

AGYW Conference 2021

Break away sessions

a. Kenya Group

The group highlighted that there is a lot of FGM which affects young girls. This cuts across most of the region. Some communities use the reproductive parts removed from girls for ritual purposes. They also highlighted teenage pregnancies as very prevalent. Some young girls resorted to having relationships due to abuses which they faced in their families during the Covid 19 induced lock down, where parents would at times fight in the presence of the children.

b. Uganda Group

Participants highlighted high rates of FGM cases in Kenya and Nigeria which cause insecurity on young girls. The group further highlighted challenges faced by young women to enter decision making spaces which results in them failing to have a voice on issues affecting them.

GBV issues were raised by the group especially where parties are in a relationship and this is triggered by culture where men feel they are in control and sadly believe that they own their partners. They also bemoaned their communities' belief system that culturally views women as commodities resulting in low uptake by women of decision-making positions.

c. Rwanda Group

Sadly, issues affecting girls know no regional demarcations. It was noted that even though most countries have come up with free education policies, girls who became pregnant while at school have failed to return to school because of child caring roles. In Tanzania 60% of girls who become pregnant failed to go back to school because of the 'Magufuli' policy that is known worldwide as the most retrogressive.

Participants further raised the concern that young girls have failed to progress in life due to limited policy and practice support. There are no follow ups on girls who drop out and no deliberate policy to ensure there is progression after school. When men are in charge, they close out women and girls. For example in South Africa, women aged 35 years are deemed old and unemployable.

The group further highlighted that there is a lack of information dissemination on economic and social opportunities. This is sadly exacerbated by the fact that women have less access to media especially those women in the rural areas due to limited internet accessibility, lack of resources eg data and smart phones.