

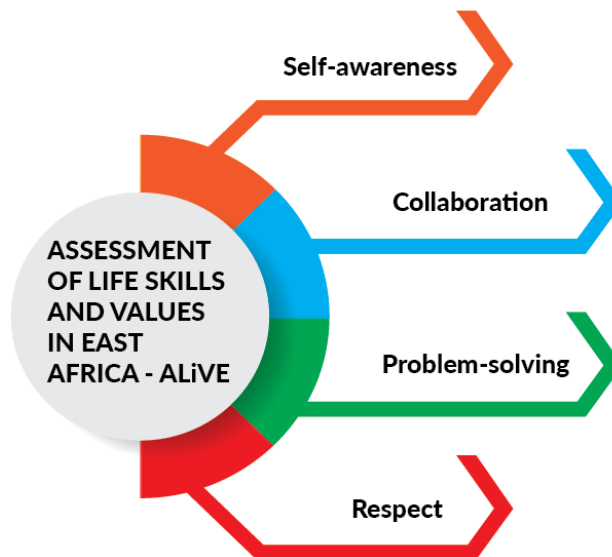


# RELI

Regional Education  
Learning Initiative

## UNDERSTANDING SELF-AWARENESS IN THE KENYAN CONTEXT: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

A Report for the Assessment of Life Skills and Values in East Africa  
(ALiVE) Project



**SELF-AWARENESS - KENYA**

This report is a product of the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI). RELI, through the Values and Life Skills (VaLi) thematic group, aimed to collaborate with local leaders to cocreate and develop contextualized assessments in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. The RELI project, Assessment of Life Skills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE), has three main objectives: (a) develop contextualized, open-source tools for the assessment of life skills and values in the East African context; (b) generate large-scale data on life skills and values across the three countries; and (c) use this data to inform change and build capacities within the VaLi-ALiVE member organizations.

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## CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>1 OVERVIEW OF THE ALIVE PROJECT</b> .....	<b>6</b>
1.1 Brief Description of the Project.....	6
1.2 General Objective of the Contextualisation Study.....	6
1.3 Research Questions.....	7
<b>2 METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>7</b>
2.1 Study Design.....	7
2.2 Study Sites .....	7
2.3 Study Population, Sampling, and Sample.....	8
2.4 Data Collection Methods and Tools .....	9
2.5 Training of Research Teams and Fieldwork .....	9
2.6 Coding System and Data Analysis.....	10
2.7 Ethical Considerations .....	11
<b>3 FINDINGS</b> .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.1 General Characteristics of the Participants.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.2 Codes and Central Themes in Self-Awareness	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.2.1 Definition.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.2.2 Subskills.....	19
3.2.3 Dispositions.....	26
3.2.4 Values and Behaviours.....	33
3.2.5 Related Skills .....	39
3.2.6 Support Systems and Enabling Factors.....	43
3.2.7 Assessment Methods.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>4 CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
4.1 Limitations of the Study.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
4.2 Recommendations for Future Research and Assessment	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
	<b>defined.</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Knowing or Understanding Self, Taking Care of Self, Finding Solutions, and Knowing or Understanding Problem by Gender and Category of the Participants.....	13
Figure 2: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Knowing or Understanding Self, Taking Care of Self, Finding Solutions, and Knowing or Understanding Problem by Study Sub-County	15
Figure 3: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of the Definition of Self-Awareness, by Category .....	18
Figure 4: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of the Definition of Self-Awareness, by Gender.....	19
Figure 5: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Expressive Communication, Relationship Skills, Self-Regulation, and Self-Confidence, by Gender and Category of the Participants ...	20
Figure 6: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Expressive Communication, Relationship Skills, Self-Regulation, and Self-Confidence, by the Study Sub-County .....	22
Figure 7: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of the Subskills of Self-Awareness, by Category .....	25
Figure 8: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of the Subskills of Self-Awareness, by Gender.....	26
Figure 9: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Responsibility, Passion, Kindness or Friendliness, Willingness to Be Corrected or Advised, Leadership, and Patience or Time, by Gender and Category of the Participants .....	28
Figure 10: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Hard Work, Responsibility, Passion, Kindness or Friendliness, Willingness to Be Corrected or Advised, and Positive Attitude, by the Study Sub-County.....	29
Figure 11: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of the Dispositions of Self-Awareness, by Category .....	32
Figure 12: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of the Dispositions of Self-Awareness, by Gender.....	33
Figure 13: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Positive Conduct, Respect, Obedience, Humility, and Discipline, by Gender and Category of the Participants .....	35
Figure 14: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Positive Conduct, Respect, Obedience, Humility, and Discipline, by the Study Sub-County .....	36
Figure 15: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of Values and Behaviours of Self-Awareness, by Category .....	38
Figure 16: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of Values and Behaviours of Self-Awareness, by Gender.....	39

Figure 17: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Decision Making, Critical Thinking, and Creativity, by Gender and Category of the Participants .....	40
Figure 18: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Decision Making, Critical Thinking, and Creativity, by Sub-County.....	41
Figure 19: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of Related Skills of Self-Awareness, by Category .....	42
Figure 20: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of Related Skills of Self-Awareness, by Gender.....	43
Figure 21: Frequency of Excerpts That Include School or Training, Family, Friends or Peers, Community, and Place of Worship by Gender and Category of the Participants.....	45
Figure 22 : Frequency of Excerpts That Include School or Training, Family, Friends or Peers, Community, and Place of Worship by the Study Sub-County .....	46
Figure 23: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of Support Systems and Enabling Factors of Self-Awareness, by Category .....	50
Figure 24: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of Support Systems and Enabling Factors of Self-Awareness, by Gender.....	51
Figure 25: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Observation, Interviews, and Task Performance, by Gender and Category of the Participants.....	52
Figure 26: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Observation, Interviews, and Task Performance, by the Study Sub-County .....	53
Figure 27: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of Assessment Methods of Self-Awareness, by Category .....	55
Figure 28: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of Assessment Methods of Self-Awareness, by Gender.....	55

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Data Collection Regions, Sites, and Selection Criteria.....	8
Table 2: Number of Participants Interviewed per Category and Site.....	9
Table 3: Codes That Emerged as Definitions of Self-Awareness.....	13
Table 4: Codes That Emerged as Subskills of Self-Awareness .....	20
Table 5: Codes That Emerged as Dispositions of Self-Awareness .....	27
Table 6: Codes That Emerged as Values and Behaviours of Self-Awareness .....	34
Table 7: Codes That Emerged as Related Skills of Self-Awareness.....	40
Table 8: Codes that emerged as Support Systems and Enabling Factors of Self-Awareness .....	44
Table 9: Codes That Emerged as Assessment Methods of Self-Awareness .....	51

## 1. OVERVIEW OF THE ALIVE PROJECT

### 1.1 Brief Description of the Project

The Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI), through the Values and Life Skills (VaLi) thematic group, intends to collaborate with local leaders to cocreate and develop contextualized assessments in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. The initiative, Assessment of Life Skills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE), will achieve three objectives: gathering information (and knowledge), building community, and advocacy. These three broad objectives mirror RELI's three pillars: being a hub for knowledge, transforming member organizations, and influencing policy. Over three years (2020–2023), ALiVE will do the following: (a) develop contextualized, open-source tools to assess life skills and values in the East African context; (b) generate large-scale data on life skills and values across the three countries; and (c) use this data to inform change and build capacities within the VaLi-ALiVE member organizations. These organizations will advocate for the three national education systems to focus on and produce these competencies, to inform regional policy throughout the East African Community, and to inform global thinking on how to measure life skills and values as *relevant and effective* learning outcomes.

ALiVE will be a context-relevant, summative assessment. The assessment will target adolescent boys and girls from ages 13 through 17 years, both in school and out of school, focusing on three competencies and one value: *self-awareness*, *problem solving*, *collaboration*, and *respect*. Embracing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) spirit of *leaving no one behind*, the initiative will conduct the assessment at the household level. The aspiration is that this will be a simple and easy-to-use tool, making it feasible and affordable to conduct an assessment on a national scale.

The first phase in developing the contextualized assessment tools was to conduct ethnographic interviews across the three countries with three categories of informants: adolescents, parents, and key persons such as teachers, social workers, youth patrons or matrons, among others. The interviews were to gauge participant perceptions and understandings of the selected ALiVE competencies: *self-awareness*, *collaboration*, *problem solving*, and *respect*.

### 1.2 The General Objective of the Contextualisation Study

The aim of the study was to achieve a contextualised understanding of *self-awareness* in Kenya in order to determine the skill structure and derive the best tools for a large-scale assessment of *self-awareness* in the three countries.

### 1.3 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

- (i) How do adolescents, parents, and other key actors in Kenya define and understand *self-awareness*?
- (ii) How do the common definitions differ across the participants' categories (adolescents, parents, and key persons), genders, and locations?
- (iii) Which subskills emerge from the common understanding of this skill, and how do they vary across the participants' categories, genders, and locations?
- (iv) What are the common dispositions and values identified by the different categories of the participants based on gender and location?
- (v) Which support systems and other factors help the adolescents develop *self-awareness* skills?
- (vi) What are the common methods identified and used by the participants to assess *self-awareness* skills in adolescents?

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Study Design

Since the purpose of this study is to learn about and reflect on a certain social group's way of life and understanding, a qualitative approach and an ethnographic design was adopted to explore and collect participants' perceptions and understandings of the selected ALiVE competence in the local context of Kenya. Ethnography is a widely used research tradition in the social sciences. It can be defined as the study of social interactions, behaviours, and perceptions that occur within social groups, teams, organizations, and communities (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Therefore, the ultimate goal of this tradition is to analyse and form a detailed understanding of the particularities of a given social group. That is why we considered this the most appropriate design for conducting the present study.

### 2.2 Study Sites

The study was conducted in 5 sub-counties in Kenya, which were sampled on the basis of their status as rural or urban, their economic activity (pastoralist, core-urban, agricultural), and their distance from Nairobi. Two villages in each sub-county were randomly sampled. Table 1 summarizes the five locations.

Table 1: Data Collection Regions, Sites, and Selection Criteria

CRITERIA	REGION AND SUB-COUNTY
Core urban characteristics, low-income areas within capital city	Region: Nairobi Sub-county: Kibra
Core rural characteristics, agriculture-rich, within 100 km from capital city	Region: Central Sub-county: Mwea East
Core rural, agriculture-rich, and within 300–400 km from capital city	Region: Western/Nyanza Sub-county: Rongo
Core rural characteristics, pastoralist areas	Region: Rift Valley Sub-county: Narok South
With different characteristics from all mentioned above	Region: Coast Sub-county: Tana Delta

Given that the study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic period, researchers specifically selected sub-counties in which RELI members were working, for the sake of ease of contact, logistics, and observance of the COVID-19 health protocols.

### 2.3 Study Population, Sampling, and Sample

The study population consisted of adolescent boys and girls from 13 through 17 years of age (both in and out of school), parents, and key persons (people close to the adolescents such as teachers, social workers, youth patrons or matrons in religious communities, and others). Research assistants selected interview participants using systematic sampling based on a list of target participants per category in each village.

In each sampled village, researchers targeted at least 4 interviews with 2 adolescents of each gender (combining those in primary, secondary, vocational training centre, and out of school); 4 interviews with 2 parents of the sampled adolescents and 2 of non-sampled adolescents (while combining fathers and mothers); and 4 interviews with key persons (teachers, social workers, and others who consistently work with adolescents, from both genders). This resulted in a target of 24 participants per sub-county for the one-on-one interviews. The sample totalled around 120 participants for the interviews. Given the prevailing challenges, however, the study reached a total of just 116 participants in the interviews. The foregoing information is summarized in Table 2 below.



Table 2: Number of Participants Interviewed per Category and Site

Sub-county	Adolescents		Key persons		Parents		Total		
	Boys	Girls	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Overall
Rongo	04	04	05	03	04	04	13	11	24
Mwea East	04	04	03	05	04	04	11	13	24
Kibra	04	05	04	04	03	05	11	14	25
Narok South	04	04	05	03	04	04	13	11	24
Tana Delta	02	05	03	00	04	05	09	10	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>116</b>

Notably, out of 116 participants in the one-on-one interviews, only 76 (40 men and 36 women) were interviewed on *self-awareness*.

In addition to the interviews, 21 focus group discussions (FGDs)—(10 FGDs for adolescents and 11 FGDs for parents)—were conducted. For the FGDs, 3 participants (adolescents or parents) were selected to join the other 4 who participated in the interviews. Ultimately, FGDs in each village consisted of 5 to 7 participants.

## 2.4 Data Collection Methods and Tools

- **Interviews:** One-on-one interviews with adolescents, parents, and key persons were conducted to determine their understanding of *self-awareness* skills in the Kenyan context. Researchers used an interview guide that was developed prior to data collection.
- **Focus Group Discussion (FGD):** Discussions with adolescents and parents were conducted in order to cultivate a deeper understanding of the issues that emerged from the interviews. Researchers developed and used specific FGD guides for each site and its interviews.

## 2.5 Training of Research Teams and Fieldwork

In each sub-county, there was need for an experienced qualitative researcher to take the lead in interviewing and for a research assistant to provide support in terms of the logistics, recording, and note-taking. At least one of the researchers needed to be fluent in the language of the study location. To ensure the collection of quality data, a 2-day researcher-training

session (covering 4 hours per day) was conducted via Zoom on October 19 and 21, 2020. The training emphasised the background and objectives of the ALiVE project, the research approach and methodology, data collection methods and tools, recording and note-taking techniques, ethical issues, and more.

Before going into the field, the research assistants were provided with resources to finalize preparatory work that included notifying local authorities, listing, and sampling, and notifying the sampled participants. Data collection was conducted between November 2 and 6, 2020 in the 5 sub-counties. The exercise lasted two days in each village. The first day was spent on the in-depth interviews, while the second day was reserved for the FGDs, which were conducted at a safe and central location within the village. Interviews and FGDs were audio-recorded and hand-written for backup and to ensure accuracy during translation or transcription.

## 2.6 Coding System and Data Analysis

A coding system was established to analyse the 76 interviews on *self-awareness* following the method of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79).

The analysis was centrally conducted for all the interviews and FGDs from the three countries. For the analysis of the interviews, we established a coding system based on *contextual (descriptive) variables*, including (a) category of informants, (b) sex of the participants, (c) country, and (d) sub-county. In *quantitative* terms, the contextual variables were analysed descriptively (in terms of frequency and percentage) using Microsoft Excel and Dedoose.

The coding system also considered *content variables* related to (e) definition and process described by the participants, (f) subskills, (g) dispositions and values, (h) behaviours, (i) related skills, (j) support systems and factors for enhancing *self-awareness* skills, and (k) methods of assessing the skill in adolescents. In *qualitative* terms as recommended by Gibbs (2018) and using Dedoose program (version 8.3.41.), we performed an analysis of the subjects’ understanding of *self-awareness* as presented in the interviews, paying specific attention to elements of contextualisation in contrast with what has been found in the literature review.

These predetermined categories emerged from the analysis of five interviews (at least 1 from each category) conducted by nine research assistants in order to achieve the inter-rater reliability in the coding system. Apart from these predetermined categories, others emerged from the main topic of *self-awareness*; this report thus addresses a unique network of

understanding the skill. The analysis process involved the identification of patterns of similar ideas, concepts, or topics in order to establish the connection and integration of information with the theoretical foundation (Miles & Huberman, 1994) as well as a suggested indication or evidence for contextualisation. The codes were created in accordance with the criteria for qualitative evaluation: dependency, transferability, credibility, and verifiability (Duffy, 1987).

Furthermore, the *synthetic analysis* followed the three stages pointed out by Thomas and Harden (2008): the free “line-by-line” coding of the primary interviews (including sentences or paragraphs as the analysis unit), the organization of these “free codes” into related areas to construct “descriptive themes,” and the development of “analytical themes” (p. 4). The analytical themes go beyond the findings of the primary interviews and develop additional concepts, understandings, or hypotheses. The analytical themes are then related to the recommendations for assessment, intervention, and policymaking in order to contextualise *self-awareness* skills in East Africa.

In addition, researchers used the *triangulation* technique (Flick, 1992, 2004) to search for, identify, select, evaluate, and summarise data from interviews, based on pre-defined criteria and emergent categories.

Finally, *data reduction* was applied through a mixed-method analysis: (a) the initial subgroup classification of the interviews is based on each participant’s category (adolescents, parents, and key persons), sex, and sub-county; and (b) data reduction involves techniques of extracting and coding data. These mixed-method analyses were carried out using the Dedoose program, which allows for the analysis of the frequency of the codes in terms of the demographic information of the participants and allows for the integration of qualitative and quantitative data. In this regard, three types of descriptive analysis were conducted: code co-occurrence, cross-tabulation of the code and participants’ characteristics, and cross-tabulation of the code and 2 or more participants’ characteristics.

Notably, for each of the quotations in the findings, we have included a code that helps in identifying the category of the participant. In each code, the first letter represents the country (Kenya), the second letter represents the category of participants (e.g., ‘A’ for adolescent, ‘P’ for parent, and ‘K’ for key person), and the last number represents the number assigned to the participant.

## 2.7 Ethical Considerations

The research team upheld approaches that address ethical considerations in dealing with different categories of participants. These approaches include obtaining informed consent,

ensuring the confidentiality of information obtained from the participants, compensating the participants (both monetarily and non-monetarily), and ensuring voluntary participation. Precautions were taken to adhere to the COVID-19 guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health at that time, especially those of not exceeding 15 persons for every gathering, wearing masks, physical distancing, and the washing and sanitizing of hands.

### **3 FINDINGS**

#### **3.1 General Characteristics of the Participants**

Overall, 76 participants (40 men and 36 women) were interviewed on *self-awareness* skills. Twenty-four of these were adolescents (12 boys and 12 girls), 27 were parents (12 men and 15 women), and 25 were key persons (16 men and 9 women). Furthermore, the average ages (in years) of the participants were 15.6 for adolescents (15.2 for boys and 16.1 for girls; SD=1.4), 44.4 for parents (46.3 for men and 42.9 for women; SD=10.3), and 35.7 for key persons (34.8 for men and 37.0 for women; SD=8.5).

