



# ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF PARALEGAL WORK ON THE LEGAL SECTOR AND ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE

*A study of the impact of paralegal work on the legal sector and in helping communities to access justice*

**REPORT**

**January, 2026**





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### Foreword

The growth of the paralegal sector in Kenya has been necessitated by a number of factors. They include the high costs associated with conventional legal services offered by advocates and other similar service providers, such as those who practise alternative dispute resolution (ADR). The absence of advocates in some areas and communities in Kenya limits access to justice by members of such areas or communities. Even where they exist, the ratio of advocates to the population who need legal services is disproportionately low. This has given rise to the need for an important cadre of intermediate people to aid the populace seeking access to justice. These are the paralegals.

According to Kenya's Legal Aid Act, a paralegal is a person who is employed by the National Legal Aid Service (NLAS) or an accredited legal aid service provider, who has completed a training course in the relevant field in an institution approved by the Council for Legal Education. An accredited paralegal is one who has received accreditation from the NLAS to provide paralegal services under the supervision of an advocate or an accredited legal aid provider. On the other hand, section 2 of the Law Society of Kenya Act defines a paralegal as a person offering support services to legal practice. Paralegals come in different forms: trained, untrained, community base, etc.

Whereas the importance of mainstreaming the paralegals in aiding access to justice cannot be gainsaid, their role has hardly been tested and documented. Yet this is important so as to make a case for mainstreaming their roles in the overall justice sector plans in the country. As a result, the Kenya School of Law set out to carry out this research to gather empirical data to determine the role of the paralegal sector in aiding access to justice and its impact on the legal sector. The research was intended to serve a number of purposes: first, to establish the extent to which the paralegals are involved in aiding access to justice, especially for the segment of the community that majorly rely on their services; second, to establish the gaps that exist, within the sector, as it endeavors to serve the important purpose of aiding access to justice; third, to build their capacity in areas where there is deficiency in knowledge and skill, for better rendering of their service; and last, but not least, to make a case for mainstreaming paralegal services in the justice sector dispensation, based on empirical data.



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This report, therefore, is an outcome of the efforts made to realise the objectives of the research.

### Acknowledgement

This research was made possible through the combined roles and effort of different players and individuals who participated in the tasks leading to its execution, in one way or the other. In this regard, we wish to acknowledge the contributions made by the following organizations and individuals:

First, is the development partner, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) whose generous donation facilitated the entire process of data collection, preparation and writing of this report. Special mention goes to its officers who were instrumental in coordinating the various activities between the organization and the representatives of the Kenya School of Law. In this case we wish to acknowledge the role played by Mr Mohammed Sabir Jafar, Ms Beatrice Gathoni Njenga, Ms Zainab Ali and Mr Boniface Kiini.

Second, we wish to acknowledge the role played by the Kenya School of Law team that participated in the conceptualization and execution of this research project led by team leader, Mr Isaac Kuloba, and the rest of the members; Mr Samuel Akhwale, Mr. Lawrence Ndirangu, Ms. Agnes Mwai, Ms Naserian Sitelu, Ms Anastasia Otieno, Mr Samwel Mwaniki, Mr Kefa Simiyu, Mr. Daniel Odhiambo, Ms. Sandra Soi, Mr Ally Gakweli, Ms. Christine Mwanzia , Mr. John Mithia, Ms Jacqueline Mararo, and Ms. Ruth Gathoni. We also, in this regard wish to acknowledge the leadership of Dr. Henry Mutai, the Director/CEO, the Kenya School of Law, for the overall leadership of the Kenya School of Law team, in giving strategic guidance and direction to the team, leading to the completion of this project.

Third, we wish to acknowledge the various people and groups that in one way or the other, assisted the team to gather the necessary data. In this respect, we recognize the role of the Chief Registrar of the Judiciary, Ms. Winfridah Boyani Mokaya, the head of station, Kibera Law Courts, the Commissioner General of Prisons, Kenya, Mr. Patrick Mwiti Arundah, the entire leadership of the Prisons Department, Industrial Area (Major and Minor) Remand Prisons, the wardens, the trained paralegals working in the prisons and the remandees who participated in one way or the other during the data collection exercise. We equally wish to acknowledge the roles played by various duty bearers, including those working under the Ministry of interior and National Government Coordination - the police, chiefs and nyumba kumi elders, for coordinating and providing the necessary environment conducive for data collection exercises.

Fourth, we wish to acknowledge the various non-governmental organizations, (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs) and other non-state actors that provided invaluable information that was critical in achieving the goal of this research. In particular, we wish to acknowledge the participation of the Centre Against Torture, led by its CEO, Mr Abubakar Jumma, the North Rift Theatre Ambassadors, led by its CEO Ms Noleine Maru, Kasarani Social Justice Group, Kasarani SJC led by Mr Anthony Maina , Korogocho Peace and Justice Centre led by Ms Evelyn Adhiambo , Mukuru Community Justice Center, led by Mr Dalmas Anami, Kamkunji Human Rights Defenders SJC led by Mr Said Athumani, the Kariobangi Social Justice Center led by Ms Beatrice Ouma, Kenya Human Rights Commission led by Ms Nelius Njuguna and the Social Justice Centre working Group led by Ms Debbie Wangeci, among others.

Last but not least, we wish to acknowledge the contribution of the Kenya School of Law students who participated in data collection for their industry and diligence in ensuring that this exercise was fruitful. In this case, we acknowledge the participation of Ms Otieno Annie Awino, Ms Vivian Bonareri, Mr. Simon Kyule Paul, Ms Faith Nwonga, Mr. Hazel Taiti, Ms. Rose Wendy, Mr. David Karanda, Ms. Mary Peter, Mr. Solomon Mithama Karani Evans Mark, Ms. Faith Njeri, Ms. Purity Bunyazi, Mr. Kelvin Kavagali , Mr. Langat Arnold , Ms. Carol Musembi, Mr. Lawrence Wamwea, Ms. Irene Mwe and Ms Christian Mutiga. Their contribution went a long way in ensuring that a wide sample sizes of the target groups were available for quality data that was instrumental in making this report possible.



## Executive Summary

Inclusive justice has been a major intent on the part of the government as well as the private sector players for a long time. Whereas the Constitution of Kenya 2010 guarantees access to justice as a constitutional right, there are legal, factual and structural challenges that have impeded the realisation of this right, particularly by population categories that are economically powerless or have been alienated by geographical distance or other barriers from accessing legal services. In Kenya, the legal profession features highly trained lawyers whose fees often is so high as to prevent the less fortunate the accessibility to their services. Despite this grim picture, there is a cadre of persons, called paralegals (generally) who have over the years provided some legal services at the grassroots and these persons are often knowledgeable with or without training, to render some assistance.

The study assessed the impact of paralegal work on the legal sector and on access to justice in Kenya, and was carried out in centres around two counties – Nairobi and Uasin Gishu – using a mixed-research method that collected both quantitative and qualitative data. The specific objectives of the study were—

- (a) determine the contribution of paralegal services in improving awareness and understanding of the law among indigent persons;
- (b) establish the role of paralegals in bridging the gap between formal legal institutions and indigent persons;
- (c) ascertain the impact of paralegal assistance on the efficiency and effectiveness of legal processes and proceedings; and
- (d) evaluate the contribution of paralegals to the provision of accessible and affordable legal services.

The study involved both the paralegal service providers (trained and untrained) and the beneficiaries of the services, thus enabling collection of data that was balanced and reflected both sides of the justice system.

The key findings were as follows:

### (a) The Paralegals

The number of males to females was evenly balanced. Paralegal service providers included persons of primary, secondary, college and university education, the latter being the least in numbers. About half of those interviewed belonged to an association, though it must be pointed out that in Kenya, there is no legal recognition of a paralegal professional association. Most interactions took place on face to face mode, which was perceived to be the most preferred and effective methodology. One of the challenges identified was the fact that most people in the community did not know the paralegals who lived with them, and hence this presented a significant barrier to access to their services.

The services provided were diverse, ranging from children matters, to succession and land matters as well as other conflicts within the community.

### (b) Referrals to legal professionals [to be completed]



## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and People's Rights
ADR	Alternative Dispute resolution
AJS	Alternative Justice System
CBOs	Community Benefits Organizations
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-based Violence
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Syndrome/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NLAS	National Legal Aid Service
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
KSL	Kenya School of Law
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
IDLO	International Development Law Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
A2J	Access to Justice
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank



## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The subject of this study is the 'paralegal.' Who is a paralegal? A paralegal, from the existing legal instrument in Kenya, means any person who offers legal support services and is qualified within the meaning of section 2 of the Legal Aid Act has basic legal training, or has, through relevant experience or prior learning, attained the status of a paralegal. It is important to note here that the word 'paralegal' is used here in a wider sense than the use under the aforesaid statute, and will refer to a person carrying out paralegal services, whether trained or has accumulated experience.

The paralegal is becoming an almost permanent fixture in the canvas of access to legal resources in Africa, and more so in Kenya. Kenya, like other African countries, has enacted a constitution and laws that offer a guarantee of free legal aid in certain conditions. However, most of these laws have not been converted into action due to budgetary constraints or lack of prioritization of the same by governments. Where there is no legal aid programme, the indigent or the poor may not access justice.

Kenyan indigent populations, like those of any other developing country, face numerous challenges in accessing justice. The challenges include the cost of mainstream legal services, which includes lawyers' fees, non-responsive police officers, navigating conflicts with the law, corrupt systems, and navigating the complexities of life and poverty, among others. Most of these issues are solvable through the intervention of a person who has legal knowledge and who can provide the services at almost no cost. This is the paralegal who often provides cost-effective and innovative community-based solutions, despite not being allowed by the law to represent people in court.

Despite its growing importance, empirical data on the impact and effectiveness of paralegal services in Kenya remains limited. Existing literature has focused primarily on legal empowerment theory, but less is known about user experiences, accessibility, satisfaction levels, or the extent to which paralegals influence legal outcomes. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining how paralegal services are perceived and utilized by justice seekers across diverse locations and social categories. It draws on survey data collected from correctional institutions, social justice centers, human rights organizations, and community-based groups across peri-urban and urban settings.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although Kenya has made significant strides in institutionalizing legal aid through the Legal Aid Act, many citizens, particularly the less economically empowered and those in marginalized communities, continue to experience legal exclusion. Access to formal legal systems is often expensive, intimidating, and time-consuming. As a result, many people either forego justice altogether, or seek help from informal systems that may not effectively achieve the desired end. Community paralegals have emerged as critical actors in addressing this gap by offering low-cost or no-cost, accessible, and community-based legal assistance.

However, questions remain regarding the effectiveness, accessibility, and overall impact of paralegal services. Are these services reaching those most in need? Do they improve users' understanding of the law and their confidence in handling legal issues, including enforcing their rights or those of loved ones? Do they accelerate legal processes or reduce dependency on formal institutions? Without comprehensive data, it is difficult to evaluate the value proposition of paralegal services or to advocate for their expansion and better integration into national justice system. There is no sufficient empirical data on how effective the paralegal services are, in order to have more effective recommendations for strengthening relevant policies and the legal system.

This study addresses this gap by exploring the lived experiences of justice seekers who have accessed or interacted with paralegal services. It assesses user satisfaction, accessibility, cost, and perceived outcomes, offering evidence that can contribute to effective legal aid policy, programme design, and community justice strategies in Kenya. It is hoped that this report contributes to generating new knowledge in the subject matter, that will be useful in various dimensions as outlined below.

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

#### 1.3.1 General Objective

The overall objective of this study was to assess the impact of paralegal work on the legal sector and on access to justice in Kenya.

#### 1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to—

- (a) determine the contribution of paralegal services in improving awareness and understanding of the law among indigent persons;
- (b) establish the role of paralegals in bridging the gap between formal legal institutions and indigent persons;
- (c) ascertain the impact of paralegal assistance on the efficiency and effectiveness of legal processes and proceedings; and
- (d) evaluate the contribution of paralegals to the provision of accessible and affordable legal services.

### 1.4 Scope

This study focused on paralegal services provided in community and correctional settings in two sites, namely Uasin Gishu and Nairobi counties. Data was collected from justice seekers and stakeholders in a variety of locations within those counties, including the Prisons Department, Industrial Area (Major and Minor) Remand Prisons, Centre Against Torture, North Rift Theatre Ambassadors, Kasarani Social Justice Group, Korogocho Peace and Justice Centre, Mukuru Community Justice Center, Kamukunji Human Rights Defenders, Kariobangi Social Justice Center, Kenya Human Rights Commission, Social Justice Centre Working Group, Kibera Law Courts and the National Legal Aid Service Centre at Kibera.

<sup>3</sup>Legal Aid Act, Ibid.



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The study population included individuals who had interacted with paralegals, including remandees, victims of crime, persons in informal settlements, and members of marginalized groups. It also incorporated feedback from paralegals, community justice centre staff, and other civil society actors. While the findings are based on the selected counties and organizations, they provide valuable insights that are indicative of national trends and challenges.

The study specifically aimed to assess the extent to which paralegals assist communities, particularly marginalized populations, in navigating legal processes, resolving disputes, and improving trust in the justice system.

### 1.5 Rationale for this Study

Swenson (2018), while quoting Maru (2006) states that paralegal programmes have contributed to promoting the rule of law (access to justice) and especially in areas where the state resources cannot reach. Quoting Carother (2003), Swensen, for example, states that, there is surprisingly weak documented evidence in the form of studies to demonstrate this. This latter position may be true, especially in the Kenyan context, even where studies have been done on paralegalism, very few of them or on the impact they have created.

The study findings are significant for multiple stakeholders, including prospective students to paralegal training programmes, civil society organizations, policymakers, justice sector actors, donors involved in legal aid programmes, and those interested in law reform. By documenting the experiences of justice seekers, the study provides empirical evidence on how paralegals contribute to legal empowerment and access to justice in Kenya, based on representative samples under this study. It also highlights the challenges paralegals face in reaching the most vulnerable groups, thereby informing future strategies for scaling up and improving legal services delivery.

For community justice organizations and paralegal training institutions, the findings will offer insights into areas of strength and areas requiring improvement, such as service accessibility, gender sensitivity, or training needs. For national and county governments, the study offers evidence to support policy and budgetary decisions on effective integration of paralegals into public legal aid frameworks and programmes. The study findings may also influence law reform to fill the gaps that require legislative intervention to strengthen the role of paralegals.

### 1.6 Limitations

Like many mixed-research studies, this research faced certain limitations. First, there could have been possible risk of response bias, as participants might report socially desirable outcomes, particularly if they felt loyalty to the paralegal or organizations that provide legal aid or sponsor their activities. Second, due to scope constraints, the study focused on a sample of institutions and two counties, which could limit the generalizability of the findings to all regions in Kenya.

Third, the study relied heavily on self-reported data, which may be influenced by memory recall issues or incomplete understanding of legal procedures by the data providers.

Despite these limitations, the study employed rigorous sampling, ensured confidentiality, and triangulated responses across multiple locations and demographic groups within the two counties sampled, to improve the reliability and validity of the results.



## CHAPTER 2 – METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology and approach used in carrying out the subject study. It sets out the research design, study population, sampling procedures, data collection tools, methods of analysis, and ethical considerations. The methodology was chosen to ensure that the research objectives were met and that the data collected was valid, reliable, and representative of the diverse populations served through paralegal programmes.

### 2.2 Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This design enabled a comprehensive exploration of the role of paralegals in the community and the legal sector by capturing measurable trends through surveys and deeper insights through interviews and focus group discussions.

### 2.3 Study Population and Sampling

The study population included paralegals (as earlier defined), civil society organizations, justice seekers who have accessed paralegal services, duty bearers such as police and judicial staff, and other key stakeholders such as representatives from NGOs, and government agencies involved in legal aid, and correctional facilities. The study focused on diverse settings, including urban and peri-urban communities within selected counties in Kenya.

Survey data was collected from a range of locations and organizations representing both formal and informal justice spaces. These included the Prisons Department; Industrial Area Major and Minor Remand Prisons; Centre Against Torture; the North Rift Theatre Ambassadors; Kasarani Social Justice Group; Korogocho Peace and Justice Centre; Mukuru Community Justice Center; Kamukunji Human Rights Defenders; the Kariobangi Social Justice Center; Kenya Human Rights Commission; the Social Justice Centre Working Group; Kibera Law Courts and the National Legal Aid Service Centre in Kibera.

