanisms. These mechanisms include community dialogue forums, litigation, digital case reporting, and collaboration with government agencies to ensure enforcement of gender laws.

Figure 4.1: Accountability Mechanisms

Mechanism	Percentage of Respondents Acknowledging Use (%)
Case documentation and online advocacy	72
Community monitoring and public dialogues	63
Legal aid and referrals	41
Citizen report cards and follow-up tracking	37

Respondents reported that Usikimye’s active use of social media has transformed the visibility of GBV cases, compelling public institutions to act. For example, viral posts documenting police negligence or delayed response have triggered faster interventions. One staff member shared:

“Sometimes it takes a tweet or Facebook post for the police to move. Online pressure works faster than official letters.”

In addition to online mechanisms, community accountability forums were highlighted as vital tools. Usikimye organizes town hall meetings and regular barazas where survivors and community members engage local authorities in dialogue about enforcement gaps and policy commitments. Such forums strengthen horizontal accountability by creating spaces where citizens can directly question state representatives. These practices align with Accountability Theory, which emphasizes answerability, transparency, and responsiveness. They also support Fox’s (2015) argument that strategic social accountability, institutional engagement and a mix of civic pressure can improve policy enforcement outcomes. However, the findings also revealed persistent challenges in sustaining accountability mechanisms. Respondents noted that state actors often display selective responsiveness, especially when perpetrators have social influence and in politically charged cases. Some survivors expressed fear of retaliation, while others reported that their cases were settled informally under community pressure. These findings echo those of (Ahikire, 2014) in Uganda, who found that community-based accountability often complements but cannot fully substitute for formal institutional mechanisms. Overall, the data illustrates that WROs like Usikimye play an indispensable role in holding both state and non-state actors accountable to Kenya’s gender equality and GBV policies. Through documentation, advocacy, and

partnerships, they transform policy frameworks into living practices that impact women’s lives in informal settlements.

4.1.3 Challenges Facing Women’s Rights Organizations

Findings from the study revealed that Women’s Rights Organizations in Nairobi face numerous structural, financial, and sociocultural challenges that hinder the full implementation of gender policies. As shown in Table 4.2, the most frequently cited challenges include limited funding (85%), patriarchal community attitudes (78%), insecurity and threats to staff (62%), weak cooperation from state actors (55%), and volunteer burnout (49%).

Table 4.2: Key Challenges

Challenge	Frequency (%)
Limited funding/donor dependency	85
Patriarchal community attitudes	78
Insecurity and threats to staff	62
Weak cooperation from state actors	55
Volunteer burnout	49

During interviews, staff members highlighted that financial instability was their biggest constraint. Usikimye largely relies on donations and external grants, making it difficult to maintain consistent operations such as feeding programs, legal aid, and shelter maintenance. One staff member explained:

“Sometimes we have to choose between rescuing a survivor or paying electricity bills at the safe house. Donor funding helps, but it’s not predictable.”

Another challenge identified was the deep-rooted patriarchal norms within informal settlements. Many respondents stated that some men resist gender equality initiatives, viewing them as threats to traditional authority. A women beneficiary remarked:

“When I started attending Usikimye workshops, my husband accused me of being disrespectful because I was learning my rights. Some men here see empowerment as rebellion.”

These sentiments reflect broader social patterns described by (Tripp, 2009) and (Oduol, 2015) who observed that entrenched patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes limit the reach of women's empowerment initiatives in African informal settlements. Security concerns also emerged as a recurring issue. Usikimye staff and volunteers occasionally face harassment or intimidation from perpetrators of violence and local actors who feel threatened by their advocacy. In addition, bureaucratic hurdles, such as police demands for P3 forms or occurrence book (OB) numbers before admitting survivors into shelters, delay interventions. These institutional bottlenecks weaken the translation of policy commitments into practical protection for survivors. Finally, emotional strain and burnout were reported among staff and volunteers due to constant exposure to traumatic GBV cases. The findings align with feminist literature that stresses the emotional labour involved in activism and care work (Fraser, 2013). Overall, the challenges highlight that while WROs are crucial for policy implementation, their impact depends on the level of financial, institutional, and psychosocial support they receive.

