

**ENGENDERED SOCIALIZATION, SEXUALITY AND THE FEMINIZATION OF HIV  
AMONGST THE LUO OF NGUNYA SUB-LOCATION OF UGUNJA CONSTITUENCY**

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## **DECLARATION**

This project paper is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other University.

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This project paper has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

**Signature:**----- **Date:**-----

Dr. Owuor Olungah

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to my sister Philista Atieno who lost her life due to HIV related complications in 1999. Her exposure to the HIV risk and her eventual untimely demise were contributed to by a number of factors which would have largely been avoidable if there was a better understanding of the intersection between HIV and the Luo culture.

Further dedication is to my late grandmother Risper Achieng (nyagwenya) whose encouragement and support made me surmount monumental challenges in my formative stages of life. Without her support I would not have reached the level where I am today.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
CD4	Cluster of Differentiation 4
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
IDIs	In-depth Interviews
KAIS	Kenya AIDS Indicator Survey
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KDHS	Kenya Demographic Health Survey
KMOTS	Kenya Modes of Transmission Study
KNASP	Kenya National AIDS Strategic Plan
KII	Key Informant Interview
NACC	National AIDS Control Council
NASCOP	National AIDS and STI Control Programme
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population
VCT	Voluntary Counselling Testing
WHO	World Health Organization

## **ABSTRACT**

Three decades since the first incidence of HIV was reported, the epidemic has acquired distinct geographic and population based patterns globally, regionally and nationally within Kenya. The sub-Saharan Africa carries inordinately high level of the global HIV burden. Specifically, Kenya has the third largest population of people living with HIV in the sub – Saharan Africa and the highest national HIV prevalence of any country outside of Southern Africa.

The Kenyan epidemic has marked gender disparities, characterized by higher prevalence amongst women at 6.9% compared to men at 4.4 % (NASCO, 2013). Young women between the ages of 15 and 24 years have been found to be nearly four times more vulnerable to contracting HIV compared to their male counterparts in the same age bracket. Nyanza region of Kenya which is predominantly occupied by the Luo community have consistently posted high levels of HIV prevalence over the years (15%) despite high levels of investments in the HIV response.

This research therefore, sought to explore the intersection between the gendered socialization of the Luo community in matters of sexuality in relation to the high prevalence to HIV infection. Ngunya sub – location of Ugunja sub County was picked as the study site. The study employed qualitative methods of data collection, specifically, face to face individual in-depth interviews with men, women and the youth in different and age cohorts. Additionally, key informant interviews were undertaken with aged women and men based on their known capacity as repository of cultural knowledge. The research involved an equal number of women and men from ages 18 and above.

The study revealed deep insights that indicated the existence of a parallel and gender distinct socialization processes of the Luo community in Ngunya sub-location. The gender socialization was also found to culminate into discernible differential gender power relations that consistently put women and girls at a disadvantage while placing boys and men on a ‘high pedestal’ on matters of sexual negotiation. The socialization process was found to further create sexual double standards, where the boys and men were egged on to be sexually adventurous and to have multiple sexual partners while the girls were encouraged to remain virgin. It was also revealed that there has been cultural transformation overtime, such that the initial societal controls that

regulated sex and sexuality before marriage, during marriage and after death of a spouse has been corrupted over time leading to adoption of 'sex centered practices' that reduced options and freedom particularly of women. At the same, time reducing the demand on the men to be responsible providers in the families. All these were seen as predisposing factors exposing women and girls more than men and boys to heightened risks of acquiring HIV infections.

Based on the findings, a raft of recommendations have been made, key amongst them being the need to embark on an objective inter-generational cultural dialogue to fish out the cultural corruptions which are fueling the spread of HIV and retain the noble practices which have value and are applicable in the current context of life.

## 1.0 CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

The HIV epidemic has continued to take its toll in the sub-Saharan African region where 70% of all the adult infections are domiciled (UNAIDS, 2013: 12). In Kenya, the number of new HIV infections among adults has stabilized at an unacceptably high rate and sexual transmission remains the highest mode of transmission of HIV, accounting for 93.7% of all new infections. Overall, the Kenyan epidemic has marked gender disparities, characterized by higher prevalence amongst women at 6.9% compared to men at 4.4% (NASCO, 2013: 2). Young women aged 15-24 years are more vulnerable as they are four times more likely to be infected (5.6%) than young men of the same age group (1.4%) (NASCO, 2009: 33).

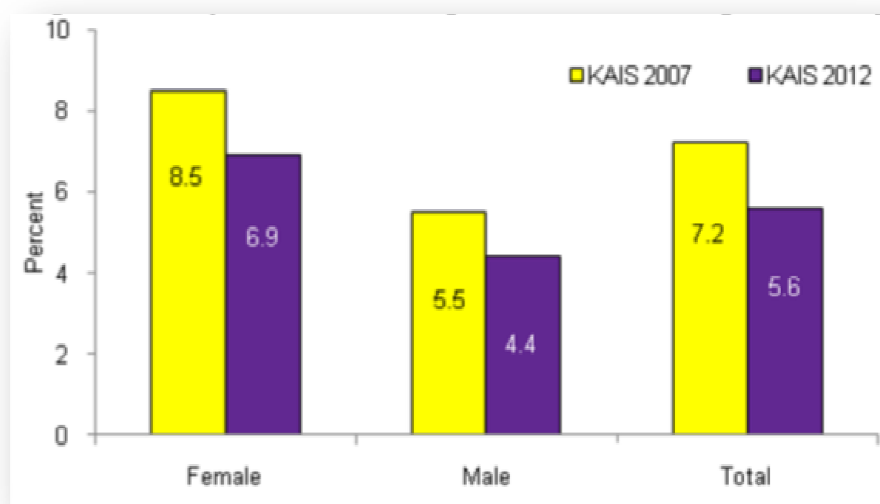


Figure 1.1: HIV prevalence among women and men aged 15 - 64 years (Source; NASCO 2012)

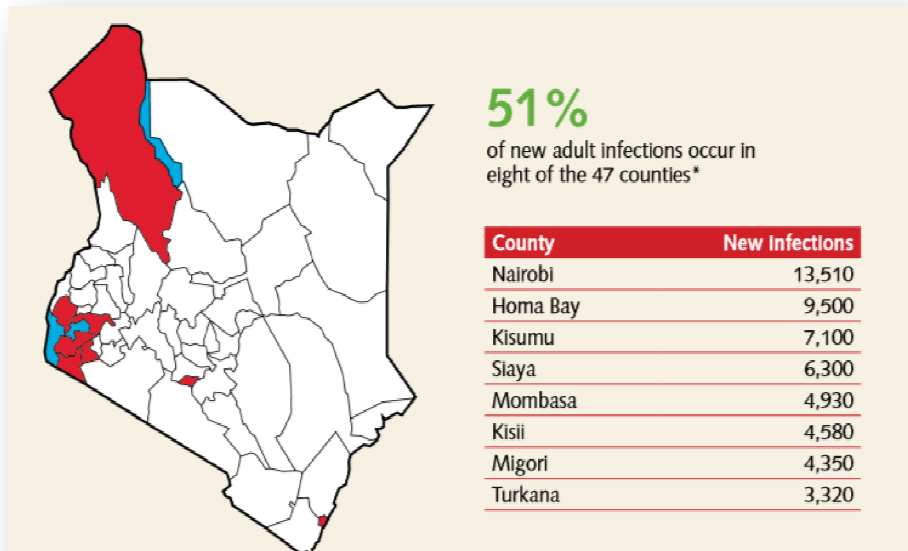
Further analysis of the draft Kenya AIDS Indicator Survey report for 2012 shows that despite the slight improvement in the general HIV prevalence, the gendered prevalence pattern has not changed as shown in

Figure 1.1.

According to NASCO (2013), the HIV prevalence has also remained unchanged and highest in the Luo community dominated region of Nyanza where the prevalence rate is at 15.1%.

The HIV National estimates for 2012 and modeling studies done by NACC and NASCO (2013) indicate that 51% of new adult infections occur in eight of the 47 counties (as indicated in figure 1.2) in Kenya. The aforementioned modeling studies have also confirmed the continued worrying trend that the bulk of new HIV infections in Kenya are in Luo dominated counties. The four counties of Migori, Siaya, Kisumu and Homabay which are predominantly inhabited by

members of the Luo community constitute half of the high burden counties which contribute about 51% of new infection in Kenya.



Map 1.1: Map of Kenya showing counties with high rates of new HIV infection (Source: NACC and NASCOP (2012)).

The intersection between HIV prevalence and socio-cultural trends is therefore, an inevitable area for scholarly scrutiny given the global, regional and national HIV epidemic trends which have shown discernible cultural, regional, gender, age and socio-economic

patterns in the epidemic.

The ethnicized HIV prevalence trend has been analyzed as being a possible product of the predisposition to certain risky behaviors which are linked to culture and gender stereotypes of particular communities (KNBS, 2009). The KAIS (NASCOP, 2012) findings showed that there is a positive correlation with the number of sexual partners reported in one's life and one's HIV status. The survey showed that among those who reported having 10 or more lifetime sexual partners there was a prevalence of 16.6% in women and 9.1% in men (NASCOP, 2009).

UNAIDS in their Global report on HIV and AIDS for 2012 posit that HIV transmission is fueled by *gender inequalities and harmful gender norms that promote unsafe sex and reduce access to HIV and sexual and reproductive health services for men, women and transgender persons* (UNAIDS, 2013:78).

In Kenya, the role of gender and socio-cultural factors in driving the HIV epidemic is clearly acknowledged in the Kenya National AIDS Strategic Plan 2009/10 (NACC, 2009); KNASP III

singles out notions of masculinity and femininity as some of the underlying causes of vulnerability to HIV infection. The Luo community which is hardest hit by the HIV epidemic in Kenya is highly patriarchal and their socialization entail high levels of tolerance for gender based violence and multiple concurrent sexual partners amongst others (KNBS, 2009).

The study thus sought to establish the possible connection between the gendered socialization and cultural indoctrination on sexuality in the Luo cultural context and the high prevalence of HIV infection particularly amongst women in the community. The study was conducted in Ngunya Location in Ugunja Constituency of Siaya County.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The high prevalence of HIV infection has remained a concern at all levels right from the global to the national level. An equally important point of concern is the fact that HIV prevalence is highest in the sub-Saharan African region where the dominant mode of transmission remain through heterosexual means (UNAIDS, 2006).

In Kenya, the similar concern of ethnicized and gendered pattern of HIV prevalence has been singled out in two important population based surveys, namely KAIS (NASCOP, 2008) and KDHS (2009). An outstanding concern is particularly the prevalence amongst the Luo ethnic group as depicted in the KDHS report of 2009. It is noted that “...*there are very large differences in HIV prevalence by ethnicity*” with the highest prevalence being amongst ‘Luos at 20.2% against the national prevalence of 6.3% (KNBS, 2009: 218).

Further analysis of the HIV prevalence amongst those identifying themselves as belonging to the Luo ethnic community show a highly gendered pattern in HIV prevalence at 17.1% in men and 22.8% in women (Kawango et al., 2010).

Certain behaviours have been identified as accounting for the high risk factors fueling HIV transmission in Kenya (KNBS, 2009). Such high risk behaviors have also been found to be common in certain cultures and as such, the same communities tend to have a correspondingly high HIV prevalence. The Luo community has been found to have quite a number of such

culturally sanctioned high risk behaviors which also have distinctive gender dimension (KNBS, 2009).

Recent studies have revealed the existence of gender discrepancy in the capacity to utilize safe sex options. Despite the high level of knowledge amongst Kenyan women and men (about 99 percent) know how HIV is acquired and transmitted (KNBS,2009), there still exist glaring gender parallels in the utilization of safe sex options with girls and women being less likely to use safe sex options (NASCOP, 2013).

It is also important to note that the gender differential vulnerability to HIV infection also has a plausible physiological explanation to women's higher susceptibility to HIV infection. Studies such as one done by Wu Z et al., (2003) established that women's larger mucosal surface area exposed to male sexual fluids/semen enhances the efficiency of HIV transmission from a man to a woman in a penile to vaginal intercourse. However, Kaul et al., (2011), while acknowledging Koffi Anan's concern on the feminization of the HIV epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa, pointed out that the biological explanation alone may not suffice to explain the feminization of the epidemic in Africa, noting that the biological factors are universal and thus the feminized trend should have been in all social and geographic contexts and not just in Africa.

In Kenya, a number of researches have been undertaken in an attempt to explain the socio-cultural dimension to HIV prevalence and trends; one notable issue that has attracted a lot of attention is the practice of widow inheritance and other cultural rituals involving sex. One such study was by Kawango et al., (2010) on *'wife inheritance amongst the Luo in Bondo District'*. Her findings provide very useful information particularly in demystifying the notion that wife inheritance is the main mode of HIV transmission in the Luo community.

Other studies on widowhood include the review by Gunga (2009) who looked at the psycho-social and emotional conflicts that arise out of widowhood practices in the Luo community of Kenya in terms of family, power and gender relations and the attendant impact including exacerbated vulnerability to HIV infection. Analysis done by Aluoch and Nyongesa (2013) titled *'Perception of the Rural Luo Community on Widow Inheritance and HIV and AIDs in Kenya'* analyzed the current HIV communication around the issue of widowhood pointing out the over



emphasis and focus of risk communication that tend to portray widows as the carriers of the virus and erroneously focusing on individual level rather the community; hence reducing the efficacy of such communications.