A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure representation across different organizational types (CBOs, NGOs, government institutions) and beneficiary groups (e.g., incarcerated individuals, community members from marginalized areas etc.). Twenty justice seekers and one hundred and six paralegals were part of the study population, while four key informants were selected for in-depth interviews.

### 2.4 Data Collection and Analysis

#### 2.4.1 Questionnaires

Structured questionnaires were administered to paralegals, quasi-legal groups and justice seekers to collect quantitative and qualitative data on their experiences, frequency of service use, perceptions of effectiveness, satisfaction with services rendered and challenges faced. The questionnaire included closed-ended and Likert Scale items for ease of analysis and open-ended section for the respondent to give in-depth insights.

#### 2.4.2 In-depth Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with court administrators and court registry staffs, paralegals and key stakeholders, including civil society organizations to explore nuanced views on policy gaps, training, institutional support, and recommendations for strengthening paralegal work.

#### 2.4.3 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions (FGDs) with community members and justice seekers provided additional qualitative data on community perspectives and lived experiences regarding access to justice through paralegals and perceptions on impact of the legal sector.

#### 2.4.4 Document Review

Relevant policy documents, training manuals, and legal frameworks related to paralegal work were also reviewed to identify existing provisions and gaps.

#### 2.4.5 Quantitative Data

This study adopts a mixed statistical analysis, combining both descriptive and inferential techniques to comprehensively evaluate the impact of paralegal support on access to justice for indigent persons. Descriptive statistics was used to provide a clear picture of the study population, including demographics such as age, gender, education level, type of organization and legal issues. These statistics helped summarize key outcomes, including satisfaction with the legal process.

The survey data was coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means) summarized demographic characteristics and key variables.

To move beyond surface-level observations, inferential statistical methods were employed to identify, among others, whether differences observed in the descriptive data are statistically significant and not due to chance. In particular, cross-tabulation and logistic regression analysis were employed to model binary justice-related outcomes, such as the perceived impact of paralegal work. One key variable assessed was whether paralegals believe that their assistance helped to speed up legal processes for clients, measured through a yes/no question.



#### 2.4.6 Qualitative Data

Interview and FGD transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. Coding was used to identify recurring themes related to experiences, challenges, and policy issues. Manual coding methods facilitated data triangulation to validate the respondents' views and experiences.

Through stratified random sampling, the research ensured representation across different organizational types (e.g., CBOs, NGOs, and government actors) and demographic groups. Statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, and Chi-square tests were employed to explore correlations between paralegal interventions and justice-related outcomes. The qualitative component, comprising interviews and focus group discussions, further contextualized these findings by capturing lived experiences, challenges faced by paralegals, and recommendations for strengthening their integration within the Kenyan justice sector.

#### 2.5 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical standards, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality and data protection, and guaranteeing voluntary participation. Ethical approval was obtained from the management of the participating institutions. Special attention was given to vulnerable groups, such as prisoners and indigent participants, who were fully informed of their rights, including the purpose of data collection and their right to disclose only the information they felt comfortable sharing. Their dignity and autonomy were respected throughout the data collection process.

Interviewers were briefed on ethical engagement with vulnerable populations prior to the commencement of any data collection sessions, to minimize harm and ensure respectful interactions. Sensitivity to participants' social and emotional well-being was prioritized, especially when discussing potentially traumatic or stigmatizing experiences. All data collected were securely stored and anonymized during collection. Survey tools were designed to avoid capturing any personal identifiable information. Additionally, after data collection, access to the data was restricted to authorized members of the research team. Efforts were made to create a safe and non-judgmental environment, enabling participants to express themselves freely without fear of reprisal or discrimination.



## CHAPTER 3 – LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of related studies on paralegals, with a focus on understanding their role, in aiding access to justice and their impact on the legal sector in Kenya, generally and to determine the state of existing knowledge or data on the subject of the study. The review is organized based on the specific research objectives of the study. Generally, scholarly work on paralegals in Kenya and across Africa is limited and there remains a significant gap in literature addressing their roles, operational aspects, legal and regulatory contexts. Available studies tend to discuss paralegals broadly, often emphasizing their existence rather than systematically evaluating their roles and impact. Consequently, there is insufficient evidence on how paralegals contribute to access to justice, support marginalized populations, or influence the efficiency of formal justice institutions. This empirical review therefore seeks to highlight existing knowledge, identify gaps and provide a foundation for the current study, which aims to generate localized, context-specific insights on the role of paralegals and their impact on the legal sector.

### 3.2 The Legal Framework

The legal framework for access to justice in Kenya is anchored in Article 48 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010, which obligates the State to ensure that all persons can access justice. The Constitution makes access to justice a core constitutional issue and places duty on the State to promote affordability, availability and inclusivity of legal services. In theory, access to justice is strengthened through legal representation, which enhances fair trial guarantees. In practice, however, many Kenyans particularly those in rural areas, informal settlements and marginalized communities continue to face systemic barriers, including high legal costs, limited availability of advocates and geographical inaccessibility of legal institutions.

Kenya has made further strides in its attempt to mainstream the services of paralegals by enacting two Acts of Parliament that, to a varying extent, address paralegal issues. The Legal Aid Act provides that it is *“to give effect to Articles 19 (2), 48, 50 (2) (g) and (h) of the Constitution to facilitate access to justice and social justice; to establish the National Legal Aid Service; to provide for legal aid, and for the funding of legal aid and for connected purposes.”* The Act also defines the expression *“paralegal”* to mean *“person employed by the Service or an accredited legal aid provider who has completed a training course in the relevant field of study in an institution approved by the Council of Legal Education.”*

The Legal Aid Act focuses on establishing a national framework to enhance access to justice for indigent, marginalized, and vulnerable persons. It creates the National Legal Aid Service (NLAS) to coordinate, regulate, and standardize legal aid services, while promoting legal awareness, paralegal support, and alternative dispute resolution. The key limitation of this Act is its inability to deal with untrained paralegals and independent paralegals who may provide services. Yet in reality, there are many untrained but experienced paralegals who regularly support persons in need of legal services, particularly in remote or marginalised communities.

The Advocates Act mentions paralegals, indirectly, in sections 34(1)(ii) and 72. According to the Act, these are persons employed by advocates as clerks and whom the law allows to an extent to draft legal documents so long as they are doing so in the course of working for an advocate. The dynamics of the justice sector have evolved and created a cadre of persons who discharge functions beyond what was contemplated under the two Acts. There are persons who engage in advocacy for law reform, civic education, settlement of disputes out of court, providing basic legal advice, especially on rights of persons in given circumstances, etc. These categories have evolved ahead of legislative framework, and before there is legal intervention, there is need to have an agreed code of conduct to which such persons

The proposed National Legal Aid Awareness Policy (still in draft), too, puts a critical focus on the need for the paralegals to be mainstreamed in the quest for access to justice by the masses. Similarly, the Legal Aid Act grants accredited paralegals the authority to provide some legal advice and assistance to the consumers of justice, an aspect that for a long time has been a preserve of the advocates. The importance of the paralegal is appreciated by encouraging funding of the paralegals through the legal aid fund, which is established under section 29 of the Act. Under the Act, NLAS is also established, and is empowered to develop programmes that are geared towards training and certification of paralegals. Training has the potential to give more recognition to the paralegal groups which seek to enhance their skills, through formal training. In addition to this, under the Act, NLAS is mandated to *“coordinate, monitor and evaluate paralegal and other legal service providers and give general directions for the proper implementation of legal aid programmes.”*<sup>4</sup>

At the regional level and international level, Articles 3(1) of the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (ACHPR) provides that all persons are equal before the law, whereas Articles 7 (1) (c) the same Charter provides that every person has the right to have their cause heard, which comprises the right to defense, including the right to be defense by counsel of the person’s choice. This pre-supposes that every person can afford the services of an advocate in terms of cost and availability on demand.

Similarly, under the United Nations Rule of Law Access initiative, there is focus on ensuring that everyone has fair, equal, and non-discriminatory access to justice and public services, promoting accountable governance, human rights, and stability, especially for vulnerable groups. However, as it shall be deduced from the findings of this research, factors such as availability of advocates at any given place and the capacity by those who need their services, on demand, does not guarantee that legal representation to all, by advocates. This makes a strong case for mainstreaming the services of the paralegals within the justice sector framework as the last lines of defence for those who may not access advocates easily, or afford their services on demand. Despite the opportunities highlighted in the various legal enactments above, there still exist weaknesses in the proper mainstreaming of the paralegals in the day to day dispensation of justice, as there are various gaps that are yet to be tackled. These have necessitated the need to carry out this research to buttress the importance of the paralegals in the dispensation of justice, by determining their role in aiding access to just and their overall impact in the legal sector in Kenya, hence make a case for better recognition, empowerment and financing for effective role in the society.

<sup>4</sup> Constitution of Kenya 2010. National Council for Law Reporting. <https://www.constitution.go.ke> <accessed on 21st January 2026>

<sup>16</sup> Chapter 16 of the Laws of Kenya.

<sup>6</sup> Section 7 of the Legal Aid Act.



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At international level, the *African Charter on Human and People's Rights* address, amongst others, fair trial, including the right to legal representation. Legal aid is also addressed in the Charter. *The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, ratified by Kenya on May 1, 1972, also provides for fair hearing, especially in criminal proceedings. However, this Covenant does not mention legal aid.

Some of the issues discussed in this study touched on lack of effective legal framework for paralegal services, hence affecting access to justice, despite the objective of the study not focusing on this issue.

### 3.3 Contribution of Paralegals to Legal Awareness among Indigent Persons

A study by Chapman and Payne (2018) examined the contributions of community-based paralegals in delivering access to justice in post-war Liberia. The study focused on how the paralegals, working through civil society organizations such as the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, the Sustainable Development Institute, Prison Fellowship Liberia, and the Norwegian Refugee Council, addressed justice gaps created by Liberia's dual legal system and weak post-conflict institutions. The research drew on case studies, programme documentation, and field-based observations across multiple counties, analyzing the impacts of paralegals on legal empowerment, mediation, and governance processes. The results of the study showed that community paralegals effectively mediated private disputes, strengthened local governance, facilitated community land titling, and enhanced accountability, particularly for vulnerable populations such as women and children. The study highlighted that while formal justice institutions remained inaccessible and mistrusted, paralegal programmes successfully bridged these gaps by empowering citizens and promoting equitable outcomes, although sustainability and institutional integration remained ongoing challenges.

The International Development Law Organization (2021) carried out a study on community paralegals and customary and informal justice across Sub-Saharan Africa. The study sought to examine how community paralegals operated within informal and customary justice systems and their contribution to legal awareness among marginalized populations. Key findings demonstrated that paralegals enhanced legal literacy, mediated between formal and informal systems and empowered communities to resolve disputes locally. The study recommended integrating paralegal training with formal and customary norms, scaling up rural and marginalized services and fostering NGO-government partnerships. This study lacked the localised and contextualised setting on Kenya, hence does not fully address or answer to the objectives of the current study.

Maru (2014), carried out a study that drew on 199 studies of legal empowerment initiatives, of which 45 specifically examined community paralegal programmes. The study explored how legal empowerment interventions influence legal awareness, dispute resolution and community engagement, while also highlighting significant gaps in existing research. Using a secondary research design, the analysis focused on published studies involving marginalized populations across Africa, Asia and Latin America. The study called for stronger evaluation frameworks, the use of standardized indicators and more context-specific empirical investigations. The current study responds to this gap by generating primary quantitative and qualitative evidence on justice seekers' legal understanding, dispute resolution experiences and satisfaction levels in Nairobi and Uasin Gishu counties in Kenya. Namati in collaboration with CAPRI (2018) carried out a study on paralegals, community agency and access to justice in multi-country contexts including Sierra Leone. The study sought to examine the role of paralegals in enhancing access to justice, reducing legal costs and empowering communities. The study revealed that paralegals reduced barriers to justice, decreased costs, improved understanding of legal rights and facilitated dispute resolution. The study recommended the need to expand evaluation frameworks, strengthen networks and training and integrate paralegals into national legal aid strategies. This study was relevant for the countries involved but did not extend to the Kenyan context. The current study focused on Kenya-specific contexts, collecting primary data from justice seekers in community and correctional settings in Nairobi and Uasin Gishu counties in Kenya.

Sandefur, Siddiqi and Varvaloucas (2012) carried out a study on paralegal work in post-conflict Sierra Leone and Liberia, particularly on access to justice. The findings indicated that paralegals reduced detention time, facilitated early case engagement and enhanced understanding of legal procedures. Recommendations focused on expanding paralegal programmes, formal recognition and certification schemes. The current study sought to evaluate paralegal impact on their effectiveness in aiding access to justice, experiences of the consumers of their services within the communities in Kenyan and correctional settings.

Kituo Cha Sheria in partnership with ACE-AJ and IDRC (2020) carried out a study on Legal Empowerment and Paralegal Programmes in Kenya: Multi-County Assessment of Access to Justice Impacts in Kenya, including Nairobi and Uasin Gishu counties in Kenya. The study sought to examine paralegal effectiveness in increasing legal awareness, dispute resolution and community empowerment. Objectives included measuring legal knowledge, dispute resolution capacity and confidence in justice systems. The research design was mixed-methods, targeting 157 participants (67 paralegals and 64 beneficiaries) through purposive and snowball sampling. Data were collected via focus group discussions and structured interviews and analyzed using narrative and thematic methods. Findings indicated that paralegals improved legal knowledge, facilitated dispute resolution and strengthened confidence in justice systems. Recommendations emphasized training, institutionalization and resource strengthening. The current study sought to include correctional settings and a broader set of justice seekers and civil society actors.

Moy (2018) carried out a study on Kenya's community-based paralegals to understand the evolution, functions and impact of paralegals in informal settlements. The study indicated that paralegals increased legal awareness, reduced conflicts and promoted alternative dispute resolution.

### 3.4 Impact of Paralegal assistance on Efficiency and Effectiveness of Legal Proceedings

The study by Sandefur, Siddiqi and Varvaloucas (2012) referred to earlier also supported this topic, though not localised in Kenya. The current study sought to address the empirical gap by assessing procedural efficiency, client outcomes and

<sup>7</sup>Chapman, P. and Payne, C. (2018). The contributions of community-based paralegals in delivering access to justice in postwar Liberia. In V. Maru & V. Gauri (Eds.), *Community paralegals and the pursuit of justice* (pp. 241–263). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316671801.007>  
Chapter 16 of the Laws of Kenya.  
Section 7 of the Legal Aid Act.

<sup>8</sup>International Development Law Organization. (2021). *Community paralegals and customary and informal justice: Paralegal interventions across sub-Saharan Africa*. IDLO.

<sup>9</sup>Namati & Community Advocacy and Research Institute. (2018). *Paralegals, community agency and access to justice*. Namati.

<sup>10</sup>Nanima, R., & Durojaye, E. (2022). Legal recognition of paralegals in Africa: Lessons, challenges and good practices. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, 22(1), 120–145.

<sup>11</sup>Kituo Cha Sheria. (2019). *Challenges and opportunities for community paralegals in Kenya*.

<sup>12</sup>Sandefur, R., Siddiqi, B., & Varvaloucas, G. (2012), *Op Cite*.



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satisfaction in civil and community-level disputes within Nairobi and Uasin Gishu counties in Kenya.

In a study by the Open Society Justice Initiative (2014) on the role of paralegal assistance in expediting pre-trial criminal justice procedures across multiple jurisdictions, the findings indicated that paralegals significantly expedited pre-trial processes, reduced unnecessary detention and improved clients' procedural knowledge.

Knight et al. (2018) carried out a study on comparative evaluation of paralegal programmes in Mozambique, Uganda and Liberia. Target populations included clients receiving paralegal assistance and local justice actors, sampled purposively. The result of the study was that clients assisted by paralegals experienced faster dispute resolution and better understanding of legal procedures. The current study seeks to provide localised, Kenyan context data on the subject.

Swenson (2018) in a study on paralegal programmes and procedural efficiency in Timor-Leste, revealed that paralegals shortened procedural delays, assisted with documentation and guided clients through court processes. The study recommended formal recognition, integration into national justice systems and structured supervision.

Dancer (2018) carried out a study on paralegals and women's legal empowerment in Tanzania, focusing on land dispute resolution. The study sought to examine paralegals' role in facilitating procedural efficiency and empowerment outcomes for women. He results of this study demonstrated that paralegals reduced settlement delays, assisted with documentation and mediated with authorities.