#### **3.2 Codes and Central Themes in Respect**

##### **3.2.1 Definition**

Participants who responded to the question about the definition of self-awareness demonstrated a clear understanding of the concept. Most notable in the definitions is the understanding of the self that was expressed in both the local definition and in the synonyms of self-awareness. Several codes emerged for the definition, as shown below:

Table 3: Codes That Emerged as Definitions of Self-Awareness

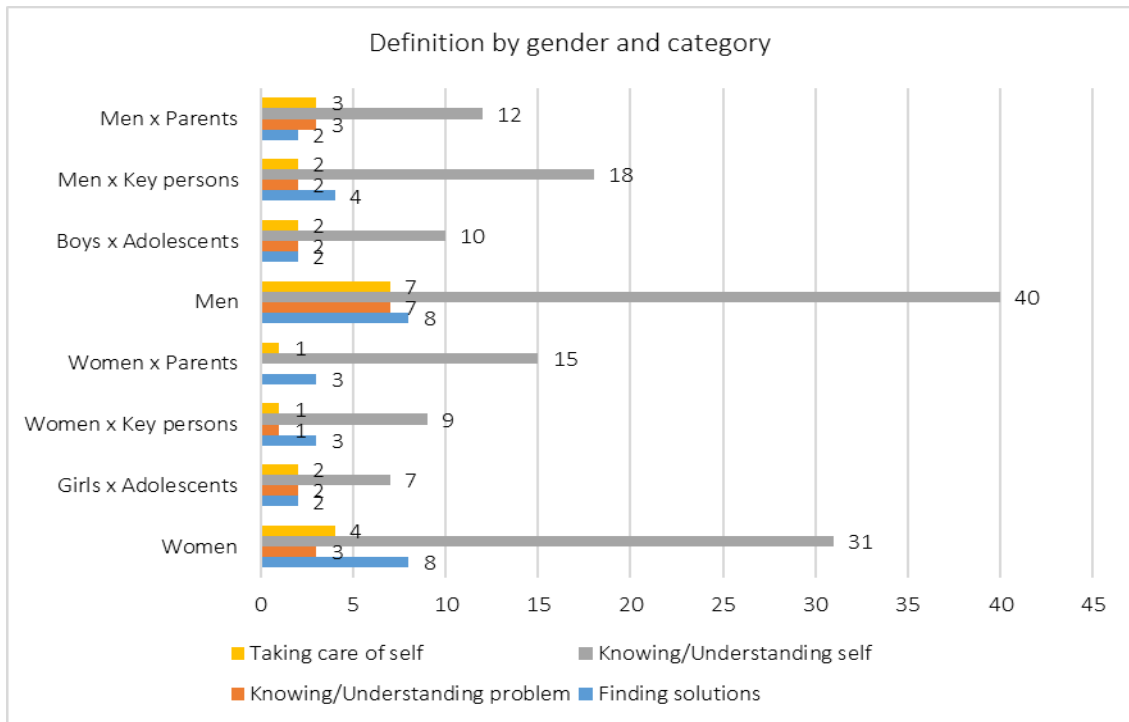
CATEGORY: DEFINITION OF SELF-AWARENESS	PARTICIPANTS (SOURCES)		EXCERPTS	
	FREQUENCY	%	FREQUENCY	%
Knowing or Understanding self	57	75.00	71	65.74
Finding solutions	14	18.42	16	14.81
Taking care of self	10	13.16	11	10.19
Knowing or Understanding problem	10	13.16	10	9.26
Judgement	5	6.58	5	4.63
Being a good person	3	3.95	3	2.78
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>108<sup>2</sup></b>	

Figure 1 shows the total number of excerpts in each code by gender and category of participants.

Figure 1: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Knowing or Understanding Oneself, Taking Care of Self, Finding Solutions, and Knowing or Understanding a Problem by Gender and Category of the Participants

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the total number of participants who were interviewed on self-awareness. It is not the sum of the observed frequencies, since more than one code in the theme could emerge from the same participant.

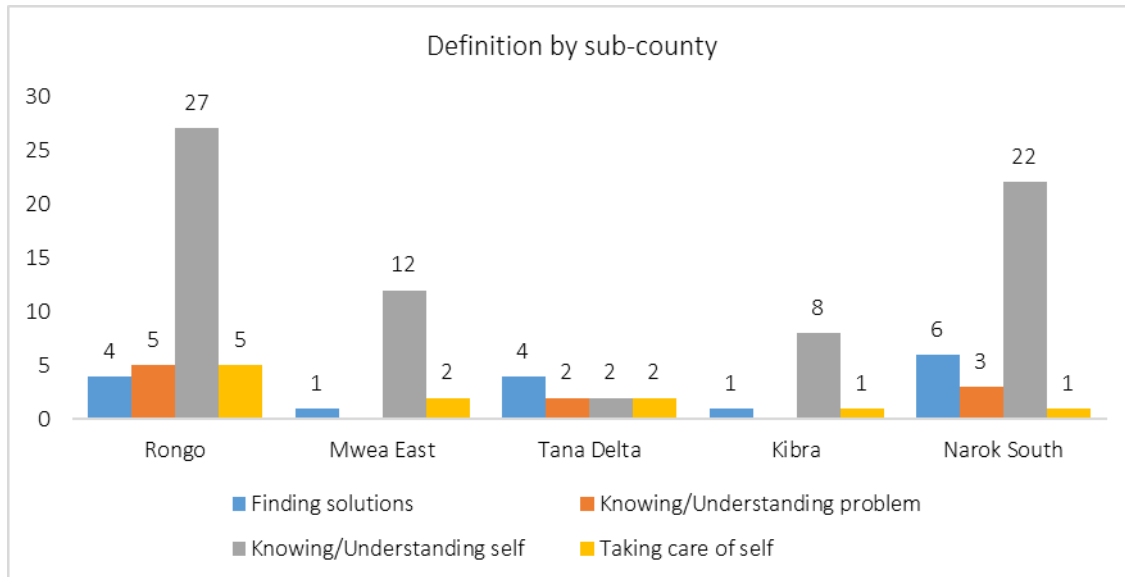
<sup>2</sup> This refers to the total number of excerpts that emerged in the definition of self-awareness. It is not the sum of observed frequencies, since one excerpt could contain more than one of these codes.



The most common definition of self-awareness among both men and women participants across all categories of participants is “knowing or understanding self,” as can be seen in Figure 1 above.

Further analysis of the same codes of the definition of self-awareness by the different study sites reveal that “knowing or understanding” oneself was still the most common code in defining self-awareness especially in Rongo and Narok (refer to Figure 2).

Figure 2: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Knowing or Understanding Self, Taking Care of Self, Finding Solutions, and Knowing or Understanding Problem by Study Sub-County



According to most of the participants, self-awareness is considered the “knowledge of self” or the “ability to know self” (K-A-17, K-A-03, K-K-01, K-K-35, K-K-31, K-K-23, K-P-37, K-P-35).<sup>3</sup> It is also attributed to an in-depth understanding of how a person understands themselves, and this usually determines how they behave toward or around others such as teachers, parents, and peers. “She is determined and behaves well around people” (K-K-01). “In-depth understanding” can also mean an exclusive inner self-analysis of one’s strengths and weaknesses: “understanding my inner self, which other people don’t know. It is understanding what I can do and what I can’t be able to do” (K-K-13).

The desire to know or understand oneself varies among the participants. For the adolescents, it is important to know themselves so they can show their parents and community elders that they are well-mannered and disciplined, while for the adults, self-awareness is a prerequisite for supporting their children and community. To some participants, it is important to know their feelings and how these feelings contribute to their lives, as can be observed in these quotes: “understanding your feelings well” (K-K-05) and “knowing what makes you happy and what doesn’t” (K-K-07).

Some participants consider self-awareness an enabling factor to future goals and plans: “understanding who you are, you must know which type of a talent so that you meet certain achievement” (K-K-25); “she has that strength to stand up and say I am so and so, this is what I’m intending to do, these are my ambitions, this is what I want to be in future despite the challenges” (K-K-35); “to recognize one’s purpose in life, for example knowing the goal of your

<sup>3</sup> The first letter represents the country (Kenya), the second letter represents the category of participants (e.g., ‘A’ for adolescent, ‘P’ for parent, and ‘K’ for key person), and the last number represents the number assigned to the participant.

education” (K-K-24). Parents and key informants expect self-aware children to plan for their future at an early age, preferably during adolescence.

Knowing or understanding oneself is also a motivating force for overcoming leadership challenges, as one of the participants noted:

To lead people, you need to know yourself better. Because, if you don't know yourself better, you won't be able to lead even the small masses. You need to know yourself in order to know the group you're going to lead. You need to know yourself in order to know what you are going to do with the people you are going to lead, which direction you are going to take them. When a challenge comes, how are you going to conduct yourself, yeah? (K-K-27)

“Finding solutions” is another definition that was suggested, as evidenced by one of the participants: “The way I understand, self-awareness is the state at which I can help myself whenever I am faced with a problem” (K-P-20). According to some participants, a self-aware individual is more likely to find solutions to the problems (or synonymously, challenges) in life (K-K-33) and more likely to help others to address their challenges (K-A-11, K-A-17). One of them said, “and even when the challenges come, she tries to look for the best ways to solve the challenges and then involve the other parties” (K-K-35).

Self-awareness contributes to the identification and solving of personal and societal problems, as one of the participants noted: “He identifies societal problems and understands what the society wants.” (K-P-06). To successfully solve or address a challenge, one must understand it before coming up with possible remedies. A self-aware individual is expected to first understand what the problem is and then find ways of coping with the situation, as seen in this quote: “When you have an emerging issue, you are able to manage it yourself. Example the COVID-19 pandemic, it's an emerging issue. To be self-aware is to know how you can cope up with it” (K-K-33). Another participant explained how he was able to overcome his problem after careful consideration of the situation and how this has made him an expert in what he does. He said the following:

There was a time I needed to build a hut, and I did not have money. I called a *fundu* (literal meaning: builder) and wanted to pay him using goats. But he insisted that he wanted me to first bring the goats to him. I sat and thought, this man was not born a *fundu*. I can construct it myself. I cut down wood and started looking at how other huts are built and I copied. Today, I am a *fundu*. I now have the expertise. (K-P-22)



Parents and key persons attribute success in education, high grades in school, and avoiding “bad groups” to self-awareness. They believe a self-aware child concentrates on their studies and respects their teachers—a factor that contributes to good performance in school. Interestingly, adolescents concur with the adults that the standard measure for self-awareness is the success that stems from understanding oneself, respecting teachers, concentrating on their studies, and not “mingling with bad elements in society.”

Self-awareness, to some participants, refers to “taking care of self” (K-A-11). It involves understanding the changes that occur in a person’s body and being open to facing such a reality, as one of the participants stated: “and when it [menstruation] happens to her when she is not aware, she is not going to start crying or wonder what to do, she takes care of herself” (K-K-35). Maintaining proper personal hygiene by being “clean and neat” (K-A-02, K-K-08) is another aspect of taking care of oneself. Moreover, an individual’s understanding of their own “health status” (K-P-03) and the recognition of the measures to be taken in order to maintain good health is also considered self-awareness. One of them said, “For example, he made his own mask from clothes during the COVID-19 pandemic and that showed me how aware he is about his health” (K-P-09). Another participant said the following:

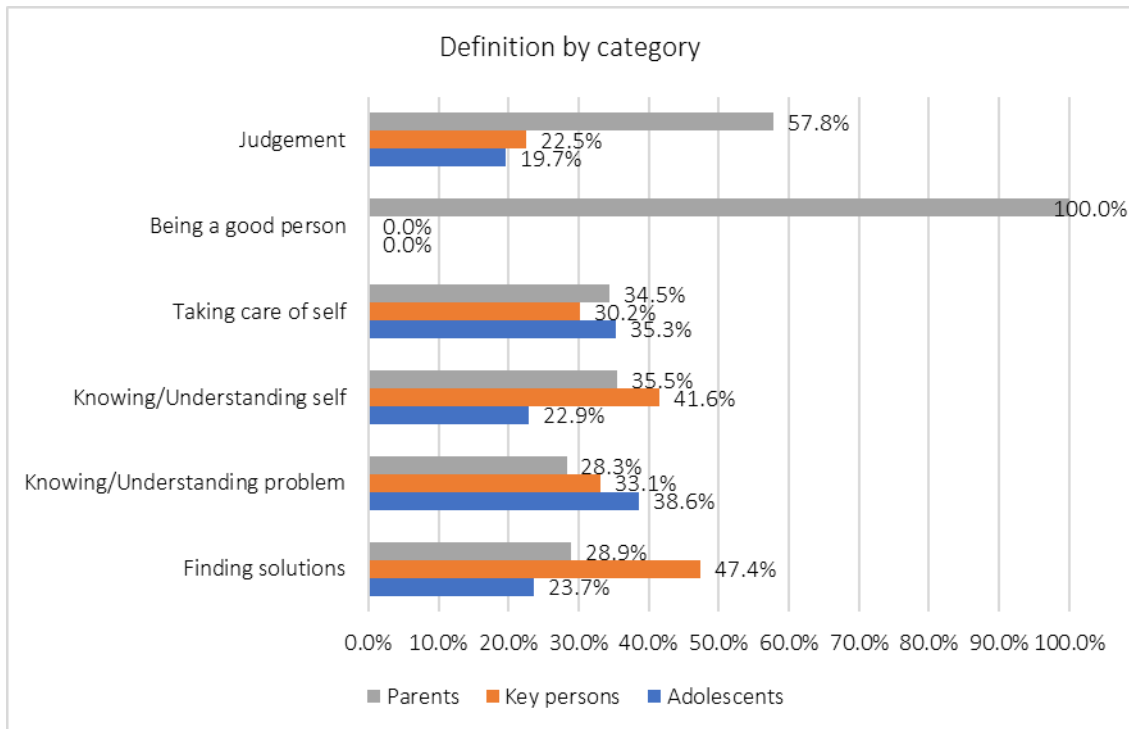
***The second thing once you know yourself, you’ll know that if I use this method, I’ll find what I’m going to eat or drink. If you’re looking for a job, then you’ll look for it only if you’re healthy. But if you’re sick, you can’t. (K-P-26)***

“Taking care of self” is also linked to conduct. Self-aware people are supposed to conduct themselves in a way that does not negatively impact their well-being, as one of the participants said: “People who are self-aware protect their bodies to make sure they don’t get pregnant” (K-A-17).

Finally, some descriptive analyses were conducted in order to answer to the research questions in regard to the differences between the main codes identified in defining self-awareness by gender, category of participants, and sites.

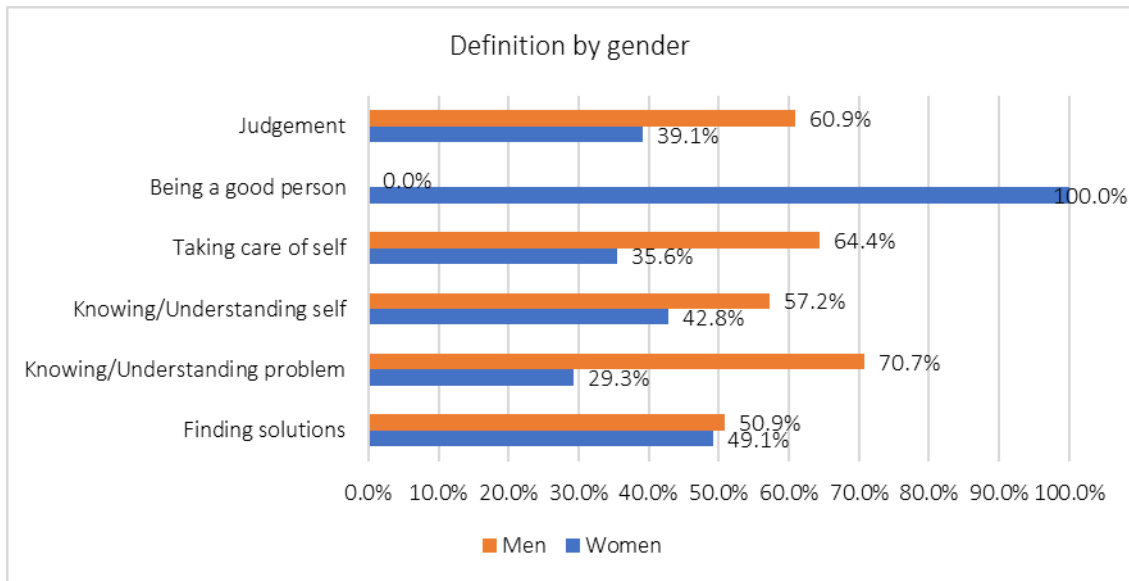
As shown in Figure 3 below, nearly all of the codes used to define self-awareness emerged from all the categories of participants except “being a good person,” which emerged from only parents.

Figure 3: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of the Definition of Self-Awareness, by Category



Besides “being a good person,” which emerged from only women participants, all codes were mentioned by both men and women participants (refer to Figure 4).

Figure 4: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of the Definition of Self-Awareness, by Gender



In summary, Kenyan participants define self-awareness as knowing or understanding one’s behaviours, goals, feelings, strengths, and weaknesses. It is also associated with taking care of oneself and one’s understanding of personal or others’ problems, and thus finding appropriate solutions.

### 3.2.2 Subskills

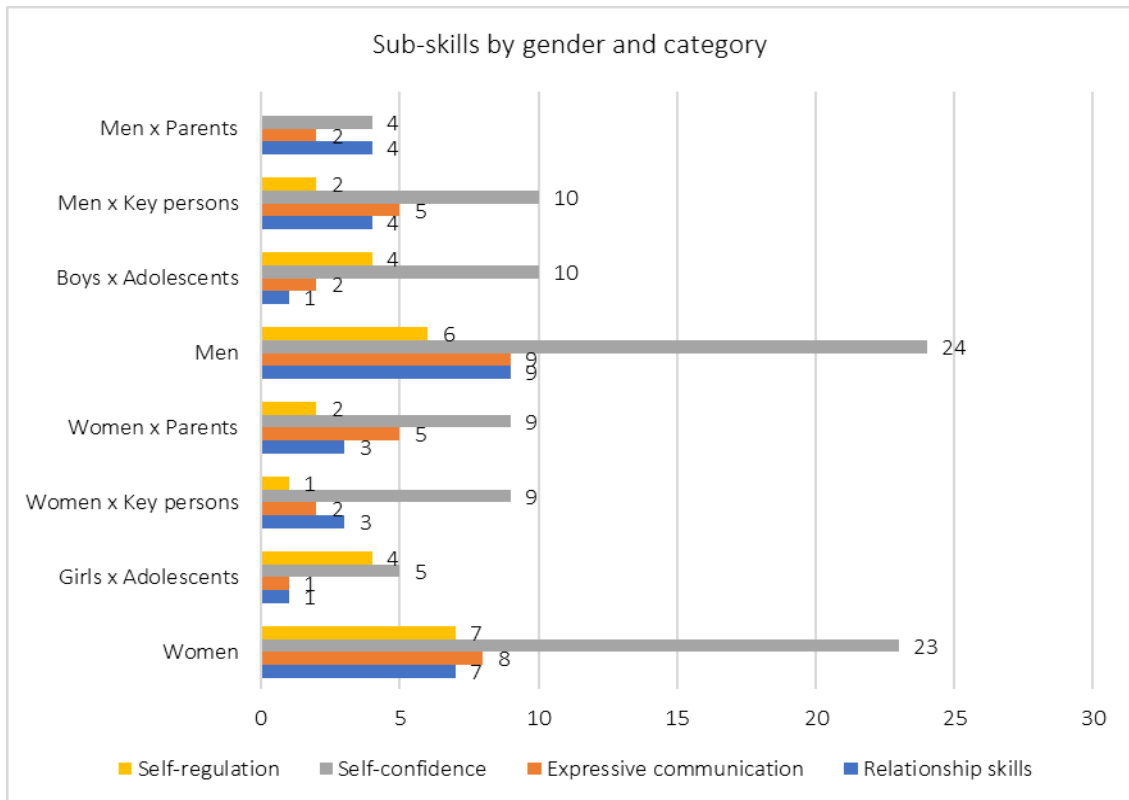
The following codes emerged as subskills of self-awareness: “planning,” “relationship skills,” “expressive and receptive communication,” among others, as shown below:

Table 4: Codes That Emerged as Subskills of Self-Awareness

CATEGORY: SUBSKILLS OF SELF-AWARENESS	PARTICIPANTS (SOURCES)		EXCERPTS	
	FREQUENCY	%	FREQUENCY	%
Self-confidence	34	44.74	47	48.45
Expressive communication	15	19.74	17	17.53
Relationship skills	13	17.11	16	16.49
Self-regulation	9	11.84	13	13.40
Receptive communication	8	10.53	9	9.28
Goal setting	8	10.53	9	9.28
Planning	5	6.58	5	5.15
Empathy	1	1.32	1	1.03
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76</b>		<b>97</b>	

Figure 5 below shows the total number of excerpts in each code by gender and category of participants.