4.1.4 Partnerships and Collaborations

The study found that strategic partnerships and collaborations are critical in strengthening the role of WROs in gender policy implementation. Respondents from both Usikimye and external organizations acknowledged that partnerships have enhanced the organization's capacity to access funding, deliver services, and influence policy outcomes. Key collaborations include partnerships with UN Women, FIDA-Kenya, and local government departments, particularly the Ministry of Public Service, Gender, and Affirmative Action. These alliances have facilitated policy dialogues, legal aid clinics, and training programs that complement Usikimye's community interventions. Additionally, private-sector partnerships, such as with Movenpick Hotel, have supported feeding initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of GBV linked to food insecurity and poverty (Nation Africa, 2023).

A program officer explained:

“When we partner with INGOs, we get the technical expertise and funding we need to expand. But it's a balance. We must stay true to the needs of the women here, not just follow donor agendas.”

Community partnerships were also found to be vital. Collaboration with local chiefs, community-based organizations (CBOs), and police gender desks has improved referral systems for survivors.

These multi-level networks ensure that national gender policies, such as the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act (2015) and National Policy on Gender and Development (2019), are localized and implemented effectively in Nairobi. However, tensions within partnerships were also noted. Some respondents indicated that donor-funded projects often come with strict conditions that may divert attention from grassroots priorities. Similar findings have been reported by (Moghadam, 2005) and (Abwunza, 2016) who warn that power asymmetries in transnational collaborations can compromise local autonomy. Nonetheless, the partnerships remain a cornerstone for sustaining advocacy and scaling impact. From a theoretical perspective, these collaborations reflect the bottom-up policy implementation model, where effective partnerships bridge the gap between grassroots actors and policymakers. They also demonstrate the intersection of accountability and feminist frameworks, as WROs leverage alliances to demand institutional responsiveness while maintaining community-centred advocacy.

4.2 Limitations of the Study

The study faced several limitations. Primarily, time and resource constraints forced the research to limit data collection to Kayole. This geographical focus means consequently the findings may not be fully representative of the experiences across informal settlements in Nairobi. Second, some participants were hesitant to discuss sensitive GBV experiences, which may have affected the depth of qualitative responses. Third, the reliance on self-reported data presents an inherent risk of social desirability bias, as respondents may have overstated positive outcomes. Lastly, while secondary data from Usikimye's media and online reports provided valuable triangulation, not all internal organizational records were accessible, limiting the comprehensiveness of external verification.

Despite these limitations, triangulating primary and secondary data strengthened the validity and reliability of the findings.

4.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and discussed the findings of the study in line with the research objectives. The results demonstrate that WROs in Kayole, particularly Usikimye, play a transformative role in translating national gender policies into actionable community interventions. Their strategies, including awareness campaigns, advocacy, digital activism and safe spaces, reflect a holistic approach that combines prevention, protection, and empowerment. Accountability mechanisms

such as online advocacy, case documentation, and community dialogues have enhanced transparency and responsiveness in gender policy implementation. However, limited resources, weak institutional support, and entrenched patriarchy continue to constrain progress. Partnerships and collaborations have emerged as key enablers of capacity-building and resource mobilization, although dependency on donors poses sustainability risks.

Overall, the findings affirm that grassroots women's organizations serve as vital bridges between policy and practice, translating legal frameworks into tangible support systems for women in marginalized urban contexts. The next chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations derived from these findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.0 Introduction

This section of the study covers a summary, recommendations, and conclusion based on the study findings in relation to the variables. This chapter synthesizes the main insights derived from the data collected from respondents, including women beneficiaries, organization staff, and community stakeholders. It also draws from the theoretical frameworks discussed to provide a coherent interpretation of the findings. The discussion concludes with recommendations directed toward policymakers, Women's Rights Organizations (WROs), and community stakeholders, followed by suggestions for further research and a final reflection on the study's significance.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The study set out to examine the role of Women's Rights Organizations (WROs) in gender policy implementation in Nairobi, focusing on the informal settlement of Kayole. The findings were organized around four thematic objectives: strategies used by WROs, accountability mechanisms, challenges faced, and the role of partnerships and collaborations.