It is therefore, clear that researches have presumptively narrowed down on the subject of widowhood and other ritual sex in an attempt to explain the disproportionately high prevalence of HIV amongst the Luo. Such studies have the tendency to produce findings that would portray the underlying socio-cultural factors as simplistic ‘dos and don’ts’ and may not give the picture of the various facets of complex web of deep seated cultural indoctrinations that require deeper understanding in order to mount an effective HIV prevention interventions.

This study therefore, aimed at addressing the information gap noted above by undertaking deep analysis of the gendered socialization process and how this may be producing sexual double standards which could be constraining the effectiveness of HIV interventions in the Luo community. The study sought to answer the following questions:

**Research questions:**

1. How does socialization in the Luo community shape the perceptions, value and practices of sex and sexuality of men and women?
2. Does the differential socialization on sex and sexuality have a bearing on the capacities of the women and men to evaluate risks, negotiate and utilize safe sex options?
3. How does the economic organization of the Luo community impact on the differential power relations between men and women and how does this expose them to differential vulnerability to HIV infection?

**1.3 Research Objectives**

**1.3.1 General Objective**

1. To explore the role of gendered socialization of the Luo community in matters of sexuality in relation to the high prevalence to HIV infection.

**1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

1. To establish the extent to which socialization creates sexual double standards between men and women in the Luo community.

2. To describe the role of gendered cultural socialization of the Luo community on sex and sexuality in the context of HIV and AIDS.
3. To determine the role of economic organization of the Luo community to the gender power relations and its attendant effects to the differential vulnerability to HIV infection by women and men.

#### **1.4 Assumptions of the study**

1. Engendered socialization in the Luo community enhances double standards between women and men.
2. An engendered socialization process in the Luo community enhances female vulnerability and dis-empowers women from sexual negotiations hence exposing them to HIV.
3. The economic organization of the Luo community incapacitates women from negotiating safe sex.

#### **1.5 Justification of the Study**

The justification of this study could not be better illustrated than the rather harsh indictment by the observation of the team of renowned consultants led by Prof. Poku Nana who undertook the end-term review of the Kenya National Aids Strategic Plan III. They observed that despite three decades of living with the HIV epidemic, the relative importance/significance of social determinants including gender inequality, gender based violence, vulnerability of young girls in driving the Kenyan epidemic remain unappreciated, poorly researched and even more poorly understood (NACC, 2013: 19).

The significance of understanding socio-cultural context in which the risks and vulnerabilities exist is underscored as a critical foundation necessary for an effective HIV prevention programmes (UNAIDS, 2007). Further, the paucity of data on the HIV, particularly the social data on epidemic owing to limited social research has been cited as a barrier to developing responsive policies and effective programmes to address the HIV epidemic (NACC, 2009).

Towards enhancing effectiveness and efficiency in HIV and AIDS programming, UNAIDS launched an initiative dubbed “Know your epidemic know your response” (UNAIDS, 2007). In

the clamour for better understanding of the Kenyan epidemic, UNAIDS recommends that the cultural, institutional and structural factors that aid or impede peoples' abilities to access and use HIV information and services, must be studied and clearly understood for effective HIV interventions (UNAIDS, 2007).

From the foregoing discourse, it is clear that behaviors and vulnerabilities to HIV risks are intertwined in complex dynamics of social and structural factors encompassing the economic, legal, political, cultural and psychosocial dimensions. This study was thus a bold attempt to create better understanding of the socio-cultural drivers of the epidemic and has generated necessary information that should be used to inform paradigm shift in HIV and AIDS policies and programmes.

This exploratory social inquiry further sought to enhance understanding of gender and the cultural practices that could be fueling the spread of HIV amongst the Luo community. The findings, have no doubt, contributed to the improved understanding of the unique social drivers of the epidemic among the Luo community and will go a long way in informing effective HIV and AIDS intervention strategies. The findings of this research therefore, form a starting point for the community dialogue on culture, socialization and HIV.

### **1.6 Scope and Limitations of the study**

This study focused on the social and cultural attributes of the research subjects in relation to how these attributes could predispose the members to risks of contracting HIV infection.

The study was limited in its coverage to selected persons who identify themselves with the Luo cultural group and who at the time of the study resided in Ngunya sub-location of Ugunja constituency in Siaya County. The study targeted and involved equal proportions of female and male adults of various age cohorts ranging from 18 – 25 years, 26-35years, 36-45 years, 46-59 years and 60 and above.

The study methodology was purely qualitative and aimed at expanding the understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics that shape behaviors, beliefs and practices of the community members on sexuality. The findings of the study can thus not be used to predict the occurrence of the said

practices but creates deeper understanding of the underlying socio-cultural issues as possible social determinants to HIV vulnerability.

### **1.7 Operational Definition of key terms**

**Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)** – An infection caused by HIV. HIV destroys the body's ability to fight off infection and disease, which can ultimately lead to death.

**Gendered socialization-** is the process of learning the social expectations and attitudes associated with one's sex

**Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV)** - this is a retro-virus that infects cells of the immune system, destroying or impairing their function. As the infection progresses, the immune system becomes weaker, and the person becomes more susceptible to infections.

**Sex and Gender:** Sex refers to the biological characteristics that categorize someone as either female or male; whereas gender refers to the socially determined ideas and practices of what it is to be female or male.

## **2.0 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This section looks at the existing body of information that relate to the research subject. Specifically, it looks at the related researches, analysis and documentations at the global, regional and country level. Specific efforts have been made to ensure that research work relating to the issues of gender, socialization and sexuality in relation to HIV in the Luo community are identified and reviewed. This section thus provides a basis upon which more analysis is built upon as well as identifying the information gaps that this study sought to bridge.

### **2.2 Overview of HIV and AIDS**

Caldwell (2000) made a rather chilling observation, that despite numerous efforts in the fight against HIV epidemic in Africa, progress remain slow and it seems, he further noted, education alone is not the tool to win the epidemic. Even though the sentiments expressed by Caldwell are wrought with pessimism, the statement is a testament to the frustration echoed by many who have noted that despite enormous resources being dedicated to stem the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS, progress has been slow and far in between. That HIV and AIDS has now been domiciled in Africa, is a hackneyed reference that need no further expounding. For the sake of emphasis however, it should be mentioned that HIV and AIDS is probably one of the most serious calamities to have befallen humanity and its impact in decimating the population in wanton proportions is only comparable to the ‘Black death’ of the 14 Century (Caldwell, 2000: 117).

According to the WHO Global Health Observatory report, about 70 million people have been infected by HIV virus since the first case of HIV infection was reported in 1981; of these, about 35 million people have died as a result of the AIDS related complications. The HIV pandemic has been more ravenous in the Sub-Saharan region where more than 80% of the HIV and AIDS related death have been reported (UNAIDS, 2013).

### **2.3 HIV trends**

For more than two decades, HIV prevention work has been focused on individual-level behavioral interventions mainly through behavior change communication which target to influence knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of the target individuals as ‘masters of their destiny’ (Gupta et al., 2008). However, Gupta and colleagues further observed, the premise of

the individual targeted interventions assume that the individuals have full discretion in adopting behaviors they deem safe based on their knowledge level is to a large extent not true.

Gupta et al., (2008) in reference to a study by Coates, conclude that individually oriented interventions are more effective in reducing HIV vulnerability if undertaken concurrently with intervention that target to address the broader structural factors such as gender, policy, legal and environmental. This, they analyzed was due to the fact the individual behavior is a product of the

societal context in which they operate. Figure 2.1 below analyses how the structural factors contribute to the individual vulnerability to HIV infection by women and girls.

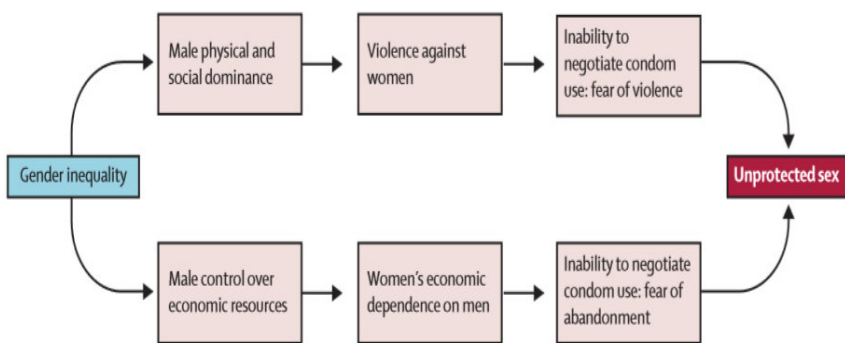


Figure 2.1: Different causal chains and HIV risk behavior ( Gupta et al., 2008.)

The above findings confirm the position that is increasingly gaining ground amongst a number of researchers such as Auebarch et al., (2009) who posit that HIV transmission is fueled by practices that are encouraged or shaped by the social context where the individuals live. However, they further acknowledged that there is lack of unanimity amongst social scientist on the extent to which an individual’s desires and practices are influenced by outside forces or the so called social determinants as opposed to individual discretionary capacity.

Despite the uncertainty on the comparability of levels of influence between the external social determinant and the individual discretion, Auerbarch et al., (2009) noted that there is no doubt amongst social scientists that human thought, behavior and desires are greatly influenced and determined by the societal elements.

To illuminate the role of culture as a determinant in the efficacy of HIV prevention options, it is important to look at the perspective of medical anthropologists in terms of their

conceptualization of culture as health outcome determinant. According to Loutaunau and Sobo (1997), to understand issues of health in any society, it is imperative that the behavior of the individuals must be understood within the cultural context in which the individual interact with others as a cultural group. In defining culture, Helman (2007) in his book titled “*Culture, Health and Illnesses*” avers with Tylors (1871) definition of culture as the complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society. Culture in the context of Tylor’s definition is seen as a set of guidelines (implicit and explicit) inherited by persons belonging to that particular society.

Helman (2000) further observed that the culture in which one is born or live influences his/her health outcomes and generally life chances. However, he proffers a caveat to this position and points out that this ‘cultural influence’ should be understood as a co-factor that does not act alone, but is intertwined with other instrumental factors and may not be the only such influence to the health outcome. The factors spelt out by Helman (2000) as possible correlates to health outcomes were such as educational, socio-economic; environmental factors which are intertwined in influencing the health outcome of individuals or groups. Helman further observes that HIV and AIDS, being one of the most ravaging epidemics of the modern times, can benefit from anthropological discipline, particularly towards understanding the social, cultural and economic context of its occurrence.

Gender as social driver of the HIV epidemic in the cultural context is further propounded by Bird and Rieker (2008) in their book titled “*Understanding Gender and Health*” where they postulate that even though men and women have what they referred to as ‘unique biological advantage over each other’, they observed that there still exist substantial variations in health outcomes that tend to occur amongst them in ways that conform to certain social trends/conditions. They further observed that this social and cultural pattern to health outcomes has not been well acknowledged in many public and clinical health researches; however they observed that an encouraging trend is emerging as there is “*a growing number of clinical researchers who have come to recognize that social and biological factors interact in complex ways, and that this explains not only health or illness at the individual level but also population health and the observed patterns of men’s and women’s health,*” (Bird and Rieker, 2008: 52).

The foregoing argument by Bird and her colleague therefore, points to the fact that social and institutional arrangements of the various social context which defines the reality of lived life for men and women have implicit correlation with the health outcomes due to what they analyzed as the 'effect of limited choices' in a societal context and as such women and men's capacity to access and utilize health services vary depending on their relative position and social category in the society.

The Kenya AIDS Epidemic update (NACC and NASCOP, 2012) published by NACC and NASCOP further affirms the role of social conditions as a determinant of vulnerability of individuals and groups to HIV infection. The report specifically points out that women's disproportionate vulnerability to HIV infection is influenced by social, legal, economic, cultural and educational opportunities. The Kenya AIDS Epidemic update further posit that the traditional and cultural practices function to determine and reinforce gender inequality and women's disempowerment which are contributing factors to gender based violence which in turn constrains women's capacity to negotiate and utilize safe sex options (NACC, 2012).

In the quest to understand the disproportionate prevalence of HIV in Africa, researchers have singled out a practice of multiple concurrent partnerships which is common in Africa but which has been found to have correlation to HIV transmission. According to UNAIDS (2008), having concurrent partners greatly increases the risk of HIV transmission compared to sequential or serial partnerships. Multiple concurrent (sexual) partnerships according to UNAIDS (2008), can broadly be described as relationships where an individual has two or more sexual relationships that overlap in time. Multiple concurrent sexual relationships tend to be long term and thus lead to low condom use. In context of low levels of male circumcision, the practice has potential of accelerating HIV spread as was noted in the Southern Africa region (SADC, 2006).

The 'Expert think tank meeting on HIV prevention in high-prevalence countries in Southern Africa' singled out other factors such as insufficient male involvement and lack of responsibility for sexual and reproductive health as well as gender inequality as the factors which work in concert with concurrent multiple partners to bring about high HIV prevalence (SADC, 2006). In Kenya, the realization of the role of multiple sexual relationships in fueling the HIV epidemic was revealed by the Kenya Modes of Transmission Study (NACC, 2009).



The foregoing discourse on the multiple concurrent partners in the Southern African context is of great significance to the Kenyan HIV epidemiological context, as the Kenyan epidemic is also largely a sexual one, transmitted through sexual contacts which accounts for an estimated 93% of new HIV infections in Kenya, with heterosexual intercourse representing 77% of HIV infections. Additionally, adults in stable, *seemingly low-risk hetero-sexual* relationships make up the largest share of new HIV infections (NACC, 2012). The statistics are corroborated by the Kenya Mode of Transmission Study (2009) which established that an approximated 44.1% of new infection are attributable to persons engaging in heterosexual and who are currently within a union or regular partnership (NACC, 2009).