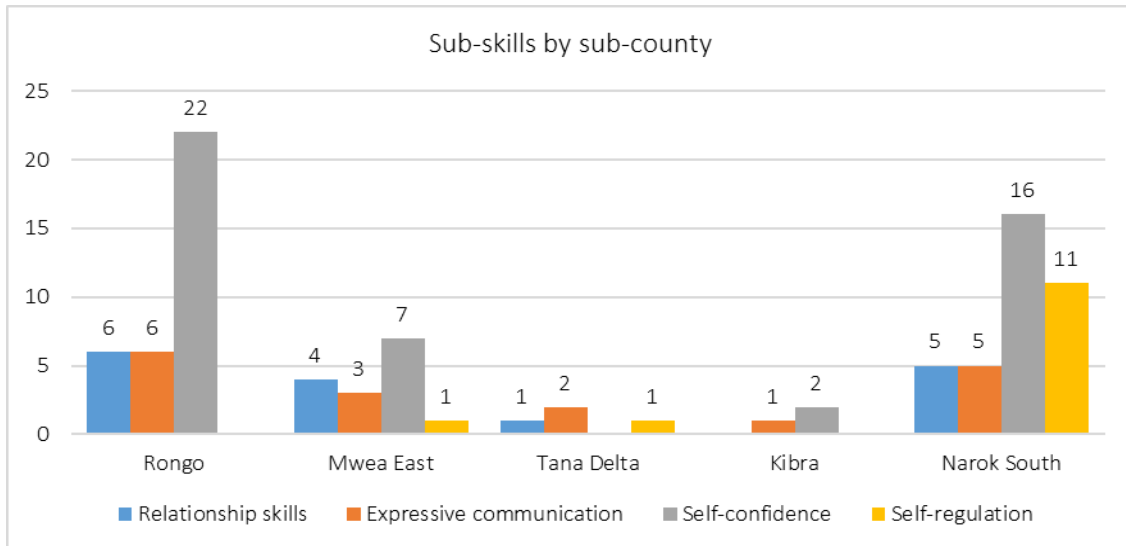
Figure 5: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Expressive Communication, Relationship Skills, Self-Regulation, and Self-Confidence, by Gender and Category of the Participants



The most common subskill of self-awareness among both men and women participants across all categories is “self-confidence,” as can be seen in Figure 5 above.

Further analysis of the same codes of the subskills of self-awareness by the different sites revealed that “self-confidence” was most mentioned in Rongo and Narok (refer to Figure 6).

Figure 6: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Expressive Communication, Relationship Skills, Self-Regulation, and Self-Confidence, by the Study Sub-County



The majority of participants, especially the younger ones, identified “self-confidence” as both a bolster to and an outcome of self-awareness (K-A-33, K-A-05, K-A-15, K-K-28, K-K-07, K-K-32, K-P-15, K-P-36, K-P-38). Some of the participants consider self-awareness and self-confidence synonymous with self-respect. Self-esteem is another term that was used several times to mean self-awareness (K-A-03, K-A-04).

Self-confidence is also explained as “being principled and standing on my ground” (K-A-15), “being assertive” (K-K-28), and belief in oneself that pushes one to take on challenges and opportunities as they arise:

High self-awareness promotes high self-esteem, with that someone won’t be limited to do any task that will be given to him or her, because self-esteem itself will push that person to do it. The opposite is also true when someone has a low self-esteem, it discourages him from taking up opportunities that can be better off. He chooses to choose something that doesn’t have a lot of competition because he doesn’t have that much courage or that uh...much belief in him that he can do certain things. (K-K-27)

Furthermore, self-aware people are not afraid to share their opinions and knowledge with others, and as a result they are able to help those who might be faced with challenging situations, as one of the participants explained about a self-aware adolescent: “because of

her self confidence in expression of issues, she has assisted in solving problems of others” (K-K-28). Another participant said the following:

She does not really mind where she comes from, she is strong enough to stand as a girl and even educate others more so on how to handle themselves during this period of adolescence which is a very challenging stage among young people. So, she is knowledgeable and she also has confidence. She is that person you can leave to be in charge of others; for instance, if a girl is having her menses for the first time, she can handle that girl well and even try to explain to that girl what to do. (K-K-35)

“Relationship skills” have also been identified as vital for a person to develop self-awareness, as several participants explained (K-A-01, K-K-06, K-K-35, K-P-01, K-P-12, K-P-19, K-P-06). Relationship skills (expressive and receptive) enable a person to self-reflect, recognise the behaviour of others, and ensure appropriate and peaceful coexistence in a school environment, home, and community. One of them explained it like so:

Firstly, the way we relate with others. That is, we have to be self-aware so that we can relate with others. The way we talk with others can also show if we are self-aware . . . also the way you organize yourself and that of your family. (K-P-19)

Furthermore, as some participants highlighted, self-aware young people characteristically help others resolve misunderstandings, which means they had developed relationship skills prior to the encounter. While explaining the attributes of self-aware adolescents, one of the participants said, “if there is a conflict, they always come in to resolve the disputes and if it’s in class, they offer more valuable thoughts to friends” (K-A-FGD-05).

“Goal setting” is another skill some participants identified (K-A-01, K-A-38, K-A-27, K-K-30, K-K-29, K-K-35, K-P-15, K-P-39). Self-aware people are capable of adequate planning and goal achievement because they know what they want. One of the participants said the following:

When she finished her Form Four, she did not think of getting married, she only thought of education and getting herself busy by opting to become a shop attendant or starting up a business. Many have been married off immediately after school, but she has taken a different path. (K-A-38)

Some of the participants’ definitions that are indicative of goal setting and responsible living include “thinking about the future” (K-A-37), “visionary” (K-K-29, K-P-39), “focused on a better future” (K-P-15), “knowing what you need in future” (K-A-27), and “having objectives in life”

(K-K-29). These attributes are expected of many adolescents, especially during their school years.

“Self-regulation,” mostly mentioned as “self-control” (K-A-36, K-A-34, K-A-15, K-P-39), is another skill that emerged. According to the participants, self-aware adolescents are able to act according to their will without being influenced by others, especially peers (K-K-32), and regulate their emotions (K-K-30), as seen in the following quote: “They have self-control. They don’t let their emotions get better of them” (K-A-FGD-07). The following participant quotes show that self-awareness is key to an individual’s ability to regulate oneself: “It is good to have self-awareness, because it will help you have self-control even when someone has wronged you” (K-A-40); and “she avoids bad company, respects herself, has self-control and avoids bad things” (K-A-34). Furthermore, self-aware individuals are able to carry out their duties without much supervision:

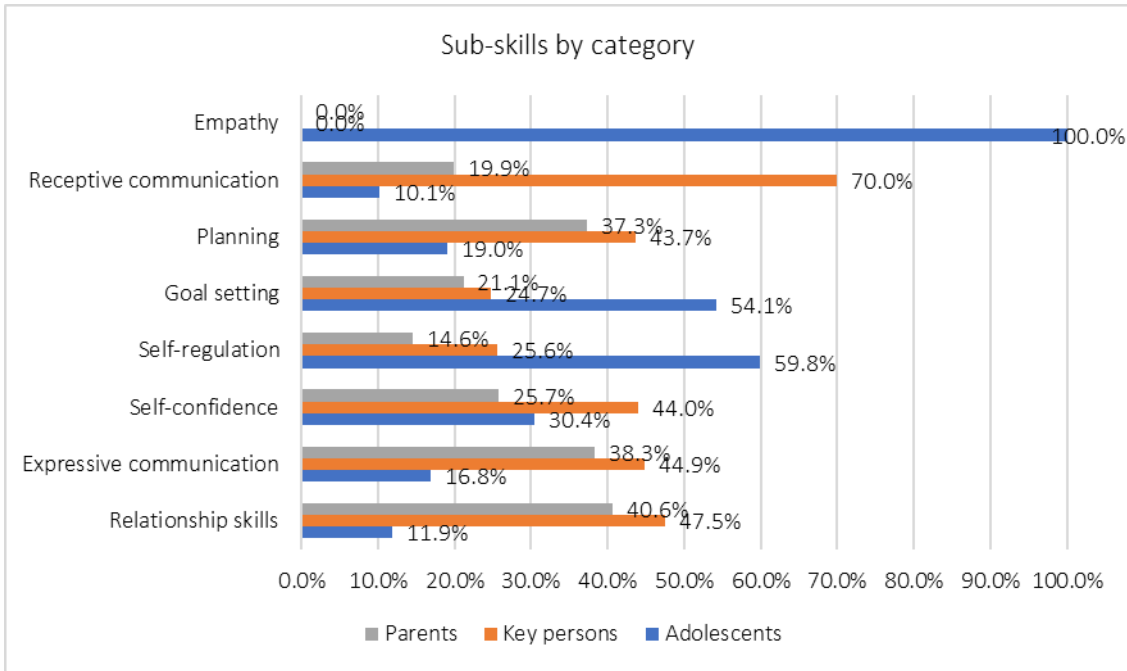
In a school set-up, the maturity comes in when the child is in a position to play roles without being followed up and down, somebody who is self-reliant, somebody who has self-control and is able to handle conflicts. (K-K-35)

Finally, some descriptive analyses were conducted to respond to the research questions regarding the differences between the main codes identified as subskills of self-awareness by gender, category of participants, and sites.

As shown in Figure 7, nearly all the codes relating to subskills emerged from all categories of participants except “empathy,” which emerged only from adolescents.

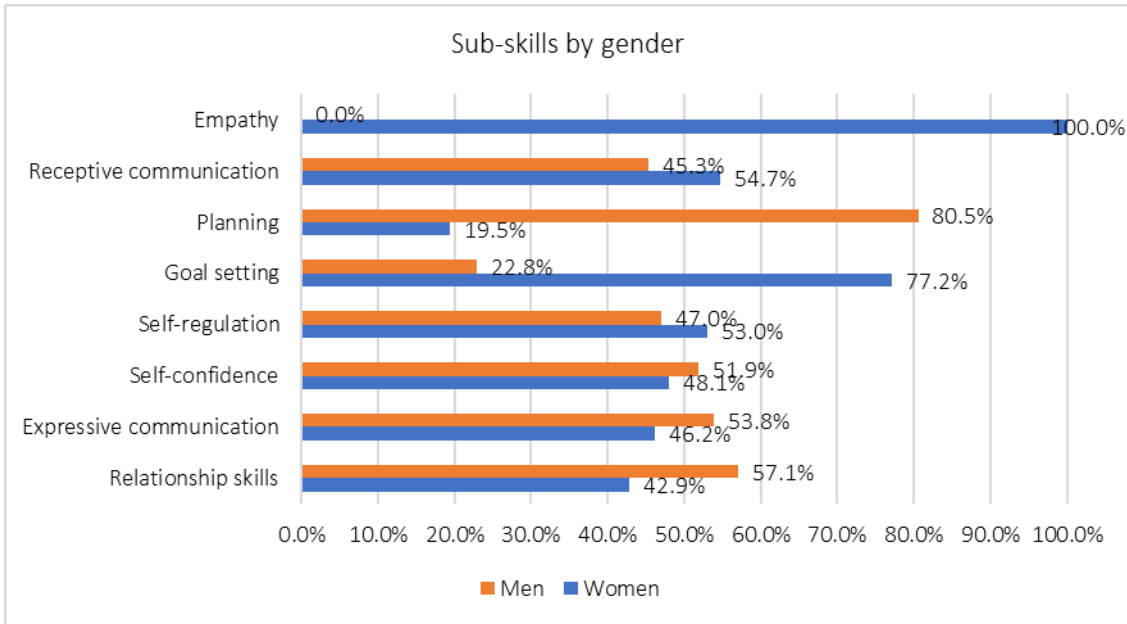


Figure 7: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of the Subskills of Self-Awareness, by Category



Furthermore, nearly all codes were mentioned by both men and women participants, except “empathy,” which emerged from men participants only (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of the Subskills of Self-Awareness, by Gender



In summary, participants acknowledge that self-confidence, good relationship skills, self-regulation, effective communication, goal setting, planning skills, and empathy are important skills for improving self-awareness skills.

### 3.2.3 Dispositions

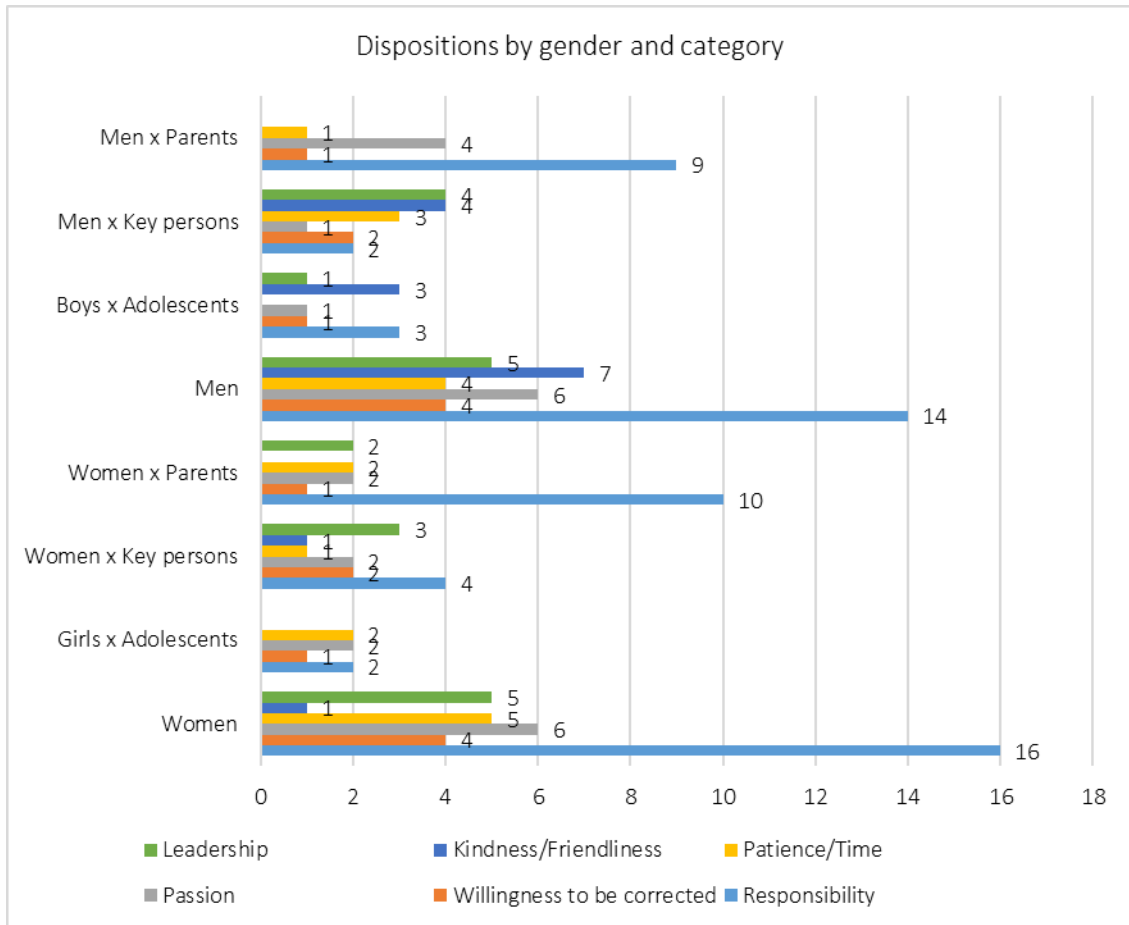
In most interviews, participants identified some attributes of mind and character, which are shown through attitudes and character traits or temperament, that enhance a person’s abilities to develop self-awareness. Lack of these would mean lack of self-awareness and would lead to bad behaviour especially among young people. The attributes identified most frequently are “responsibility,” “passion,” “leadership,” “patience or time,” “kindness or friendliness,” and “willingness to be corrected,” as shown below:

Table 5: Codes That Emerged as Dispositions of Self-Awareness

CATEGORY: DISPOSITIONS OF SELF-AWARENESS	PARTICIPANTS (SOURCES)		EXCERPTS	
	FREQUENCY	%	FREQUENCY	%
Responsibility	19	25.00	30	33.71
Passion	12	15.79	13	14.61
Patience or Time	9	11.84	9	10.11
Kindness or Friendliness	8	10.53	8	8.99
Willingness to be corrected or advised	8	10.53	8	8.99
Leadership	8	10.53	10	11.24
Hard work	6	7.89	8	8.99
Self-reflection	6	7.89	6	6.74
Courage	4	5.26	5	5.62
Inquisitiveness	4	5.26	4	4.49
Positive attitude	3	3.95	4	4.49
Self-actualisation or Self-realisation	2	2.63	2	2.25
Perseverance	2	2.63	2	2.25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76</b>		<b>89</b>	

Figure 9 below shows the total number of excerpts in each code by gender and category of participants.

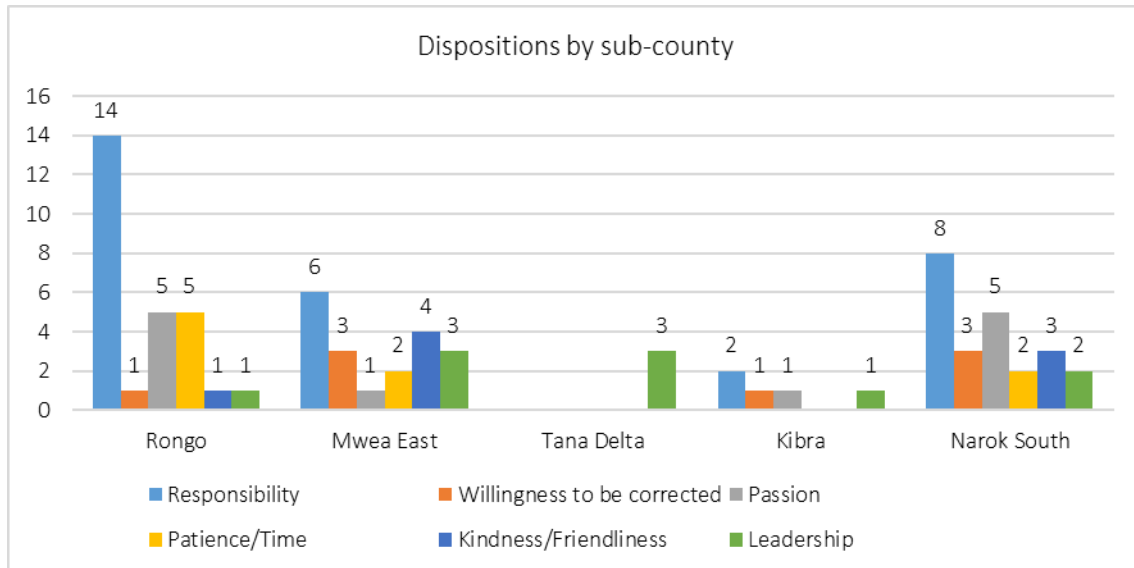
Figure 9: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Responsibility, Passion, Kindness or Friendliness, Willingness to Be Corrected or Advised, Leadership, and Patience or Time, by Gender and Category of the Participants



The most common disposition of self-awareness among both men and women participants across all categories is responsibility, as can be seen in Figure 9 above.

Further analysis of the same codes of the dispositions of self-awareness by the different sites revealed that responsibility was still the most frequently mentioned, except in Tana River, where it never emerged (refer to Figure 10).

Figure 10: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Hard Work, Responsibility, Passion, Kindness or Friendliness, Willingness to Be Corrected or Advised, and Positive Attitude, by the Study Sub-County



*Disposition*, in these interviews, referred to the affective and intellectual state of mind and attitudes that enable a person to perform a task in an appropriate and meaningful way. “Responsibility,” which is the most mentioned disposition (K-A-01, K-A-33, K-K-35, K-K-07, K-P-02, K-P-37), portrays a young person as trusted, reliable, dependable, and willing to take on tasks without instruction or supervision. Based on the interviews, some parents become assured of their children’s self-awareness when they do household chores such as cooking, looking after siblings, welcoming visitors, going to the garden, and tending cattle (K-P-40) on their own, without loitering in the village. A responsible person sometimes displays leadership skills in the home and at school.