5.1.1 Strategies Used by WROs

The study revealed that WROs in Nairobi, particularly in informal settlements, employ a wide range of strategies aimed at translating national gender policies into tangible community action. These include advocacy and awareness campaigns, the creation of safe spaces for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), social media activism, legal aid services, and community training initiatives. These strategies align with the Feminist Theory's call for collective action and empowerment of women to challenge patriarchal structures. The use of social media campaigns and community-based advocacy proved especially effective in mobilizing awareness and shaping public discourse on GBV and gender equality. Usikimye's integrated approach combining prevention, protection, and empowerment demonstrates how WROs operationalize gender policy through community engagement and service provision.

5.1.2 Accountability Mechanisms

The study found that WROs enhance gender policy accountability through both formal and informal mechanisms. Usikimye employs case documentation, online advocacy, and community dialogues to hold institutions accountable. These mechanisms ensure that duty bearers such as police officers and local administrators are responsive to survivors' needs. The Accountability Theory helped explain how WROs create platforms for transparency and answerability by bridging the gap between policy and practice. However, state responsiveness remains inconsistent, and survivors often face intimidation or informal settlements of cases. Despite these challenges, WROs continue to complement formal accountability structures through persistent civic engagement and documentation.

5.1.3 Challenges Facing WROs

The study identified multiple barriers affecting the effectiveness of WROs in implementing gender policies. Limited funding and donor dependency emerged as the most significant constraints, followed by patriarchal community attitudes, insecurity, weak institutional support, and staff burnout. These findings reflect broader structural inequalities that limit sustainability and autonomy within the women's rights movement. Furthermore, persistent patriarchal norms and cultural resistance were found to impede community-level acceptance of gender equality initiatives. Bureaucratic inefficiencies among government institutions and inconsistent enforcement of GBV policies further compound these challenges.

5.1.4 Partnerships and Collaborations

The findings highlighted that partnerships and collaborations are central to strengthening WROs' capacity for gender policy implementation. Usikimye's collaborations with organizations such as FIDA-Kenya, UN Women, and local government agencies have improved its ability to offer legal aid, training, and psychosocial support. However, donor-imposed priorities sometimes divert attention from grassroots needs, revealing the need for balance between external funding requirements and local realities. These partnerships nonetheless illustrate how bottom-up implementation and collective advocacy can enhance the translation of policy into action.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings, the study concludes that WROs such as Usikimye play a transformative role in the implementation of gender policies at the grassroots level. They bridge the gap between formal state structures and community realities, ensuring that gender policies are not only adopted but actively practised. From the Feminist Theory perspective, the study concludes that WROs act as vehicles for women's collective empowerment, challenging patriarchal systems that marginalize women from decision-making and protection mechanisms. Through advocacy and awareness, they provide women with the agency to claim their rights and participate in governance processes. Under the Accountability Theory, WROs contribute to fostering transparency and responsiveness within governance structures. Their watchdog role, through monitoring, case documentation, and civic pressure, ensures that state actors uphold their obligations under gender laws and policies. In line with the Policy Implementation Theory, particularly the bottom-up model, the study affirms that grassroots organizations like Usikimye are essential intermediaries that adapt national policies to local contexts. Their community-driven approaches help overcome the disconnect between formal frameworks and on-the-ground realities, thereby enhancing policy effectiveness.

Overall, the study concludes that WROs are indispensable actors in Kenya's gender policy ecosystem, yet they require sustained institutional, financial, and political support to achieve long-term impact.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of Women's Rights Organizations (WROs) in gender policy implementation. At the policy level, the government, through the Ministry of Public Service, Gender, and Affirmative Action, should strengthen institutional support for WROs by creating structured funding channels and technical assistance programs. This would reduce donor dependency and ensure sustainable operations. There is also a need to enhance accountability frameworks by formally integrating WROs into policy monitoring and evaluation processes, ensuring that data and insights from grassroots organizations directly inform national reports and planning. Furthermore, bureaucratic barriers that hinder timely responses to gender-based violence cases such as delayed access to P3 forms or complex reporting procedures, should be simplified. The state should also promote multi-sectoral collaboration by fostering coordinated partnerships