The KMOT findings prompted NACC to run behavior change campaigns titled '*wacha mpango wa kando*' (stop extra-marital affairs) and '*weka condom mpangoni*' (put condom in your extra-marital relations plans). The public reaction has been mixed but generally gender biased, as attested to by the reactions when the female version of the '*weka condom mpangoni*' was aired; It elicited the loudest condemnation from religious and cultural groups (Standard online media, 2013).

Plurality of sexual relation amongst the Luos is perhaps well illustrated by the assertion that a Luo wife belongs to a larger group beyond the individual (Nyarwath, 2012). He observed that one became a wife/husband or daughter/son to a household, a homestead, a clan or the nation. The woman was therefore, not only a wife to the husband but also a wife of the household, homestead and clan. This is an indication that marriage was not a husband and wife affair but an entire extended family affair. Death of a spouse did not dissolve marriage; therefore, the woman remains (*chi liel*) wife of the grave. Therefore, a woman should not remarry but have an inheritor (Nyarwath, 2012).

#### **2.4 Gendered socialization of the Luo on sex and sexuality in the context of HIV and AIDS**

Studies of sexuality in Africa have tended to show that sexual behavior of both men and women are strictly guided and regulated by culturally acceptable values and norms. Extensive studies by anthropologist in East Africa have shown that sexuality notions revolve around and are often enforced through notions of 'respect', 'shame', 'secrecy' and 'sacredness' (Chege, 1993; Ocholla-Ayayo, 1982).

The gendered construction of sexuality in Africa as in many other parts of the world is manifest in the norms that define masculinity and femininity, which have been noted to have duality of expectations. They tend to demand that young men be knowledgeable, aggressive, and experienced regarding sexuality and reproductive health issues while girls and women are pure and strive to maintain their virginity (Ricardo and Baker, 2005). Ricardo and Baker further observed that these expectations by default give men a disproportionate share of the power and voice in intimate relationships with women. However, Baker and Ricardo (2005) in their publication for World Bank on '*Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa*', posit that despite, these norms, young men frequently often have little accurate information on these matters and fear admitting their ignorance, which may lead them to engage in unsafe behaviors that put both them and their partners at risk.

Growing bodies of researches have also shown that socialization around sexuality in many African cultures is biased in favour of boys and men in terms of gender power relations. Young women in many parts of the developing world are socialized to have little control over how, when and where sex takes place (Gupta et al., 1996). Gupta et al., (1996) further observed that there are strong pressures on young unmarried women to retain their virginity in many communities in Africa. It has been noted that the Sub-Saharan Africa has a high incidence of polygyny and a trend where men prefer to marry women who are significantly younger, because this will make them more submissive (Tertilt, 2005).

As aptly noted by Gupta et al., (2008) the stereotypical gender roles place young women, and to a lesser extent young men, at heightened risk of HIV infection. Compelling observations have been further made by Gupta and others in their publications for UNFPA, '*HIV and AIDS Prevention Guidance for Reproductive Health Professionals in Developing-Country Setting*' (2002) where they note that many societies view women's sexual behaviors as being appropriate if linked to reproduction and immoral if for pleasure. UNFPA (2002) noted that the contradiction in the sexual expectations on men where in many societies, it is believed that men's nature dictates that they have variety in sexual partners.

The traditional education system of the Luo was largely run through a gender parallel system where the boys were educated in the 'Duol' by the elders and in the 'Simba' by peers and older male relatives. The girls on the other hand were educated/socialized through the 'siwindhe' by the grandmothers (Ochola-Ayayo, 1976). Ochola-Ayayo's account of the Luo socialization system portrays a cross-purpose socialization where the men and boys are socialized and encouraged to be tough, domineering and sexual conquerors while the girls are socialized to be home makers, submissive and nurtures. He further notes that symbolism is a strong medium of socialization where boys were given tough nick names such as 'sibuor', 'thuon', 'ratego' amongst other adjectives that denote strength and power. Conversely, the girls were given nicknames such as 'nyadundo', 'nyanam', 'nyapiny' which denotes gentility.

Pritchard (1950) gives a rather more original account of the Luo socialization trends by virtue of him being one of the earliest scholars to document the Luo culture; he postulates that the traditional socialization revolved around 'Siwindhe' and the 'Duol' institutions. He points out that high premium was put on virginity for girls and even though girls had boy friends who they visited in their 'Simbas', sex was largely non penetrative sex. The accounts of the gendered socialization of the Luo may seem too historical and far removed from the current situation where the influence of two institutions of 'duol' and 'siwindhi' waned and nearly non-existent in their original structure, it is intriguing to note that the original intended outcome remained largely in force through the enforcing myths that have persevered despite the disappearance of the original teaching (Evans-Pritchard, 1950 and Achola- Oyayo, 1976). According to Odek (2008), the evolution of the practice and concept of socialization opines *that there are essentially two layers of cultural influences in every Kenyan*. These, he posits include the traditional tribal value system, and the second consists of Western influences.

The socialization pattern of the Luo, just like many other African communities is replete with sexual double standards characterized by discordant behavioral expectations including sexual behaviors and attitudes to sexuality. From the foregoing, it is conceivable that the current prevalent occurrence of concurrent multiple partnerships is a product of the skewed socialization and hence high prevalence of HIV in the contexts where such is tolerated (Crawford and Popp, 2003).

The phenomenon of multiple concurrent sexual relations is one of the major products of gendered cultural socialization in many communities in sub-Saharan Africa (Crawford and Popp, 2003). Crawford further notes that men and women have been traditionally subjected to ‘different “rules” guiding sexual behavior and as such, women were stigmatized for engaging in any sexual activity outside of heterosexual marriage, whereas for men, such behavior was expected and rewarded. The attention to the multiple concurrent sexual partners is premised on the scientific findings of Pilcher et al., 2004 and Waweru et al., 2005 who posit that multiple concurrent partners carry the increased risk of HIV infection if sex takes place with a second partner within a few weeks after someone is newly infected with HIV, at this time, the risk of HIV transmission is particularly high (UNAIDS, 2008).

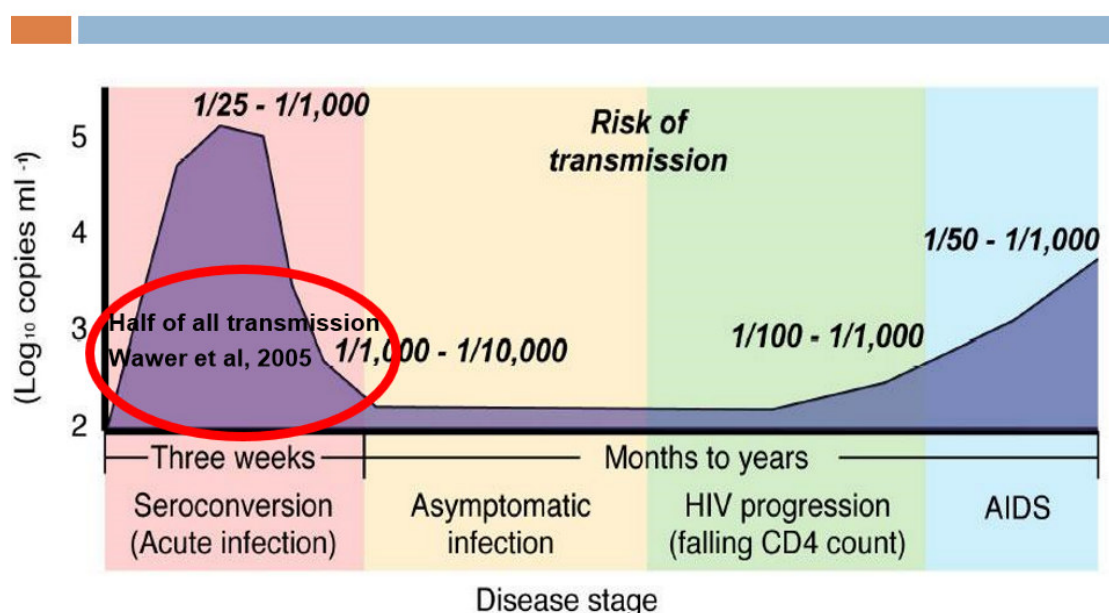


Figure 2.2: HIV Transmission risk (Source: Galvin and Cohen, 2004)

The skewed gender power relation, which was noted in the foregoing discussion as one of the product of biased socialization, has been linked to the upsurge in transactional sex and sex work in Kenya. Kenya modes of transmission (2009) revealed that about a 34% (1/3) of new infections could be attributable to sex work and transactional sex.

## 2.5 Economic organization of the Luo community and its implication on the gendered vulnerability to HIV infection

The ‘commercialization’ of sex can be traced to the emergence of the ‘provider’ ideology and in the context of emerging new values in the capitalistic economy of the 1940s and 50s. Households

were dependent on men's financial contributions as men became more and more recognized as bread winners, thus creating a new social role that meshed with old ones (Silberschmidt, 2004).

Silberschmidt in her study of the changing role of men in the evolving economic set up in Nyanza, notes that during this period, women became the daily managers of the household, but men remained heads of households in absentia and they were expected to provide financial assistance to the household. The low wages paid in the urban employment however, were hardly enough to cover financial requirement of households. A rather powerful observation by Temah (2007), in analyzing the socio-economic link to women's vulnerability to HIV infection captures the current concerns that has been noted to be on the rise is transactional sex and sex work which heightens prevalence of HIV amongst women; she observes that the economic vulnerability of women predisposes them to exchange sex for money or favours and that their ability to negotiate for protection is greatly undermined. Temah further observed that because of economic dependency, women are less likely to leave a relationship that they perceive to be risky.

The 'fish economy' and particularly the emerging phenomenon called '*fish for sex or sex for fish*' has attracted a deserved attention in the HIV discourse since it was established by the modes of transmission study commissioned by the National AIDS Control Council in 2009 that the HIV prevalence in the fishing communities are very high, ranging from 25 and 30 percent; more than double the Nyanza region's prevalence which then stood at 15.3%. This phenomenon is not unique to Kenya as it has been established that fishing communities in middle and low-income countries are some of the groups at highest risk for HIV transmission (Kissling et al., 2005). MacPherson et al., (2012) posit that the high HIV prevalence amongst the fishing community have been attributed to existence of transactional sex within the fishing industry which arise from the power relation structures mediated by the heavily patriarchal nature of most fishing communities in sub-Saharan Africa. This, they observed tend to put the control of the key factors of production in the fishing industry in the hands of men hence skewing the gender power relation in favour of men of the fishing communities around Lake Victoria.

Kwena et al., (2010) while citing other studies concur that the phenomena of fish for sex is indeed a new phenomenon which emerged in the 1980's with the shrinking formal sector economy. This, they observed, led to more focus on the fish and water based resources which

themselves were dwindling due to ecological degradation. This coupled with the pre-existing rigid division of labour which prescribe that men undertake the fishing and women processing and selling the fish tend to reinforce the skewed power relations in favour of men. This increase in competition for fish due to the diminishing fish stock has given rise to transactional sex (Kwena et al., 2010).

It is estimated that 30,000 women migrate to the beaches in the former Nyanza Province to buy fish, prepare them for the market and broker sales of fish to other female traders while about 19,000 men work within the fishing industry, as boat owners, fishermen, net-makers, repairers and brokers (Kwena et al., 2010).

## **2.6 Theoretical Framework**

The study employed the Gender Schema Theory as propounded by Bem (1981) to analyze how the gendered socialization of boys and girls shapes their world view into sex-typed behavior patterns. Particularly, this theory has been used to analyze how the gender differential socialization in the Luo community influences the perceptions, attitude and behavior of boys and girls and later as men and women in relation to sex, sexuality and HIV risks.

The Gender Schema theory which is a combination of the social-learning and cognitive-developmental approaches postulates that children tend to choose from among a variety of behavior options, behavior patterns that conform to the cultural definition of what it means to be male or female. Theory suggests that children use gender as a schema to organize and guide their view of the world by acquiring gender-specific behaviors through social-learning. The theory has thus enabled the analysis of how the gendered socialization that prescribe acceptable attitudes and behavioural expectations on issues of sexuality for males and females could be encouraging the risky sexual behaviors and/or undermining the capacity of women and men to negotiate for safe sex.

## **3.0 Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This section provides a description of the study site, the study design, study population, sampling procedures, and units of analysis, the methods of data collection and how the data has been analyzed and presented. It also further elaborates on the ethical considerations of the study.