To some participants self-awareness means responsibility, as seen in this quote: “[Self-awareness] means knowing my responsibilities as the head of the family and whether I’m able to provide everything or not, I should always use an appropriate language, also helping my neighbours wherever they are in need” (K-P-09).

With responsibility comes “leadership,” another skill that participants expected a self-aware person to possess (K-A-18, K-P-20, K-K-30, K-K-27, K-K-16, K-K-09, K-K-02). The participants’ perception of leadership skills suggests correcting siblings and friends, designating to them roles in the home, and making them aware of body changes during adolescence. Girls are leaders if they can train their peers on sanitation, health, body cleanliness, and sexual reproductive health (K-K-35), hence any child who is brave enough to

have such discussions with their peers is considered a leader. One of the participants explained it like so:

They give educative talks and teach others or their friends . . . for example, they guide other girls who have just reached adolescence; they guide and help them on how they can handle the issue of their monthly period. In church, they act as youth leaders and children who are not self-aware cannot be selected to lead. (K-P-20)

Another participant describes self-aware adolescents as “ambitious,” “go-getters,” and “believers.” (K-K-27)

Self-aware people also exercise kindness and are friendly to others. “Kindness or friendliness” is extended to others as a sign of understanding one’s emotions (K-A-05, K-A-11, K-K-33, K-K-29, K-K-30). Kindness is a vital social skill that requires a person to understand themselves before understanding others, which leads to empathy: an important characteristic of good leaders. Some participants note that a kind person is “selfless” (K-A-13), “cares for self and others” (K-A-11, K-K-09, K-K-30), and “likes making friends” (K-A-05).

Some participants also mentioned “time management” as another attribute of self-awareness (K-A-02, K-A-09, K-K-08, K-K-06, K-P-34, K-P-05). Self-aware people keep time, manage it well for all their activities, and exercise patience. One parent notes of a student, “She understands herself, knows how to manage time. During revision time, she manages her time well” (K-P-34).

Proper time management is also associated with responsibility. Self-aware, responsible adolescents are “time conscious” (K-K-32) and principled in their decisions—a quality that enables them to prioritise tasks depending on the occasion—and they are “always doing things at the right time without being told” (K-P-05). Furthermore, time management is an aspect that can be assessed as an indicator of self-awareness, as one of the participants said: “test if he can manage time, test if he is forgetful, you can test on attitudes” (K-P-34).

There seems to be a perceptual disparity between the adults and young persons on the importance of time management. Even though a few of the adolescents mentioned it as an indicator of self-awareness, their understanding of the concept is implausible. Time management to them is “being at the right place at the right time” (K-A-09).

“Passion,” as some participants mentioned, is another important attribute of a self-aware person. During the interviews, it emerged in aspects such as being “self-driven” (K-P-32, K-P-35), an individual’s ability to do things or tasks without supervision (K-P-06, K-P-36), being

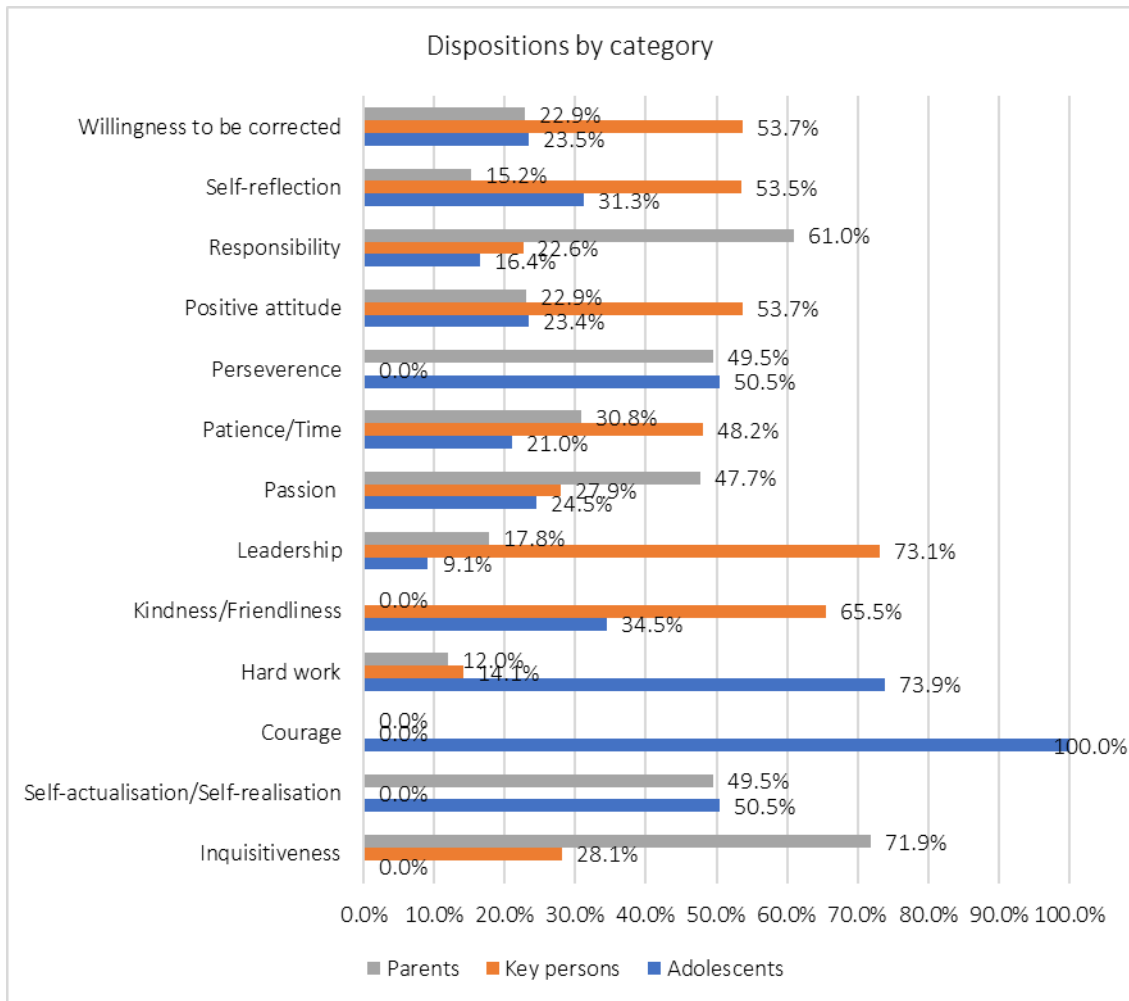
“interested in something” (K-A-08), and “self-dedication” (K-P-38) to work or studies (K-K32). One of the participants said, “From the way I see him, he tries to work to his very best. He puts passion in everything he does using limited resources available to him” (K-K-13). Another participant notes the following of a self-aware adolescent: “she is motivated to have a better life through her studies” (K-K-09).

According to some participants, self-aware individuals are always “willing to be corrected or advised.” They are able to seek help (K-K-23) whenever they are faced with a challenge and listen to the guidance of others (K-A-40), as seen in the following quotes: “she looks for guidance when she needs and rarely makes mistakes” (K-P-08) and, “whenever she has a problem or a challenge, she comes and asks for assistance. Thereby I see she knows more about herself” (K-K-33). In addition, for a person to improve on their self-awareness skills, a positive attitude toward others’ views is paramount, as one of the participants explained: “You need to have a positive attitude. For instance, when you are being advised or given skills on how to handle yourself, you should be ready to listen and also put into practice whatever you have been taught” (K-K-35).

Finally, some descriptive analyses were conducted to respond to the research questions regarding the differences between the main codes identified as dispositions of self-awareness by gender, category of participants, and study sites.

As shown in Figure 11, besides “inquisitiveness” (which did not emerge from adolescents), “self-actualisation or self-realisation” and “courage” (which did not emerge from key persons and parents), “kindness or friendliness” (which did not emerge from parents), and “perseverance” (which did not emerge from key persons), the rest of the codes relating to dispositions of self-awareness emerged from all the categories of participants.

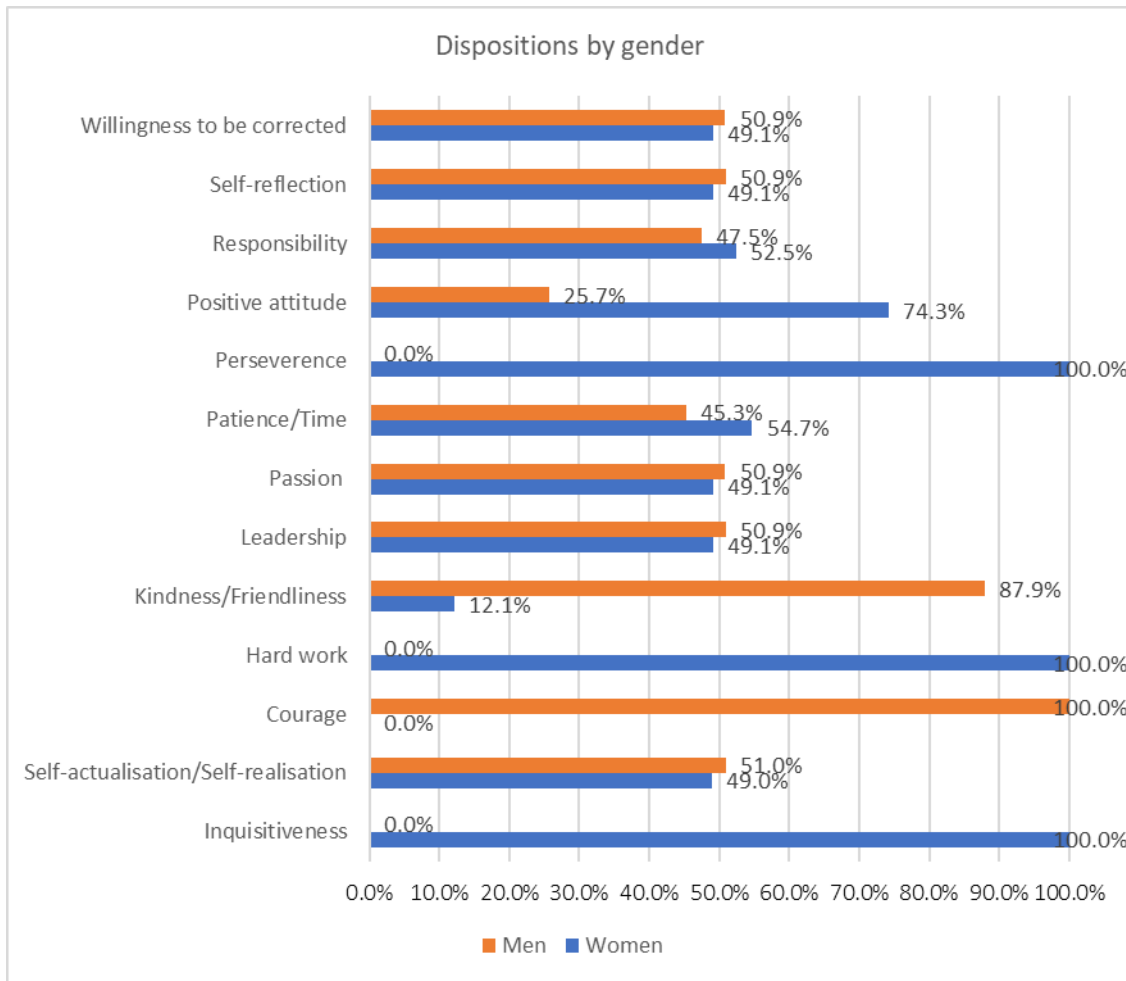
Figure 11: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of the Dispositions of Self-Awareness, by Category



Furthermore, except for “inquisitiveness,” “hard work,” and “perseverance,” which emerged from only women participants and “courage,” which emerged from only men participants, the rest of the codes were mentioned by both men and women participants (see Figure 12).



Figure 12: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of the Dispositions of Self-Awareness, by Gender



In summary, participants acknowledge that responsibility, passion, leadership, kindness, willingness to be corrected or advised, time management, and self-reflection are important attributes of a person with a strong sense of self-awareness

### 3.2.4 Values and Behaviours

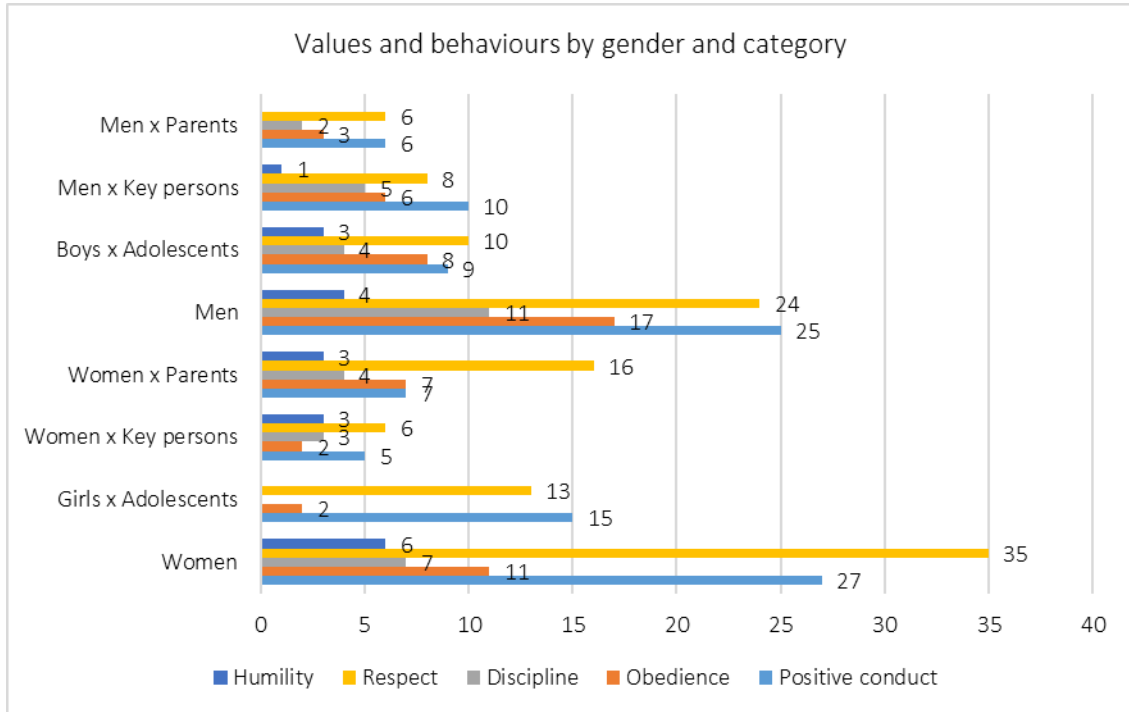
Several codes were identified by participants to represent the behaviours and values that portray self-awareness as demonstrated by the different categories of people, shown below:

Table 6: Codes That Emerged as Values and Behaviours of Self-Awareness

CATEGORY: VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS	PARTICIPANTS (SOURCES)		EXCERPTS	
	FREQUENCY	%	FREQUENCY	%
Respect	40	52.63	59	45.04
Positive conduct	38	50.00	52	39.69
Obedience	22	28.95	28	21.37
Discipline	11	14.47	18	13.74
Humility	8	10.53	10	7.63
Fear of God	7	9.21	8	6.11
Love	7	9.21	10	7.63
Trust or Honesty or Truth or Faithfulness	6	7.89	6	4.58
Wisdom	3	3.95	3	2.29
Exemplary	2	2.63	2	1.53
Tolerance	2	2.63	2	1.53
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76</b>		<b>131</b>	

Figure 13 shows the total number of excerpts in each code by gender and category of participants.

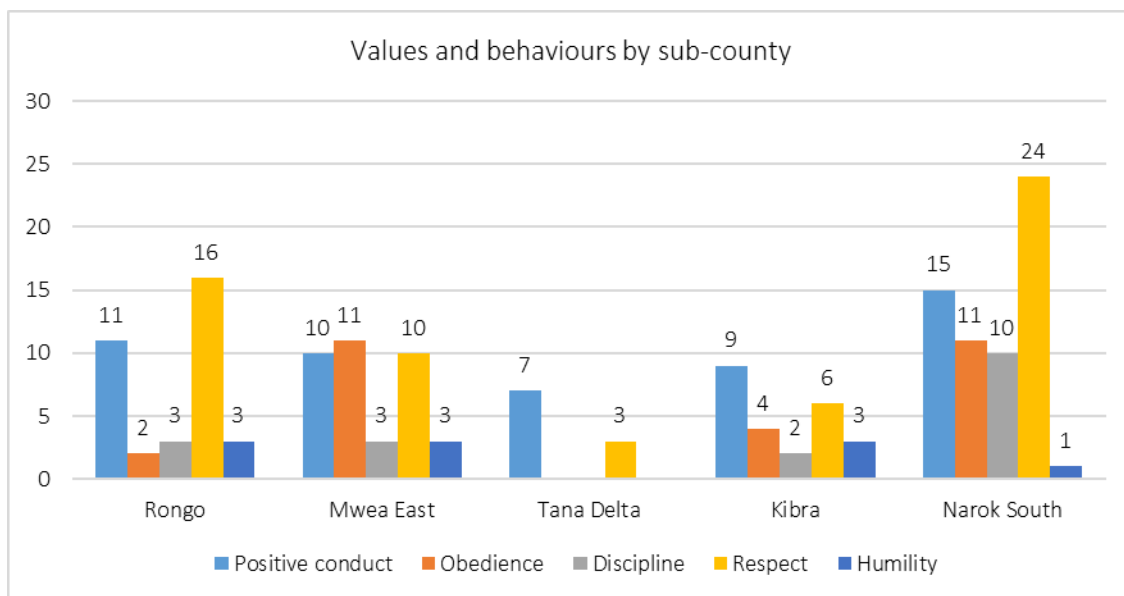
Figure 13: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Positive Conduct, Respect, Obedience, Humility, and Discipline, by Gender and Category of the Participants



As can be seen in Figure 13, “respect” and “positive conduct” were the most mentioned codes of values and behaviours of self-awareness among both men and women participants across all the categories.

Further analysis of the same codes of the values and behaviours of self-awareness by the different study sites revealed “positive conduct” and “respect” as the most mentioned (refer to Figure 14).

Figure 14: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Positive Conduct, Respect, Obedience, Humility, and Discipline, by the Study Sub-County



“Being respectful,” as most participants mentioned, is a value demonstrated by self-aware adolescents (K-A-11, K-A-35, K-K-32, K-K-30, K-P-41, K-P-15). According to the participants, respect is shown through actions such as greeting and caring for others: “you will see him coming with respect, first he will even greet you and find out how you are” (K-K-23); valuing others’ cultures: “I would start by respecting your culture first because I’m aware of the existence of different cultures” (K-K-16); and treating others in a positive way: “Yes, you can look at the way they treat their neighbours. If they treat them with respect, then they have self-awareness. But someone who is always at loggerheads with neighbours is not self-aware” (K-P-23).

“Respect” is not only exhibited in how one treats others, but also in how one treats oneself (K-A-37, K-A-34, K-K-34, K-K-28, K-P-23, K-P-38), as one participant described: “A self-aware person is able to respect him/herself and portray values for positive living” (K-K-13). Young people who are self-aware respect everyone (K-A-31) regardless of age, as one of them explained: “She respects her parents and teachers in school. She respects both her elders and juniors” (K-A-39). Another participant added, “She is very respectful and disciplined. She respects all regardless of age” (K-P-12).