among government departments, donors, and private actors to address interrelated issues such as GBV, poverty, and unemployment, especially in informal settlements. Finally, national gender policies should include clear operational guidelines for community-based implementation, outlining how local organizations can contextualize and localize national frameworks to meet the needs of marginalized groups. At the community level, Women's Rights Organizations such as Usikimye should continue expanding their grassroots efforts to shift social norms and empower women economically and socially. Community sensitization should be intensified to challenge patriarchal attitudes and misconceptions about gender equality, with a special focus on involving men and local opinion leaders in gender discourse. To reduce economic vulnerability, WROs should integrate sustainable livelihood and vocational training programs within their gender policy initiatives. In addition, greater investment in psychosocial support for staff and survivors is needed to prevent burnout and ensure effective service delivery. Regular community barazas and town hall meetings should be institutionalized to foster transparency, dialogue, and accountability between residents and local authorities. Lastly, digital activism should be further leveraged to sustain public engagement, improve case documentation, and promote real-time advocacy against gender-based violence.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

This study recommends that future researchers explore areas that can build upon its findings and address identified gaps. Comparative studies should be conducted between multiple informal settlements to assess how different contexts influence WRO strategies and their overall impact on gender policy implementation. Future research could also employ quantitative methodologies to measure the social and economic outcomes of WRO interventions, providing a more comprehensive picture of their long-term effectiveness. Additionally, studies should examine male engagement approaches within WRO initiatives to evaluate how involving men can contribute to dismantling patriarchal norms and sustaining behavioural change. Another important area of inquiry would be the analysis of donor-WRO relationships, especially how funding structures and power dynamics influence the sustainability and autonomy of grassroots women's movements. Finally, given the growing importance of technology in advocacy, researchers should investigate the role of digital activism, online campaigns, and data-driven accountability in expanding WRO influence and visibility across Kenya and beyond.

5.5 Chapter Summary and Reflection

This chapter summarises the study's key findings, drawing conclusions, and provides recommendations for strengthening gender policy implementation through Women's Rights Organizations. The findings demonstrated that WROs such as Usikimye serve as essential actors in bridging the gap between policy and practice, translating national gender frameworks into localized, community-based interventions. Through advocacy, awareness creation, and collaborative partnerships, these organizations promote gender equality and hold institutions accountable to their policy obligations. The study concluded that while WROs have made significant contributions, they continue to face structural and contextual barriers that limit their capacity to fully implement gender policies. It emphasized the importance of sustained financial, institutional, and political support to ensure the longevity and effectiveness of women's rights advocacy in Kenya.

5.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that Women's Rights Organizations (WROs) play a crucial and transformative role in promoting gender policy implementation, particularly within marginalized urban contexts such as Kayole. Using the case of Usikimye, the research illustrated how grassroots organizations act as intermediaries between policy formulation and community realities, translating national frameworks into practical interventions that directly impact women's lives. Through advocacy, awareness creation, and service delivery, WROs ensure that the principles of gender equality and women's empowerment are not confined to policy documents but are realized through tangible community action.

The study also revealed that WROs operate in complex environments marked by structural, social, and political barriers. Limited funding, entrenched patriarchal attitudes, and inconsistent institutional support continue to hinder their progress. Despite these challenges, organizations like Usikimye have shown remarkable resilience and innovation by leveraging digital activism, building strategic partnerships, and fostering community accountability. Their efforts underscore the vital importance of empowering local actors and investing in sustainable, community-driven mechanisms for gender policy enforcement.

The findings affirm that meaningful gender transformation cannot occur in isolation from the lived experiences of women at the grassroots level. It requires collaboration among all stakeholders; government institutions, civil society, international partners, and the communities themselves. Strengthening WROs is therefore essential not only for advancing gender equality but also for deepening democratic governance and social justice in Kenya.

Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader discourse on gender and development by highlighting how local women-led initiatives can reshape the trajectory of policy implementation. By bridging the gap between rhetoric and reality, Women's Rights Organizations, embody the promise of a more inclusive, equitable, and accountable society for all

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Respondent,

My name is **Sabra Shamte**, Admission Number **__BDS/33/00259/1/23__**, a student at **The Management University of Africa** pursuing a **Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies**. As part of the requirements for the award of my degree, I am conducting a research study titled:

“The Role of Women’s Rights Organizations in Gender Policy Implementation in Nairobi: A Case Study of the Informal Settlement of Kayole.”

The purpose of this study is to assess the strategies, accountability mechanisms, challenges, and partnerships employed by Women’s Rights Organizations (WROs) in promoting the implementation of gender-related policies Nairobi.