### **3.2 Research site**

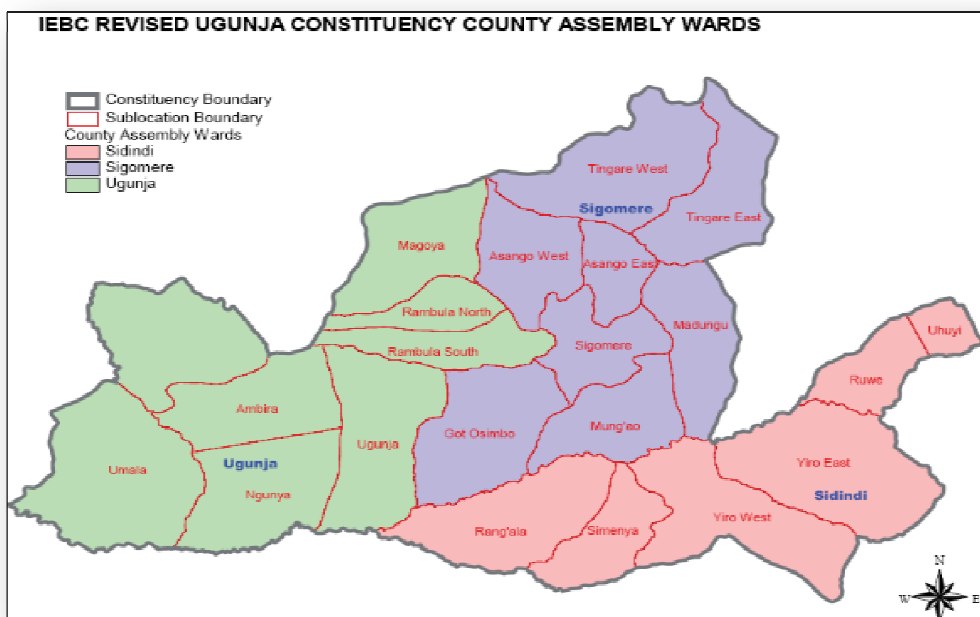
The research was conducted in Ngunya Location in Ugunja Sub-county of Siaya County (Map3.1). The inhabitants of Ngunya Location are predominantly Luo from mainly *Kager* and *Boro* clans, however there are other smaller clans embedded within the community. Ngunya sub-location is one of the 25 sub-locations of Ugunja constituency. The constituency borders Gem constituency on its south east border and Ugenya constituency to its North West boundary. The constituency also borders Alego-Usonga constituency to the south. Ugunja sub-county is home to 88,458 inhabitants and Ngunya has a population of 5,206 inhabitants (KNBS, 2009).

The HIV prevalence of the constituency is 15% according to information from the Ugunja constituency strategic plan (2013). In terms of HIV knowledge, a study by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2013) revealed that all women in Siaya County have heard of AIDS. However, only 58 per cent have comprehensive knowledge of HIV prevention methods and transmission while only 60 per cent know the three main ways of HIV transmission. The poverty level in Ugunja constituency is reportedly very high, estimated at 60% for rural and 89% for the urban population (Ugunja Constituency, 2013). Subsistence agriculture is the main economic activity in Ugunja constituency just like the rest of Siaya County. According to the information attributed to Siaya county website, agriculture provides employment to about 80% of the county population and contributes approximately 60% of the household incomes (<http://www.siyacounty.com/>).

The rate of unemployment is very high and the presence of idle male youths whiling away time in the urban centers is a common site. Drug and alcohol abuse is common in Ugunja constituency. The consumption of the local brew known as '*changaa*' and '*busaa*' is common mainly amongst the men of all ages and even the women. There are a number of cultural rituals around setting up of homestead, putting up a house; agricultural activities such as planting and

harvesting which all require mandatory ritual sex. It has however been noted that the strict adherence to these cultural rituals is not as strong as it used to be due to modernization.

Marriage amongst the Luo generally is exogamous in terms of clan. Marriage is considered complete once the agreed bride wealth has been paid. Traditionally, there were two stages of formalizing a marriage, the first being the payment of ‘*ayie*’ which is usually considered gifting the mother in order to get her permission to marry her daughter. The proper bride wealth in form of livestock varied from one marriage to the other. The payments were usually done in terms of cows and goats although lately, money equivalent to the agreed number of animals is accepted. The advent of Christian marriages has changed the trend of marriages and therefore, a blend of traditional and Christian marriages are common and involve bride wealth payment before church weddings.



Map 3.1: Map of Ugunja Constituency showing Ngunya Sub-location (Source: IEBC, 2013).

### 3.3 Research Design

The research was mainly an exploratory study which sought to expand the understanding of how the gendered socialization of the Luo shapes perceptions and attitudes on sexuality and how this could be contributing to the disproportionately high prevalence of HIV. The study was thus



purely qualitative owing to the fact that it was mainly targeting to enhance the understanding of aspects of the cultural attributes in relation to gendered HIV vulnerability.

Two main qualitative methods of data collection employed in the study included In-depth Interviews and Key Informant Interviews. The In-depth Interviews targeted and involved participants of diverse ages and genders spread within the area under study. Key Informant Interviews also targeted and involved persons from the two genders who had good understanding of the cultural practices of the community. Purposive sampling method was used to identify the informants for the IDIs and the KIIs.

### **3.3 Study population**

The study population was drawn from the male and female adults (18 years and above) who are currently residing in Ngunya sub-location of Ugunja sub-County in Siaya County.

### **3.4 Sample Population**

The study sampled Ngunya sub-location in Ugunja Sub-County of Siaya County. Purposive sampling was used to identify informants for both methodologies (KII and In-depth Interviews).

The sampling criteria for the in-depth interview informants thus purposed to ensure proportionate geographic, gender and age representation. The informants were identified through community development assistant's office since they have a good socio-demographic knowledge of their areas of jurisdiction. Efforts were made to ensure that the six villages in the sub-location are proportionately represented. Informants both male and female, were categorized in different age cohorts as follows: 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-59 and 59+ years for purposes of ensuring that the information provided took into account the various age groups as well as gender.

A total of 20 informants were sampled for in-depth interviews. The sampling criterion was tailored to ensure equitable gender, age and geographic distribution as follows:

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>No. of persons</b>
Male/Female	18 - 25	4
Male/Female	26 - 35	4
Female/Male	36 - 45	4
Male/Female	45 - 59	4
Male/Female	59 and above	4

<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>
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Purposive sampling was also used to identify the 10 (5 males and 5 females) key informants. The key informants were identified through referral mechanisms which entailed participants who were met through the in-depth interview identifying people who are known to have a deep repository of knowledge on the Luo cultural history, beliefs and practices.

### **3.5 Data Collection Methods**

Two main data collection methods were employed as elaborated below.

#### **3.5.1 In-depth Interviews**

In-depth interviews targeted the youth, women as well as men of various age ranges as elaborated in the previous section. They were engaged in discussions to explore their knowledge, experience and views on the impact of culture on their lived sexual and relational lives in the Luo cultural context. The interviews sought to understand their experiences and how that experience creates and reproduces disparities in behavior, attitudes and expectations on sex and sexuality. Additionally, the interview sought to establish how these double standards could either be impeding female action or enhances male masculinity hence exposing them to differential dangers in the face of HIV. All the interviews entailed face to face interaction with detailed probing which was used to enable the researcher understand the various cultural concerns.

During the interviews, attention to details was greatly observed so as to understand the different experiences that men and women face. Attention was also paid to the age differences to see the generational differences in the socialization process and its implications in making them vulnerable to the HIV epidemic.

#### **3.5.2 Key Informant Interviews**

The key informant interviews involved people with deep knowledge about the local socio-cultural dynamics. The persons targeted included male and female elders with known good understanding of the Luo culture. The participants in this category were interviewed on the central issues identified for this study. They shared their experiences on the Luo cultural socialization, the changes that have taken place, the present circumstances and whether they see any link between the process and the high prevalence of HIV and AIDS in the community. As the custodians of culture and people who have lived longer in the community, their ideas formed

a significant basis for the analysis of traditional socialization and better understanding of the community's cultural transformation over the years. They further shared their opinions on the direction they believe the community should take in the face of HIV epidemic.

### **3.6 Data analysis and presentation**

The study mainly generated qualitative data; the data was thematically categorized, analyzed and summarized according to the objectives. The emphasis in qualitative analysis was basically towards "sense making" in order to understand the cultural phenomenon under investigation. The data has thus been presented in terms of analyzed narratives, drawing inferences from the various opinions captured in the various discussions as elucidated in the foregoing section. Additionally, attempts have been made to present the information in its primary form by using verbatim quotes from the informants as a form of amplification to their voices.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

The research was purely through voluntary participation based on informed consent. The informants were adequately informed that their participation in this process was voluntary and if any of them wished to withdraw from the study, they were free to do so at any time without any unfavorable consequences.

Furthermore, all participants received and signed an Informed Consent form that clearly described their right to participate and right to withdraw before their responses in the study could be recorded.

Equally, the informants were informed and assured that their identity was not to be revealed nor attributed to any opinion. Anonymity and confidentiality were thus guaranteed; the researcher made commitment not to divulge anybody's identify in any report, paper, or public forum.

Before the commencement of the fieldwork, the research was reviewed and cleared by an authorized Ethical clearance board. The participants were assured that there will be a feedback session in which the results will be discussed with them for the purposes of individual risk reduction strategy. It is also expected that the results will be published in refereed journals for the larger consumption of the scientific community.

#### **4.0 Chapter 4: ENGENDERED SOCIALIZATION, SEXUALITY AND THE FEMINIZATION OF HIV AMONGST LUOS OF NGUNYA SUB-LOCATION OF UGUNJA CONSTITUENCY**

##### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the findings from the field work. It begins by giving a brief analysis of the demographic characteristics of the informants involved in the study. It also gives a descriptive overview of the main features of the socialization of girls and boys; men and women in matters of sexuality, gender relations and livelihood sourcing amongst members of the Luo community residing in Ngunya sub location of Ugunja Constituency.

In the latter sections of this chapter, qualitative analysis of the findings are done and inferences drawn in line with each of the three study objectives and particularly to analyze and document the '*role of gendered socialization of the Luo community in matters of sexuality in relation to the high prevalence to HIV infection*'.

##### **4.2 General Information**

The study targeted and reached a total of 20 gender proportionate informants from four of the six villages in Ngunya. The informants were of varied age groups as shown in the table below.

Of the 20 informants in the in-depth interviews, 10 were men and 10 were women between the ages of 18 to 59 as shown on the table below. Key informant interviews were done with five men and five women, all of whom were above 60 years of age.

##### **Socio-demographic characteristics of the informants**

###### **4.2.1 Age and distribution of informants.**

Informants were all adults falling in the five age cohorts as shown in the table below.

N=20

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>No. of informants</b>		<b>%</b>
		<b>Men</b>	<b>women</b>	
Male/Female	18 - 25	2	2	13.3%
Female/Male	26 - 35	2	2	13.3%
Male/Female	36 - 45	2	2	13.3%
Male/Female	46 - 59	4	4	26.6%
Male/Female	60 and above	5	5	33.3%

Table 4.1 – Age categories of informants

The age variation gave a very rich basis for comparative analysis of the cultural change over time in terms of change in the socialization trends and content over the years. Analysis of the emerging views of various informants of different ages indicated that there was a discernible variation in the content, opinion and processes.

**4.2.2 Gender of the informants**

Equal number of male (50%) and female (50%) informants were reached during the study. The gender balanced sampling enabled the research to capture gender balanced opinions as either gender was able to capture their opinions from personal recollection.

**4.2.3 Informants Level of education**

Majority (40%) of the informant reached had certificate levels of education followed by 30% who had primary level education. Only 5% of the informant had university level of education. Of the women interviewed, only 15% had post primary level of education.

The 30 informants included 10 key informants. The varied levels provided a rich variation in the views and analytical capacity. The more educated informants were more objective in providing analytical views in relations to the emerging issues such as HIV in relation to the cultural attributes.

***Informants Level of education by gender (N=30)***

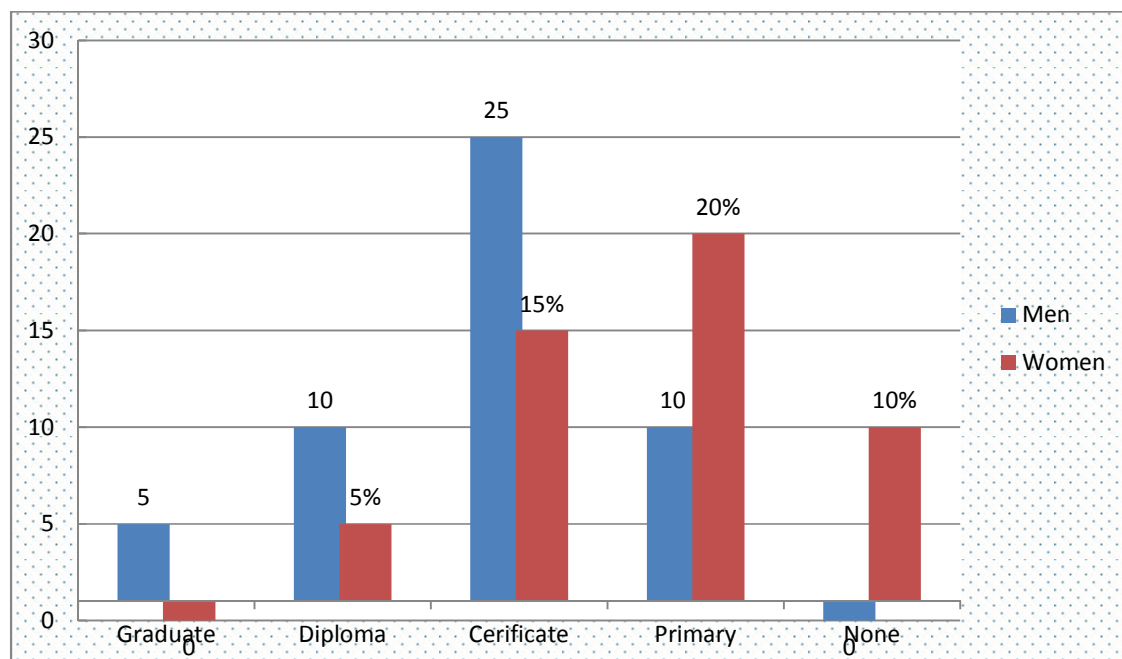


Fig. 4.1 - Informants level of education

#### 4.2.4 Residency of the informants

Majority (80%) of the informants lived in their rural homes within Ngunya sub-location. 20% of the informants lived in a nearby town of Ugunja.