To some participants, respect and self-awareness complement each other, such that having a strong command of one can aid the improvement of the other, as one participant explains:

“because once you understand self, you are able to respect yourself. It can also work vice versa—when you have respect, you are better able to understand self. It can be that way too” (K-K-24).

Self-aware individuals demonstrate good behaviours and morals (K-A-06, K-A-39, K-A-03, K-K-13, K-K-09, K-P-39, K-P-37). These include “dressing decently” (K-A-40, K-K-23), “resisting peer pressure” (K-A-15, K-A-40), “shunning bad companies” (K-A-38, K-P-01, K-A-34), “speaking ill of no one” (K-A-09), “being clean and neat (K-K-08),” “talking well to others” (K-P-19), “resisting drugs and substances” (K-K-30), and “greeting others” (K-P-28). One of the participants said, “Those that have self-awareness, even when they go to the towns or anywhere else, they dress well, they behave well. When they go where there are many people they will behave correctly” (K-P-23). Another participant said, “His language is polite, dressing code is decent, he/she obeys a parent or an adult’s instructions, she/he follows religious laws—if a Muslim, he will be seen praying as required, he does not give in to promiscuity, he does not abuse drugs” (K-K-24).

As some participants mentioned, self-aware individuals are obedient (K-A-36, K-A-13, K-K-16, K-K-13, K-P-15, K-P-40) and disciplined (K-A-08, K-A-35, K-K-30, K-K-31, K-P-12, K-P-38). Obedience is exercised by following instructions and commands (K-A-35, K-K-31) given by elders like parents and teachers. Adolescents who obey their elders are regarded as self-aware. One of the participants said, “He obeys his parents and follows their instructions to the letter and that shows his awareness in being under his parents’ hands” (K-P-09). On the other hand, discipline is displayed through respecting others, especially parents, as one of the participants explained: “[a] disciplined child . . . is a child who respects his parents, respects his neighbours and even with his peers, you see his behaviour is different; a child who is raised let’s say, he has his dignity, he has good character” (K-K-23). Additionally, seeking permission from elders before doing something or leaving home is an act of good discipline demonstrated by self-aware young people (K-K-23, K-P-28).

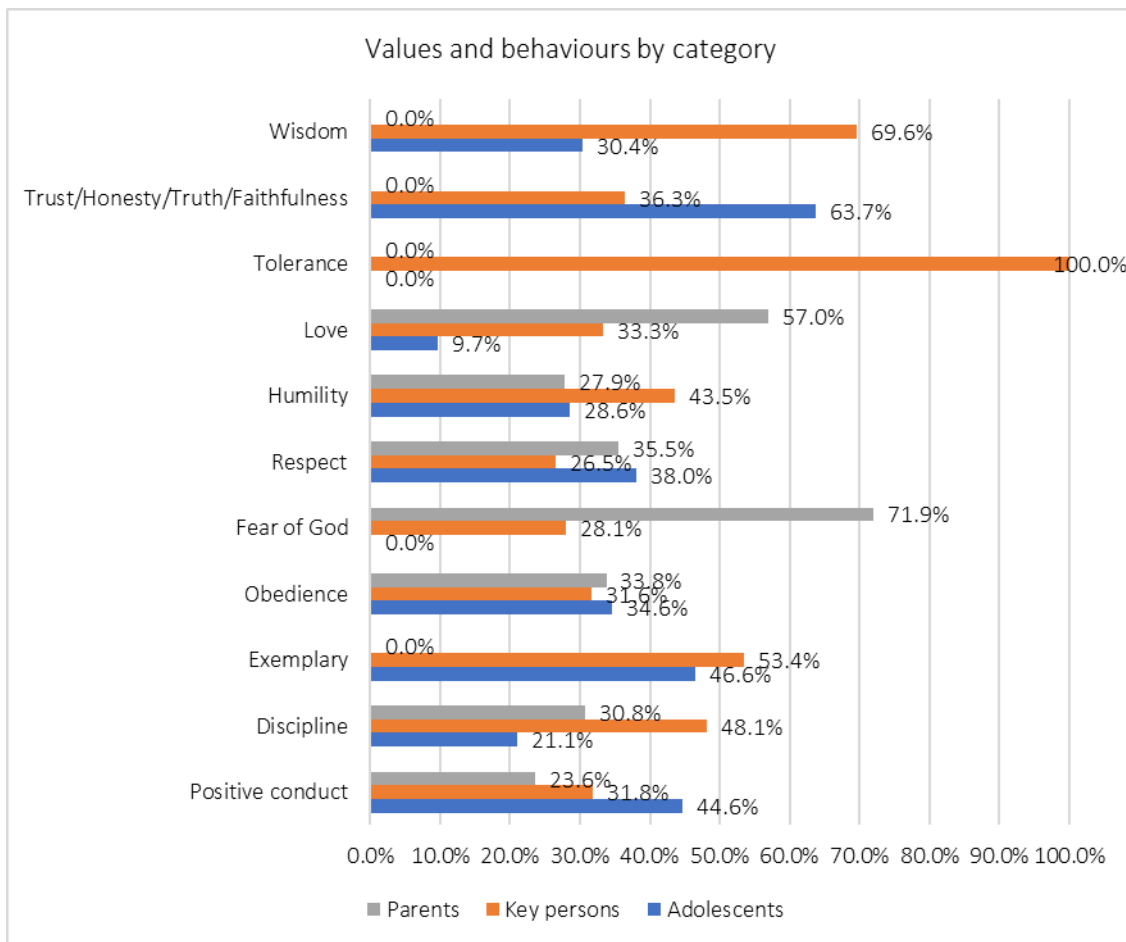
Self-aware individuals are “God-fearing” (K-K-32, K-P-03, K-P-15, K-P-06) people, and to some participants, the fear of God can help a person improve their self-awareness skills and help them coexist harmoniously with others. One of them said the following:

**According to me, the first thing is knowing the existence of God who created man in his own image and doing according to His will. You derive the good from the Bible and you will be able to live in harmony with the others. (K-P-09)**

Finally, some descriptive analyses were conducted to respond to the research questions about the differences between the main codes identified as values and behaviours of self-awareness by gender, category of participants, and sites.

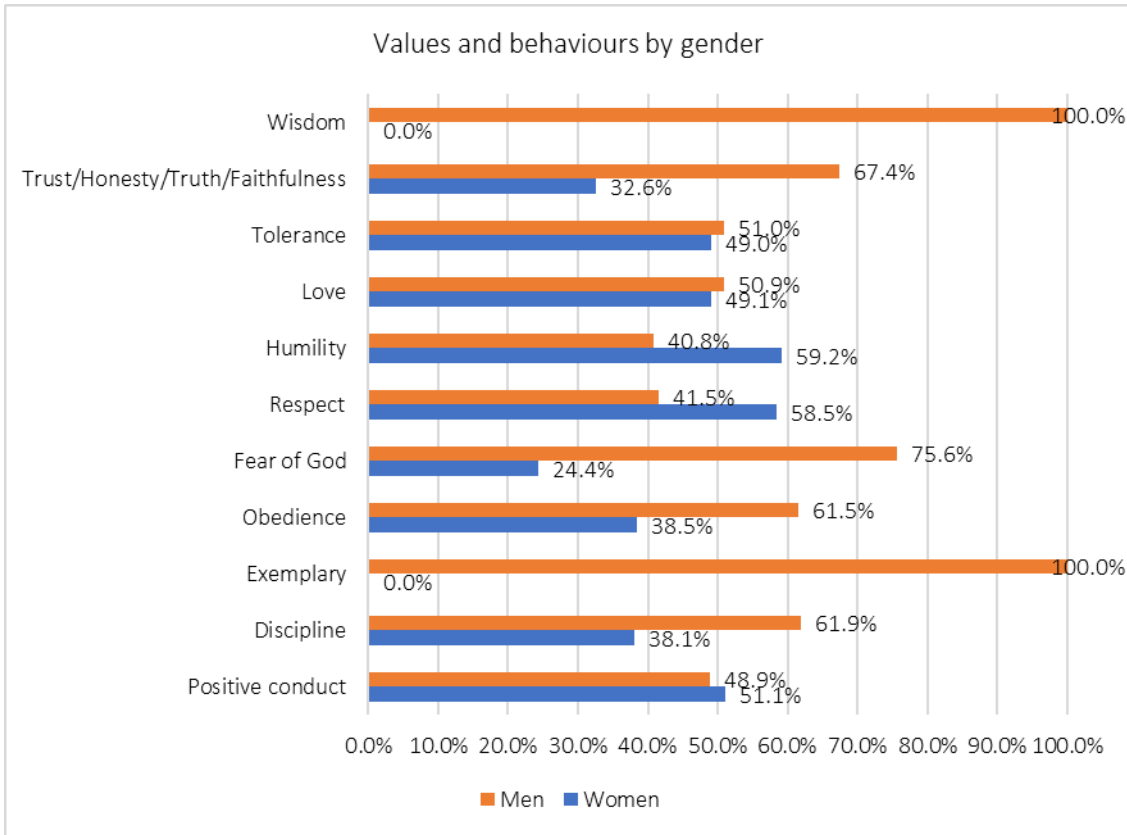
As shown in Figure 15 below, apart from “fear of God” (which did not emerge from adolescents), “exemplary,” “trust or honesty or faithfulness,” “wisdom” (which did not emerge from parents), and “tolerance” (which did not emerge from adolescents and parents), the rest of the codes emerged from all the categories of participants.

Figure 15: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of Values and Behaviours of Self-Awareness, by Category



Furthermore, nearly all codes emerged from both men and women participants, except “exemplary” and “wisdom,” which were mentioned by only men participants (refer to Figure 16).

Figure 16: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of Values and Behaviours of Self-Awareness, by Gender



In summary, self-aware individuals respect both themselves and others, are disciplined, obedient, God fearing, and generally have good behaviours.

### 3.2.5 Related Skills

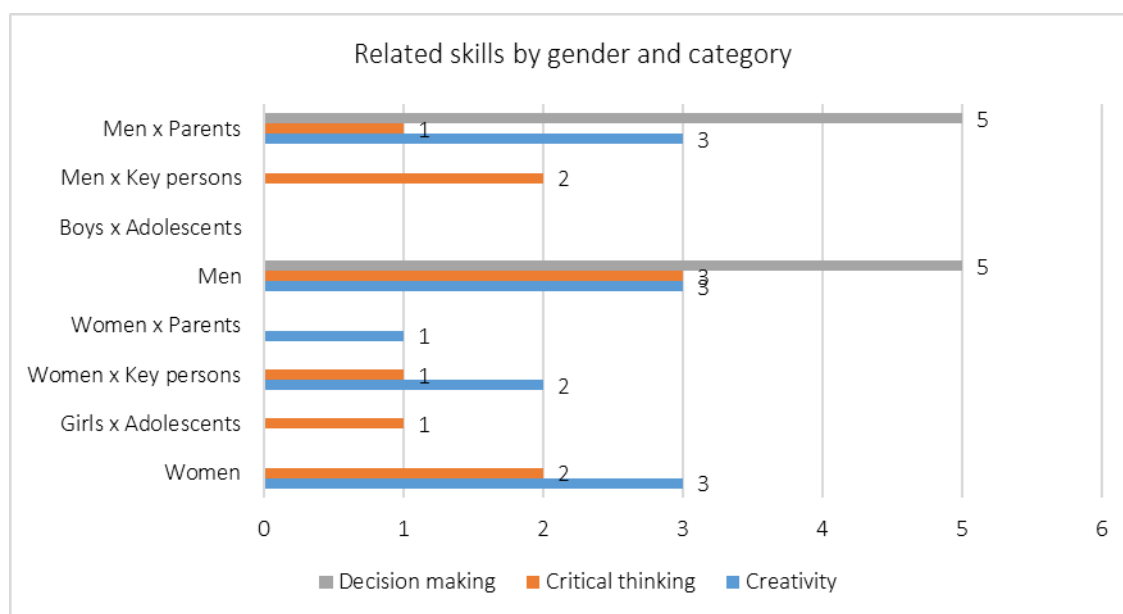
*Creativity, decision making, and critical thinking* are the skills identified in relation to self-awareness.

Table 7: Codes That Emerged as Related Skills of Self-Awareness

CATEGORY: SKILLS	RELATED	PARTICIPANTS (SOURCES)		EXCERPTS	
		FREQUEN CY	%	FREQUEN CY	%
Creativity		4	5.26	6	46.15
Critical thinking		4	5.26	5	38.46
Decision making		3	3.95	5	38.46
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>76</b>		<b>13</b>	

Figure 17 shows the total number of excerpts in each code by gender and category of participants. It is evident from the graph that some of the codes of related skills did not emerge from some of the categories of participants.

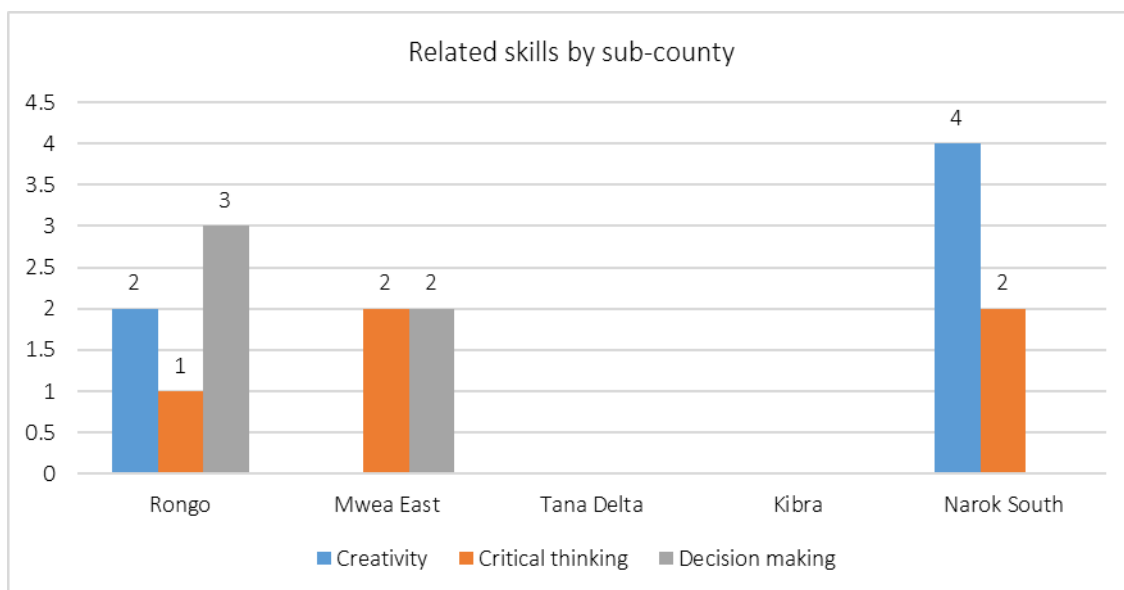
Figure 17: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Decision Making, Critical Thinking, and Creativity, by Gender and Category of the Participants



Further analysis of the same codes of the related skills of self-awareness by the different study sites revealed that none of the participants from Tana River and Kibra mentioned any of the skills (refer to Figure 18).



Figure 18: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Decision Making, Critical Thinking, and Creativity, by Sub-County



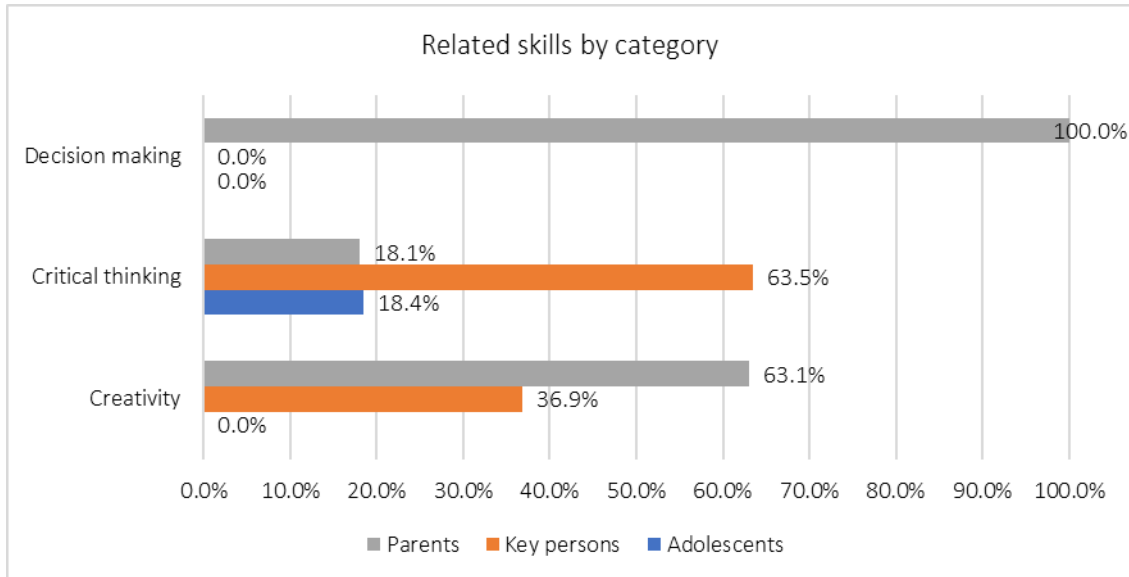
According to some of the participants, “creativity” and “critical thinking” are evident in the actions of a self-aware individual (K-P-08, K-P-28, K-K-28, K-A-02). Parents and key persons agree that a young person is self-aware if they make their own decisions, are creative when solving problems, and think critically. But although the participants appreciate the related skills in the lives of individual adolescents, they do not explain how these skills enhance self-awareness. They briefly mention their contribution to the process of attaining self-awareness but not the fruit of each skill:

He is a critical thinker. He once challenged and gave us an idea that assisted in bridging the gap and solving the differences between the older and the young in church. He insisted on a dialogue which was led by parish priests. (K-K-09)

Additionally, participants who mentioned decision making as another related skill recognise that most self-aware adolescents are good decision makers, are principled, and exhibit good communication skills (K-P-08, K-P-09). They further claim that involving young people in decision making processes at the household level would help boost their self-confidence, which they believe to be a key skill that contributes to improved self-awareness. One of the participants said, “Children should be engaged in decision making at homes like collective home budget making process. This will improve their confidence and those who do positive acts should be encouraged” (K-P-FGD-04).

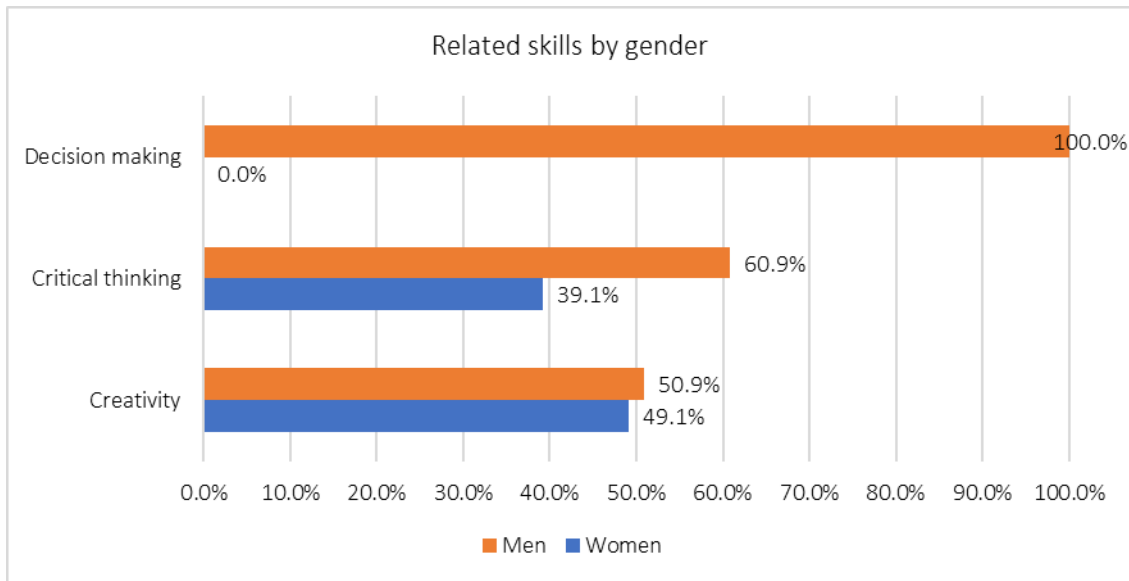
As shown in Figure 19 below, “decision making” did not emerge from key persons and adolescents, and “creativity” did not emerge from adolescents. Only “critical thinking” emerged from all the categories of participants.

