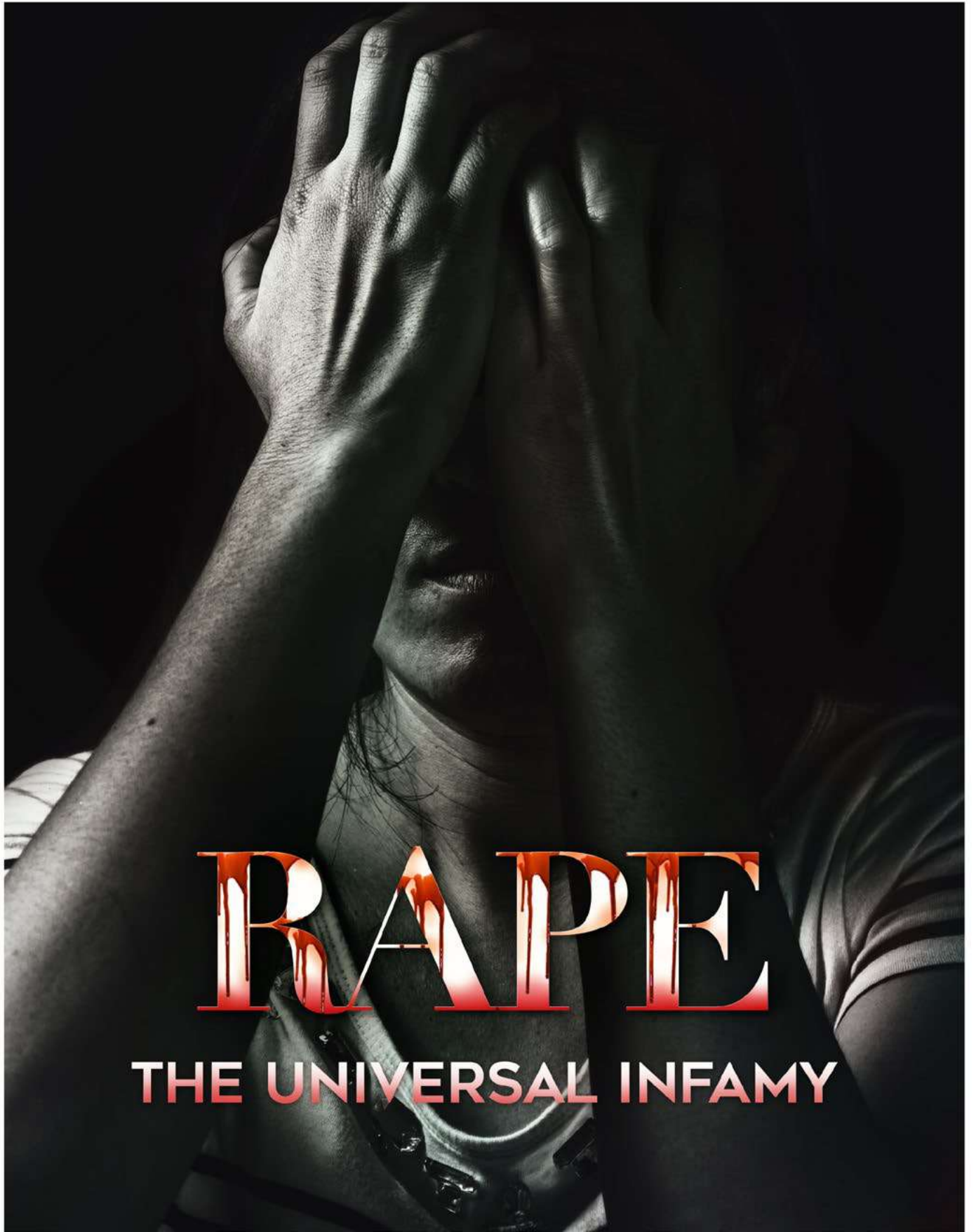


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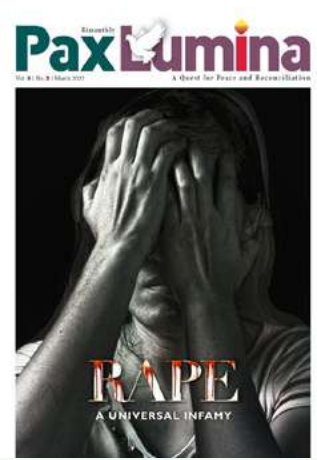
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A Quest for Peace and Reconciliation



RAPE

THE UNIVERSAL INFAMY



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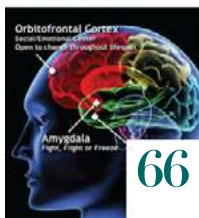
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Rehabilitating RAPE SURVIVORS in Kenya





Gender-based violence is any act that results in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

It is perpetrated against a person based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females.

Violence is a common method used to dominate power relations.

One-in-three Kenyan women and one-in-five males have experienced an episode of sexual violence before attaining the age of 18. About 41 per cent of married women have experienced physical or sexual violence, while 11 per cent of married men have experienced either form of violence.

St. Martin Catholic Social Apostolate is a faith-based organisation working in Laikipia, Nyandarua and Baringo counties. We work with vulnerable groups of people,

There have been attempts by the Kenyan government in the recent past to develop a one-stop service centre for the survivors of violence within the police stations called 'Policare'.

We are lucky to have one in Laikipia county. When it opened up, it helped the service providers to offer services promptly and in a watertight system.



including those recovering from addiction and mental health, children in need of care and protection and the survivors of violence and other human rights violations.