During the East and Horn of Africa Paralegals Conference (2019) which focused on paralegal interventions and procedural efficiency across East and Horn of Africa, including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Somalia and South Sudan, the data and information generated indicated improved efficiency but lacked quantitative measurement. Among the recommendations were need for formal training, institutional partnerships and systematic monitoring.

The ICJ-Kenya study (2023) recommended emphasized ADR integration and stronger institutional partnerships.

Another study carried out by Kituo Cha Sheria (2025) was on Legal Empowerment Programs and Paralegal Effectiveness in Kenya. The study sought to evaluate how paralegals streamline legal processes, guide clients and mediate disputes. The results from the study showed that paralegals facilitated case preparation, guided clients and reduced delays.

A study carried out by Moy (2019) on historical and practical role of community-based paralegals in Kenya sought to examine paralegals' impact on dispute resolution and procedural efficiency in urban informal settlements. The findings demonstrated that paralegals reduced delays, facilitated dispute resolution and guided clients through legal procedures. Recommendations emphasized formal recognition and training. The current study focuses on specific localities and different demographic subjects in Nairobi and Uasin Gishu counties.

### 3.5 Role of paralegals in bridging the gap between legal institutions and indigent persons

Rostain (2024) carried out a conceptual study on evaluation frameworks for lay legal assistance programmes, including paralegals. The study sought to examine how non-lawyer legal assistants can improve procedural efficiency, case outcomes and overall judicial effectiveness. Data obtained from the study suggested that paralegals and allied assistants could enhance efficiency by ensuring broader representation, reducing court delays and improving satisfaction with case outcomes.

*World Justice Project* (2022) carried out a series of studies on paralegal-linked interventions that combine mediation and advocacy globally. These studies sought to determine whether early engagement with paralegals improves access to justice and procedural outcomes. These studies found that connecting parties to paralegal services improved timeliness of dispute resolution, client satisfaction and economic benefits compared to no assistance.

PMC Community Paralegal Programmes Article (2023) carried out a study on paralegals' indirect contributions to procedural efficiency. The findings showed that paralegals mitigated delays by negotiating alternative outcomes, educating clients on rights and facilitating preemptive resolutions. The current study sought to address the empirical gap by quantitatively measuring procedural timelines, client experiences and perceived effectiveness in Kenyan urban and correctional contexts.

### 3.6 Contribution of Paralegals to the provision of Accessible and Affordable Legal Aid

A Powerful Tool of Justice (2025) carried out a cross-context analysis on paralegal services across several African countries. The study sought to examine how paralegals improve access to legal aid for low-income and marginalized populations. The study demonstrated that paralegals effectively reduce cost barriers, enabling marginalized clients to pursue justice in family law, tenancy and property disputes that they would otherwise forgo due to high lawyer fees.

Overseas Development Institute (2025) carried out a study on front-line justice services with the potential to scale up, exploring cost-effectiveness and affordability of paralegal and other community legal aid services in low- and middle-income countries. The study showed that paralegal services were highly cost-efficient while still effectively resolving disputes and providing legal assistance.

<sup>13</sup> Open Society Justice Initiative. (2014). The role of paralegal assistance in expediting pre-trial criminal justice procedures. OSJI.

<sup>14</sup> Swenson, G. (2018). Paralegal programs and procedural efficiency in Timor-Leste. United Nations Development Programme.

<sup>15</sup> Dancer, H. (2018). Power and rights in the community: Paralegals as leaders in women's legal empowerment in Tanzania. *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, 50(1), 40–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07329113.2018.1435174>

<sup>16</sup> East & Horn of Africa Paralegals Conference. (2019). Regional synthesis on paralegal roles in access to justice across East and Horn of Africa. IDLO.

<sup>17</sup> Op cite.

<sup>18</sup> Moy, J. (2019). Kenya's community-based paralegals: A tradition of grassroots legal activism. Legal Resources Foundation.



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Timap for Justice (2020) exemplified paralegal-based legal aid delivery in a low-income, rural setting in Sierra Leone. The study indicated that paralegals successfully provided free legal services, significantly reducing the financial barriers for indigent clients.

Justice and Development Working Paper Series (2022) examined community-based paralegals delivering affordable legal aid in South Africa. The study sought to examine how paralegals reduce access barriers and improve legal awareness for vulnerable populations. Findings showed that paralegals enable communities to navigate legal processes at lower costs, delivering mediation, legal education and referrals efficiently.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights, in its series Access to Justice and Legal Aid in East Africa (2021) carried out a comparative analysis of legal aid mechanisms in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The study assessed how non-lawyer providers, including paralegals, improve affordability and accessibility of legal aid. Findings demonstrated that paralegals reduce costs and improve geographic accessibility.

Hope Behind Bars Africa (2023) focused on paralegal support for indigent pre-trial detainees in Nigeria. The study sought to examine how paralegal and allied services reduce financial barriers to legal representation. In the study, hundreds of detainees accessed free legal support that would otherwise require costly lawyers. ICJ Kenya (2023), in its Annual Paralegal Report 2023, examined the provision of affordable legal aid in Nairobi and other counties. The report indicated that 768 community members received free legal aid, including mediation and court document support, resulting in reduced need for expensive lawyers. Recommendations included expanding support and integrating networks into national legal aid strategies. The current study sought to address the empirical gap by empirically assessing client perceptions of affordability, legal aid utilization and satisfaction.

ICJ Kenya Programme Documentation (2022) examined paralegal operations in Trans Mara, Taita Taveta, Kwale, Kitui, Meru and Laikipia counties in Kenya. The study sought to evaluate free legal aid, mediation and court support for indigent clients. Objectives included assessing cost reduction and dispute resolution effectiveness. The findings demonstrated effective legal support at minimal or no cost. KECOSCE and Paralegals Society of Kenya (2025) carried out an operational study on paralegal deployment in rural communities in Tana River County, Kenya. The study sought to examine how paralegals reduce household legal costs and facilitate dispute resolution. In their findings, it was demonstrated that paralegals significantly reduced legal aid costs for indigent residents.

### 3.7 Conclusion

In summary, the review of literature on the subject shows that there have been concerted efforts by different players in the justice sector to unravel key data and information that would help in promoting access to justice and generally to assist persons who are disadvantaged in one way or the other to access legal services. Whereas some studies consisted of both empirical and secondary sources analysis, the results do not fully respond to the problem under the current study.

The current study seeks to contribute to the body of existing knowledge on the subject, while at the same time, adding empirical dimensions, focused on the scope as delimited in this study, that would further provide insights into the challenges facing justice system, relating to accessibility, with a view to making workable recommendations to strengthen the justice sector.

<sup>19</sup> Service-Level Rule-of-Law Interventions. (2018–2022). Global evaluation of paralegal-linked mediation and advocacy programs. World Justice Project.

<sup>20</sup> PMC Community Paralegal Programs. (2023). Paralegals' indirect contributions to procedural efficiency. Public Monitoring Consortium.

<sup>21</sup> A Powerful Tool of Justice. (2025). Cross-context analysis of paralegal services in Africa. African Justice Initiative.

<sup>22</sup> Overseas Development Institute. (2025). Front-line justice services with the potential to scale up. ODI.

<sup>23</sup> Hope Behind Bars Africa. (2023). Paralegal support for indigent pre-trial detainees in Nigeria. Hope Behind Bars Africa.

<sup>22</sup> International Commission of Jurists Kenya. (2022). ICJ Kenya programme documentation: Paralegal operations in selected counties. ICJ Kenya.



## CHAPTER 4 – DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an in-depth analysis of data collected from a survey of justice seekers, paralegals, and key stakeholders across multiple sites of the survey. The findings provide insights into the effectiveness, accessibility, affordability, and overall impact of paralegal services in marginalized and vulnerable communities, as well as to the legal sector. Both quantitative and qualitative data are integrated to offer an understanding of user experiences, satisfaction levels, and systemic challenges. This chapter further explores variations across demographic groups to identify disparities and areas for improvement in service delivery.

### 4.2 Paralegals

#### 4.2.1 Demographic of Paralegals

The study, as expected in this kind of subject, did collect demographic data from the respondents because they have a direct correlation what nature of information the study seeks to uncover.

##### 4.2.1.1 Gender Distribution

Gender is an important parameter to understand and whether paralegals who provide services are of one or the other gender and whether it signifies a bigger picture.

**Table 1 – Distribution by Gender**

Gender	Frequency (F)	Percentage(%)
Male	14	48.3
Female	15	51.7
Total	29	100.0

The survey among the paralegals demonstrates a fairly balanced gender distribution, with females representing a slight majority at 51.7% (15 respondents), compared to 48.3% males (14 respondents). This gender balance suggests that paralegal work attracts a near-equal participation from both men and women.

##### 4.2.1.2 Age Range

In terms of age continuum, it was evident that the age of the respondent was a factor in their involvement in the provision of services:

**Table 2 - Age Range**

Age Range	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
18–35	13	44.9
36–45	8	27.6
46–55	5	17.2
Above 55	3	10.3
Total	29	100.0

The largest group of respondents (44.9%) falls within the 18–35 years age bracket, indicating that the programme is popular among younger adults who may be early in their legal careers. The 36–45 age group accounts for 27.6% of respondents, while 17.2% are between 46 and 55 years old, and a smaller proportion (10.3%) are above 55. This spread reflects a diverse age range among paralegals, suggesting that the programme serves both new entrants and more experienced individuals seeking a career enrollment into it.

The data portrays a paralegal workforce in prisons and communities that is young, with few years of experience, and educationally diverse. The prevalence of community-based and NGO employment underscores the social justice and rights advocacy focus of this group.

##### 4.2.1.3 Years of Experience

The study also sought to know the length of time in terms of years that the paralegals had been involved in the work within the community.

**Table 3 - Years of Experience**

Years of Experience	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 year	6	20.7
1–3 years	16	55.2
4–5 years	3	10.3
More than 5 years	4	13.8
Total	29	100.0

Regarding experience in the provision of paralegal services, over half of the respondents (55.2%) had between 1 and 3 years of experience as paralegals, showing a concentration of early-career persons within the sample. Additionally, 20.7% had less than one year of experience, which, combined with the 1–3 years group, means that nearly three-quarters (75.9%) were relatively new to paralegal work. Meanwhile, 10.3% have 4–5 years of experience, and 13.8% boasted more than five years, indicating a slight possibility of a population making a career out of paralegal work.



#### 4.2.1.4 Level of Education

Does education matter for the type of work they do? Statistics showed as set out in the table below.

**Table 4 - Level of Education**

Level of Education	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
KCPE	6	20.7
KCSE	6	20.7
A Level	1	3.4
Certificate	3	10.3
Diploma	10	34.5
Degree	3	10.3
Total	29	100.0

Examining educational background revealed that the majority of respondents possessed formal secondary and post-secondary qualifications, with 34.5% holding diploma and 10.3% university degree, highlighting that over 44% had attained higher education credentials relevant to their profession, and not necessarily in a discipline related to what paralegals do. However, a notable portion of respondents (41.4%) had completed secondary education at the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) or Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) level, while a small percentage (3.4%) completed A Level studies. This educational diversity indicates paralegal work attracts a population with varied academic histories, including those with basic education levels as well as individuals with higher qualifications.

#### 4.2.1.5 Employment Organisation

The study sought information on employment, whether and by whom were the respondents employed.

**Table 5 - Employment Organisation**

Employment Organisation	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Community-based organization	17	58.6
Non-governmental organization	7	24.1
Government agency	4	13.8
Faith-based organization	1	3.4
Total	29	100.0

Most respondents (58.6%) work within community-based organizations, underscoring the programme’s strong link to grassroots legal aid and community development roles. Non-governmental organizations (24.1%) and government agencies (13.8%) also employed significant numbers of graduates, while faith-based organizations account for a smaller fraction (3.4%). This distribution reflects the paralegals’ relevance to sectors focused on social justice, advocacy, and public service, highlighting the practical and societal impact of paralegal work.

#### 4.2.1.6 Membership to a Paralegal Association

There exist associations, whether formal or informal, comprising persons who engage in paralegal work. As part of the information collected, the study sought to know affiliation to associations professing to represent paralegals. The results are shown below.

**Table 6 - Membership to a Paralegal Association**

Membership to a Paralegal Association	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Yes	14	48.3
No	15	51.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The data on affiliation to associations showed that membership to relevant associations was almost evenly split among respondents, with 48.3% belonging to such associations and 51.7% not affiliated. This suggests a moderate level of ‘professional’ engagement beyond formal employment, which could influence access to networking, continued learning, and advocacy opportunities within the legal field. It may also have an impact on the future recognition of the paralegals as a profession, because in Kenya, it is not yet developed into a profession. The nearly even split in membership to associations suggests potential gaps in professional support and development opportunities.

This diverse demographic profile highlights the importance of tailored training and capacity-building programmes to meet varying educational backgrounds and experience levels. It also points to the need for enhanced networking and professional development platforms to support career progression and effectiveness in challenging environments such as prisons and NGOs. Understanding these characteristics is vital for designing interventions that strengthen the impact and sustainability of paralegal work within these crucial sectors.

The low level of affiliation to relevant professional associations points to the need to have regulatory intervention to recognise these cadre f persons, through registration, code of conduct and identification to enhance recognition as a part of the legal sector.

#### 4.2.2 Legal Awareness, Support and Sensitisation

The respondents were required to provide information relating to the frequency with which they provided their services to persons in need and other related issues. The statistics of their responses are as shown in the table below.



**Table 7 - Frequency of Providing Legal Information and Assistance**

Frequency of Providing Legal Information and Assistance	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Yearly	3	10.3
Every 6 months	24	82.8
Monthly	2	6.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The data reveals active and impactful paralegal workforce within prisons, community-based organizations, NGOs, and related settings. A significant majority of the paralegals (82.8%) provide legal information and assistance every six months, while 10.3% do so yearly, and a smaller number (6.9%) offer support on a monthly basis. This indicates that most paralegals operate on a semi-regular basis, likely aligned with institutional outreach schedules, training programmes, or legal aid initiatives. The relatively low monthly engagement may reflect constraints such as staffing, caseloads, or limited institutional support, which were beyond the reach of this study.

**Table 8 - Approximate Number of People Assisted**

Approximate Number of People Assisted	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1-10	3	10.3
11-50	7	24.1
51-100	5	17.2
Over 100	14	48.3
Total	29	100.0

When examining the approximate number of people assisted (see the table below), the data highlights that paralegals were reaching substantial numbers within their communities or institutions. Nearly half (48.3%) of respondents reported assisting over 100 individuals, demonstrating a high level of community engagement. An additional 17.2% assisted between 51-100 people, while 24.1% helped between 11-50 individuals, and only 10.3% supported fewer than 10 people. This suggests that most paralegals were not only active but also managed significant caseloads, emphasizing their crucial role in enhancing access to justice for underprivileged populations.

**Table 9 - Most Effective Method of Providing Paralegal Assistance**

Most Effective Method of Providing Paralegal Assistance	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
One-on-one interaction with clients	27	93.1
Awareness forums	2	6.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In terms of methodology of providing their services, an overwhelming 93.1% of respondents identified one-on-one interaction with clients as the most used method of providing paralegal assistance. This highlights the value of direct, personalized engagement in addressing individual legal concerns, particularly in sensitive environments such as prisons or vulnerable community settings. Only 6.9% preferred awareness forums, suggesting that while public education had its place, individualized legal aid was seen as more impactful and tailored to client needs.

In summary, the findings under this parameter demonstrate that paralegals played a vital role in community justice systems, with 82.8% of respondents providing legal information and assistance every six months, and a smaller number (6.9%) doing so monthly. This pattern indicates frequent yet periodic service delivery, likely shaped by organizational capacity or funding cycles. While such biannual engagement allows paralegals to assist large numbers of individuals, increasing the frequency of support, particularly monthly interventions, could significantly enhance access to justice, especially in high-need or high-turnover environments such as prisons or informal settlements.

The data further underscores the high impact of paralegal interventions, with 48.3% of respondents having supported over 100 individuals, and an additional 17.2% assisting between 51 and 100 people. This, highlights both the demand for their services and their deep community reach, particularly in underserved or marginalized settings. Such impressive caseloads not only reflect paralegals' dedication but also point to the need for greater institutional support, including training, supervision, and formal recognition within the justice system.