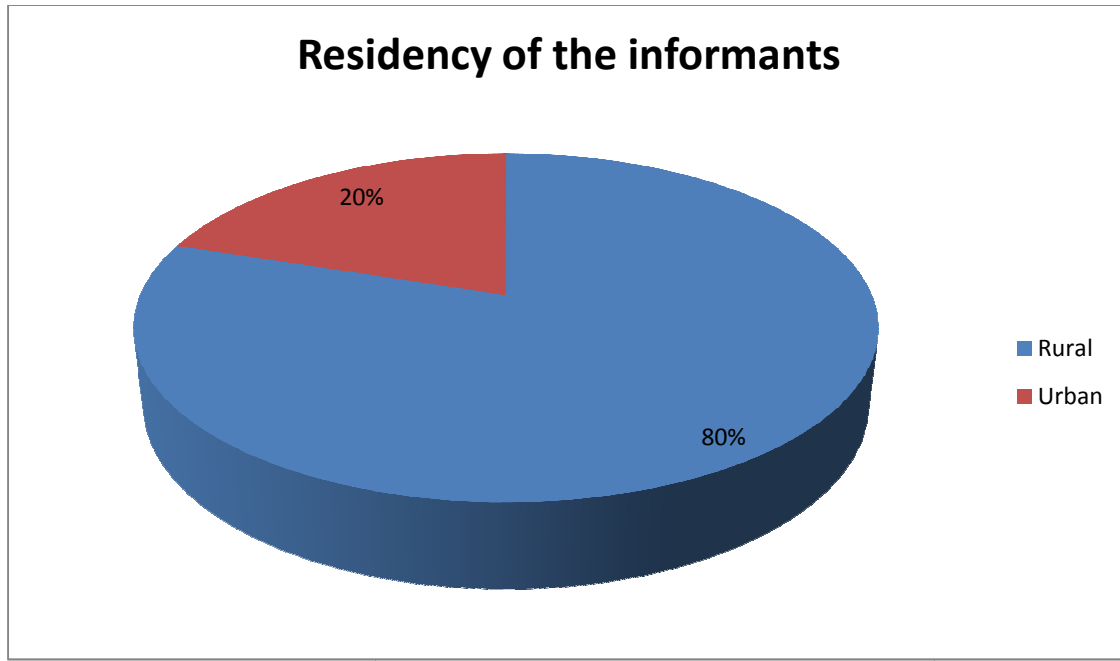


Fig. 4.2 - Residency of informants

#### 4.3 Socialization in the Luo community and how this creates sexual double standards between men and women

The inquiry on this section focused on establishing the different types of teachings and lessons that boys and girls were exposed to during their childhood and progressively through to the pre-adolescent stage. Specifically, the inquiry focused on capturing the informant's recollections of the major lessons learnt while growing and particularly those that influenced their understanding of what constitute appropriate position and perception of a girl or as a boy in the society.

Many of the informants both male and female indicated that they became aware that they were different from the other gender at between ages three to five. This, many of the male and female informants indicated, they learnt through observations, direct teachings, rewards and sanctions depending on the level of conformity to the approved behavior patterns in the community. For instance, one informant noted thus: "...I knew I was different from the other gender when I was still under five years, between three and four. First it was from the different clothing's we were

*given to wear and later, the different tasks we were given as children” (A 21 year old female informant).*

Other informants indicated that they became aware of their differences with other genders when their parents and other adults started admonishing or encouraging them for engaging in certain activities depending on their sexes. A female informant testified that she was admonished several times as a child of about four or five years for climbing trees with her male peers. When she asked why she was being prevented from climbing trees and while her brothers were allowed, she was told that she is a girl and girls are not supposed to climb trees.

A male informant indicated that as a child he observed the variations in the mood, rituals and practices when a child was born and came to know that there were different moods, beliefs and words associated with the birth of a girl child which were different from the birth of a boy child. He observed and this was corroborated by the key informants and other informants that when a boy was born, people often said “*ogoyo wuoyi siro*”(she has given birth to a boy, the pillar) whereas when a girl was born, it was said that “*okelo ja umbo*” (she has brought the one who will fetch water). It was discernible that whereas birth of a boy was often referred to as ‘*goyo*’ while birth of a girl was referred to as ‘*kelo*’; while both denoted giving birth, ‘*goyo*’ carried with it a more pompous and value adding connotation.

The informant further recounted various symbolic references associated with girls and boys that were used to praise or rebuke them as children, they noted that the phrases were different for boys and girls. Many of the female informants recounted the references that were made to the girls for instance the women such as ‘*nyanam*’ (daughter of the lake), ‘*nyadundo*’, (the short one). The women further recalled that they were often told that as girls, particularly if they had conflict with their brothers, that they should respect the boy child since unlike the boy who is the pillar of the home, the girls do not even know where their home will be. A lady recalled that she was often told that “*an nyako ogwang thurgi bor*” meaning, she as a girl is like a mongoose who belongs elsewhere. It was observed by the informants that girls were generally expected to behave in a feminine way while boys were expected to behave more assertively and emotionally detached from their mothers and sisters. A male informant recalled the several beatings and rebukes he received from his grandfather just because he would sit with his mother in the kitchen

at night. He recounted how his grandfather would start singing a song of ridicule which went like “...*Aot nyinge kende, Aot nyinge kende*” this roughly meant ‘he who likes staying in the house has no one with a name like his’. This song would make him and his male peers remember that they should not stay with women in the kitchen however cold or enticing the grandmothers/mothers stories were, he added.

The female informants recalled that as girls, they were to perform certain chores that were deemed appropriate and deviation or noncompliance was always met with punishment. Male informants also recalled that as boys, they were also made to perform strictly certain chores like herding cattle, helping in mending fences, tilling the land mainly with the ox drawn plough.

However, the male informants noted that at younger age, that is from the age of three to seven years, the gender role differentiation was not as strict and many boys helped their mothers with kitchen chores like fetching water, firewood or even washing dishes. But as the boys reached their teens, the boys and girls were made more aware of ‘*their differences*’. As boys grew older into their teen years they were made aware of ‘their importance in the community and had to sleep in “*simba*” (boys house) while girls were to sleep in the kitchen. Girls’ roles were to collect firewood, fetch water and prepare food or assist their mothers’ in doing so.

A male informant aged 40 recounted that “...*at about 13 years, I was still comfortable helping my mother with the kitchen chores. I found nothing wrong with fetching water with my sisters and aunties until one day an older uncle took the bucket full of water from my head and poured the water I was taking home on the ground. He admonished me harshly, reminding me that boys my age were doing manly things like looking after animals in the field and even bringing girls to their ‘simbas’.* He reminded me that if I continued doing the girly duties, no girl will take me seriously.

*I came to learn that one way of being considered a man was to be tough and sexually assertive by being able to get the girls to visit was the mark of being a man”*

The interviews further revealed that there were distinct lessons for girls and boys which served to reinforce the predetermined societal social order as summarized in table 4.2 and 4.3



Table 4.2 - Summary of lessons learnt by women while growing:

<b>Lessons learnt while growing up</b>	<b>From who did you learn?</b>	<b>How did you acquire oral/ observation?</b>
Associated with names which depict gentleness for girls i.e. “nyadundo” ‘nyanam’, ‘jaber’	Grandmothers, mothers, fathers.	Oral/observation
Modes of dressing ( putting on of skirts/blouses and dresses )	Mothers Aunts	Oral/observation
Respecting men and older people.	Mother, fathers, grandparents	Observation
Must undertake domestic chores.	Parents	Observation
Being presentable in physical appearance	Parents, peers	Observation, instruction
Should not be too loud and adventurous as boys.	Parents/peers/grandparents.	Oral/observation.
Taking care of her body during menstruation.	Mothers, older siblings, aunties and grandmothers.	Oral

**Lesson learnt by the men:**

<b>Lessons learnt while growing up.</b>	<b>From whom did you learn?</b>	<b>How did you acquire?</b>
A man must be a principled person.	Fathers, brothers, grandfather.	Oral instructions, Songs, observation
A man should not cry	Parents, older people	Songs/oral
A man must be brave and courageous.	Grandfathers/fathers	Observation/songs/oral
A man must work hard to fend for his family.	Father, grandfather, peers, teachers.	Observations, direct teachings, songs, stories.
A boy must succeed in school and life.	Father, mother, teachers, Brothers, sisters	Parents/books
Names given to boys encourage bravery and success i.e. <i>omuga, sibuor, kwach, otoyoy</i> (names of wild animals).	Peers/Grandfathers/parents	Songs/ oral
Men should be a conquerer	Parents, grandparents, peers.	Oral/observation.
Man is the judge and final decision maker in family issues.	Parents/grandparents.	Oral/observation
A respectable man is one who sires boys.	Parents	Oral/observation.
To have respect to the elderly.	Grandparents/parents	Oral

Mode of dressings Shorts & shirts	Mothers, Peers fathers, spiritual leaders.	Oral communication
Men do not cry like girls and women.	Parents	Observation
A man's place is outside the house.	Parents/ grandparents/ peers.	Oral, observation.

It is evident from the accounts of the informants from the in-depth interviews that was a parallel curricular for boys and girls that was actively passed on to them by the older relatives. The main feature of the teachings for the boys was the need to feel and act superior and dominate the female in all spheres of life including in sexual and other social relations. The boys were taught to be aggressive and to go for what they needed from the society and even from women. Economic power was one avenue of control that was bestowed on the boys who later used the same as men to leverage their control of the sexual relations.

The main theme of the girls' socialization on the other hand was obedience and servitude to male folk and the society at large. Form the accounts of women in the in-depth interviews and the key informants' sessions, the teachings girls got as they grew up diminished their capacity to negotiate in sexual relations thus limiting their capacity to employ HIV risk aversions later in life as adults.

It is evident from the foregoing that the socialization of the girls and boys emphasized on communicating the '*differences*' between them and using the notion of the differences between the girls to create hierarchy of power where boys were socialized to assume positions of power and advantage in aspects of social and economic development. The advantageous position of men/boys was from the accounts of the informants, directed towards sexual dominance as a show of the manhood. It was clear that the notions of masculinity emphasized on aggression, emotional and physical distance from women and girls. This clearly can be deduced to be a major contributor to sexual risks as men and boys that men from the Luo community take in the quest to distinguish themselves as real men. The socialization trend for the girls tended to direct them towards passivity, servitude and obedience. This can be clearly linked to the low capacity for self-agency by young girls and women which results in the low capacity to negotiate for safe sex hence high vulnerability to HIV infections by women.

***\*Nya Muga's Account:***

Nyamuga is one of the key informants. She is in her early seventies and is a widowed mother of three grown up children and a grandmother of many. She has lived most of her life in the Ngunya sub-location having been married at a tender age as the fifth wife to a prominent man few years before Kenya's independence. Nyamuga's account of the main features of socialization corroborates the views expressed by most of the female informants in the in-depth interviews.

**Here is her recollection on the socialization process for boys and girls in her community:**

*In the past when we were growing up, when a child was born, there were distinct processes and traditions observed depending on the sex of the child. When a boy child was born, the announcement of the arrival of the child was different from that of the girl child. When a boy was born, the parents would identify the child by the anticipated role for instance it would be said "Okelo jakwath" (she has brought the one who will herd cattle) and if it was a girl they would say "okelo ja umbo" (she has brought the one who will fetch water).*

She further narrated that depending on the sex of the child, the baby was kept indoors for a certain number of days, for instance boys were kept indoors for four days while girls were kept indoors for three days and would be exposed to the outside world only after the appropriate duration in a ceremony called '**Rusonyathi**'. Additionally, she further recounted that there was a ritual called '**kalo tie nyathi**' which was the initial ritual sexual intercourse between the father and the mother after the birth of the child. This was usually done on the day the child is removed from the house for the first time; however this was not strictly enforced and varied depending on the parents' own judgment of right time. She noted, that in polygamous marriages, it was encouraged that a man get this done with so that he can be free to tend to the other wives' sexual needs as it was decreed that a man should perform this ritual with the mother of the new born baby before engaging sexually with any other woman.

She recounted that as children started growing up, they were mostly with their mothers until they reached around three or four years when the boys would occasionally be sent to spend more time

with their father but they would still be under the direct care of their mother. At this point the children would begin to learn very basic tasks by seeing what others are doing and trying to reproduce the actions. As the children grew, they would get exposed to tasks appropriate for them, for instance, a boy would join the bigger brothers or cousins when they are looking after livestock in the field. They would progressively be allowed to undertake tougher tasks under the supervision of older siblings, cousins or parents until they can undertake the task on their own.

Girls on the other hand would spend most of their time in the company of the female members of the household especially their mother. They would also try to imitate what they see being done by their mother and older sisters where there were some. However, some activities like farming were done by both men and women together, so when the children are young and under the care of their mother, they would be brought along to the farm to play around under the watchful eye of the mother and other adults. In farming, however the clearing of bushes or cutting down of trees was work reserved for men as they were considered heavy tasks. Women left the farm earlier than the men to go and prepare breakfast for the family while men continued to work and when the breakfast was ready, it was either brought to the farm or the men would be called back home to have breakfast.

Upon reaching the age of about twelve to fourteen years, boys were kept under the tutelage of their grandfather and father and there was no distinction between uncles and father or brother and cousins as all uncles and cousins were called father and brother respectively amongst the Luo.

In terms of gender and the division of labour between the sexes, the Luo divided work between men and women in terms of the amount of physical labour required to get the work done. Tasks that were viewed as demanding a lot of physical effort were done by men. These included such tasks as the construction of houses, taking care of and looking after livestock, cutting down of trees for firewood or for any construction work, hunting, and fishing among other duties that involved long periods of being away from home and required physical strength to undertake. On the other hand, women were tasked with the duty of taking care of household related chores and looking after children. Women prepared the meals, fetched water from the river, they collected firewood around the home and its surrounding environs. Thus, there was traditionally a clear

division of roles between the sexes among the Luo with each role serving a purpose necessary to support life.