The community programme of Peace and Reconciliation uses a multi-sectoral survivor centred approach while supporting survivors of sexual violence. Over the years there have been several capacity-building sessions on best practices when it comes to handling survivors of sexual-based violence (SBV). This has been done for various stakeholders and duty bearers. The stakeholders include the police officers manning the police-gender desk, clinical officers and nurses, teachers, church leaders, and the public. We have had

Awareness is one of the strategies employed by the organisation to pass information and enhance knowledge in the community. With information on sexual gender-based violence the community, through trained volunteers in the targeted areas, assists the survivor. **These include hosting, making relevant referrals and follow-up. This makes the survivor cope easily.**



discussions with survivors, capacity building, debriefing and counselling sessions, and offered legal advice.

This has enhanced the working relationship on matters of SBV, especially the referral system. There have been attempts by the Kenyan government in the recent past to develop a one-stop service centre for the survivors of violence within the police stations called 'Policare'. We are lucky to have one in Laikipia county. When it opened up, it helped the service providers to offer services promptly and in a watertight system.

The members of St. Martin CSA sit in various forums where gender-based violence issues are deliberated. The participants include the Court users committee, the Laikipia civil society organisations forum, Laikipia county gender technical working group and the Children Institutions Forum. On some occasions, we have had forums with the members of the county assembly on matters of mental health and the plight of vulnerable groups of people.



Sexual violence often takes a significant long-term toll on the survivors' mental and physical health, increasing the risk not only for depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder but also high blood pressure and sleep loss.

The effects of sexual harassment are not easy to deal with, but with integrated support, the survivors can recover.

After a traumatic event (sexual violation), it is typical to have feelings of anxiety, stress, or fear, making it challenging to adjust or cope for some time especially when the survivors hear some self-blaming statements. We address this through sessions of counselling with the help of a trauma and grief counsellor, ensuring safety nets, and quality medical support, rescue to places of safety when the need arises and offering legal aid for redressal.

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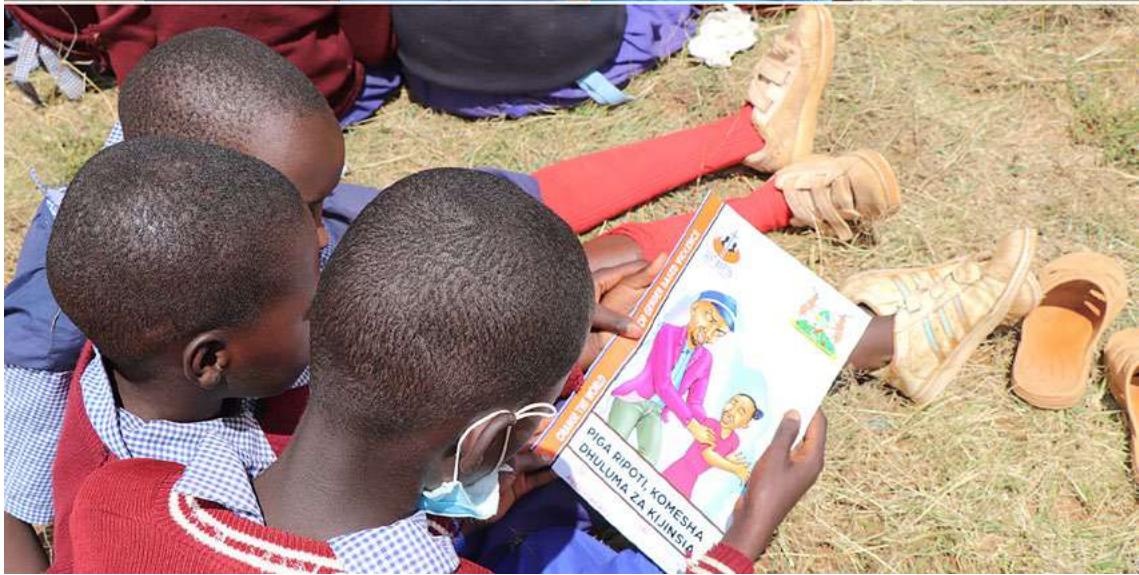
volunteers in the targeted areas, assists the survivor. These include hosting, making relevant referrals and follow-up. This makes the survivor cope easily.

There are Acts in the legal framework that responds to the issue of rape. For example, the Sexual Offences Act (2006). The bill of rights in the Constitution of Kenya (2010) under Chapter 4 gives guarantees for a wide range of rights and fundamental freedoms. The Children's Act (2001), and the protection against Domestic Violence Act (2015) protects survivors of GBV.

The framework creates an environment for understanding violence by highlighting the various forms of sexual and gender-based violence in detail. It has analysed the existing legislative and policy responses, community interventions as well as their efficacy and weakness and gives directions for future actions to end domestic violence.

St. Martin CSA also has a sexual harassment policy and child protection policy that governs the staff, stakeholders and volunteers who are recruited and trained to serve the





community. More needs to be done to assist and integrate the survivors back to life.

Some of the things that can be enhanced are:

- Continuous awareness on preventive measures, response and referral system in case of sexual violence.
- Advocate for safe houses where survivors can be placed during the intervention of their cases.
- Advocate for incorporating GBV training sessions (handling of survivors) in the professional training of (police, nurses, teachers) and other relevant authorities.
- Enhance counselling and life skill training in the education curriculum.
- Fast track the implementation of the already-passed Sexual Offences Act and other legal instruments that are in place.
- Have more judges/magistrates handling sexual gender-based violence cases to fasten the trials of perpetrators. This will reduce the dangers of survivors killing witnesses, withdrawal and corruption of the cases as some take very long in court.

Justice delayed is justice denied.

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