You have been selected as one of the respondents in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and all information provided will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. The data collected will be used solely for academic purposes and will not be shared with any third party.

Your honest and objective responses will be highly appreciated.

Thank you for your time and valuable contribution.

Sincerely,

Sabra Shamte

Admission Number: BDS/33/00259/1/23

The Management University of Africa

APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

Please answer the following questions as accurately and honestly as possible. The questionnaire is divided into two sections. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for academic purposes.

SECTION ONE: Personal Information

1. Gender:

☐ Male

☐ Female

2. Age Bracket:

☐ 18–25 years ☐ 26–30 years ☐ 31–35 years ☐ 36–45 years ☐ 46 years and above

3. Education Level:

☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ College ☐ University Degree ☐ Postgraduate

4. Category of Respondent:

☐ Usikimye Staff ☐ Local Stakeholder ☐ Women Beneficiary ☐ Individual Beneficiary

5. Duration of Involvement with Usikimye or Gender Programs:

☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 1–3 years ☐ 4–6 years ☐ More than 6 years

SECTION TWO: Main Study Variables

**Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.
Use the scale: 5 – Strongly Agree | 4 – Agree | 3 – Neutral | 2 – Disagree | 1 – Strongly Disagree**

A. Strategies used by WROS

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Usikimye conducts effective advocacy and awareness campaigns on gender issues.					
The organization provides safe spaces and psychosocial support for survivors of GBV.					
Social media platforms are effectively used to raise awareness on gender-based violence.					
Usikimye offers training and capacity-building programs that empower women in the community.					
The organization collaborates with local leaders to ensure policy awareness at the grassroots.					

B. Accountability Mechanisms

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Usikimye documents and reports gender-based violence cases for follow-up action.					
The organization engages community members in accountability dialogues.					
Legal aid and referral services are available for survivors.					
Social media is used to hold institutions accountable for gender-related injustices.					
There is transparency in how the organization communicates its interventions to the public.					

C. Challenges Facing Women's Rights Organizations

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Limited financial resources hinder the implementation of programs.					
Patriarchal attitudes in the community affect program effectiveness.					
The organization faces security threats and political intimidation.					
Donor conditions sometimes limit the organization's autonomy.					

Emotional burnout among staff affects service delivery.					
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D. Partnerships and Collaborations

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Usikimye collaborates effectively with government agencies on policy enforcement.					
Partnerships with INGOs and CBOs have strengthened the organization's capacity.					
Collaborative programs improve access to services for survivors of GBV.					
Joint advocacy with other organizations increases policy visibility.					
Power imbalances sometimes affect decision-making in partnerships.					

E. Gender Policy Implementation

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
WROs play a key role in translating national gender policies into community action.					
The presence of Usikimye has improved awareness of women's rights in Kayole.					
Gender policy implementation has led to reduced cases of gender-based violence.					
Collaboration between WROs and state actors enhances policy enforcement.					

Community participation improves the sustainability of gender policy outcomes.					
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Thank you for your participation!

Your contribution is highly valued and will play a vital role in advancing understanding of how Women's Rights Organizations strengthen gender equality and accountability in Kenya.

APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Guiding Questions

1. Strategies Used by WROs

- What strategies does Usikimye use to promote gender policy implementation?
- How effective are these strategies in addressing GBV and promoting empowerment?

2. Accountability Mechanisms

- How does the organization ensure accountability in its programs?
- In what ways are local institutions engaged in upholding gender policies?

3. Challenges

- What are the main challenges faced by WROs in implementing gender policies?
- How do funding, politics, or cultural attitudes affect your work?

4. Partnerships and Collaborations

- What partnerships has Usikimye formed to enhance its work?
- How do these collaborations strengthen or limit gender policy implementation?

5. Recommendations

- What can be done to improve gender policy implementation in Kayole?
- What support do WROs need from government and partners to sustain their work?

APPENDIX IV: FDG GUIDE

Guiding Questions

1. How did you first learn about Usikimye and its work in Kayole?
2. What activities or programs by the organization have helped women most?
3. How has awareness about women's rights or gender-based violence changed in your community?
4. What challenges do women still face when seeking justice or protection?
5. How does Usikimye work with other partners, like chiefs, police, or hospitals?
6. What can be done to make such programs more effective for women in Kayole?

Thank you for your responses