The socialization of girls was done by their grandmother in whose house (“*Siwindhe*”) teenage girls lived while boys were socialized by their grandfather in the “*duol*” (the men’s house) on their different roles. Each evening, the girls congregated in the kitchen with their grandmother and they held their conversations while the boys congregated in the grandfather’s house “*duol*”. Additionally, she added, the boys as they grew older, they got further socialization on sex and skills for men from the older brothers in the “*Simba*” (the boys’ house).

She recounted that there existed two sets of rules for children and depending on their gender, the expectations of their roles, social relations and sexuality expression were varied and actively enforced through stories, the “*pako*” (praising) as well as using riddles and songs among other methods. So boys who exhibited bravery, adventurousness and outgoing character earned praise while girls who were timid, obedient and hardworking earned the praise of being ‘*the good girl*’ and attracted many suitors.

She however lamented that, with the advent of modern education, urbanization and the modern economy, the circumstances of life have greatly changed and the role of grandmothers and grandfathers have greatly waned. Nowadays, children are hardly at home and even if they are there they do not value the opinion of the older people. She attributed the many social and health challenges such as HIV to the breakdown in the traditional education which taught people how to engage in proper behavior “*ritruok*” (taking care of themselves).

The account of ‘Nyamuga’ echoed the sentiments expressed by many informants in the in-depth interviews on the rigid dichotomy in socialization of girls and boys which conferred differential value and power to the two the genders. This has evidently created double standards in both social and sexual expectations between the girls and boys thus contributing to heightened HIV infection.

#### **4.4 Gendered cultural socialization of the Luo community on sex and sexuality in the context of HIV and AIDS**

The inquiry on this section sought to document information on the different forms of socialization of sex and sexuality and the dominant practices arising thereof. The inquiry further sought the informants' opinion on the possible linkages between the socialization on sexuality and HIV.

#### **4.5 Account of sex socialization by the older women and men (50 and above)**

There was a distinctive variation in the source of information on sex and sexuality according to the age of informants. Most informants above fifty years of age indicated that they received most of their sex education from their grandparents, uncles and peers. The women indicated that they received most of the sex education from their grandmothers. It was reported that the grandmothers for the sake of removing the age and social barriers referred to their granddaughters as "*nyieka*" (my co-wife).

Additionally, most of the older female informants (50 and above) indicated that they received sex education from their peers, older sisters, cousins and aunts while fetching firewood, water or while cooking. These older women also indicated that during their childhood, virginity was emphasized for girls and whereas girls were allowed to "*wuowo*" (date and visit boys in their homes), they were encouraged to "*rito ringre gi*" (preserve their virginity). The informants recounted that they were often warned not to allow boys to have penetrative sex with them. They were taught how to perform non penetrative sex to help the boys 'relieve themselves' (ejaculate) through thigh sex and cuddling. If a boy/man forced 'themselves on the girls' (had penetrative sex), the girl had to report to the grandmother or the older siblings after which the women from her home would gather and go to the boys/man's home singing songs of ridicule, chastising the boys for being a "*mwagla*" (he who has no control). The boy's family would be compelled to pay a fine of a heifer for "*ketho ringre nyako*" (spoiling the body of the girl). Girls would be warned to avoid such boys/men.

Various accounts from the informants indicated that girls were always reminded that if they were to get pregnant, they would be forced to marry older men as second or third wives. Girls were also encouraged to make known their boyfriends and would often be heard praising themselves with their boyfriends name as "*an ng'ane chotng'ane*" (am so and so the girlfriend of so). It was

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**“Siwindhe-** *It was a place meant for womenfolk and particularly young girls who were approaching their maturity stage. Siwindhe was at a grandmother’s house. In most cases, she was an old woman in the village who was known to have a good knowledge of the culture. Education concerning culture, tradition and other rites of the community was provided at this place to the girls. The old woman gave the girls education on issues regarding sexuality, how to remain chaste till marriage and how to take care of her family once married. They were also told what to do if boys impregnated them” – A female Key informant.*

also noted that girls would often be invited by their married sisters and aunts to their marital homes as an opportunity for them (girls) to meet boys who could marry them. Other informants indicated that getting girls to visit their married relatives was a way of avoiding incestuous relationships since people tended to live in communal set up composed of relatives unlike the cosmopolitan living arrangements of modern times.

It was reported by many informants that one prominent practice which exposed girls to boys from other communities was the practice called “*omo wer*” (bringing the song) where a group of girls of marriageable age would visit their sister/cousin in her place of marriage and would sing “*wende kisera*” (songs of seduction). Young men who are brother in-laws to sister/cousin would come to woo the girls. It was learnt that there were many other opportunities created to enable girls meet and interact with boys from other places mainly in places where their relatives are married. This, according to the older women key informants, was to enable girls meet boys/ men whose background could be verified.

Individual girls would also be called by their sisters or cousins to visit them so that they could be introduced to their sister’s husbands and be married as second wives through the practice called “*omo sweho*”. It was recurrently pointed out that marriage in the olden days were mainly through a go between known as “*wanjira*” or “*jagam*” (go between).

It was learnt that girls would be betrothed when they were still young, “*nyako mapodi ok onyiewo piny*” (a girl who has not started menstruating). Such girls were allowed to stay in their maiden home until they reached menstruation age but they were considered as married women.

A go-between was mostly a relative who connected two individuals, families or clans. They looked at the family background to ascertain presence or absence of issues like witchcraft,

history of theft and wizardry. They also looked at the character of the two individuals in so far as hard work was concerned.

### ***Men's Account***

From the account of the **older men (above 50 years)**, sex education was mainly imparted in the “*duol*” during the evening fireside stories presided over by the grandfather, ‘fathers’ and the older ‘brothers’. However, for the men, it emerged that more sex education were through peers and older brothers in the ‘*simba*’. The substance of sexual education for men was towards making them sexually assertive and to be people who would be successful in wooing the girls.

According to a male informant, men who had good success rate in winning girls were admired by peers and praised by elders as “*wuoyi mongeyo kiseru*”(a man who knows how to woo girls). Having multiple girlfriends was not frowned upon and such men would be given names to depict their prowess. An informant recounted the account of such name in his heyday, the man was nick named “*Ogutu danger*”.

The male informants however noted that despite the pressure to ‘conquer’ and show prowess in wooing girls, chastity was equally an important feature in the boy’s sex education and socialization. A boy who would be known for exceeding the borders of chastity and breaking the virginity of girls or making a girl pregnant would be shunned by peers and girls would be warned about him. Given that when a boy broke a girl’s virginity, they would be forced to pay a head of cattle, the brothers would also chastise the errant relative for wasting cows which were then an important indicator of wealth.

According an elderly male informant, “*The art of seduction was a skill that was deliberately taught by the older siblings and relatives while in the grazing fields or in the “simba”* (the boys’ house). Boys of about age sixteen years and above would bring girls to their “*simba*”. The men’s account corroborated women’s account that one’s girlfriend(s) were well known to everyone including the parents.



The men affirmed that their sisters-in-laws were very important in creating opportunity for them to meet girls from their sister in-law's place. It was thus important that boys maintained cordial relationships with “*yuoche*” (sisters-in-laws).

Polygamy was celebrated amongst the Luos. According to an informant, if a man had only one wife, he was subject to ridicule by peers. For instance it was often said “...*Ja dhako achiel bedo e dhoot eod budho*” (During meetings, a man with one wife is expected to sit next to the main door or generally in an open place). Polygamy was used as a proxy of gauging a man's leadership ability. A male informant opined thus:

*“....a man with one wife cannot handle as many problems and withstand pressure as a polygamous man would do. Such a fellow can cause a lot of havoc and destabilize a meeting when seated in the center when a problem revolving around his family is reported. A polygamous man on the other hand before acting will pose a few questions to know exactly who, where and how to assist/ react to the problem.”* – ( **male Key Informant in his 60s**).

It was evident that for informants in this age category sexual double standard was the norm in the socialization process and plural sexual relationships for men such as polygamy was encouraged. It was also noted from the discussions that even though the circumstances of life have changed and men may not necessarily marry many wives, concurrent multiple sexual relationships is still prevalent and approved by men and tolerated by women in this age category. As pointed out by Pilcher et al., (2004) and Waweru et al., (2005), multiple concurrent sexual partnerships is considered as one of the key high risk behavior in HIV transmission and this could therefore, explain the high incidences of HIV in the Luo community.

#### **4.5.1 Accounts of the younger generation (men and women) on socialization on sex and sexuality**

The account of informants from the ages 18 to 40 years indicated a significant shift in the source of information on sexuality. It was discernible that much smaller number of informants between ages of 18 and 49 indicated having received sex education from their grandparents. An equally smaller number indicated having received some information on sex from their parents. There was no mention of “*duol*” or “*siwindhe*” as avenues of socialization on sexuality and life in general.

The informants in this category mainly mentioned the following as the actors in their socialization on sex and sexuality:

- Parents
- Sunday school teachers and church generally
- Teachers in school
- Clubs at school
- Counselors at VCT centers
- Peers
- Television and newspapers.
- Books (for academic and recreation)
- Social media.
- Songs and folk tales.

Significant similarities and differences between the sex socialization for the older and younger generation were discernable. Some of these differences and similarities are captured on table 4.3 below:

**Table 4.3 Cross generational similarities and difference in socialization**

<b>Similarities in socialization on sex amongst older and younger generations</b>	<b>Differences in socialization sex amongst older and younger generations.</b>
In both younger and older generations, boys/men were initiators of relationships.	Amongst the younger generation chastity and virginity not emphasized for both girls and boys unlike in the older generations.
Women and girls played passive roles in relationships in both generations.	Unlike the older generations where courtship and marriage relationship were arranged through networks of relatives, the younger generation initiate their relationship independently or through peer networks.
In both generations, men and boys are allowed/not condemned for multiple sexual relationships.	Girls and boys engage in penetrative sex without any serious repercussion or societal sanctions.
	Unlike the older generation where relationships between girls and boys were open, the younger generations are more secretive in their relationships.

Interesting perspective emerged in the sexuality socialization trends for the younger and older informants. It was noted that whereas the processes and means of socialization has changed tremendously across the generations, the content and the outcome of the gendered socialization remained fairly intact. The double standards in the social and sexual expectations remained and the girls are still socialized to play the passive role in all aspects of life including sexual negotiation and boys and younger men are still encouraged to engage in multiple concurrent sexual relations thus still exposing the boys and girls to risk of HIV infections.

#### **4.5. 2The role sex and sexuality in the Luo culture**

According to the accounts of the various categories of stakeholders, sex played and still plays a very central role in the culture and social arrangements in the Luo community. Amongst the older informants (50 and above), sex was predominantly a preserve of the marriage institution. However, in some instances, married girls who returned to their maiden homes would engage in sex with their peers.

In the marriage context, sex was mainly for procreation and men were discouraged from over indulging in sex as it was thought that this would weaken them. According to a key informant, men were encouraged to maintain emotional distance from women lest they lose their manly authority hence men were encouraged to build an independent hut (*duol*) from where they would choose which wife to spend the night.

In terms of decision making on sex, a man's word was final and if a wife refused the husband's sexual advances, it was considered a taboo and the man had to report to the elders when "*dhako oloko ne toke*" (the woman has turned her back on him). The errant woman would be forced to go back to her maiden home and come back with a goat for cleansing otherwise "*chira*" (curse) could befall them. Even though this practice has waned in terms of the means of enforcement, men and women attested that it is still widely applicable and enforced through physical force or economic sanctions for instance an errant woman would be beaten, or not be allocated a farm to till.

Women were also not supposed to swear that they would not have sex with their husbands. It was reported that if a woman, in a moment of disagreement was to slap her thighs saying that the

husband will never touch her again; she would be forced to go to her maiden home to fetch a goat for cleansing to avoid “*chira*” (curse) before they could resume their normal sexual life.

Sex was an integral part and parcel of the major cultural rituals. Observance of the sexual rituals was and is still largely enforced through myths which threatens non conformity with *chira* whose consequences were mostly death of children and/or the non-conforming parties. According to the recollection of the various informants, some of the circumstances that demanded ritual sex were:

- When a daughter or son was getting married, the parents were to be the first to rise for the occasion
- When a new house was completed, it had to be initiated by a ritual sex.
- When a child or parents died, there was sex after three or four days depending on the gender of the deceased.
- When the main gate was erected (*chungo rangach*) sex followed.
- When it was time for *golo kodhi* (initiating planting) the father had to initiate the process by having sex with the first wife. In cases where the father was deceased, the mother would initiate planting with a brother in law. This has changed over time and is now not strictly observed due to urbanization and christianity.
- When it was time for harvesting, there was the *ruako kodhi* (welcoming the harvest) which entailed having the ritual sex by the parents if they are alive and if deceased, the brothers welcomed the harvest by having sex with their wives in order of seniority.

### **The practices of *Lako* (Wife inheritance)**

One of the most significant practices that involved ritual sex was the practice that has become commonly known as ‘*wife inheritance*’ although the direct translation and the implication in the cultural context actually meant ‘*herding*’ or ‘*keeping within leash*’. This translation was actually consistent with the explanation given by a female Key informant who proffered that ‘*the practice was noble when it was properly being practiced*’. In anthropology, this practice is known as levirate marriages.