Notably, 93.1% of respondents identified one-on-one client interaction as the most effective method of providing legal aid, reinforcing the importance of personalized, case-specific support. This suggests that capacity-building efforts should continue to focus on client-centered skills such as interviewing, legal counseling, and follow-up casework. The minimal reliance on formal awareness forums (only 6.9%) may represent a missed opportunity for broader community legal sensitization. Expanding this approach could help raise legal awareness at scale and prevent legal problems before they escalate, thereby complementing the one-on-one model that is frequently employed.



#### 4.2.3 Paralegal Support in Navigating Legal Issues

Table 10 - Frequency of Assisting Clients with Legal Documents

Frequency of Assisting Clients with Legal Documents	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Rarely	1	3.4
Sometimes	6	20.7
Often	12	41.4
Always	10	34.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The survey respondents' data shows that paralegals played a critical role in assisting clients with legal documentation, a foundational task in access to justice. According to the data, 75.9% of respondents indicated that they "often" (41.4%) or "always" (34.5%) assisted clients with legal forms or document preparation. This highlights the essential role paralegals play in bridging administrative and procedural gaps for individuals who may otherwise be unable to navigate complex legal procedures, particularly in preparing documents with legal implication. Only 3.4% reported rarely performing this function, emphasizing that documentation support was a consistent and expected part of paralegal duties across institutional and community contexts.

The respondents were also asked whether, in their opinion, their assistance in preparing documentation speeded up legal processes.

Table 11- Belief that their Assistance Speeded up Legal Processes

Belief that their Assistance Speeded up Legal Processes	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Yes	28	96.6
No	1	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In terms of outcomes, a strong 96.6% of respondents believed that their assistance helped to speed up legal processes, suggesting not only the importance but also the contribution of their support to the efficiency of the process. Gain, on the question whether the respondents thought that their assistance was helpful to the person in need, the response was as below.

Table 12 - Perceived Helpfulness of Assistance Provided

Perceived Helpfulness of Assistance Provided	Frequency (F)	Percentage(%)
Somewhat helpful	1	3.4
Very helpful	12	41.4
Extremely helpful	16	55.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>

More than half (55.2%) of the respondents stated their help was "extremely helpful," while 41.4% said it was "very helpful." Combined, this means that nearly 97% of respondents believe their work is significantly beneficial to clients, indicating both competence and trust in their impact. These findings indicate that paralegals were not just administrative helpers but key facilitators in promoting faster, more accessible legal outcomes.

Table 13 - Frequency of Helping Clients Connect with Lawyers or Legal Resources

Frequency of Helping Clients Connect with Lawyers or Legal Resources	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Rarely	2	6.9
Sometimes	12	41.4
Often	7	24.1
Always	8	27.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Additionally, paralegals also serve as links to the broader legal ecosystem. When asked about their frequency in connecting clients to lawyers or legal resources, 27.6% said they "always", and 24.1% said they "often" perform this task. A further 41.4% said they "sometimes" assist with referrals, while 6.9% do so rarely. This suggests that roughly 93% are actively involved in linking clients to formal legal channels, reinforcing the paralegal's role as both a first point of contact and a bridge to professional legal support. This connectivity ensures that clients receive not only initial guidance but also continued support through appropriate legal referrals, which is critical in complex or high-stakes cases.

#### 4.2.4 Cost Implications and Funding for Paralegal Services

The question under this heading was whether the provision of paralegal services involved costs.



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Cost Implications and Funding for Paralegal Services	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Yes	15	51.7
No	14	48.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The data reveals that 51.7% of respondents reported the presence of costs associated with providing paralegal services, while 48.3% indicated they incur no costs. And who meets the costs of providing the services? The response was as set out below.

**Table 15 - Sources of Funding to Meet Paralegal Service Costs**

Sources of Funding to Meet Paralegal Service Costs	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Clients pay	4	13.8
Fees charged	4	13.8
Donor support	20	69.0
Paralegal's pocket	1	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Among those facing costs, the primary method of covering these expenses was overwhelmingly donor support, cited by 69.0% of respondents. This suggests a strong dependency on external funding to sustain paralegal activities. In contrast, only 13.8% rely on client payments, and another 13.8% depend on fees charged for services, indicating that cost recovery from beneficiaries is relatively limited. Notably, just 3.4% reported personally funding services from their own pockets, highlighting both the commitment of individual paralegals and the rarity of this practice. These figures underscore the importance of sustainable donor backing and raise concerns about the long-term viability of paralegal services in the absence of consistent funding sources.

The reliance on donor support (69%) of paralegals to cover service costs points to a vulnerability in sustainability if such funding diminishes. With only 27.6% relying on client contributions or service fees, there is minimal cost recovery from beneficiaries. Policy implications include the need for more structured funding mechanisms, such as integrating paralegal services into government legal aid budgets or community justice programmes. A key recommendation is for policymakers to recognize paralegals as essential justice actors and establish public or hybrid funding models to ensure consistent support, reduce overdependence on donors, and enhance the long-term viability of these critical services.

### 4.2.5 Training, Skill, and Perceived Legal Gaps in Paralegal Practice

**Table 16 - Paralegal Training**

Sources of Funding to Meet Paralegal Service Costs	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Yes	24	82.8
No	5	17.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The vast majority of respondents (82.8%) reported having received formal paralegal training, highlighting the investment in capacity-building across institutions that deploy paralegals.

**Table 17 - Extent of Use of Skills and Knowledge Acquired**

Extent of Use of Skills and Knowledge Acquired	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Not at all	1	3.4
Slightly	2	6.9
Moderately	2	6.9
A great deal	24	82.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>

This training appears to be highly relevant and well-utilized: an equal 82.8% stated they use the skills and knowledge acquired “a great deal” in their day-to-day paralegal work. This suggests that the training provided is not only accessible but also practical and directly applicable in the field. Very few reported low skill utilization, with only 3.4% stating they don’t use the training at all, and 13.8% indicating slight to moderate use, underscoring that most training content aligns closely with real-world responsibilities.

**Table 18 - Perception of Training’s Impact on Paralegal Work delivery**

Perception of Training’s Impact on Paralegal Work delivery	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	2	6.9
Disagree	4	13.8
Somehow Agree	23	79.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>26</sup> Although there is legal aid scheme under the Legal Aid Act, the limits in that Act disadvantages the untrained, yet experienced paralegals in providing services.



When asked about the impact of training on their ability to deliver paralegal services, a strong 79.3% of respondents said they “somehow agree” that the training positively influenced their performance. Although this response is generally affirmative, it may also suggest that while training is beneficial, some gaps remain in fully empowering paralegals. This is supported by a small proportion 20.7% who either disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating room for improvement in training quality, scope, or ongoing professional development opportunities.

**Table 19 - Perception of Gaps in Law and Policy Affecting Paralegal Work**

Perception of Training’s Impact on Paralegal Work delivery	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Yes	21	72.4
No	8	27.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Crucially, 72.4% of respondents identified gaps in law and policy that hinder effective paralegal work. This finding points to structural and systemic issues that go beyond individual training, suggesting that even well-trained and skilled paralegals may face limitations due to unclear mandates, lack of recognition in legal frameworks, or regulatory constraints issues that were noted through the open-ended question responses.

#### 4.2.6 Challenges to Legal Awareness and to Paralegal Assistance

A response was sought from the respondents on what they considered to be the biggest challenge facing people in understanding of their rights. This question was so framed because the success of the access to justice programme depends on people coming forward to enforce their rights. Any factor that would prevent this action indirectly scuttles the attempt to enforce people’s rights. Those interviewed stated that there were many factors that prevented people from knowing their rights, hence affecting their action for enforcement. Lack of knowledge or education, or ignorance of the law came out conspicuously as a key factor. Others included cultural issues and lack of support from the administration, such as police. An example was given where when a person goes to report a complaint to the police, instead of assisting, they make a joke out of the incident, thus discouraging the enforcement of people’s rights. Some administrators who ought to support paralegal work actually opposed it. Support from those that are expected to support, including government agencies, was cited as lacking or inadequate.

Poverty and cultural practices that may not favour strong agitation of their rights was cited as an issue. Negative perception regarding the persons practising paralegalism has also affected the path to justice. Perception is closely connected to ignorance of what the paralegals do, hence the dearth of proactive enforcement of rights.

Another issue that was cited as affecting people’s understanding of their rights was the fact that paralegals are not known amongst the community. Because they are not many and are not physically conspicuous, many people do not identify them to explain to them their challenges which would probably be resolved by way of litigation or legal advisory. This factor may be linked to lack of knowledge.

Perceptions about the legal process – that it is expensive, it takes too long to resolve – hinder the work of paralegals in informing persons to take steps to enforce their rights. With negative perception, the role of paralegals in helping with access to justice is made less effective.

On the question whether paralegal services contributed to improving awareness and understanding the law among indigent persons, the answer was in the affirmative. From the quantitative data collected, the persons who came in contact with paralegals ended up taking some positive step toward enforcement of their rights. It therefore means that lack of awareness of their rights is a major issue in terms of access to justice. With effort to sensitise people, the data suggest that more indigent persons will be able to access justice, empowered by knowledge.

One of the issues that was cited as a factor impeding access to justice was the cost. Because of the perceived high cost of justice, some people did not take any action. Some of the legal issues the people had could be resolved through assistance of paralegals. When they became aware of this alternative route to justice, a number of people were assisted without necessarily incurring expenses in seeking justice.

The paralegals would be critical in improving awareness of rights and the enforcement, but the role of the paralegals has been hampered by:

- (a) Lack of a system that identifies paralegals within the community;
- (b) Perception about paralegals, and this hinders people in approaching them;
- (c) Cultural issues that frown upon certain actions, e.g. enforcement of land rights by women, considered as anti-social by a large part of the community.

#### 4.2.7 Role of Paralegals in Providing Legal Aid

The respondents were asked whether they believed their assistance would help the people they interacted with and whether their role was useful. The respondents gave varying responses to these questions.

According to the study, the paralegals have assisted members of their communities in a multiple way. They have provided voluntary, cost effective ways of resolving legal issues and making people aware of their rights. Where persons have found themselves accused before courts, they have been assisted in processing bail/bond, including drafting of documents to be



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submitted in court. Making remandees know how to deal with court when they appear for their cases was also evident as there were simulated court processes just for the suspects to have a feel of how a court deals with cases.

Cases of victims who are not willing to come out and report cases were reported but after the intervention of paralegals, many, especially women, reported cases relating to sexual harassment or assault. There were cases where the paralegals actively pushed cases through and the victims finally got justice.

As evidence of the usefulness of the paralegals in assisting persons with legal issues, some of those assisted to realise their rights made referrals to the paralegal. In case of matters that a paralegal would not be able to help, including filing of civil disputes, the people were referred to lawyers to help them resolve their issues.

On the question whether paralegals contribute to the provision of accessible and affordable legal aid, the evidence suggests that they contribute through awareness creation. One of the reasons cited why people do not enforce their rights is about affordability. Paralegals are accessible at the lower level of the community's spectrum and because they do work without pay, this has bridged the gap to an extent, despite the fact that a combination of other factors have meant that penetration of paralegal services in the community is still low.

The paralegals have been helping in preparation of cases through drafting necessary documents and sensitizing on court processes. As many people from the areas subject to the study do not understand the intricate procedures, such as processing bail or bond, the paralegals have assisted in this regard. Because of the enlightenment on rights and responsibilities, some cases have been withdrawn after successful discussions. This is part of the processes that contribute toward effectiveness in managing court cases. Where the parties to a dispute get more knowledge on their respective rights and responsibilities, this has assisted in reducing the time cases have taken before determination, since some are sorted out by consent, others are handled faster because the participants appreciate certain things that would have taken the court time explaining to them. Full impact of paralegal work will, however, be properly measured, where statistics from the courts are available to triangulate with the findings in this study.

The work of the paralegals is not limited to court but a lot of work goes on in the community. The cases reported of alternative justice mechanisms have resulted in families being reunited. One of the respondents in fact stated that he had handled over 100 disputes and successfully resolved them in the last two years, healing the families in the process.

The paralegals have assisted in ensuring that disputes that would otherwise not be reported are reported. Cases of sexual assault and violence are sometimes not reported because of factors such as cultural practices, the fear of ridicule, etc. The paralegals working in the community have taken time to make the victims and families to be aware of the rights and this has resulted in cases being reported and ultimately the suspects apprehended. One of the respondents put it more boldly:

We have managed to create awareness - community understands the criminal justice system, beneficiaries are able to report and follow up cases, we have conducted capacity building which have assisted the community, legal aid through partnerships with NGOs and lawyers - this has resulted in pro bono legal services

The contribution in creating awareness of people's rights, and in resolving disputes within the communities has, however, been affected by a number of factors which have already been discussed and which will be dealt with again in another part of the report.

### 4.2.7.1 Referrals to Lawyers and Legal Resources and Barriers Encountered

Respondents were asked how often they sought help from lawyers or other legal resources and they gave a wide range of responses. There was no single answer and the experience often depends on the resources available and the challenges faced.

#### (a) Regular connectors

Some paralegals consistently link their clients with legal assistance. For example, one person mentioned that they frequently send clients over to justice defenders for legal help. Another one indicated having a strong partnership with the Center Against Torture Kenya Foundation, which makes it much easier to connect clients with legal professionals.

#### (b) Struggle for access

Many respondents shared the difficulties they encounter in getting legal support for their clients. One indicated they did not have direct access to lawyers, and wished they could connect with organizations offering volunteer legal services. Another common challenge was simply finding lawyers willing to take on cases, especially on a pro bono basis.

A respondent cited former collaboration with Independent Policing Oversight Authority, which had a readily available a pool of lawyers and clients could easily be connected. However, the existing pro bono setup had unfortunately reduced the amount of legal support available.

#### (c) Funding makes a difference

The UNDP/AMKENI programme was making a real impact. It provides funding that helps vulnerable clients, particularly in cases like land succession, making legal representation possible when it otherwise would not be.

#### (d) Constant demand for legal aid

Many respondents emphasized the ongoing need for legal help, especially in certain areas. They frequently see cases involving succession law, land rights which were big issues in relation to widows and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The rising number of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) cases in informal settlements often ends up in court, creating a constant need to connect clients with legal resources.



**(e) Financial barriers**

Financial barriers are a significant problem, with many clients simply unable to afford legal services. In these situations, respondents often guide clients to law firms in Eldoret City for assistance and follow-up on their cases.

**(f) Empowered and independent**

Some respondents felt empowered by the skills and knowledge they have gained. This allows them to handle many issues directly, meaning they rarely need to refer clients to lawyers unless it's for something truly serious.

In conclusion, it is evident that while some are well-equipped to connect clients with legal resources, others face significant hurdles. This highlights the ongoing need for more accessible and affordable legal aid for those who need it most. It is also clear that access to pro bono lawyers is limited as these lawyers also have their own constraints. Thus, a few respondents simply don't refer clients to lawyers at all.

**4.2.7.2 Gaps in Law and Policy Affecting Paralegal Work**

A recurring theme in the responses is the lack of legal recognition for paralegals within Kenya's legal framework. Many respondents highlighted that while paralegals play a significant role in delivering justice—particularly to marginalized groups—the law does not clearly define or empower them. This lack of recognition often results in limited access to court processes, legal authority, and acceptance by formal justice actors. Some paralegals noted instances where they were questioned in court about their legal standing, suggesting the need for certification, registration, and clear legal mandates. Others called for a formal regulatory policy under the Legal Aid Act, supported by proper membership structures, government acknowledgment, and defined roles, including possible representation in certain legal matters.

**4.2.7.3 Training and Capacity Needs**

There is a substantial demand for refresher courses and ongoing training, particularly in specialized areas such as the Children Act, Land Act, Marriage Act, succession law, and criminal law. Respondents requested training in alternative dispute resolution (ADR), legal drafting, and client advocacy. Others mentioned the value of boot camps, moot courts, and exposure to real-life case simulations. Many paralegals also expressed the desire to pursue further legal education—suggesting support for scholarships for diploma or LLB degrees. These needs reflect a widespread desire not only to sharpen professional skills but also to increase their credibility and effectiveness when serving communities.

**4.2.7.4 Material and Operational Support**

A critical barrier for many respondents was the lack of logistical resources. Calls for laptops, internet access, legal documents, printed constitutions, and training manuals were consistent across submissions. Several mentioned how paralegal work, particularly in remote or prison contexts, becomes difficult without such support. A number of paralegals emphasized the financial strain of volunteer work, recommending stipends or financial incentives, especially for those working with prisoners or in hard-to-reach areas. There were also requests for paralegal desks in chief's offices, legal aid centers in communities, and enhanced transport facilitation to support case follow-ups and court attendance.