Figure 19: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of Related Skills of Self-Awareness, by Category



Furthermore, nearly all codes of related skills emerged from both men and women participants, except “decision making,” which emerged from only men participants (refer to Figure 20).

Figure 20: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of Related Skills of Self-Awareness, by Gender



In summary, self-aware people demonstrate creativity, good decision-making skills, and critical thinking abilities.

### 3.2.6 Support Systems and Enabling Factors

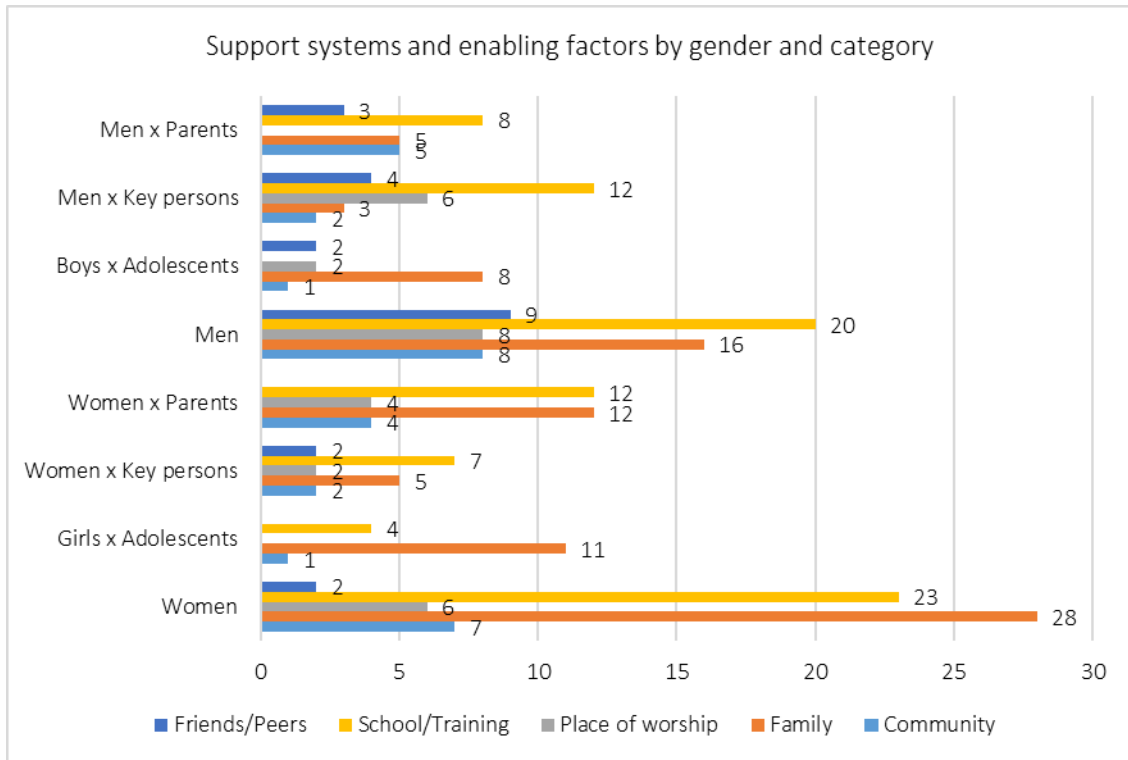
This theme considers all the essential networks or elements in the community that enhance a person’s ability to achieve self-awareness. The most mentioned systems are “family,” “school,” “community,” and “place of worship,” as shown below:

Table 8: Codes That Emerged as Support Systems and Enabling Factors of Self-Awareness

CATEGORY: SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND ENABLING FACTORS	PARTICIPANTS (SOURCES)		EXCERPTS	
	FREQUEN CY	%	FREQUEN CY	%
Family	42	55.26	44	51.16
School or Training	40	52.63	43	50.00
Community or Developmental partners	14	18.42	15	17.44
Place of worship	13	17.11	14	16.28
Friends or Peers	11	14.47	11	12.79
Reading	07	9.21	08	9.30
Experience	02	2.63	02	2.33
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>76</b>		<b>86</b>	

Figure 21 shows the total number of excerpts in each code by gender and category of participants.

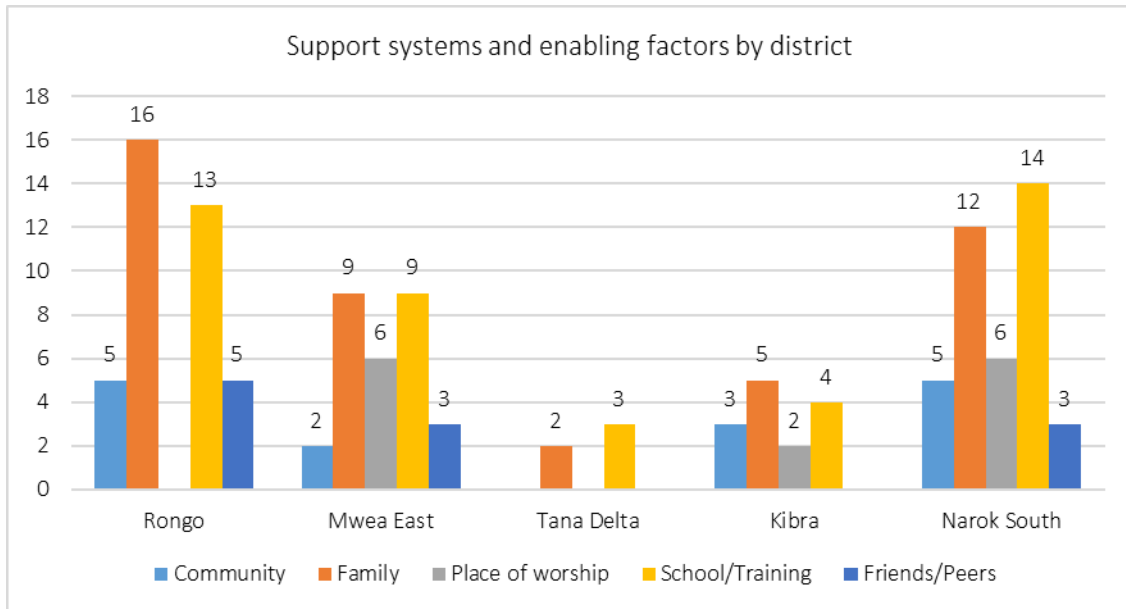
Figure 21: Frequency of Excerpts That Include School or Training, Family, Friends or Peers, Community, and Place of Worship by Gender and Category of the Participants



As can be seen in Figure 21 above, “school or training” and “family” emerged as the most mentioned support systems of self-awareness among both men and women participants across all the categories of participants.

Further analysis of the same codes of support system of self-awareness by the different study sites revealed “school or training” and “family” as the most mentioned across sub-counties (see Figure 22).

Figure 22 : Frequency of Excerpts That Include School or Training, Family, Friends or Peers, Community, and Place of Worship by the Study Sub-County



Support systems play a pivotal role in enhancing self-awareness in adolescents—a belief held by most participants in all the interviewed categories. Families in this context encompass parents, siblings, and extended relatives, while the notable members that form the community mostly include the community members and development partners. Places of worship exert an immense influence over a person’s self-awareness. At school, support is received from teachers, colleagues, peers, or friends. The majority of the participants appreciate an interdependent contribution from all community institutions (K-A-40, K-A-39, K-P-05, K-K-35, K-P-41, K-P-08, K-P-04, K-P-01), although the highest percentage referred to family (K-A-38, K-K-29, K-P-15, K-P-16, K-P-19, K-P-26, K-P-12, K-P-38, K-P-39, K-P-08, K-P-32, K-P-36, K-P-09, K-P-06). This is because family is meant to provide a solid foundation for love and support in everyone’s life.

Participants recognise the initial role that family plays in bringing up children before they interact with the community and friends. A child’s future behaviour is shaped by family, as one of the adolescents explained:

Family, because it is where one is brought up from the beginning and that is where you will be taught on how to tolerate your friends first. So, family plays a big role in self-awareness. When you join school, you will meet different people with different behaviours and characters. So, if you were not taught well at home, you might end

up joining a bad company or end up in a good company and change from there, so the source is at home. (K-A-38)

In this regard, parents are aware and proud of their contribution to the children's upbringing. Parent-child relationships influence self-awareness; good parenting improves or builds self-awareness in a child, and poor parenting has the opposite effect. A family should provide an environment conducive to nurturing the child's abilities.

Okay, I don't think there are people who are not self-aware. You know when a child is born, they are brought up until they attain the age of 5 years and 10 years. So, the way they relate with their parents is how they will acquire awareness. So, in cases where there are no morals or light in families then it becomes hard for a child to be self-aware. Also, the environment the child is exposed to contributes a lot to the self-awareness of a child. . . . For example, by going to school and interacting with different people you become self-aware in different perspectives, as some are quick learners while others are not. (K-P-19)

Though "places of worship" have been identified as another important support system, several parents believe that it is "family" that introduces the child to the church. Therefore, a parent has an obligation to lead the child through the principles of the places of worship. One of them said the following:

If the child does not go to church and you make them stay behind, you don't know what they are doing, you'd rather show them the ways and teachings of the church on life, obedience to parents, speaking well to old people and responding. (K-P-28)

Another participant said this:

The first system that helps children, when a child is two years old, you will show him love for the church, when he leaves and he is about seven years old, you as the parent must go with offering, give him the money. You see, you bring them up in the foundation of the church. As they move along, you will see he is understanding himself. If they are not, then they do not understand themselves. Even if you give him money for a church offering, he cannot, he will go back outside and buy a sweet. (K-P-26)

In addition, the places of worship hold seminars, where young people are taught the word of God, which enhances their knowledge about themselves, and about "avoiding bad things."

Churches also enhance adolescents' social interaction and interpersonal skills, as explained by one of the participants:

Churches, you go to seminars. We are taught the word of God and we are taught not to do bad things. The churches play their role by showing you how to relate with others. Respect people and parents. We are taught about other spiritual things that can help them in their lives. We see the community also plays a big role. These children go together in one place. (K-K-34)

Some of the participants believe that members of the community need to be collectively concerned with children in order to enable them to understand who they are by finding solutions to the problems they face each day. Communal parenting was an important cultural element in the community, which some Kenyan parents suggest should still be practised:

Sometimes you can see a child is just there, they go up the road and come back down, but if you ask them what problem they are having and if they need help and they accept to be helped, you know then how you will deal with them and tell them how you will help them. If he tells you he wishes to read, and he doesn't get books or pens, you ask him "if you try hard and get a job and buy you a book and a pen, will you read?" If I am the one who gave him the book and the pen, I will take the initiative and investigate whether or not they are going to school, so that I can help the parent. (K-P-26)

Other participants who mention "community" as a support system to self-awareness, do not offer a justification for their choice (K-P-41, K-P-40, K-P-15, K-P-06).

In instances of an unfavourable relationship between the children and parents, the school, especially the teachers, will support the children in gaining self-awareness. Several parents believe that the school has a greater influence on their children's lives because it is where they learn how to read and write, spend most of their time, and make long-lasting friendships.

Schools encourage lifelong learning, which nurtures students' skills and dispositions, including self-awareness. One of the parents says that the schools' role is designed for them to "develop learners' skills" but that family is the most important (K-P-32). Furthermore, some participants noted that the school helps adolescents develop relationship skills, which they perceived to be important for a person to improve their self-awareness: "schools play a role in making people become self-aware. Some of those who went to school at least have some level of social skills that introduce them on being self-aware" (K-P-FGD-04).



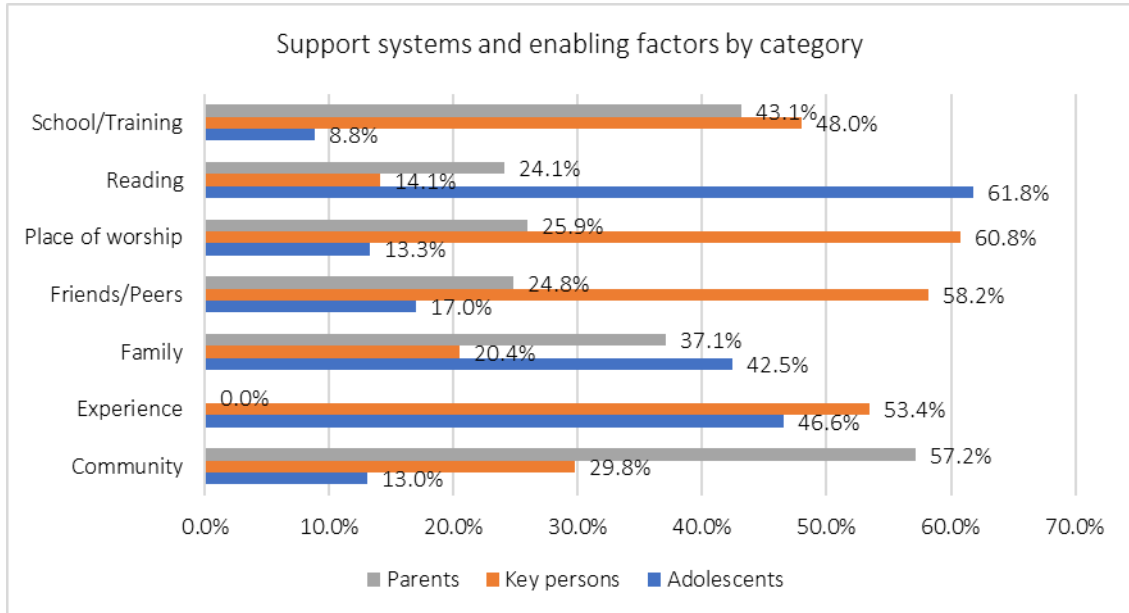
The importance of family is still indispensable, though all systems may contribute in different ways, as one parent stipulates. There is a lot of scepticism toward society, as some parents hold unfavourable views toward the community members and hence cannot trust them with their children:

The school has been given the role to develop skills in adolescents but in my own opinion, family is the most important. Adolescents listen to their parents more and they respect parents more than they respect church. The society comes last. In school you might find a teacher-student ratio of about 1:40. The teacher can't be able to handle the behaviours of forty students. The society we live in is rotten. Many will see my adolescent child as a wife and the technology all contribute to ill morals of our adolescents. (K-P-32)

Some participants who recognise family, school, and community as the major support systems equally recognise and appreciate the guidance and counselling these systems provide. Guidance and counselling improve self-awareness and provide a safe environment for children to express themselves. For young people to better know or understand themselves, they need experienced people to talk to, and these are mainly teachers, parents, and social workers, as evidenced in these quotes: "one is guided by the teacher, parents' guidance also and community" (K-P-41); and "you talk to them, to go to the guiding and counselling office, creating a public awareness" (K-A-27). Parents provide guidance and counselling to children to improve their behaviour, discipline, or obedience in the community, while the teachers help adolescents to relate with their peers at school.

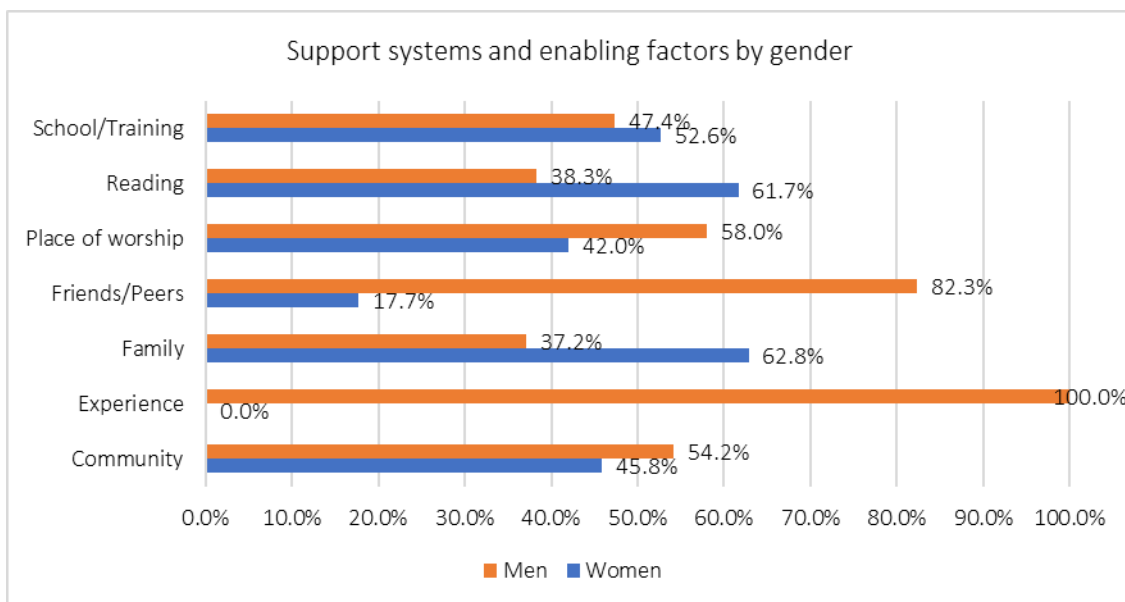
Nearly all codes relating to support systems emerged from all the categories of participants except "experience," which did not emerge from parents, as shown in Figure 23 below:

Figure 23: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of Support Systems and Enabling Factors of Self-Awareness, by Category



Furthermore, nearly all codes relating to support systems were mentioned by both men and women participants, except “experience,” which emerged from only men participants (see Figure 24).

Figure 24: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of Support Systems and Enabling Factors of Self-Awareness, by Gender



In summary, participants acknowledge family, school or training, community, and place of worship as key support systems for helping adolescents improve their self-awareness skills.