### ***An account of a female key informant in her late seventies:***

In the olden days, this practice was meant to keep particularly young widows of child bearing age within the family. The widow could identify a person on her own and then notify the immediate relatives. Alternatively, a committee of elders was formed to identify a suitable brother in law to take the place of the dead person. A man who would qualify needed to have met certain set criteria such as, for instance he must have fulfilled all his marriage obligations

especially *diso chiege* (process of setting up your wife to start cooking in her own house and not with her mother-in-law). Most importantly, the man must be from the deceased man's clan and is a cousin or younger brother to the deceased. The man must also demonstrate economic capacity to provide for both families.

She pointed that “..Women who were past child bearing age, did not have to go through the ritual sex to fulfill the cultural requirement of ‘*chodo kola*’ (ritual cleansing after death of husband). The older women would get a brother-in-law to pass a cigarette through the crevice of the door (**gamo ndawa egala mbewa**). When this was done, the ritual was considered to have been fulfilled”.

However, she lamented that the practice has greatly changed in the modern times and in many instances it is not properly practiced and is largely fueled by sexual lust and unfounded fear. She noted that, nowadays non clan members are paid to have sex with widows in the guise of fulfilling the rituals, according to her, “*magi chode ok tieko kwer*” (this is mere fornication not cultural ritual).

She further noted that nowadays, old women are coerced to have ritual sex unlike the true spirit of the practice which conferred a lot of discretion on the matter. She blamed the ‘latter day experts’ who insist on sex even with dead bodies. According to her, if a woman died with *kola* (before cleansing), a brother-in-law would merely “*pimo nget*” (position oneself as if sleeping together) and not have any penetrative sex with a corpse, “but nowadays this happens” she opined.

She further noted that nowadays men who go to ‘inherit women’ target the wealth of the family instead of bringing resources to the family as was the practice.

#### **4.5.3 HIV and Wife Inheritance**

The key informant concluded by observing that these distortions have made the once noble practice to be particularly very dangerous in this era of HIV and AIDS. She cited the case of her daughter-in-law whose husband (her son) died a few years ago of HIV related complications. Given that she had been adequately sensitized and therefore, had good understanding of HIV and AIDS, she advised her daughter-in-law against going for the ritual “*and she pretended to have heard*”, lamented the old lady. However, a few months later, when one of the (deceased son's) children started getting chronically ill, the daughter-in-law was advised that it is because she has not fulfilled the sex rituals of “*chodo kola*” that was making the child ill. However, the truth was

that the child had acquired the virus from the parents, but due to fixation with the culture and the fear of accepting her HIV status, the mother insisted it was *chira*, noted the informant.

She further narrated that the daughter in-law secretly brought in *jalako* (wife inheritor) whom she paid to perform the ritual sex. However, many months after the ritual, the child was still sickly and the daughter in-law also started ailing. Her condition deteriorated very fast but she refused to seek medical attention opting for the traditional medicine claiming that she was also suffering from *chira* due to some other imagined unfulfilled rituals. She narrates that it took the combined efforts of a community support group members and relatives to get her to seek appropriate medical attention. She and the child have since been initiated on anti-retroviral therapy (ART). The man who had been brought to perform the sex ritual was reported to have become hysterical when the HIV status of the lady was confirmed. He was supported through counseling and has also since been enrolled on ART.

The accounts of this key Informant resonates very well with the views of many of the informants from the in-depth interview who noted that the culture of the Luo in regards to sexuality decision making has degenerated over time and have consistently become more restrictive with more powers on sex decision making by women diminishing and thus exposing the women to risky sexual encounters in the name of fulfilling corrupted cultural rituals. It was noted that the deep indoctrination and the fear implanted on women made them ignore information on HIV prevention since most of the myths indicate that non conformity would lead to the death of children, many women therefore, reasoned that they would rather sacrifice themselves by fulfilling the sex based cultural rituals and save their children.

This therefore, validates the emerging evidence in HIV programming that individual targeted behavioral intervention for HIV may not be effective as the broad structural factors emanating from the cultural norms undermines the individual's capacity to utilize the information to avert HIV infection risks.

#### 4.6 The role of economic organization of the Luo community to the gender power relations and its attendant effects to the differential vulnerability to HIV infection

Inquiry in this area focused on establishing the main economic activities in the community, specifically, it sought information on how men and women accessed and controlled family and community resources in the quest for meeting their livelihood needs. The inquiry also sought to establish how the gender differential access and control of resources impacted on gender power relations and its potential impact in influencing vulnerability to HIV infection.

##### 4.6.1 Perception and ownership of important resources in the community

Informants were unanimous that among the Luo, key resources that were highly valued included Land, Water, trees and livestock. Additionally, some informants added that in the olden days and even currently but to a lesser extent, women and children were considered as a man's resource. Therefore, men who had many wives and children were considered wealthy since, it was argued, many hands were instrumental in getting farm work done and that therefore, translated into more farm produce.

It was further noted by many informants that there was a distinction in the types of properties which were considered a man's property and what was considered a woman's property.

Man's property	A woman's property
Land	Chicken
Cattle	Farm produce (cereals)
Trees	Cooking utensils
women	
children	
Farming implements	

Table 4.4 Dichotomy of men and women's property amongst the Luo

A male informant observed that:

*“..In our Luo custom, men are the only people who have a say on every family resource, even though in many families women have access and can use resources such as land for farming, at the end of the day it is still at a man's discretion and depending on the woman's behavior, the man can reassign her farm to another wife or even reduce the acreage of her farm. It is only*

*men who can inherit land and animals, but in some circumstances, daughter who never got married or returned back to their maiden homes were given land by their fathers or uncles.”*

It is discernible therefore, that women merely had access to factors of production such as land and water and could only use them at the discretion of the male relatives.

The existence of the patrilineal trend in property inheritance was confirmed by nearly all the informants. It was noted that this is one of area where there has been minimal change over the years. Informants noted that even though the laws have changed decreeing that women should have equal rights to property inheritance especially land, however, the cultural pressure is still strong and thus few women are making any claim for land inheritance. The informants pointed out that they have not heard of any case in the sub-location where a family has bequeathed a daughter any immovable property such as land or a house.

The above situation was confirmed by a sentiment from a male informant who noted that:

*“Men have more say in controlling the family resources. The man customarily provides for the family. The woman cooks. So everything, including the woman, belongs to the man. When the man dies, his property is inherited by his male children, or they revert to his brothers or cousins. Even if the head of the family dies, the elder son is to inherit the resources and if he is still young the brother to the father is proposed to take control”.*

#### **4.6.2 Economic activities of the Luo community**

Crop and livestock farming were some of the main economic activities undertaken among the Luo living in Ngunya sub-Location. Ngunya sub location being part of the larger Ugenya community is ‘land locked’ and thus far removed from the *nam lolwe* (Lake Victoria), fishing was mentioned as being done in small scale in the rivers that traverse the locality namely *nam ndhoya* and *aora wuoroya* (river Nzoia and river Wuoroya).

The crops predominantly cultivated were mentioned as sorghum, millet and beans. It was mentioned that it is through farming that the community ensured its self-sufficiency in food. Informants noted that in the past, someone was considered to be wealthy if they could ensure that



their family was food sufficient and he had surplus with which he could feed visitors he hosted and even gave them some at the end of their visit on their return to where they came from.

It was revealed that animals that were considered important were cattle and goats which were used for bride-wealth payment. Sheep was also widely reared but were considered mainly as source of food during funerals and other ceremonies. However, due to diminishing land space, many families have fewer livestock. Livestock were mainly looked after by the men. A man would assign a cow or cows to different wives for the sake of using the milk. However, even though the woman could use the milk resource for many years, she could not sell or donate the animal or its off spring.

It terms of division of labour, various participants pointed out that both men and women participated in the farming. However men's mandatory key role was during land clearance and breaking the ground which at times was done using ox drawn ploughs or by hand. Women's role in the crop farming was in the planting, weeding, harvesting, winnowing and storage of farm produce. Fishing was strictly done by men while women's role was limited to preparing the catch for eating.

According to the younger informants, the gender division of roles is not as distinct today as many cited that they participate in all the stages of cultivation equally. However, the female informants pointed out that many younger men still use the cultural excuse that a man's role is in looking after the animals even though many families have only few animals that are tethered.

#### **4.6.3 Educational opportunities and employment**

With the evolving trends, it was noted that modern education and employment have diversified sources of livelihood and economic engagements. However, most male and female informants observed that modernity has not altered the traditional trends much. It was noted that the fact that men are considered the main providers for the families, many parents therefore, give the boy child more opportunity to pursue education than girls. This was observed to have resulted in the few employment opportunities being taken up by men.

It was observed by many informants that many male youths who could not secure salaried employment resorted to idling and partaking in the local *changaa* or *busaa* brews. When asked why they were not pursuing other livelihood engagements, many of the male youths indicated that some jobs were below their ‘qualifications’ even though most of them just had KCSE level of education. The females, particularly the married ones on the other hand were more versatile and engaged in businesses, *changaa* brewing and farming among others.

#### **4.6.4 Economic arrangement and its possible link to HIV**

Upon further inquiry, it was observed by many informants that girls/women who were not married by certain age (mostly mid-twenties) tended to move to urban centers or to bigger towns due to pressure from their brothers and the community due to fear that they will start exerting pressure on the family resources since most of them already have children by that age. However, many informants further observed that given that these women/girls never got good education or any inheritance, most of them have to rely on other men for support hence they engaged in either sex work or transactional sex. This was noted to be a big predisposing factor to HIV vulnerability.

#### **According to the account of female informant in her mid-forties:**

*“Over the years we have seen many girls move to urban centers or the big towns mostly to join their sisters, brothers or even cousins. However, it was not lost on us that these girls were merely running away from the pressure mounted on them by the male siblings or even parents and community members who would start calling girls of certain age (from early twenties) as “nyako ma odiwo” (a girl who is stranded). Most of these girls would be having one or two children by that age and thus the competition for resources between her children and the brother’s family would peak”.*

She went on to add that, *from the mid-nineties up to mid 2000’s, many of these “girls started coming home in coffins” (dead).* He challenged me to take a head count of orphaned children living with their grandmothers in the various homes in the village to confirm that every home has children of “*wagogni*” (unmarried women) who have since died. She noted that even though both men and women were affected by the HIV scourge, many women have ‘been pushed into the (HIV) scourge’ by economic circumstances which stemmed from the cultural biases in wealth and opportunities distribution.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the economic arrangements of the Luo community conferred a lot of opportunities and control over resources to men. This arrangement skewed the gender power relation in favour of men and according to the insights offered by both male and female informants, rendered women voiceless in very many fronts and particularly in sexual negotiation matters. The sheer denial of opportunity in access to education and other livelihood means exposed women and girls to dependency on men. Instances where the women were not able to get married, it was noted many of them inadvertently ended up in transactional sex and even in outright sex work. Cross generational transactional sex mostly involving younger girls and economically better endowed older males has been blamed as one of the high risk sexual behaviors responsible for the disproportionately high HIV prevalence amongst young women of 15-24 years.

The unequal economic opportunities and women's lack of control over resources is therefore, some of the known economic induced vulnerabilities which expose women and girls to risks of HIV infection. The existence and active enforcement of this economic apartheid in the Luo community could be responsible for the higher prevalence of HIV infection.

There are also myths that create link between HIV and AIDS and the sexual intercourse with virgins. Older men who have contracted the virus in the urban centers come to die at home in the rural areas. Since there is no external sign of the illness and given that most of them have resources, they lure young girls in the belief that having sex with a virgin could be part of the cure. Still, some men are outrightly malicious and may spread the disease to the innocent victims.

## **5.0 Chapter 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This study sought to enhance the understanding of how gender socialization and the attendant cultural practices could be fueling the spread of HIV amongst the Luo community. This section therefore, gives summative and interpretive overview based on findings of the study.

### **5.2 Summary of major findings**

From the accounts of the various informants, the findings are summarized as follows.

#### **5.2.1 Socialization in the Luo community and its impact on gender differential vulnerability to HIV infection by men and women**

From the findings, it was clear that cultural socialization system employed a dual socialization system for girls and boys. It is clear that the socialization in the Luo community aimed at cultivating predetermined (gender schema) traits and conferring value on the boys and girls differentially.

It is observable from the emerging information that girls and women were socialized to play subordinate roles to men and the main emphasis in their socialization was towards servitude and obedience. Boys' and men's socialization on the other hand focused on equipping them with knowledge necessary for leadership and authority. The gender skewed socialization make girls to internalize low self-esteem hence low capacity for self-efficacy which in turn predisposes them to social, economic and sexual manipulation by men hence increased risks of HIV infection.

It is further deducible that the girl's socialization which directed them towards being passive and obedient distorted the gender power relation in favour of men/boys as girls/women are structurally indisposed to negotiate in all matters including sex on equal platform with men. The gender disproportionate vulnerability of girls and women to HIV infection is thus most likely being contributed to by these structural disadvantages.

The high valuation of males is rather very open in the socialization process. References such as “*wuoyi siro*” (a man is pillar) seem to be the guiding ideology for men which thus lay foundation for preference for the boy children. These preferences were found to lead to discrimination against the girl children especially in the provision of education. Parents in the Luo community were reported to believe that it is the boys who finally are going to take care of them and not girls. Additionally, boys/men are socialized to take risks, this as observed, is a contributor to the reason for the adventurous and reduced risk aversion capacity to HIV infection. Additionally, it was noted that the over glorification of boys and men could be fueling complacency and poverty since just being born a man seem to ‘confer a lot of advantages’ that men don’t need to work hard to prove anything. This in turn leads to idling and experimenting with drugs and sex, all which contribute to heightened risks of HIV infection.