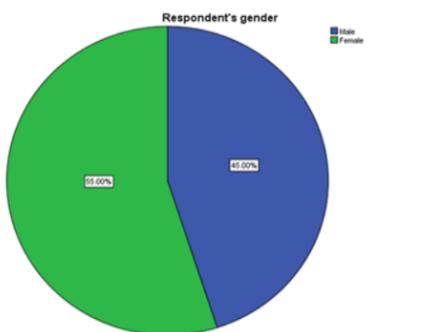
**4.2.7.5 Structural and Institutional Recommendations**

Beyond personal training and resources, respondents talked about the need for stronger institutional support and collaboration. Some proposed formal memoranda of understanding with courts, police, and government agencies to legitimize and streamline their interventions. Others recommended the creation of paralegal networks, centralized coordination centers, and systems to monitor impact and ensure accountability. In addition, there were several recommendations for expanded civic education and more community-level legal aid clinics. A few respondents highlighted that security and psychosocial support such as counseling and debriefing sessions are often overlooked but vital in sustaining long-term commitment to the work.

**4.3 Beneficiaries of Paralegal Services**

**4.3.1 Demographic Profiles**

**(a) Gender Distribution**



**Figure 1-Gender Distribution**

The sample was relatively balanced, with 45% male and 55% female respondents.

**(b) Age Breakdown**

The largest proportion (40%) of respondents was aged 18-35 years, reflecting the youthful demographic. Middle-aged respondents (36-45) made up 15%, while older respondents (55+) comprised 15%. This age distribution provides insights across different age brackets vis a vis needs for legal services.

<sup>27</sup> The beneficiaries examined here include Victims, Prisoners, Remandees, Communities



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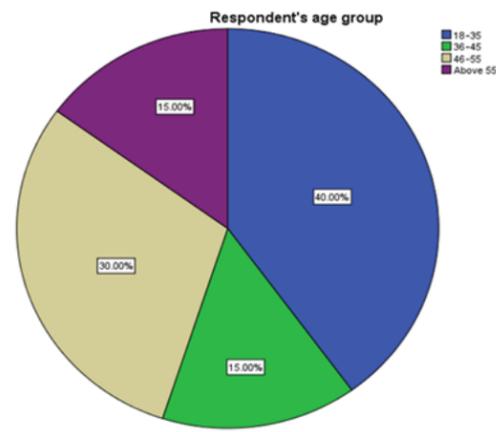


Figure 2

### (c) Education Levels

Education was diverse, with 55% having completed KCSE, indicating secondary-level education, and 25% holding diplomas or certificates. Notably, 5% had degrees, showing that paralegal services also reach university graduates.

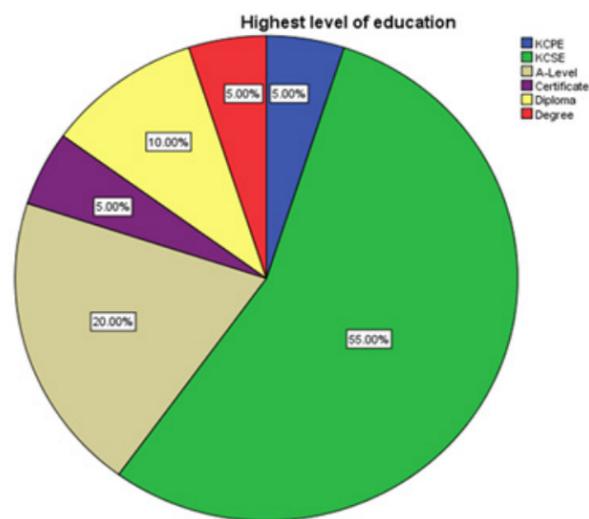
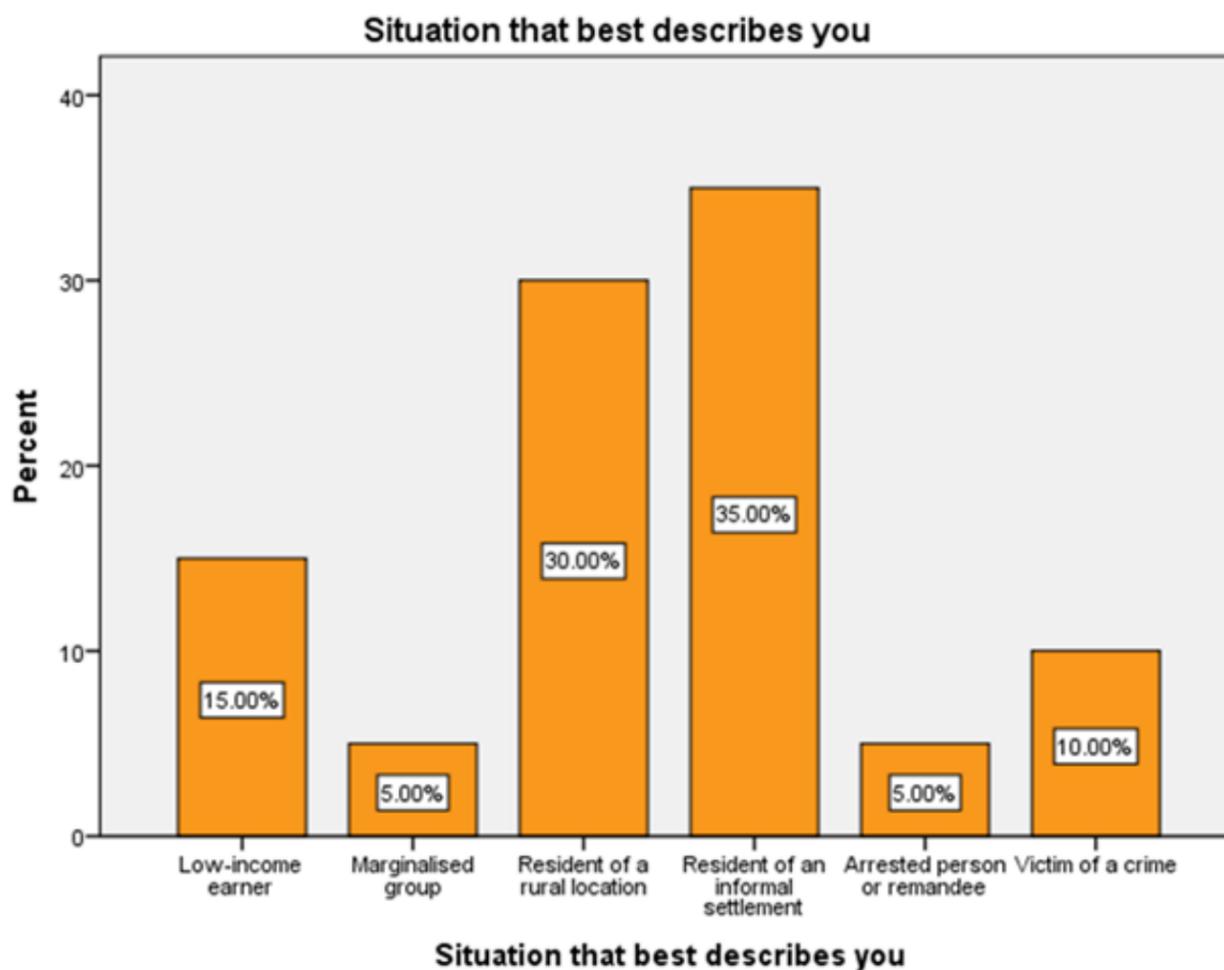


Figure 3

### (d) Perception About Themselves





**Figure 4**

Based on the data, approximately 55% of respondents identified with at least one form of vulnerability, including:

- i. Low-income earners: 15%
- ii. Marginalised groups: 5%
- iii. Minority groups: 0%
- iv. Persons with disabilities (PWDs): 0%
- v. Residents of rural areas: 30%
- vi. Residents of informal settlements: 35%
- vii. Arrested persons or remandees: 5%
- viii. Victims of crime: 10%
- ix. Children in conflict with the law: 0%

This demographic breakdown is critical for assessing the reach and effectiveness of paralegal services among populations typically excluded from formal justice systems. The findings highlight the need for continued efforts to expand access, particularly in rural and informal settlement areas.

#### 4.3.2 Contribution on Legal Awareness and Confidence

**Table 20 - Understanding of legal rights**

Understanding of legal rights delivery	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Not at all	12	60.0
Somewhat well	5	25.0
Very well	3	15.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Before receiving paralegal assistance, 60.0% of respondents indicated they did not understand their legal rights at all, and only 15.0% reported understanding them very well. This demonstrates a substantial initial knowledge gap among beneficiaries.

**Table 21 - Paralegal helped improve understanding**

Paralegal helped improve understanding	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
No	1	5.0
Yes, somewhat	2	10.0
Yes, completely	17	85.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Following interaction with paralegals, 85.0% of beneficiaries reported that the assistance completely improved their understanding, while an additional 10% said their understanding improved somewhat. 5.0% felt there was no improvement, indicating a strong educational impact from paralegal interventions.

**Table 22 - Confidence in dealing with legal issues after help**

Confidence in dealing with legal issues after help	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
No, I feel the same	2	10.0
Yes, somewhat more confident	5	25.0
Yes, much more confident	13	65.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

After receiving help, 65% of respondents said they felt much more confident, and another 25% reported feeling somewhat more confident in handling legal issues. Only 10% stated that their confidence had not changed.

Understanding the background characteristics of respondents is critical for interpreting the survey findings. The youth are often most affected by legal challenges such as criminal justice issues, and employment disputes and social challenges. This near parity allows for analysis of gendered differences in access and satisfaction with paralegal services. The presence of female respondents is significant given their vulnerability in many legal contexts such as gender-based violence.

The data reveals a significant transformation in beneficiaries' understanding of their legal rights and their ability to engage with legal systems. This positive shift in legal awareness also translated into increased confidence in dealing with legal matters. These figures strongly suggest that paralegals not only help beneficiaries understand their rights but also empower them to act on those rights more effectively and independently. This points to paralegal services being a critical tool for legal empowerment among underserved populations. The dramatic jump from low initial understanding (60% had none) to high post-assistance comprehension (85% complete improvement) shows that paralegals are effectively closing the legal literacy gap. Furthermore, the corresponding rise in confidence reflects not just knowledge gain, but personal empowerment, enabling beneficiaries to navigate legal processes with greater agency. This underscores the importance of expanding access to paralegal support as a frontline mechanism for access to justice, particularly for communities with limited formal legal education or representation.



#### 4.3.3 Support and Guidance on Legal Processes

Table 23 - Paralegal Assisted with Forms/Documents

Paralegal Assisted with Forms/Documents	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Yes	14	70.0
No	6	30.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The data reveals that paralegals played a vital role in helping clients to manage documentation and to navigate environment with multiple legal issues. A strong 70% of beneficiaries reported that paralegals assisted them with legal forms and document preparation, a task often critical in legal proceedings but daunting for those without formal legal training. This practical support not only eases the burden on beneficiaries but also ensures that documentation is correctly completed, reducing the likelihood of procedural errors that could delay or derail legal processes.

Table 24 - Help Navigating Legal Process



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The data reveals that paralegals played a vital role in helping clients to manage documentation and to navigate environment with multiple legal issues. A strong 70% of beneficiaries reported that paralegals assisted them with legal forms and document preparation, a task often critical in legal proceedings but daunting for those without formal legal training. This practical support not only eases the burden on beneficiaries but also ensures that documentation is correctly completed, reducing the likelihood of procedural errors that could delay or derail legal processes.

**Table 24 - Help Navigating Legal Process**

Help Navigating Legal Process	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
No	1	5.0
Yes, somewhat	5	25.0
Yes, significantly	14	70.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In addition to helping to complete forms, paralegals contributed to guiding clients through the legal system. The survey showed that 70% of respondents stated that paralegals significantly helped them navigate the legal process, while another 25% said they received somewhat helpful support. Only 5% felt they did not receive any meaningful guidance.

**Table 25 - Helped Speed up Legal Process**

Helped Speed up Legal Process	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Yes, possibly	4	20.0
Yes, definitely	16	80.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The data shows a perceived improvement in efficiency with 80% of beneficiaries believed that paralegal involvement definitely helped speed up their legal process, with the remaining 20% stating it possibly did. These responses point to a widespread acknowledgment of the value paralegals add, not just in access, but also in accelerating outcomes.

The respondent's views suggest that paralegal services are more than just a supportive add-on they are central to reducing barriers to justice. The high levels of reported assistance in documentation (70%) and procedural navigation (95% combined) indicate that paralegals act as crucial intermediaries between underserved clients and complex legal systems. The perception that they help speed up legal processes (80% definite impact) reinforces the idea that paralegals contribute to efficiency in justice delivery, especially for those who might otherwise be delayed or excluded due to lack of knowledge or procedural fluency.

### 4.3.4 Value and Accessibility of Paralegal Support

Could resolve issue without paralegal help	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
No	3	15.0
Yes, with difficulty	6	30.0
Yes, easily	11	55.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

While a majority (55%) of respondents felt they could have resolved their legal issue without paralegal help, a significant 30% said they could have done so only with difficulty, and 15% stated they could not have resolved their issue at all without assistance. This indicates that although some beneficiaries may have had the capacity to manage on their own, nearly half experienced paralegal support as either essential or significantly helpful in navigating legal challenges.

**Table 27 - Accessibility of paralegal services**

Accessibility of paralegal services	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Not accessible	1	5.0
Somewhat accessible	1	5.0
Yes, very accessible	18	90.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

A large majority (90%) found paralegal services very accessible, while only 5% found them not accessible. Moreover, paralegals helped ease the psychological burden of seeking legal assistance: 80% of beneficiaries reported feeling much more comfortable reaching out for help due to the presence of a paralegal, and an additional 20% said they felt somewhat more comfortable. This emotional reassurance suggests that paralegals not only facilitate procedural justice but also play a crucial role in creating a safe and approachable environment for vulnerable populations.

**Table 28 - Comfort in Seeking Legal Help Due to Paralegal Intervention**

Comfort in Seeking Legal Help Due to Paralegal Intervention	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Yes, somewhat more	4	20.0
Yes, much more comfortable	16	80.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The high accessibility rate (90%) combined with the emotional ease experienced by beneficiaries of the services (100% reported increased comfort) shows that paralegals are effectively positioned as both facilitators and gatekeepers of grassroots justice. The data highlights both the perceived necessity of paralegals and their emotional impact on clients seeking legal help. The accessibility and emotional support provided by paralegals were also notable.

The survey data suggests that paralegal services, while not always seen as indispensable, are critically valuable to those with limited capacity or confidence to engage legal systems independently.

These findings support the need for continued investment in paralegal networks—not only to bridge legal knowledge gaps but also to sustain the human connection that encourages marginalized individuals to seek timely and appropriate legal support.



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### 4.3.5 Referrals, Confidence and Beneficiary Satisfaction

Table 29 - Willingness to recommend paralegal services

Willingness to recommend paralegal services	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Yes, probably	1	5.0
Yes, definitely	19	95.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

95% stated they would definitely recommend paralegal services to others, while only 5% said they probably would. These findings suggest that the quality of interaction, assistance provided, and outcomes achieved through paralegal intervention are meeting or exceeding expectations.

Table 30 - Overall satisfaction with paralegal

Overall satisfaction with paralegal	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Satisfied	2	10.0
Very satisfied	18	90.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

A significant 90% of respondents reported being very satisfied with the services received, while the remaining 10% were satisfied indicating that no respondent expressed dissatisfaction. According to the data, 90% of respondents reported being very satisfied with the paralegal services they received, while the remaining 10% indicated satisfaction, showing no dissatisfaction across the board. Furthermore, 95% of beneficiaries stated they would definitely recommend these services to others, with only 5% responding “probably”.

The survey demonstrates overwhelmingly positive feedback from beneficiaries regarding their experiences with paralegal support. This high level of satisfaction strongly correlates with beneficiaries’ willingness to endorse the service.

The results also point to the high degree of trust beneficiaries place in paralegal service delivery. The fact that nearly all participants are not only satisfied but eager to refer others implies that their engagement with paralegals was both meaningful and effective. Such strong positive sentiment is often indicative of personalized, respectful, and impactful service, qualities that are essential when working with vulnerable or underserved populations facing legal challenges.