### 3.2.7 Assessment Methods

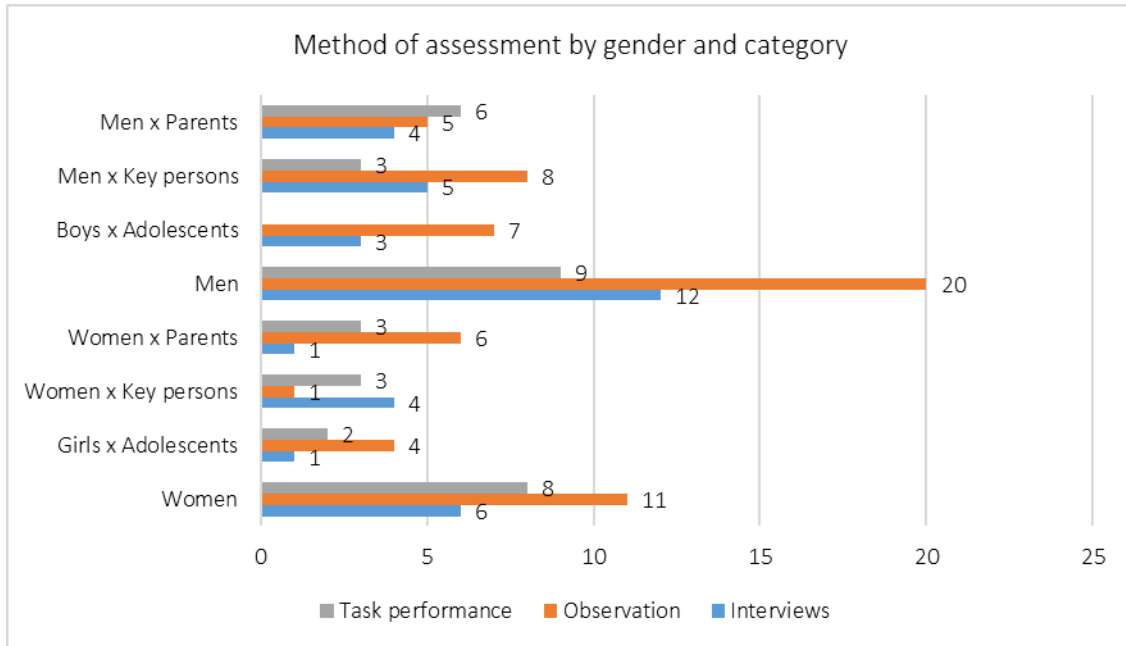
The methods of assessing self-awareness, as mentioned by the participants include: “observation,” “interviews,” “task performance,” and “staying with people” as can be seen below:

Table 9: Codes That Emerged as Assessment Methods of Self-Awareness

CATEGORY: METHODS OF ASSESSMENT	PARTICIPANTS (SOURCES)		EXCERPTS	
	FREQUENCY	%	FREQUENCY	%
Observation	30	39.47	30	50.00
Interviews	18	23.68	18	30.00
Task performance	17	22.37	17	28.33
Staying with the people	3	3.95	3	5.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76</b>		<b>60</b>	

Figure 25 shows the total number of excerpts in each code by gender and category of participants.

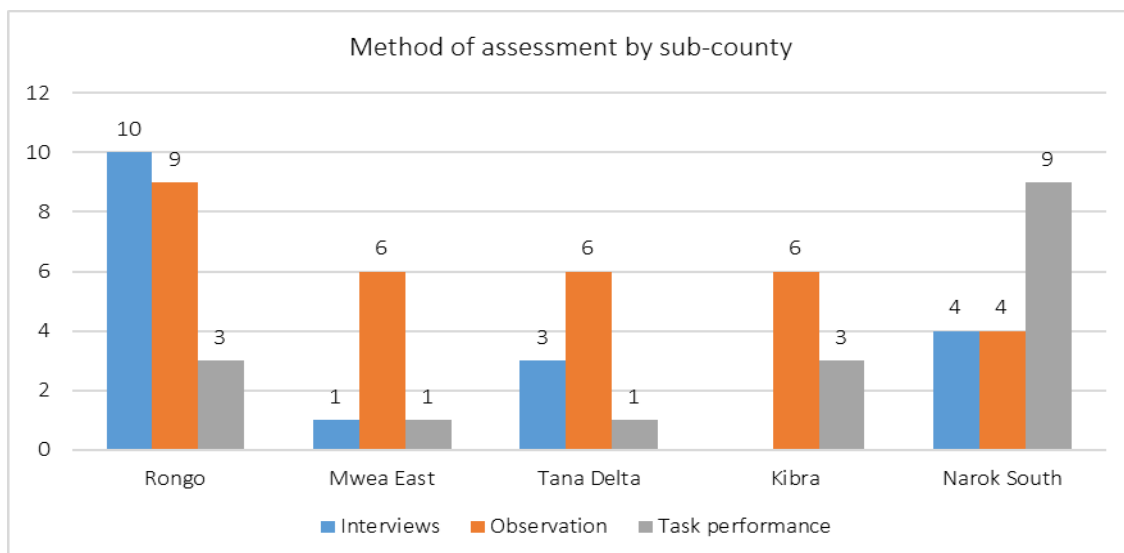
Figure 25: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Observation, Interviews, and Task Performance, by Gender and Category of the Participants



As can be seen in Figure 25 above, “observation” was the most mentioned code of assessment methods of self-awareness among both men and women in almost all the categories of participants.

Further analysis of the same codes of assessment methods of self-awareness by the different sites where the study was conducted revealed “observation” as the most mentioned across sub-counties except in Narok South and Rongo, where “task performance” and “interviews” were the most mentioned, respectively (refer to Figure 26).

Figure 26: Frequency of Excerpts That Include Observation, Interviews, and Task Performance, by the Study Sub-County



Participants identified three main methods of assessing whether a person is self-aware, as can be observed in Table 9. Through observation, some of the participants believe they can determine a person’s self-awareness. According to them, observation does not need to be a structured activity; one can tell that a young person is self-aware when one encounters them on the street, at home, or even at school. Watching how they walk, talk, and dress gives one a clear picture whether a given young person is self-aware. Interestingly, in this case self-awareness is considered an external trait measured by outward actions and behaviours as opposed to innate traits.

Some participants observe the cleanliness of the adolescent’s home. To them, a self-aware adolescent’s home is clean with clean utensils, swept floors, and washed clothes, while the reverse is true for an adolescent without self-awareness (K-A-18).

Other participants suggest “interviews” as a form of assessing self-awareness (K-A-35, K-K-35, K-P-01, K-K-28, K-P-22, K-P 08, K-P 19). Although the participants mentioned interviews, their understanding is limited to the informal questioning during casual interactions. The participants suggest asking adolescents several questions, mainly on social issues. Correct answers mean that the person is self-aware, as quoted from one of the participants: “You can ask the question and know by their responses. The one who answers well is self-aware” (K-P-22). Appropriate expressions including gestures and tone of voice when answering is also an important quality that demonstrates self-awareness.

In addition to observation and interviews, other participants identify “task performance” as another method of assessing self-awareness. However, the participants do not give details of the tasks the adolescents have to perform. In most of their responses, they argue that a person who agrees to perform a given task and is respectful toward the one assigning the task is self-aware, while the one who refuses to do the task is not self-aware. Parents expect self-aware adolescents to be responsible, respectful, and obedient. One of them said, “As a visitor, you can send them to do something. The one who obeys is self-aware. The one who refuses to go shows lack of self-awareness” (K-P-22, K-P-34).

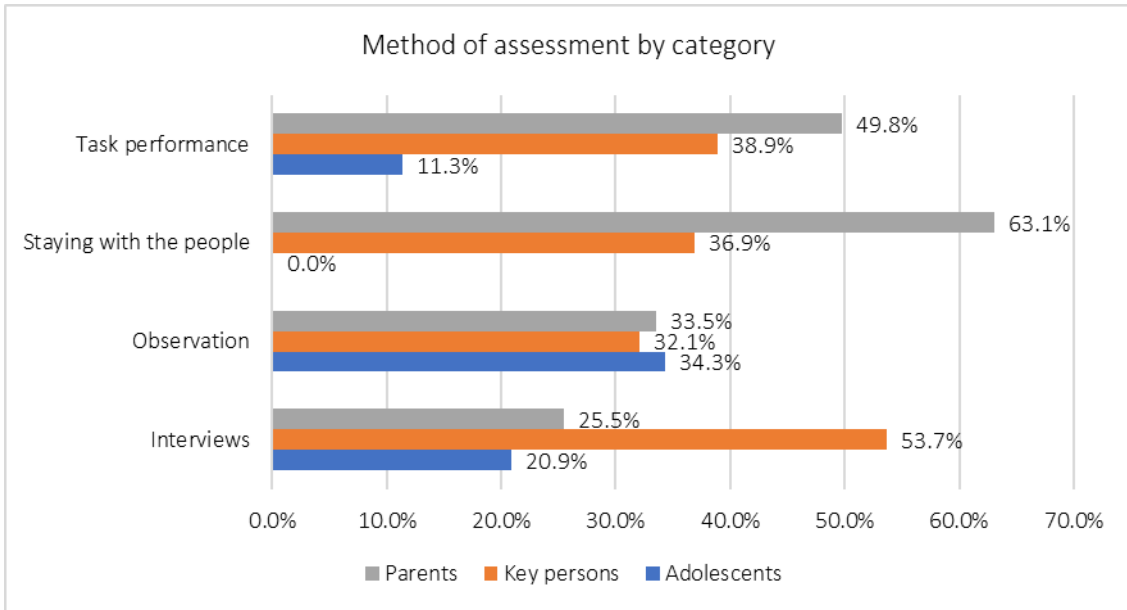
Most importantly to some parents, task performance will not only enable them to know whether their children are talented but will also enable their children to demonstrate their problem-solving skills. One parent believes that a child’s ability to “initiate a solution” when given a task is an indicator of self-awareness (K-P-40).

Although participants identified “interviews,” “task performance,” and “staying with the people” as assessment methods, most of them imply that ultimately “observation” will always play a role in assessment. For example, to evaluate a task, you must observe how it is carried out. Participants suggest that all the methods depend on an evaluator’s observational skills:

Through his communication and reaction are also evident in his body language. Rebuke him and observe his reaction. What is his body language? You can also flood him in a tempting environment then observe how he reacts. Maybe he is disciplined. He comes home early but invite him to a dance hall and just watch. Maybe he does not use drugs. To assess his self-awareness, expose him to an environment with drugs like this one then see how he reacts. What is his body language communicating? Is he comfortable with what is going on? Muslims say if you want to know someone you need to do five things: (a) travel with him—there is no way he can pretend while on a journey, his true character will show itself; (b) live with him—then you will know his behaviour over time; (c) work with him; (d) lend him some money; and (e) offend him. (K-K-24)

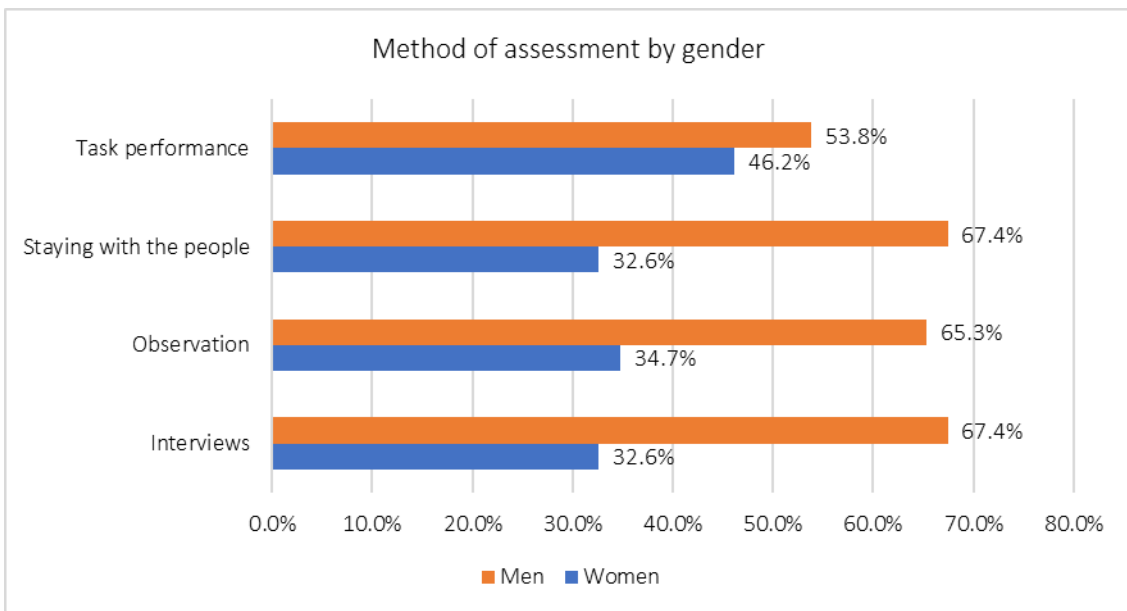
Nearly all codes of assessment methods emerged from all categories of participants except “staying with people,” which did not emerge from adolescents, as shown in Figure 27 below:

Figure 27: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of Assessment Methods of Self-Awareness, by Category



Furthermore, all codes of assessment methods of self-awareness were mentioned by both men and women participants (refer to Figure 27).

Figure 28: Percentage of Excerpts That Include Codes of Assessment Methods of Self-Awareness, by Gender



In summary, participants suggest observation, interviews, and task performance as the appropriate methods by which adolescents' self-awareness skills can be assessed.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

In the Kenyan context, self-awareness is commonly defined as knowing or understanding oneself. It encompasses a people's understanding of their own character, behaviours, values, desires, goals, feelings, strengths, weaknesses, and capabilities. Knowledge of one's health, sex, body changes, and of taking care of self are other qualities of a self-aware individual. Participants also expect self-aware individuals to demonstrate positive behaviours such as greeting others, dressing decently, being obedient, fearing God, being disciplined, showing respect, and more.

The most familiar subskills that characterise self-awareness are self-confidence, the ability to forge healthy relationships, effective communication, self-regulation, goal setting and planning, cooperation, empathy, and good judgement. Self-aware adolescents should also possess values such as hard work, passion, responsibility, leadership, kindness, willingness to be corrected or advised, positive attitude, time management, self-reflection, and inquisitiveness. Additionally, a person who is self-aware is expected to share with others, be open to others' opinions and perceptions, work or stay with others, and help others. This implies that self-aware individuals also demonstrate a strong sense of community or belonging.

Adolescents are aided in becoming more self-aware through the various support systems they continuously have access to. These include school, family, community, friends or peers, and places of worship. No one system should work in isolation, however, but they should complement each other, since adolescents are directly involved with all of them.

Observation, interviews, and task performance are regarded as the most appropriate methods of assessing self-awareness skills among adolescents. The tests could explore aspects such as a person's behaviours, time management skills, etc.

### 4.1 Limitations of the Study

The findings presented in this report should be read in light of the limitations presented throughout the processes of planning, data collection, and data analysis.

Regarding the data collection process, the way the interviewers asked the questions had some influence on the participants' responses. Due to the large number of interviews, different styles



were used to conduct them. For instance, some direct styles elicited particular responses due to the inclusion of leading explanations.

Researchers encountered two other difficulties in this process: the lack of familiarity with the participants and the challenge of interacting with the adolescents. Specific skills may have been necessary when interviewing adolescents.

The need to use the English language to ensure a common understanding of the sources, and to share the findings with the scientific community and other stakeholders posed a challenge to the participants in terms of their understanding of the questions—especially for adolescents and parents. Most of them responded to the questions in their local languages with the added complexity of translations. The challenge of using the English language as a medium of communication and the need for translation into the local languages meant that during the interviews some nuances and cultural connotations of the words used may have been lost along the way. The findings of this report were reviewed by the Kenyan researchers for cultural sensitivity.

Regarding the process of data analysis, the complexity of the study (including different skills in different countries) affected the treatment of the documents and the codebook. It was impossible to foresee all the challenges that would arise during coding and analysis. Qualitative analysis required a systematic and collaborative process among the researchers involved in reading, analysing, and coding the sources. Given the large number of interviews for such a qualitative study, a large number of researchers were involved in the process, increasing the challenges as well as the richness of the analysis. Nevertheless, different strategies were implemented to guarantee the reliability and accuracy of the findings. On the other hand, the team analysed interviews in two rounds in order to achieve sufficient inter-rater reliability. Raters maintained constant communication through daily meetings to share challenges, doubts, and suggestions.

Finally, it would have been beneficial to conduct a second round of interviews with the participants to verify whether their understandings of self-awareness were included in the findings of this report.

## **4.2 Recommendations for Future Research and Assessment**

A unique understanding of self-awareness skills in the Kenyan context has emerged from this study. This should open a new path of research in order to develop more contextualised studies on life skills based on different cultures and contexts.

New strategies and assessment methods should be informed by these new contextualised studies and concepts. Authentic knowledge about the nature of a skill as used in a particular culture could inspire new methods of assessment.

Certain unique aspects of this study seem to call into question the appropriateness and importance of conducting an inductive process. More studies, including a qualitative participatory approach as a first step in developing assessment tools, are therefore recommended. This finding supports the benefit of the mixed-method approach in assessment studies.

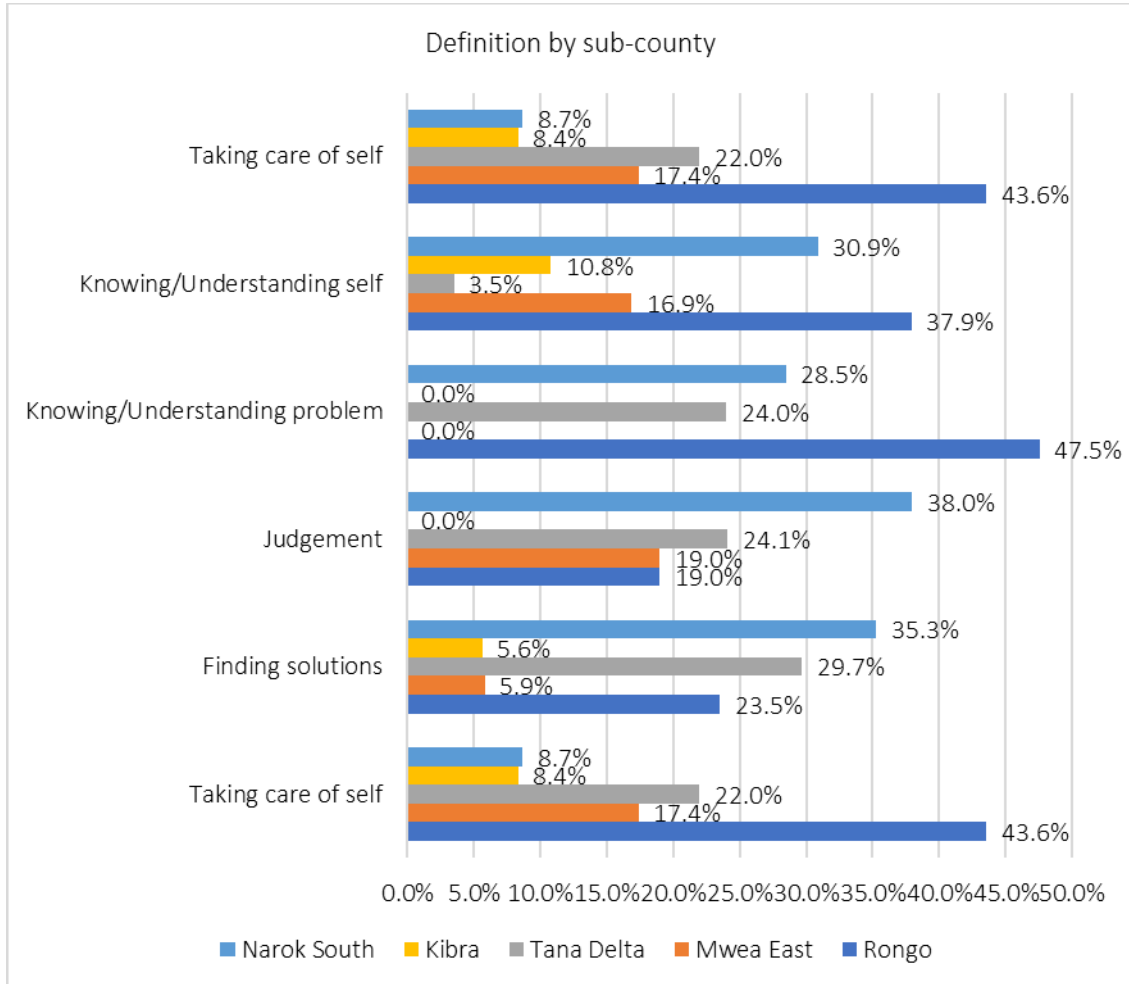
More iterative processes are also recommended in future studies to verify the preliminary findings.