### **5.2.2 Gendered cultural socialization of the Luo community on sex and sexuality in the context of HIV and AIDS**

The findings of this study reveal that the socialization of boys and girls on sex and sexuality was/is wrought with duality of sexual expectation on either gender. While girls are expected to be passive on sexual matters, boys are socialized to be adventurous and engage in multiple sexual relations without much societal sanction. However, it was notable that the past Luo generations were more balanced on socialization on sex and sexuality as both boys and girls were encouraged to exercise restraint in their sexual engagements. These, however, has been lost over time and thus the boys have been accorded a more free reign to engage in multiple sexual exploration with little or no societal sanctions. The social restraints which were hitherto imposed on the girls have also reduced; however there is still more demand on sexual fidelity of girls compared to boys.

It was also reported that sexual rituals which mainly demanded mandatory sex in certain circumstances have remained fairly intact across generations. Even more intriguing was the observation that the rituals that did not demand sex have been modified to entail mandatory sex in the current times; one such example was the wife inheritance which exempted the older women from the sex ritual but has been so far distorted to entail mandatory sex even for old or sick people unlike the original practice.

It was revealed that men have used their advantaged position to change norms which confer them more control on women's sexuality. The gender power relations has thus continued to be skewed in favour of men while women's position in the family remain marginal and even weaker when it comes to sexual negotiation, a fact that could be exacerbating vulnerability to HIV infections. However, men have also been greatly exposed as a number of the sex related rituals demand participation of both parties irrespective of the background. With the modern trends of urbanization and modern economy, more women work outside the home and have risks of acquiring HIV which they can expose their husbands to due to these rituals. The societal permissiveness to concurrent multiple sexual relations were also very evident and this is one factor that fuel the transmission of HIV infection.

### **5.2.3 Economic organization of the Luo community to the gender power relations and its attendant effects to the differential vulnerability to HIV infection**

The findings revealed that the economic organization of the Luo community is one of the well laid out instruments of enforcing male domination. It was evident that all the important resources mainly the factors of production such as land and related resources such as trees, water and water resources, human resources and machinery are within the exclusive control of men. Women on the other hand have mostly access rights which are determined by their relationship with the men in the society.

The restricted economic opportunities for women was analyzed to be the main predisposing factor to reduced capacity to negotiate for safe sex and a possible contributor to the large number of women involved in transactional sex and sex work. All these contribute to women and girls' reduced capacity for safe sex options hence increased risk to HIV infection.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The study has revealed that the socialization in the Luo community is steeped in cultural stereotypes which are tailored to produce different predetermined behaviors and value for boys and girls which persist throughout the life cycle of men and women; very much in line with the gender schema theory. The content of parallel 'socialization curriculum' for girls and boys that was characteristic of the "*duol*" and "*siwindhe*" has remained fairly intact particularly on matters that pertain to gender power relations.

The socialization processes of the boys and girls were evidently targeted to package the boys/men for leadership and as people who deserve to be in charge of things in the society. Women and girls on the other hand were prepared to accept subordinate and passive roles in the society.

The subordination and passivity of girls was evidently extended to socialization on sexuality as girls' socialization were found to mainly focus on preparing them for roles of servitude and submission to men's physical and sexual demands. The study further revealed that while there were norms targeting to regulate the sexual behavior of men and women, those for women were actively enforced; for example if a woman failed to submit to sexual demands of a man, she was subjected to harsh and humiliating sanctions such as being sent back to their maiden homes to fetch animals for refusing to have sex with the husband. Even though the aforementioned methods of cultural norms enforcement have changed overtime, the skewed gender power relation reinforced by gendered socialization and culturally sanctioned economic advantage for men have ensured that women toe the line in many fronts including submission to sexual demands.

The study also revealed that the Luo community employed a litany of myths which were used to ensure conformity and which were particularly used to control women's sexual behavior. Even more discernible was the framing of these cultural myths which exploited the interest of the person who was being targeted; for instance a lot of Luo myths targeting women were found to focus on the health of the child and most of the time prescribed that non-conformity would lead to the death of child. Lactating mothers were always reminded that infidelity would lead to death of their children.

In summary, it is clear that the socialization of the of the Luo community does indeed predispose both men and women to the risk of contracting HIV mainly due to the cultural impact in constraining, mainly the women's capacity to negotiate and employ safe sex options. Additionally, it is very clear from the findings of the study that the cultural socialization also predispose men to risk taking behaviors which exacerbate the vulnerability to getting HIV infection for instance, it was evident that boys and men are socialized to engage in concurrent

multiple sexual relationship either through the polygamous marriages or casual sexual relationships outside/ and/or before marriages.

Studies have found that multiple concurrent sexual relationships in contexts of low levels of male circumcision are fertile ground for exponential spread of HIV epidemic. Given the super-endemic HIV scenario in the Luo community, it is deducible that the socialization trends are some of the major confounding structural factors that aid the spread of HIV by undermining individual men and women's capacity to implement HIV prevention options. Women are affected more than men by this cultural scenario.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The study makes a strong case for HIV prevention to shift focus from the currently heavily biomedical leaning interventions, to paying more attention in addressing the structural factors emanating from the socialization trends of the Luo as a means of enhancing the efficiency for uptake of HIV prevention programs particularly through participatory dialogue forums to deconstruct beliefs and myths which propound risky sexual behaviors.

Additionally, the following interventions are also recommended:

- Government and other development agencies to initiate a robust inter-generational cultural dialogue as part of a socio-cultural transformation process in view of the HIV epidemic.
- Development and Government agencies to develop community led sexual and reproductive health education modeled on the “*siwindhe*” and “*duol*” models but moderated to incorporate gender balance and current health and demographic realities.
- Develop and implement a gender and HIV strategy of community targeted empowerment intervention to transform gender power relations.
- There is need to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the Luo cultural practices to establish the original intended values of the same. This will help weed out the distortions and eliminate the practices with no value but which continue to be observed due to the myths.
- Development agencies should work with communities to challenge the negative cultural myths and perception by identifying and profiling positive deviant families who have



accorded their male and female children equal opportunities and those who have defied the negative cultural dictates and are living normal progressive lives.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1: CONSENT FORM**

#### **Informed consent Form Individual Interview**

Hello. My name is Aggrey Aluso, I am a student undertaking a degree of Master of Arts in Gender and Development at the University of Nairobi. The research is targeting this sub-location and is seeking information to establish if there is a linkage between the socialization of men and women/boys and girls of this community in to risks of contracting HIV infection.

I would like to ask you some questions about how you grew up, the teachings you received as a boy/girl and practices/behaviors expected of you as a male/female. If you agree to be interviewed, I will be asking you about how the teachings you received as a male/female shaped your ideas, attitudes and opinions on sexuality and relations with the opposite sex.

There is no right or wrong answers to the questions I will ask you. Your opinions and experiences are important to us and so we want you to be honest and truthful in answering our questions. The interview will take about 30 minutes. If you do not want to answer any question, you do not have to and you can stop the interview at any time.

I would like to take notes of the discussion. Your name will NOT be used in the notes. The notes will be kept safely and will be considered private and confidential. They will be used for this study only and the notes will be destroyed afterwards. Any report from this discussion will not use any names or any other information that may identify any individual person.

Do you agree to be interviewed?      YES.....NO.....

Date .....

Signature (or mark) of interviewee.....

## APPENDIX 2: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

### SECTION 1: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF INFORMANT

N <sup>o</sup> .	QUESTIONS AND FILTERS	CODES
101	Age	Age:        _ _   Estimated age _ _
102	Sex ( <b>Circle the corresponding answer</b> )	Male.....1 Female.....2
103	Where do you live?	Village.....1 Town.....2
105	Level of education	Graduate.....1 Diploma.....2 Certificate.....3 Primary school.....4 None.....5

#### In-depth Interview guide:

#### **Theme 1: socialization in cultural context and how this creates sexual double standards between men and women.**

Based on the stages of life; exploring the practices, beliefs and the teachings that shaped the perception as boys and girls from birth to puberty. (**Birth – puberty**)

1. When did you know you are different to the other gender?
2. How did you come to know of the differences and who was communicating this to you?
3. What are/were some of the differences between girls and boys in terms of behaviors and values in this community?
4. Who was communicating this to us?
5. What were some of the key things you learnt about being a girl/boy in the Luo community? (Probe: value ascription, perception, attitudes, relations, behavior)
6. How were those who conformed /did not conform treated?
7. Do you think that these teachings could be having bearing in your adult life?

Probe for:

- i. World view or how they look at things,
- ii. Power relation to other gender,
- iii. Self-perception and perception of others.
- iv. Perception and Attitude towards sex



## **Theme 2: gendered cultural socialization of the Luo community on sex and sexuality in the context of HIV & AIDS.**

Socialization of the girls and boys into gender appropriate sexual roles(**adolescent – transition into adulthood**)

1. As young boys/ girls what were/are some of the messages or teachings you receive (d) in terms of being appropriate sexual behavior for a boy/girl of your community?
2. Where did you get such teaching/lessons? Probe for various agents and channels of sexuality socialization.
3. What is/was done to those who don't conform to the appropriate sexual behaviors? Probe: for sanctions/rewards, enforcing agents and agencies.
4. Were there other avenues through which people were made to know about appropriate sex and sexual behavior?
5. What were the major differences in terms expected sexual behavior between your gender and the other?
6. What do you think about these different sexuality teachings between boys and girls? Probe for negative perception.
7. What is the impact of this sexuality education in people's sexual lives?
8. What do you think is the about the various teaching on sexuality in terms of managing sexual relations between men and women in this community? Probe for the power dynamics and its impact on sexual negotiation.
9. Do you know of situations in our cultural context in which it is mandatory to have sex? probe for knowledge of ritual sex, what is demanded of men/women, who is obligated to participate in ritual sex and the myths that are used to enforce such, which ones touch on men/women?
10. Do you know how HIV is transmitted? Probe for the understanding of the hetero sexual mode of transmission.
11. What do you think about this traditional sexuality education in relation to HIV? Probe in relation to how cultural dictates influence men's and women's ability to negotiate for safe sex? Who has better leverage?
12. Do you think this the teachings/ lessons you learnt from observations has a bearing in your: (probe for specific issues and behaviors, attitudes & perception)
  - i. Social life
  - ii. Sexual life
  - iii. Economic wellbeing.

## **Theme 3: Economic organization of the Luo community in the gender differential vulnerability to HIV infection.**

1. Which are some of the resources considered as important in this community?
2. In terms of the management of these resources, who has say in which resources at the family and the community according to the Luo customs? Probe for gender disparity in resource access, control and inheritance.

3. How does the difference in resource access and control affect the relationship between men and women?
4. What are some of the impact of resources control or lack of it in terms of HIV? **Probe** for resource induced vulnerability, constrained choices in sexual decision making, sex work and transactional sex and the predisposition to HIV infection.

### **APPENDIX 3: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE**

1. Socialization in cultural context and how this creates sexual double standards between men and women.
  - a. Could you describe some of the beliefs and practices from the time when a child is born until about five years that are distinct for boys and girls.
  - b. Kindly, also elaborate who are responsible for the teachings and if the teachings help create an understanding of the place of the boy and the girl differentially.

- c. Can you explain further the teachings, beliefs and practices/roles for boys and girls from six years up to around ten years, and how these were/are different for the boys and girls? Kindly elaborate how this helped the girls/boys fit in their appropriate roles in the society. (N/B: probe for changes over time and sanctions for those who did not conform)
  - d. I would like you to share information of how girls and boys from ten years up to about fifteen years were taught on their roles, position and appropriate behaviors in this community. (N/B: Probe for impact on gender relations, changes in trends over time and how non conformity was dealt with)
  - e. I would like to hear your opinion on what you think were the impact of these teachings to boys and girls in their later lives as adult men and women particularly in decision making on the various issues?
2. Gendered cultural socialization of the Luo community on sex and sexuality in the context of HIV & AIDS.
- a. Kindly explain to me the general perceptions on sex and sexuality in this community?
  - b. Could you explain how sex and sexuality knowledge was passed to girls and boys? (Probe: for age when sex education started, main features of sex for boy/girls, who was responsible and sanctions for non-conformity)
  - c. Kindly explain the practices of courtship and marriage in this community. (**Probe:** for sex in both contexts, role of men and women in initiation, sexual expectation on men/women, sanctions for non-conformity and the changes over time).
  - d. I would like to know if there are circumstances where sex was mandatory and what was/is the value. (**Probe for:** ritual sex, myths that reinforced the practice).
  - e. In this era of HIV and AIDS, could there be a possibility these teachings, beliefs, and practices could contribute to the spread of the disease? (Probe for: women and men).
  - f. Which recommendations would you give to help reduce vulnerability to HIV that could be emanating from our traditional teachings, beliefs and practices around sex and sexuality?

3. Economic organization of the Luo community in the gender differential vulnerability to HIV infection.
- a. Kindly explain what are/were considered as the main economic activities and sources of livelihood in this community. (Probe for: gender differential control of factors of production)
  - b. Could you describe what were/are the different roles of men and women in the economic and livelihood sourcing? (**Probefor:** gender division of labour, gender differential access to economic opportunities, impact on gender power relations, changes over time, factors responsible for change and impact general welfare).
  - c. In your opinion, what do you think could be some of the possible consequences of the trends in the economic activities for women and men in this era of HIV and AIDS? (**Probe for:** sexual exploitations of men and women i.e. fish for sex, economic induced vulnerability)
  - d. In view of the emergence of the HIV epidemic, which recommendations would you give to reduce economic induced vulnerability to HIV infection?