Further the survey suggests that paralegal services are not only functionally valuable but also highly respected by those who use them. The combination of 90% very satisfied and 95% definite willingness to recommend underscores that paralegals are perceived as reliable, competent, and approachable legal support providers. This level of satisfaction can drive community-level trust in justice services and highlights the need to scale up and formalize paralegal initiatives as an integral part of accessible legal aid frameworks.

This study highlights the need for a paralegal capacity enhancement programme aimed at strengthening the practical skills and legal knowledge of paralegals. Although 82.8% of paralegals reported extensively using their training, 72.4% still perceive gaps in the legal and policy frameworks affecting their work. To address this, targeted activities such as advanced training workshops, refresher courses, and mentorship programmes focusing on emerging legal issues and client interaction are essential.

To bridge the knowledge gap among the public, a community legal awareness and education campaign is crucial. The data shows that 60% of beneficiaries had little to no understanding of their legal rights before engaging with paralegals. This campaign could include mobile legal clinics, radio sensitizations, and community forums delivering simplified legal information in local languages, thereby enhancing public access to justice.

Finally, strengthening formal connections between paralegals and the broader legal system through a paralegal referral and legal linkages project is necessary. While 27.6% of paralegals always connect clients to legal resources, a significant proportion only do so occasionally. Developing referral protocols, legal contact directories, and joint training sessions with lawyers and legal aid boards would enhance collaboration. Additionally, establishing robust Monitoring, Evaluation, and Policy Engagement Frameworks will enable systematic tracking of paralegal work and inform policy reforms, while a Sustainability and Funding Diversification Initiative will help reduce financial vulnerabilities by exploring co-funding models and income-generating opportunities for paralegal services.

### 4.3.6 Promoting Legal Awareness in Marginalized Communities

Based on the analysis of data collected from beneficiaries who received support from community-based paralegals, an intricate and compelling picture emerges of the multi-dimensional role that paralegals play in advancing justice among marginalized populations. This analysis explores four interconnected themes: legal awareness and understanding, procedural efficiency and effectiveness, the relational bridge between communities and legal institutions, and the accessibility and affordability of legal aid. Each of these areas reveals unique and often under-acknowledged insights into how paralegals operate as frontline agents of justice—particularly for those most often excluded from the formal legal ecosystem due to poverty, illiteracy, geography, or systemic bias.



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The findings vividly highlight the transformative and multifaceted role of community-based paralegals as frontline agents of legal literacy, empowerment, and social justice. These individuals, often drawn from within the very communities they serve, bridge the wide and persistent gap between marginalized populations and formal legal institutions. The impact of their work is particularly profound in contexts marked by poverty, systemic exclusion, and weak state presence, where the absence of legal awareness perpetuates cycles of vulnerability and disempowerment.

Prior to receiving assistance from paralegals, an overwhelming majority of respondents—85%—reported having little to no understanding of their legal rights. A closer breakdown of this figure reveals that 60% of participants admitted to having no awareness whatsoever of their rights under the law, while an additional 25% described their knowledge as partial, fragmented, or highly contextualized—often limited to hearsay, cultural norms, or misinterpreted information from non-legal sources. Only 15% of respondents stated that they were adequately informed about their rights and legal remedies, a figure that mirrors long-standing empirical evidence from access-to-justice research. Scholarly literature has consistently documented the acute legal information deficit faced by indigent and socially excluded populations, especially those residing in informal urban settlements, remote rural areas, or regions afflicted by conflict and institutional breakdown. In such spaces, legal education campaigns are rare, legal texts remain inaccessible or incomprehensible, and justice systems are perceived as opaque, corrupt, elitist, or outright hostile to the interests of ordinary citizens.

Against this backdrop, the role of paralegals is nothing short of indispensable. Operating from within the community, paralegals are uniquely positioned to offer guidance that is both accessible and trusted. Their embeddedness allows them to build rapport, contextualize legal knowledge in culturally resonant ways, and develop outreach strategies that are responsive to local needs and concerns. This is reflected in the post-intervention data, which reveals a dramatic shift in legal awareness among respondents. After engaging with paralegals, 85% of participants reported that they now “completely” understood their legal rights and the avenues available for redress. An additional 10% indicated that their understanding had “somewhat” improved, suggesting that even partial exposure to legal education yields meaningful gains. Only one individual reported no increase in knowledge—an outlier potentially attributable to a mismatch between their expectations and the specific legal support offered.

These statistics do more than validate the informational role of paralegals; they point to a deeper educational function that has structural implications for how justice is accessed and understood. Paralegals do not merely dispense information—they translate the law into lived experience. Through vernacular language, culturally adapted explanations, and case-based examples, they demystify legal terminology, clarify procedures, and relate abstract rights to concrete community challenges. Whether addressing issues related to land and housing, domestic violence, family law, inheritance, employment disputes, or tenant protections, paralegals serve as interpreters of both the law and the local context.

Perhaps even more importantly, the cognitive transformation engendered by legal literacy is often accompanied by a profound psychological shift. Thirteen respondents—constituting 65% of the sample—reported feeling “much more confident” in addressing similar legal issues in the future. A further five respondents (25%) described themselves as “somewhat more confident.” This enhanced confidence is not simply a by-product of knowledge acquisition; it reflects a broader transformation in self-perception and agency. In essence, paralegals build legal self-efficacy—a form of empowerment that equips individuals to navigate legal institutions independently, advocate for their rights, and even assist others in their communities in doing the same.

This shift from passive victimhood to active citizenship is central to the democratization of justice. It challenges the notion that legal systems are the sole purview of lawyers, judges, and bureaucrats, and instead repositions everyday people as rights-holders capable of engaging meaningfully with the law. As such, paralegals contribute not only to individual empowerment but also to the construction of more inclusive and participatory legal systems. Their work catalyzes broader societal change, fostering a culture of legal consciousness and rights-based dialogue within communities that have historically been excluded from the formal legal order.

Moreover, the capacity of paralegals to facilitate this transformation cannot be separated from their unique positioning at the intersection of legal knowledge and community trust. Unlike formal legal practitioners, whose services may be costly, intimidating, or geographically inaccessible, paralegals are embedded in the social fabric of the communities they serve. They are often known personally to their clients, share similar life experiences, and are perceived as approachable and empathetic. This social proximity enhances their legitimacy and efficacy, allowing them to operate not just as legal intermediaries, but as advocates, confidants, and change agents.

Additionally, the role of paralegals is inherently adaptive and responsive. Unlike top-down legal aid models that may apply generic solutions to complex community problems, paralegals tailor their interventions to the specific needs, identities, and power dynamics of the populations they support. This includes adjusting strategies based on gender, age, ethnicity, language, and local power structures. For instance, in contexts where women face gender-specific legal barriers—such as in cases of domestic violence, child custody, or property inheritance—paralegals often play a crucial role in helping them navigate patriarchal systems that compound their legal and social marginalization. In these instances, paralegals become facilitators of both legal and gender justice.

The data also points toward the systemic implications of paralegal intervention. By increasing legal awareness and boosting confidence, paralegals effectively reduce the incidence of legal problems escalating into crises. When individuals understand their rights and options early on, they are more likely to engage in preventative action, negotiate settlements, or seek redress through appropriate channels—thereby reducing the burden on courts, police, and other state institutions. This preventative and proactive dimension of paralegal work underscores its cost-effectiveness and value as a public good, especially in resource-constrained legal systems.

In conclusion, the findings illuminate a deeply compelling narrative about the power of community-based paralegals to transform legal knowledge into action, and action into empowerment. Through a combination of accessibility, cultural competence, and deep community engagement, paralegals help dismantle the barriers that keep justice out of reach for so many. They not only fill the gap left by formal institutions but actively reshape the terrain of legal empowerment from the ground up. In doing so, they contribute



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to the creation of more resilient, rights-conscious communities where the law is not a distant abstraction but a tool for collective dignity and agency.

### 4.3.7 Barriers to Access to Justice by Beneficiaries

- Not knowing their rights or where to seek help

The biggest challenges people face is lack of knowledge on the existence of legal rights in the country, what kind of help is available, or how the justice system works. This includes not understanding the law itself, not getting enough information about their rights and finding legal procedures confusing. Sometimes, people just cannot get access to information because of poor communication, limited education or a lack of public awareness campaigns.

- Fear and stigma keep people quiet

Fear and stigma also play a big role. People are often scared to speak up because they fear backlash from authorities or intimidation. Cultural and societal norms also discourage reporting or taking legal action. This is especially true in sensitive cases like GBV or succession issues, where cultural barriers can put women at a significant disadvantage.

- Poverty and financial constraints

Poverty and financial constraints were mentioned a lot. Many simply cannot afford legal fees, court costs, or even transportation to get to legal services. To make matters worse, some even face demands for bribes or unofficial payments from local leaders or law enforcement. This just discourages them even more from seeking justice.

- Corruption

Corruption is another major challenge, both within the justice system and at the community level. Collusion between offenders and local leaders, bribery among village elders, and even corrupt practices by some lawyers who overcharge clients who do not know any better were reported. These acts are significant deterrents.

- Practical roadblocks

Many structural and logistical challenges such as unreliable internet, a lack of basic supplies like stationery, not enough staff, and difficulties accessing clients in prison or remand were mentioned. In prisons, convicted individuals often have no free time and those on remand can be isolated, especially if they do not have family to follow up on their cases.

- Language and education gaps

Language and education barriers complicate access to legal assistance, particularly in rural or marginalized communities where legal language is hard to understand and interpreters are not available. Some respondents noted that differences in local languages, limited education and primitive attitudes prevent people from fully engaging with legal processes.

- Slow and complicated court systems

The lengthy and complex nature of court procedures discourages many from pursuing justice. The perception that legal and court processes are expensive and cumbersome makes many feel that seeking redress is not worth the effort.

- Weak systems and lack of support

Finally, weak judicial systems, a lack of witnesses and, in certain cases, the reluctance of law enforcement to support victims (especially when medical documents or police forms like P3 forms are needed) create even more obstacles to justice.

In conclusion, it is clear that addressing these multiple challenges is crucial to ensuring more Kenyans can access the legal help they desperately need, particularly the disadvantaged category of people.

## 4.4 Paralegal Training and Access to Justice

### 4.4.1 Introduction

Access to justice remains a critical challenge in many societies, especially for indigent and marginalized populations who often find formal legal systems inaccessible or prohibitively expensive. Paralegal training has emerged as a vital strategy to bridge this gap by equipping individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide legal assistance at the community level. The Kenya School of Law (KSL) has been at the forefront of this effort, offering a two-year Diploma in Law (Paralegal Training Programme) designed to develop competent paralegals capable of supporting justice delivery. This part of the report presents an analysis of survey data collected from graduates of the KSL Paralegal Programme, aiming to evaluate the extent to which their training has translated into practical contributions toward enhancing legal access and empowering communities.

The statistical findings discussed here provide an overview of the graduates' experiences, including their employment status, relevance of the curriculum to their roles, and perceived impact of the diploma on their career progression. By examining these dimensions, the report seeks to highlight both the successes and areas for improvement within the paralegal training framework. Ultimately, this analysis serves as a foundation for evidence-based recommendations to strengthen paralegal initiatives and explore innovative pathways to further promote accessible, affordable, and effective justice in Kenya.

### 4.4.2 Curriculum Relevance and Its Role in Paralegal Preparedness

The survey findings demonstrate that the Diploma in Law Programme plays a significant role in preparing paralegals to enhance legal awareness, particularly among indigent and underserved populations. A critical indicator of this contribution is



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the perceived relevance of the programme's curriculum to actual paralegal practice. As shown in Table 1, a combined 77.1% of respondents rated the question "how relevant is your current job to the knowledge and skills gained from the program" as either "Good" (49.2%) or "Excellent" (27.9%). In contrast, only a small proportion 1.6% rated it "Very Poor" and 6.6% "Poor" expressed dissatisfaction with the curriculum's relevance. This distribution underscores a strong alignment between the programme's content and the practical realities faced by paralegals working to support access to justice.

Table 31 - Rating of Curriculum Relevance to Paralegal Practice

Curriculum Relevance	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Very poor	1	1.6
Poor	4	6.6
Average	9	14.8
Good	30	49.2
Excellent	17	27.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Similarly, overall satisfaction with the quality of the Diploma in Law programme offers further insight into how effectively the training supports the paralegals' mandate. As shown in Table 2, more than 70% of respondents indicated positive satisfaction levels in response to the question, "How satisfied were you with the overall quality of the Diploma in Law program?" Specifically, 39.4% reported being "Satisfied," while 31.1% were "Very Satisfied." In contrast, only 4.9% of respondents expressed being "Very Dissatisfied," and another 4.9% were "Dissatisfied." These high satisfaction levels suggest that the programme is well-received and likely effective in equipping graduates with the necessary knowledge and skills to engage effectively with communities and improve their understanding of the law.

Table 32 - Satisfaction with Overall Quality of Diploma in Law Programme

Satisfaction with Overall Quality of Diploma in Law Programme	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Very dissatisfied	3	4.9
Dissatisfied	3	4.9
Neutral	12	19.7
Satisfied	24	39.4
Very satisfied	19	31.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>

An additional layer of insight emerges from respondents' views on the most valuable components of the programme. In response to the question, "Which aspects of the program did you find most valuable among the following: Course content, Teaching quality, Practical skills development, Networking opportunities, Career support services?", the largest proportion (39.3%) identified Course Content as the most valuable. This was followed by Teaching Quality (23.0%) and Practical Skills Development (16.4%). These findings highlight strong appreciation for the programme's academic and practical foundations, particularly those that facilitate the dissemination of legal knowledge. In contrast, fewer respondents selected Networking Opportunities (8.2%) and Career Support Services (13.1%), suggesting that the programme's substantive learning elements are seen as more beneficial than its supplementary offerings.

Table 33 - Valuable components of the programme

Valuable components of the programme	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Course content	24	39.3
Teaching quality	14	23.0
Practical skills development	10	16.4
Networking opportunities	5	8.2
Career support services	8	13.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In summary, the data presented across these three tables demonstrate that the Diploma in Law programme is widely regarded as relevant, effective, and impactful in preparing paralegals to fulfill their critical role in legal awareness and public legal education. The programme's strong curriculum and practical orientation appear to directly contribute to improving understanding of the law among the community's paralegals serve, particularly those with limited access to formal legal institutions.

#### 4.4.3 Perceived Relevance of Diploma Skills to Current Legal Work

To further ascertain the impact of paralegal assistance on the efficiency and effectiveness of legal proceedings, an examination of key variables was conducted. A question was posed to the respondents "Are you currently working in a field related to law" The responses reveals that just under half of the respondents (45.9%) are currently working in a law-related field, while a slightly larger proportion (52.5%) are not engaged in legal work, with a very small fraction (1.6%) unclassified (see Table 34). This distribution provides a foundational understanding of the sample's professional engagement in legal contexts.

Table 34 - Currently working in a field related to law

Currently working in a field related to law	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Yes	28	45.9
No	32	52.5
Missing	1	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In assessing how respondents perceive the relevance of their current job to the knowledge and skills gained from the diploma programme, the data shows a diverse pattern. Approximately 19.7% of respondents reported that their current job is not relevant, 42.6% indicated it is somewhat relevant, and 37.7% described their job as highly relevant to the skills acquired during their training (Table 5). This suggests that while many participants find some connection between their job and the diploma skills, a notable proportion do not see a direct relevance, which may have implications for the perceived impact of paralegal assistance.



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Table 35 - Relevance of current job to knowledge and skills gained from the programme

Relevance of current job to knowledge and skills gained from the programme	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Not relevant	12	19.7
Somewhat relevant	26	42.6
Highly relevant	23	37.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Turning to the overall perceived impact of the Diploma in Law on the efficiency and effectiveness of legal proceedings, the responses are predominantly positive. As shown in Table 6, only a small fraction of respondents (6.6%) rated the programme as having no impact, and 9.8% indicated a slight impact. Meanwhile, a combined 63.9% rated the impact as either moderate (19.7%), significant (29.5%), or highly impactful (34.4%). This distribution clearly indicates a strong perception among the majority of respondents that the paralegal training meaningfully contributes to improving legal processes.

Table 36 - Overall impact rating of the Diploma in Law

Overall impact rating of the Diploma in Law	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1 = No impact	4	6.6
2-Slight impact	6	9.8
3-Moderate impact	12	19.7
4-Significant impact	18	29.5
5-Highly impactful	21	34.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>

These descriptive statistics provide a nuanced picture of how paralegal assistance is viewed among the respondents. While nearly half are working directly in the legal field and most perceive at least some relevance of their jobs to their diploma training, the overall high ratings of impact suggest that the programme's contributions extend beyond direct employment in law. The positive impact ratings affirm that paralegal assistance plays an important role in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of legal proceedings, either through direct legal work or through related functions informed by the training received.