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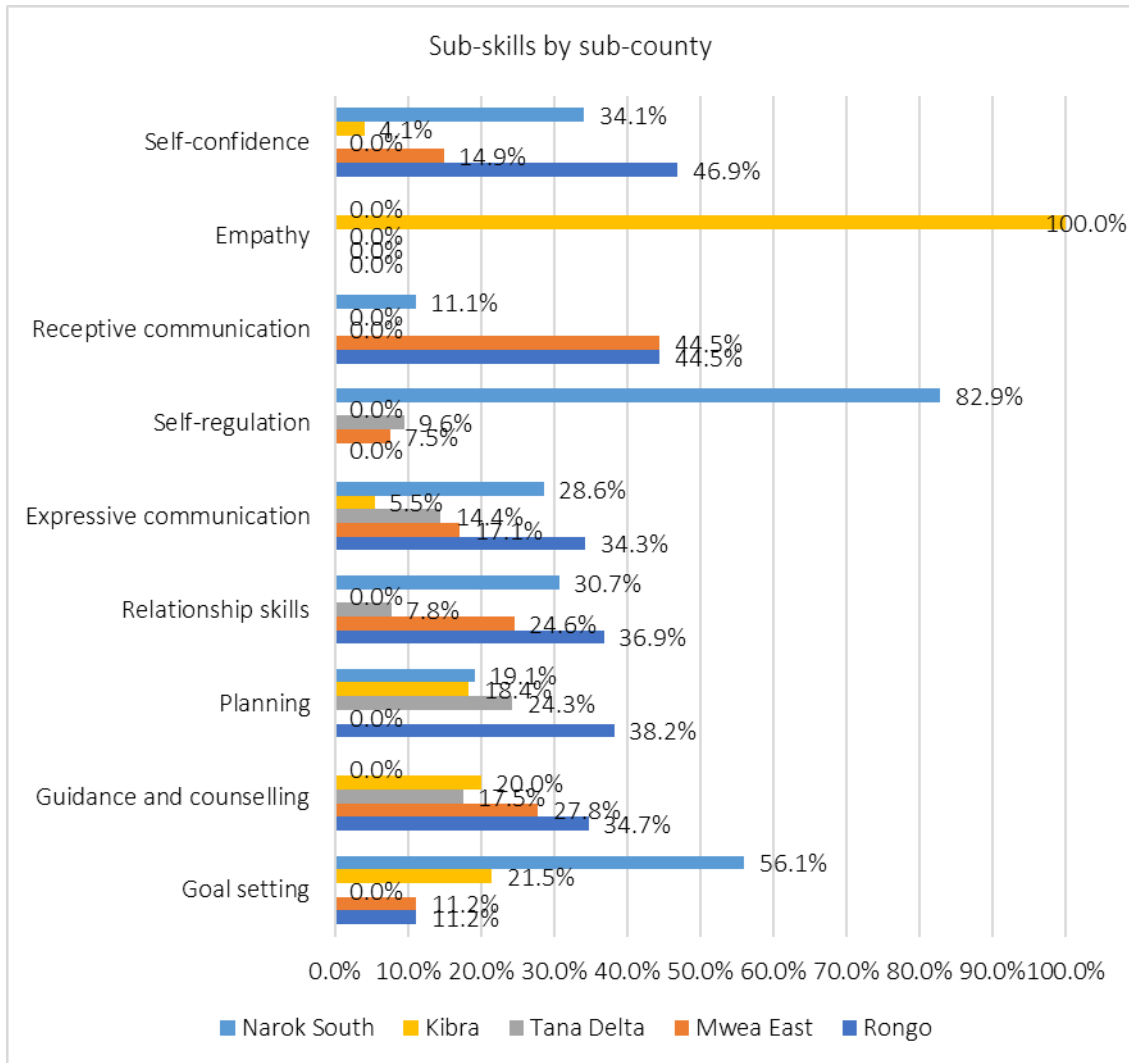
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## APPENDICES

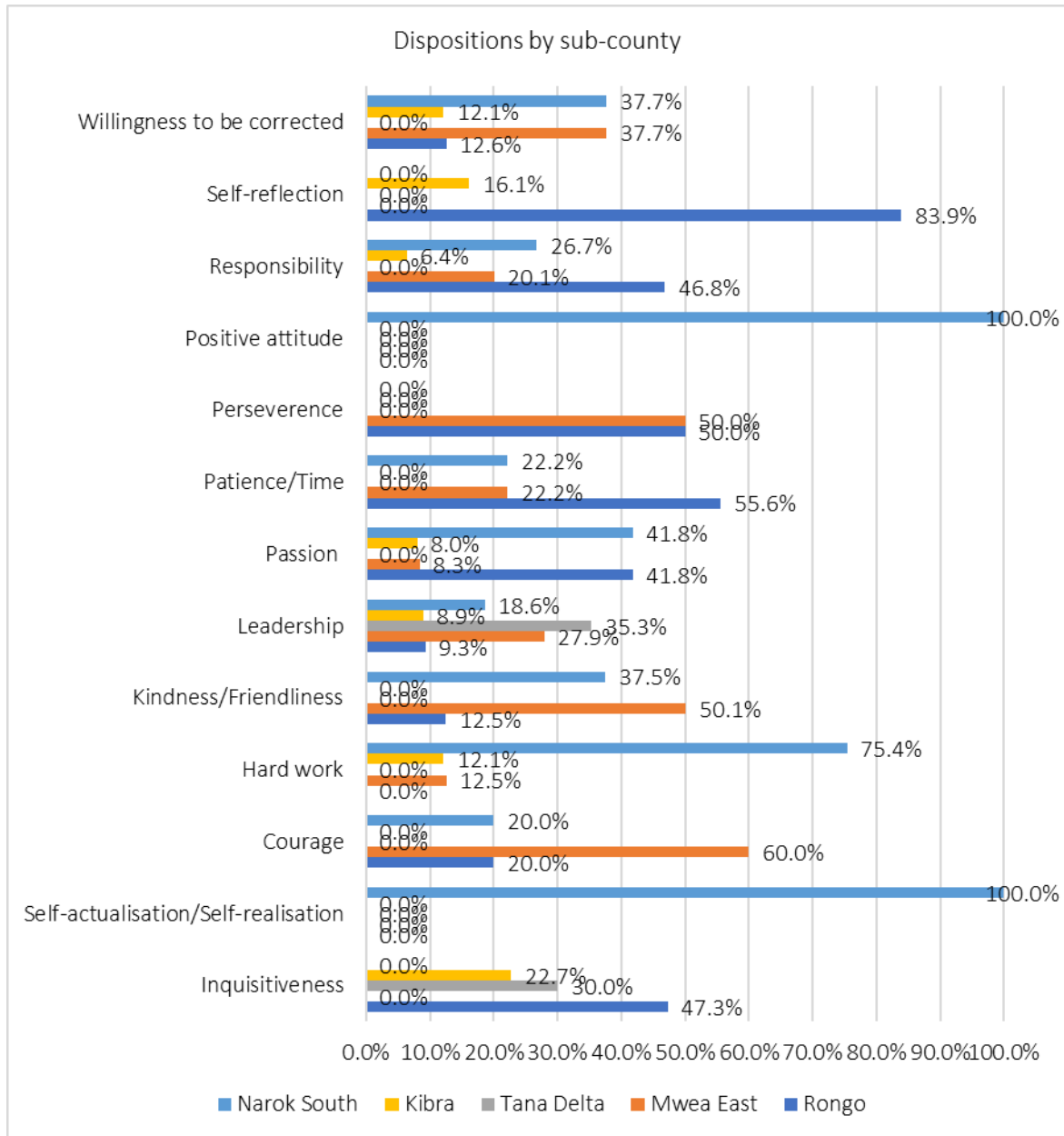
### Appendix 1: Descriptive Analysis of the Definition Codes by Descriptors



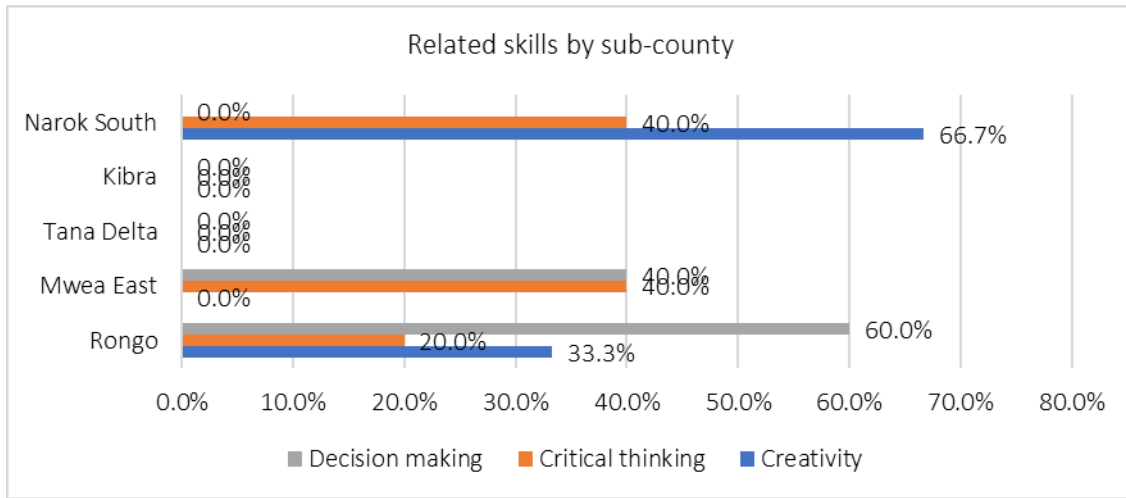
Appendix 2: Descriptive Analysis of the Subskills Codes by Descriptors



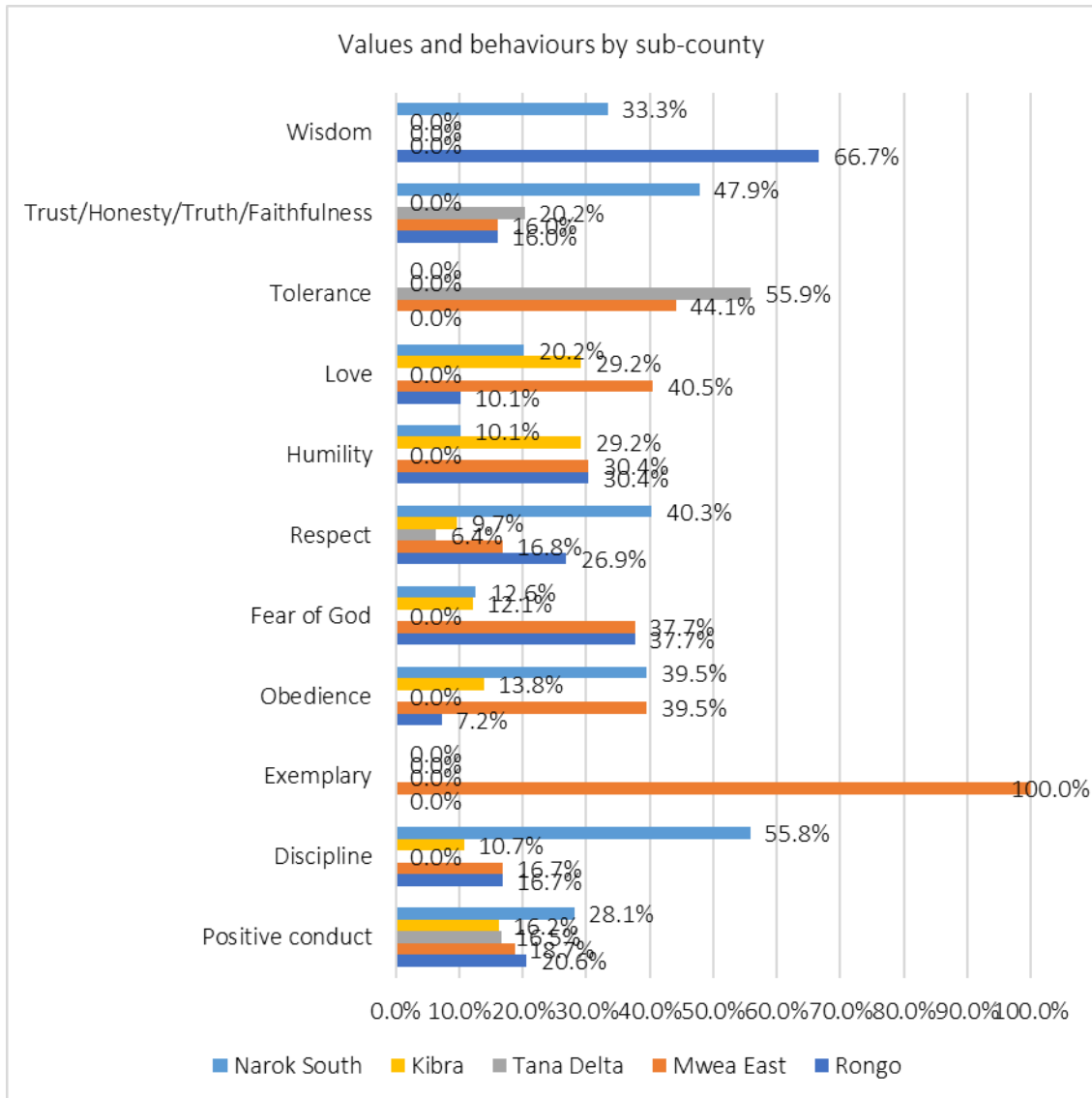
### Appendix 3: Descriptive Analysis of the Dispositions Codes by Descriptors



Appendix 4: Descriptive Analysis of the Related Skills Codes by Descriptors

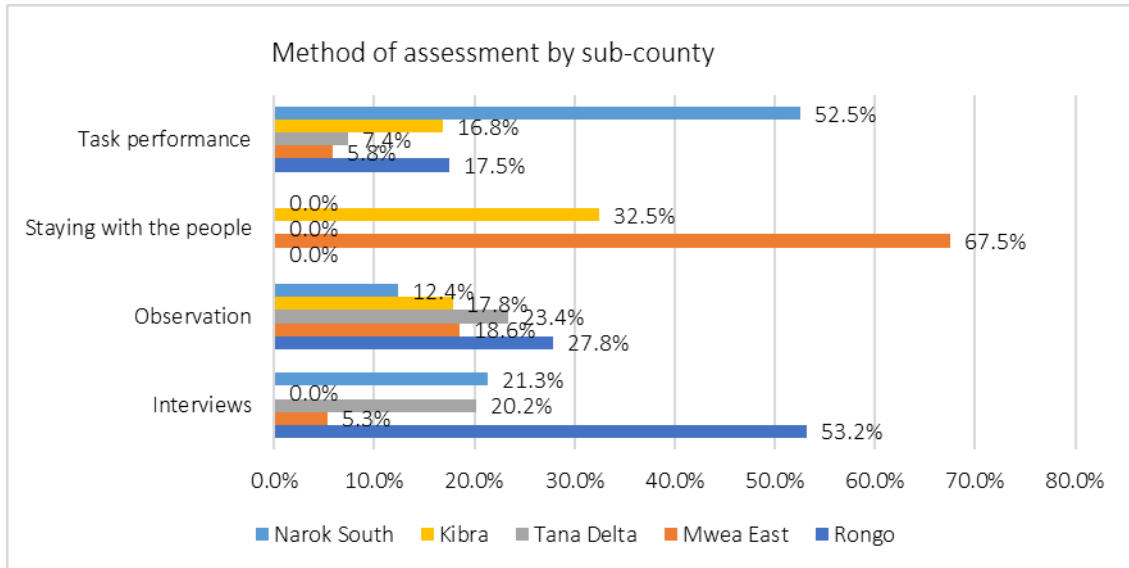


Appendix 5: Descriptive Analysis of the Values and Behaviours Codes by Descriptors

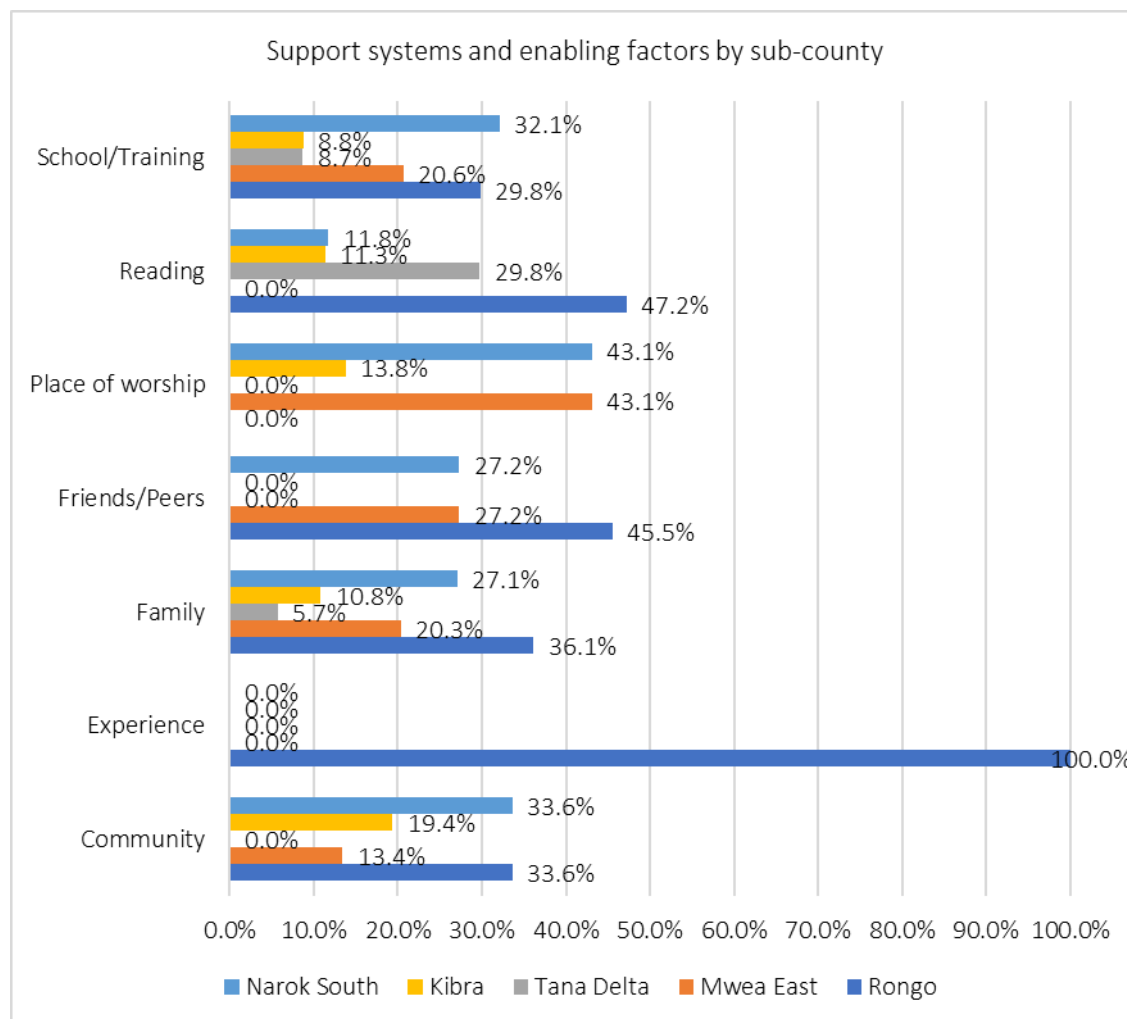




Appendix 6: Descriptive Analysis of the Assessment Methods Codes by Descriptors



Appendix 7: Descriptive Analysis of the Support Systems and Enabling Factors Codes by Descriptors





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