#### 4.4.4 Alignment Between Paralegal Training and Legal Sector Employment

Building on the prior findings, a cross-tabulation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between respondents' current employment in a law-related field and the relevance of their job to the knowledge and skills gained from the Diploma in Law programme. The results of this analysis reveal a strong and statistically significant association between these two variables, suggesting that employment in the legal field is closely linked to how relevant individuals find their current work to their paralegal training.

As shown in Table 37, among those currently working in a law-related field (n=28), a substantial 82.6% rated their job as highly relevant to the knowledge and skills gained from the programme, while 34.6% rated it as somewhat relevant. Notably, none of the respondents in this group rated their job as not relevant, indicating a strong alignment between legal work and the utility of the diploma training.

Table 37 - Cross-tabulation of current work in law-related field and relevance of job to skills gained

Currently working in a field related to law	Not relevant		Somewhat relevant		Highly relevant		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
<b>Yes</b>	0	0.0	9	34.6	19	82.6	<b>28</b>	<b>45.9</b>
<b>No</b>	12	100	17	65.4	3	13.1	<b>32</b>	<b>52.5</b>
<b>Unclassified</b>	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.3	<b>1</b>	<b>4.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Conversely, for respondents not currently working in a law-related field (n=32), a contrasting pattern emerges. Here, 100% of those who reported their job as not relevant belong to this group, along with 65.4% of those who selected somewhat relevant. Only 13% of those not working in a legal field rated their job as highly relevant, suggesting that outside the legal sector, the practical application of the training is perceived as less direct.

These differences are statistically supported by the Chi-Square Test of Independence, which yielded a Pearson Chi-Square value of 27.443 (df = 4, p < .001). The likelihood ratio ( $\chi^2 = 33.822$ ) and linear-by-linear association ( $\chi^2 = 18.379$ , p < .001) further confirm the robustness of this relationship. The significant p-value indicates that the observed distribution is unlikely to have occurred by chance, thereby validating the conclusion that working in a legal field is strongly associated with perceiving one's job as relevant to paralegal training.

These findings provide compelling empirical support for the notion that paralegal assistance particularly when applied within the legal sector substantially enhances the alignment between training and practice. This in turn implies that such assistance can positively influence the efficiency and effectiveness of legal proceedings, as the skills developed through the diploma are actively utilized in law-related roles.

Table 38 - Chi-Square Test – (Cross-tabulation of Work in a Law Related Field and the Perceived Job Relevance)

Test	$\chi^2$ Value	df	Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.443	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	18.379	1	.000
Valid Cases	61		



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### 4.4.5 Career Progression and Workforce Readiness Among Paralegal Graduates

A key consideration in determining how effectively paralegals bridge the gap between formal legal institutions and indigent populations lies in assessing their current engagement with the legal sector, the relevance of their training, the influence of the programme on their career progression, and their overall employment status.

The findings indicate that nearly half of the respondents (45.9%) are currently working in a field related to law, as shown in Table 39. This suggests a significant proportion of paralegal graduates are integrated into legal service environments, where they are more likely to interact with and support underserved populations in navigating formal legal processes. However, a slightly higher percentage (52.5%) are not presently working in the legal field, pointing to a potential gap in transitioning from training to legal sector employment for some graduates.

Table 39 - Currently working in a field related to law

Currently working in a field related to law	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Yes	28	45.9
No	32	52.5
Undecided	1	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The perceived relevance of the diploma curriculum to actual paralegal practice reinforces this view. A combined 77.1% of respondents rated the curriculum as either “good” (49.2%) or “excellent” (27.9%), indicating that the training is generally well-aligned with the expectations and practical realities of paralegal work (see Table 40). This high level of curriculum relevance is crucial, as it suggests that those who do find themselves in the legal field are well-equipped to serve clients, especially indigent persons who rely on informed intermediaries to access formal justice systems.

Table 40 - Rating of curriculum relevance to paralegal practice

Rating of curriculum relevance to paralegal practice	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Very poor	1	1.6
Poor	4	6.6
Average	9	14.8
Good	30	49.2
Excellent	17	27.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Further supporting this alignment is the positive influence the diploma has had on participants’ career trajectories. As shown in Table 41, a majority of respondents reported that the programme either moderately improved (37.7%) or significantly improved (37.7%) their career progression. Only a small proportion noted no impact (18.0%) or a negative influence (6.6%). These results point to the diploma playing a pivotal role in preparing graduates to move into roles where they can contribute meaningfully to legal processes either as formal employees or community-based legal service providers.

Table 41 - Influence of diploma programme on career progression

Influence of diploma programme on career progression	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Hindered progress	4	6.6
No impact	11	18.0
Moderately improved	23	37.7
Significantly improved	23	37.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Employment status further contextualizes these insights. While 44.3% of respondents are currently employed, an additional 27.9% are pursuing further studies an indication of continued investment in professional development and potentially deeper engagement with the legal sector in the future. However, 27.9% remain unemployed (Table 42), suggesting that while the programme has clear positive outcomes for many, there are still barriers for some graduates in securing roles that allow them to participate directly in legal service delivery.

Table 42 - Current employment status of respondents

Current employment status of respondents	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Employed	27	44.3
Unemployed	17	27.9
Pursuing further studies	17	27.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Taken together, these findings suggest that paralegals trained through the diploma programme are positioned to bridge the gap between legal institutions and indigent individuals, particularly when they are employed in law-related fields. Their training is broadly considered relevant and impactful, and their career progression reflects growing capacity and potential within the justice sector. The data also point to the need for further support in transitioning all graduates into law-related roles to fully realize the sector’s potential in promoting access to justice.

As shown in Table 43, a strong positive trend is evident between those currently working in law-related fields and those who reported significant improvements in their careers due to the diploma. Over 53% of respondents employed in the legal field indicated that the programme had “significantly improved” their career progression, while a further 39.3% reported a “moderate improvement.” In contrast, among those not working in the legal field, only 25% reported a significant improvement, and 37.5% cited moderate improvement.



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Additionally, negative or no impact was disproportionately reported by those outside the legal field: 100% of those who said the programme hindered their career were not working in the legal sector, and 72.7% of those who said it had no impact were also outside that field. These findings point to a clear link between working in the legal sector and perceived benefits of the diploma, suggesting that the programme is more likely to support upward career mobility when it leads directly to work in law-related areas. This, in turn, reinforces the notion that paralegals active in the legal system are better positioned to bridge institutional barriers, especially for underrepresented or marginalized clients.

Table 43 - Crosstabulation of Influence of Diploma Programme on Career Progression and Currently Working in a Field Related to Law

Career Influence	Yes (%)	No (%)	Other (%)	Total (%)
Hindered progress	0.0	12.5	0.0	6.6
No impact	7.1	25.0	100.0	18.0
Moderately improved	39.3	37.5	0.0	37.7
Significantly improved	53.6	25.0	0.0	37.7
<b>Total Count (n=61)</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The association between these two variables was statistically significant, as demonstrated by the results of the chi-square test. The Pearson Chi-Square value was  $\chi^2(6) = 14.066$ , with a p-value of .029 (see Table 44), indicating a meaningful relationship between career influence and employment in the legal field. The Linear-by-Linear Association was also significant ( $\chi^2 = 10.582$ ,  $p = .001$ ), pointing to a positive trend: the greater the career impact, the more likely the individual is to be found working in a law-related area.

Table 44 - Chi-Square Test – Crosstabulation of Career Influence and Law-Related Employment outcomes

Test	$\chi^2$ Value	df	Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.066	6	0.029
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.582	1	0.001
Valid Cases	61		

Together, these findings support the argument that the paralegal programme not only equips participants with relevant knowledge but also facilitates meaningful entry into legal workspaces, where they can serve as essential intermediaries between formal legal institutions and indigent individuals.

The relationship between perceptions of the diploma's career impact and the perceived relevance of its curriculum to paralegal practice further strengthens the case for the programme's practical value. The cross-tabulation presented in Table 45 reveals a clear pattern: respondents who rated the curriculum as either "good" or "excellent" were also the most likely to report that the programme had "significantly" or "moderately" improved their career progression.

Table 45 - Crosstabulation of Curriculum Relevance and Influence of Diploma on Career Progression

Curriculum Relevance	Hindered Progress	No Impact	Moderately Improved	Significantly Improved	Total (%)
Very Poor	1 (100.0%)	0	0	0	1.6%
Poor	1 (25%)	2 (50%)	1 (25%)	0	6.6%
Average	2 (22.2%)	0	6 (66.7%)	1 (11.1%)	14.8%
Good	0	7 (23.3%)	13 (43.3%)	10 (33.3%)	49.2%
Excellent	0	2 (11.8%)	3 (17.6%)	12 (70.6%)	27.9%
<b>Total (n=61)</b>	<b>4 (6.6%)</b>	<b>11 (18%)</b>	<b>23 (37.7%)</b>	<b>23 (37.7%)</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Among those who described the curriculum as "excellent," a majority (70.6%) also indicated that the diploma had significantly improved their careers. Similarly, 43.3% of those who rated the curriculum as "good" also reported moderate improvement, and another 33.3% indicated significant improvement. These two curriculum categories alone account for nearly all respondents who experienced a positive career impact.

In contrast, respondents who rated the curriculum as "poor" or "very poor" reported very limited or no positive career influence. For instance, all respondents who indicated that the diploma hindered their career progression came from the groups who rated the curriculum as poor or very poor. Notably, none of the respondents who saw the curriculum as excellent felt the programme had negatively affected their careers.

These associations are statistically significant. The Pearson Chi-Square value of 39.965 with 12 degrees of freedom yields a p-value of .000, indicating a strong association between curriculum relevance and career impact (Table 46). The Linear-by-Linear Association value is also significant (17.546,  $p = .000$ ), confirming a clear positive trend: the more relevant the curriculum is perceived to be, the greater the impact it appears to have on career advancement.



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Overall, these findings highlight that curriculum design and relevance are not only important for skill-building but are closely tied to paralegals' ability to navigate and integrate into formal legal environments. This reinforces the diploma's strategic value in bridging gaps between marginalized populations and legal systems by empowering paralegals through effective, career-enabling training.

Table 46 - Chi-Square Test – Crosstabulation of Career Influence and Curriculum Relevance

Test	$\chi^2$ Value	df	Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	39.965	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	17.546	1	.000
Valid Cases	61		

### 4.4.6 Perceptions of Programme Impact and Contribution to Legal Aid Delivery

The capacity of paralegals to enhance accessible and affordable legal aid can be inferred by examining respondents' overall rating of the programme's impact and their willingness to recommend it to others. These indicators provide a user-driven evaluation of the programme's effectiveness and utility in addressing the legal needs of communities particularly those who are indigent or marginalized.

As shown in Table 47, the majority of respondents rated the overall impact of the Diploma in Law very positively. Over 63.9% of participants rated the impact of the programme between 8 and 10 on a 10-point scale with 34.4% assigning it the highest score of 10, indicating it was "highly impactful." Only a small fraction (6.6%) felt the programme had little to no impact. These figures suggest that the programme plays a substantial role in equipping paralegals with practical, usable skills that empower them to deliver legal aid in meaningful and affordable ways.

Table 47 -Overall Impact Rating of the Diploma in Law

Impact Rating	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1 – No Impact	4	6.6
2 – Slight Impact	6	9.8
3 – Moderate	12	19.7
4 – Significant	18	29.5
5 – Highly Impactful (10)	21	34.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Similarly, Table 48 shows that 71% of respondents were "very likely" or "extremely likely" to recommend the programme to others. This high level of endorsement not only reflects satisfaction with the training itself but also implies confidence in its ability to provide accessible legal education and contribute to wider justice delivery efforts. Given that many communities rely on trained paralegals as their first or only point of legal contact, such high levels of perceived effectiveness and word-of-mouth value reinforce the role of paralegals as essential access points to justice. Together, these findings point to the strong contribution of paralegal services as delivered through the diploma programme to extending affordable and accessible legal aid across communities. They underscore the value of continued investment in paralegal capacity-building as a strategy to decentralize and democratize justice.

Table 48 - Likelihood of Recommending the Programme to Others

Recommendation Level	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Not at all likely (1)	2	3.3
Slightly likely (2)	4	6.6
Moderately likely (3)	11	18.0
Very likely (4)	21	34.4
Extremely likely (5)	23	37.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 4.4.7 Correlation Between Programme Satisfaction, Impact, and Recommendation

The contribution of paralegals to the provision of accessible and affordable legal aid can be further understood by examining how graduates perceive the value and impact of their training, and whether they are inclined to recommend it to others. In the absence of direct measures of affordability or accessibility, the study employed inferential indicators such as the overall impact of the diploma programme, general satisfaction with the diploma, and the likelihood of recommending the programme.

A strong positive correlation was observed between likelihood of recommending the programme, and overall impact of the diploma programme (Pearson's  $r = 0.723$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that respondents who rated the diploma as highly impactful were also significantly more likely to recommend it to others. This suggests that those who felt the programme positively influenced their ability to offer legal support saw it as a valuable and accessible resource for others as well. In other words, the diploma's impact translates into perceived utility in delivering community legal services, thereby strengthening its role in supporting access to justice.

Similarly, a positive correlation was found between Satisfaction with overall quality of Diploma in Law programme and Likelihood of recommending the programme to others (Pearson's  $r = 0.683$ ,  $p < .001$ ), implying that higher satisfaction with the programme aligns closely with willingness to recommend it. This indicates that respondents not only valued the content and structure of the training but also believed in its potential to prepare others to deliver effective legal assistance a key attribute of an accessible and relevant training model for grassroots justice work.

These findings, presented in Table 49, reinforce the broader theme that paralegal training, as delivered through the diploma programme, contributes meaningfully to expanding access to legal aid. Participants' strong endorsement of the programme suggests it is perceived as both practical and empowering, enabling them to serve populations that might otherwise remain underserved by the formal legal system.



Table 49 - Pearson Correlation: Recommendation Likelihood and Programme Impact

Variable Pair	Pearson's <i>r</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Likelihood of recommending the programme to others and Overall impact rating of the Diploma in Law	0.723	0.000
Likelihood of recommending the programme to others and Satisfaction with overall quality of Diploma in Law programme	0.683	0.000

The findings from this analysis of Diploma in Law graduates from the Kenya School of Law affirm the pivotal role that trained paralegals play in advancing access to justice, particularly for communities underserved by the formal legal system. The programme has been positively evaluated by its graduates in terms of relevance, satisfaction, and career impact. Nearly 46% of respondents are currently working in law-related fields, and 87% rated the curriculum as either “Good” or “Excellent.” This demonstrates a strong alignment between the training and the practical demands of paralegal work, particularly in providing legal aid and navigating informal justice contexts.

Graduates report that the programme contributed meaningfully to their professional advancement, with over 75% indicating moderate to significant career progression. Their willingness to recommend the programme to others and their high overall satisfaction scores further emphasize the programme’s perceived value and practical utility. These outcomes suggest that paralegal training not only builds individual capacity but also contributes to the broader objective of legal empowerment in Kenya. The results strongly support the call for mainstreaming paralegal services as part of formal justice system reforms.

#### 4.5 Impact of Paralegal Work on the Legal Sector

##### 4.5.1 Introduction

This part of the report provides insights from a focus group discussion conducted at Kibera Law Courts on November 3, 2025. The participants included court administrators, judicial officers responsible for managing court operations, registry staff handling case files and public interfacing, as well as employees from the newly established Legal Aid Centre and customer service personnel. The goal of the discussion was to explore the role of paralegals in enhancing access to justice, particularly for marginalized communities, and their contribution to the efficiency of legal proceedings.

Judicial officers at the registry play a vital role in assisting clients with inquiries regarding court dates, terms, processing security bond forms, and collecting refunds. The digitalization of court processes has significantly enhanced efficiency, making the system more streamlined and accessible. This transition has improved the overall accountability and transparency of the judiciary by enabling more accurate tracking of cases and related financial matters.

##### 4.5.2 Paralegals’ Role in Enhancing Legal Access and Community Outreach

The judiciary has been instrumental in improving access to justice by addressing information gaps and raising community awareness. Kibera Law Courts have implemented a hybrid system that allows court users to choose between attending hearings virtually or in person, providing flexibility for individuals in marginalized communities. This initiative is essential in overcoming logistical barriers, particularly for those who face financial or physical constraints. A large number of cases at Kibera Law Courts involve defilement, underscoring the need for accessible legal assistance for vulnerable groups.

Several outreach initiatives have been launched, including public barazas, court user committees, activism sensitization forums, and radio talk shows on local stations like Pamoja FM. These initiatives educate the public about legal rights and responsibilities, demystifying the court system. Additionally, campaigns focusing on gender activism and Children’s Services Month help raise awareness of the legal needs of women and children. However, the impact of these initiatives would be significantly enhanced by a robust presence of paralegals. Paralegals must earn the trust and confidence of both accused individuals and victims. To achieve this, paralegals need to be independent, accessible, and closely connected to the communities they serve.

##### 4.5.3 Legal Aid Centre and the Role of Paralegals

The opening of the Legal Aid Centre at Kibera Law Courts by the National Legal Aid Service (NLAS) marks a significant milestone in fulfilling the government’s constitutional promise to provide free and equitable access to justice. The Centre provides critical legal assistance in areas like land disputes, domestic violence, child protection, and more, particularly benefiting vulnerable groups. Paralegals are integral to this initiative, ensuring that legal services are affordable and accessible to individuals who might otherwise be excluded from the formal justice system.

Although the Centre has only been operational for three weeks, it has already received approximately 20 cases, including matters such as maintenance and custody (3 cases), divorce (3 cases), assault (1 case), criminal offenses (2 cases), unlawful eviction (1 case), land disputes (2 cases), and employment-related cases (2 cases). Most of these cases have come through referrals from Legal Aid Clinics and agencies handling children’s matters, reflecting the growing demand for legal assistance.

To address this demand, the Centre urgently needs additional paralegals to manage the influx of cases and improve the efficiency of case management. A larger team would ensure that the Centre provides timely and effective assistance to individuals seeking justice.

##### 4.5.4 Paralegal Support and the Efficiency of Legal Proceedings

At Legal Aid Centre in Kibera Law Courts, paralegals play a pivotal role in improving the efficiency of legal proceedings. Paralegals handle a significant portion of the Centre’s workload, assisting with tasks such as drafting legal documents, case file management, and preparation for hearings. This support is vital in reducing delays, particularly for self-represented individuals who may lack the necessary legal knowledge and resources.

Paralegals also assist with mediation services, held twice a week (Mondays and Thursdays), and offer virtual mediation to accommodate those unable to attend in person due to logistical or financial barriers. Additionally, they help clients with e-filing and the drafting of legal documents, streamlining the legal process and ensuring that clients are well-prepared for hearings.



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Despite these contributions, the Legal Aid Centre is currently facing challenges related to limited paralegal staffing. This shortage means that many clients who need help may not receive timely assistance. Judicial officers have emphasized that while paralegals enhance efficiency, the current staffing levels are insufficient to meet the high demand for legal support, particularly in cases involving sexual offenses, domestic violence, and land disputes.

### 4.5.5 Bridging the Justice Gap: Paralegals and Access to Justice

Paralegals are key in making the justice system more accessible to marginalized groups in Kibera, where poverty, illiteracy, and lack of legal representation pose significant barriers. The Legal Aid Centre plays a critical role in providing free legal assistance to vulnerable groups, including women facing domestic violence, children involved in legal disputes, and individuals dealing with land-related issues. Paralegals help bridge the gap by offering counseling, drafting legal documents, and facilitating communication between clients and the courts. These services are especially vital for women and children, who often face additional socio-economic and cultural challenges when seeking legal redress.

Paralegals also play a role in addressing socio-economic factors like poverty and hunger, which exacerbate the difficulties faced by victims of gender-based violence (GBV) or sexual offenses. Many of these individuals are dealing with trauma while also struggling with day-to-day survival, making it harder for them to pursue justice. Paralegals provide emotional support, guide them through the court process, and help them access legal resources.

Despite these efforts, challenges remain. Public awareness of the Legal Aid Centre and its services is still low, limiting the number of people who can benefit from the available legal aid. Additionally, there is a shortage of paralegals, and the National Legal Aid Service (NLAS) faces resource constraints in training and deploying more paralegals across the country.

### 4.5.6 Affordable Legal Aid and the Need for Paralegals

Judicial officers and staff at Kibera Law Courts agree that affordable legal aid plays a crucial role in increasing access to justice. Paralegals, by offering services at low or no cost, ensure that individuals who cannot afford full legal representation still have access to the legal system. Many paralegals at the Legal Aid Centre provide mediation services, assist with e-filing, and help clients prepare legal documents, thereby reducing the burden on the court system and ensuring that cases are properly managed.

However, the paralegal services at Kibera Law Courts remain limited due to staffing shortages and limited funding for training. Additionally, there is insufficient public outreach to increase awareness about the Legal Aid Centre and its services. These issues need to be addressed to ensure that paralegals can effectively assist more individuals.

### 4.5.7 Collaboration and Regulation: Enhancing Paralegal Support

The relationship between paralegals and judicial officers at Kibera Law Courts is collaborative, but there is room for improvement. Judicial officers acknowledge the important work done by paralegals but highlight the need for better integration and formal regulation of their roles. Training and certification were identified as key areas for improvement, as they would ensure that paralegals are equipped to handle more complex legal matters.

Court administrators suggested that expanding outreach programmes, including community sensitization and public awareness campaigns, could improve the relationship between paralegals and the communities they serve. The current initiatives, such as public barazas and court user committees, are a good start, but more focused programmes targeting the local population would enhance confidence in paralegal services.

### 4.5.8 Key Findings and Recommendations

#### Role of Paralegals

Paralegals at Kibera Law Courts are crucial in enhancing access to justice, particularly for marginalized groups. They provide significant assistance in legal documentation, court appearances, and guiding individuals through legal processes, helping bridge the gap between formal legal institutions and vulnerable communities.

#### Challenges in Service Delivery

While the Legal Aid Centre is a promising development, challenges such as limited staffing, low public awareness, and insufficient training resources hinder the full potential of paralegals.

#### Recommendations

**Training and Capacity Building:** Increased funding for paralegal training and certification would improve their ability to serve the community effectively and ensure higher standards of legal assistance.

**Enhanced Collaboration:** Strengthening the relationship between paralegals, judicial officers, and court staff will improve service delivery and make the judicial process more efficient.

**Public Awareness:** Expanding outreach efforts, such as community barazas, radio campaigns, and court user committees, would help increase awareness of the Legal Aid Centre and the services provided by paralegals.

**Resource Allocation:** More resources should be allocated to the National Legal Aid Service (NLAS) to hire additional paralegals, upgrade court technologies, and expand physical access to legal assistance.

### 4.5.9 Conclusion

The opening of the Legal Aid Centre at Kibera Law Courts marks a positive step toward improving access to justice for the residents of Kibera and surrounding areas. Paralegals play a pivotal role in this process, providing essential legal support to those who would otherwise be excluded from the justice system. However, addressing challenges such as limited resources, insufficient paralegal staffing, and low public awareness is crucial to maximizing the effectiveness of this initiative. Strengthening the collaboration between paralegals, judicial officers, and the community will help ensure continued progress in enhancing access to justice for all.



## CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter brings the study to a close by presenting its concluding insights and proposed recommendations. It integrates the evidence generated from the research to draw objective conclusions and to outline practical, policy-relevant measures informed by the study outcomes. It consolidates the study's findings by draws on the research objectives, and provides a synthesized interpretation of the evidence generated, with emphasis on the implications of the findings for the justice system and paralegal practice.

### 5.2 Paralegal Services and Promotion of Legal Awareness

The study established that paralegals played a substantial role in improving awareness and understanding of legal rights among indigent individuals. Evidence from both the service providers and the beneficiaries indicated that legal education was predominantly delivered through individualized engagement, which respondents consistently identified as the most effective approach. Many beneficiaries reported greater confidence in addressing legal matters, clearer comprehension of legal procedures and improved knowledge of appropriate justice pathways.

Beyond general awareness, the findings demonstrate that paralegals enhanced functional legal literacy by assisting beneficiaries to interpret how legal rules apply to their specific circumstances. Respondents highlighted support in understanding court documents, bail and bond conditions, charge sheets and procedural obligations—areas that frequently present challenges to lay persons. This tailored assistance was particularly valuable for individuals facing literacy constraints, language barriers, or prior negative interactions with justice institutions.

Paralegals were found to be especially impactful within correctional facilities and community settings where formal legal services were limited, inaccessible, or perceived as intimidating. By simplifying legal language and maintaining consistent follow-up, paralegals enabled justice seekers to engage meaningfully with legal processes rather than remaining passive participants.

The study further revealed that continued interaction with paralegals contributed to sustained legal awareness beyond individual cases. Beneficiaries reported sharing acquired legal knowledge within their households and communities, indicating a spillover effect. This diffusion of legal understanding strengthened grassroots legal consciousness and supported broader efforts to promote accountability, rule of law and civic participation in marginalized contexts.

### 5.3 Paralegals Role in Efficiency and Effectiveness of Legal Proceedings

The findings provide strong evidence that paralegal involvement improves both the efficiency and effectiveness of legal processes. A majority of paralegals indicated that their work contributes to faster case progression through assistance with documentation, clarification of procedures, referrals and follow-up with justice institutions.

The study shows that paralegals played a preventative role by addressing procedural gaps that often resulted in adjournments and delays. Through guidance on filing requirements, court procedures and documentation standards, paralegals helped to ensure that cases were presented more accurately and coherently. Justice sector actors noted that clients who had received paralegal support were generally better prepared and more compliant with procedural expectations.

Paralegals also contributed to reducing procedural delays by ensuring that clients understood timelines, completed required forms correctly and prepared adequately before engaging courts or other justice actors. Within correctional settings, paralegal interventions were associated with reduced confusion among remandees, improved case monitoring and more timely court appearances. These findings underscore the role of paralegals as practical facilitators within an otherwise complex and slow-moving justice system.

In addition, the study found that paralegals enhanced institutional efficiency by serving as intermediaries between justice seekers and formal institutions. Through referrals, follow-ups and clarification of procedural issues, paralegals reduced repetitive inquiries and misdirected applications. This intermediary function contributed to more efficient use of scarce judicial and legal aid resources, particularly in high-demand and resource-constrained environments.

### 5.4 Bridging the Gap Between Formal Legal Institutions and Indigent Persons

The study established that paralegals serve as a crucial interface between marginalized communities and formal legal institutions. Many beneficiaries reported apprehension, mistrust, or unfamiliarity with courts, police stations and legal aid offices. Paralegals mitigate these barriers by accompanying clients, explaining institutional processes and facilitating referrals to advocates, courts and relevant government agencies.

The findings further indicate that paralegals help overcome social and psychological obstacles that discourage indigent persons from seeking justice. Beneficiaries described paralegals as approachable, culturally sensitive and easier to engage than formal justice actors. This proximity allows paralegals to identify legal needs at an early stage and guide individuals toward appropriate remedies before disputes escalate.

Paralegals were also found to strengthen confidence in the justice system by simplifying institutional procedures and advocating for clients within defined ethical and professional limits. Their embedded presence within communities enables them to operate in areas where formal justice institutions have limited reach, thereby reinforcing the legitimacy of the justice system at the grassroots level.

Importantly, the study showed that paralegals assist communities in translating grievances into legally actionable claims. By supporting documentation and structured referrals, paralegals ensured that marginalized voices were not excluded from formal legal processes while respecting professional boundaries. This bridging role enhanced coordination among justice actors and supports the development of a more inclusive and responsive justice system.



### 5.5 Accessible and Affordable Legal Aid

The findings demonstrate that paralegals play a significant role in expanding access to affordable legal assistance. Most beneficiaries reported receiving services either free of charge or at minimal cost support that would otherwise have been inaccessible due to the high cost of advocate-led legal services. Through legal information provision, mediation, documentation support and referrals, paralegals substantially reduced financial barriers to justice.

The study further found that paralegal services were especially important for individuals who did not qualify for formal legal aid schemes yet lacked the financial capacity to engage private advocates. By providing preliminary legal assistance, paralegals ensured that such individuals were not entirely excluded from justice services. This approach enhanced equity and aligned with constitutional principles of fairness and equal access to justice.

By resolving minor disputes early, supporting alternative dispute resolution and preventing escalation of legal problems, paralegals also reduced indirect costs such as prolonged detention, repeated court appearances and transport expenses. These findings confirm that paralegals represent a cost-effective mechanism for legal aid delivery, particularly for indigent and marginalized populations.

In addition, the study highlighted the broader economic value of paralegal interventions within the justice system. By reducing case backlogs, limiting unnecessary litigation and promoting early dispute resolution, paralegals contributed to overall institutional cost savings. This positions paralegal programmes as both socially beneficial and economically efficient components of national legal aid frameworks.

### 5.6 Recommendations

Drawing from the study findings, it is evident that paralegals contribute significantly to access to justice, procedural efficiency and institutional connectivity within Kenya's justice system. However, the study also identified regulatory, institutional and resource-related challenges that hinder the full realization of their potential. In response, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the integration, effectiveness and sustainability of paralegal services.

#### 5.6.1 Improving Efficiency and Effectiveness of Legal Processes

- There is a need to formally embed paralegals within justice sector operations, particularly in courts, correctional facilities and legal aid offices. Institutional inclusion would enable paralegals to systematically support case preparation, documentation, client guidance and case monitoring, thereby reducing avoidable delays and improving coordination among justice actors.
- The study further underscores the importance of establishing structured, continuous professional development programmes for paralegals. Training should prioritize legal documentation, case management systems, ethical standards and emerging legal issues to enhance service quality and adaptability to evolving justice sector demands.
- To address procedural inefficiencies, referral and feedback mechanisms among paralegals, advocates, courts and the National Legal Aid Service should be strengthened. Clear referral protocols and communication channels would reduce duplication, improve accountability and ensure timely progression of cases involving indigent clients.

In light of these findings, it is recommended that a follow-up study be conducted to explore the potential for anchoring trained paralegals as referral agents to court-annexed mediation mechanisms. Given their close ties to communities and demonstrated legal knowledge, paralegals are well-positioned to identify disputes particularly in areas like family, land, succession, and civil matters that may be more appropriately addressed through alternative dispute resolution.

The proposed study would assess the feasibility of institutionalizing paralegal-led referrals, examine the modalities of integrating such a process within the existing court-annexed mediation framework, and lay the groundwork for stakeholder collaboration. This collaboration could include the Judiciary, Kenya Law Reform Commission, legal aid providers, and community justice organizations. Embedding paralegals in this process would reinforce their role in early conflict identification and resolution, while also contributing to the decongestion of courts and enhanced access to justice at the grassroots level.

Given that over 63.9% of respondents rated the programme's overall impact as "Significant" or "Highly impactful," and that most graduates are engaged in legally relevant roles, the evidence provides a strong foundation to justify this extension. By expanding the functional scope of paralegals into structured mediation referrals, the justice system can better leverage their grassroots reach to enhance both the efficiency and equity of dispute resolution in Kenya.

#### 5.6.2 Bridging Institutional Gaps

The study recommends strengthening legal recognition and accreditation mechanisms for paralegals to enhance legitimacy, accountability and institutional acceptance. A standardized accreditation framework would clarify professional expectations and promote ethical and effective collaboration with other justice sector actors.

There is also a need to develop clear operational guidelines defining the scope and limits of paralegal practice. Such guidelines would minimize role ambiguity, reduce friction with advocates and encourage complementary working relationships within the justice system.

Additionally, structured partnerships should be promoted between paralegal organizations, the Judiciary, the Kenya Prisons Service, law enforcement agencies and legal aid institutions. Formal collaboration arrangements would enhance coordination, improve service delivery and align paralegal interventions with broader justice sector objectives.

#### 5.6.3 Expanding Affordable Legal Aid

There is a need for increased public and donor investment in community-based paralegal programmes, given their demonstrated cost-effectiveness in extending justice services to marginalized populations. Sustainable financing would support programme expansion, service quality improvement and outreach to underserved areas.



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The study further recommends the inclusion of paralegal services within county and national legal aid budgets in accordance with the Legal Aid Act. Integrating paralegals into public legal aid frameworks would enhance institutional ownership, sustainability and policy coherence.

Finally, targeted deployment of paralegals should be prioritized in underserved settings, including informal settlements, rural areas and correctional facilities. Focusing resources on high-need contexts would help close persistent access-to-justice gaps and ensure timely, affordable and locally accessible legal support for vulnerable populations.

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